

The Byronic Hero in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*

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ABSTRAKT

Cílem této bakalářské práce je dokázat, že tři hlavní postavy v díle *Šarlatové písmeno* reflektují znaky Byronského hrdiny, což je romantický hrdina, který byl pojmenován po slavném britském spisovateli George Gordonu Byronovi. Tato práce postupně popisuje postavy Hester Prynové, Arthura Dimmesdala a Rogera Chillingwortha. Hlavním cílem práce je dokázat skutečnost, že chování těchto postav obsahuje Byronské prvky; a dále je porovnat s jinými Byronskými typy hrdinů, které je možné v literatuře nalézt.

Klíčová slova:

Šarlatové písmeno, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Hester Prynne, Arthur Dimmesdale, Roger Chillingworth, Byronský hrdina, Puritánství, cizoložství, hřích

ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that the three main characters in *The Scarlet Letter* reflect the features of the Byronic Hero which is a romantic character type named after George Gordon Byron, a famous British writer. The thesis successively describes the characters of Hester Prynne, Arthur Dimmesdale and Roger Chillingworth. The main objective of the thesis is to exemplify the fact that the character's behaviour contains Byronic features; and furthermore, compare them with other Byronic Hero types which can be found in the literature.

Key words:

The Scarlet Letter, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Hester Prynne, Arthur Dimmesdale, Roger Chillingworth, Byronic Hero, Puritanism, adultery, sin

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

The Byronic Hero was named after George Gordon Byron according to his characters in works such as *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, *Manfred* and others. According to *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, it is defined as “a boldly defiant but bitterly self-suffering outcast, proudly contemptuous of social norms but suffering for some unnamed sin,”¹ meaning that the characters are moved to the edge of society because of their behaviour including sins they have committed in the past and with which they have to live henceforward.

Byronic Heroes are typical character types of dark romanticism of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in England. Byron influenced not only American writers but also had an impact in Europe in countries such as Germany, Italy, Spain, and others. In France for example “the Byronic hero is the direct ancestor of many of the pessimistic or nihilistic heroes and philosophical rebels in Romantic and decadent literature.”² However, there have been many studies dealing with the Byronic heroes in different kinds of literature after Byron; there have not been many connections to the literature before Byron. Based on Heinrich Kraeger's dissertation, it is possible to consider Satan, who is associated with Prometheus in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* as the first appearance of the Byronic Hero in literature. Despite the fact, there have not been any other associations more recent to Byron which could have inspired him.³ Going deeper into the literary history there is one more character, in whom Byronic Hero can be observed, and that is Dante's Satan in *Divine Comedy*, an Italian, fourteen-century narrative poem. The character of Satan in either *Divine Comedy* and *Paradise Lost* cannot reverse the impact of his rebellion against God. He is viewed as Lucifer, the fallen angel and sentenced to be the king of Hell for all eternity. As Anne Paolucci suggests in “Dante's Satan and Miller's ‘Byronic Hero’” the two are conceptually the same, but they differ in characteristics. Dante's Satan is viewed as a negative persona with nothing good in him, whereas Miller's Byronic Hero is described as “painfully sensitive to light and love; his despair is awakened sharply at the sight of Heaven and Eden. He cannot help remembering the goodness of God.”⁴ Even though he was dismissed from Heaven, he continues to admire it.

¹ Chris Baldick, *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), byronic.

² Peter L. Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero: Types and Prototypes*, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1962), 3.

³ Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero*, 4-5.

⁴ Anne Paolucci, “Dante's Satan and Miller's ‘Byronic Hero’,” *Italica* 41, no. 2 (1964): 144-5, accessed January 8, 2019, doi:10.2307/476984.

The Scarlet Letter is set in Puritan New England and therefore Puritanism, and its historical development will be discussed. After the first permanent settlement at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607 John Smith is considered to be the author of the first English book written in America in 1608. He is followed by the Puritans, who came to New England to start a new life separate from the Church of England. They believed that the Reformation in England had not gone far enough and that there was still too much resemblance to the Roman Catholic Church. In the meantime, a larger colony was developed at Massachusetts Bay, where the first book on American soil was printed. It is called the *Bay Psalm Book*, and it was printed in 1640.⁵ During this period American literature is in its beginnings and therefore it is evident that Puritanism has had a significant impact on the basics and further development of literature.

The witch trials are closely related to Puritanism for the reason that the Salem witch trials took place in 1692 in Massachusetts and a Puritan community. Many authors were inspired by the processes, which was reflected in their literary works. Two influential authors who wrote about this period are considered to be, for example, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Arthur Miller as representatives of authors of literature, followed by a non-fictional writer, Marion Starkey.⁶

Puritans believed they were “chosen for salvation and men and women can do nothing to earn grace or to avoid it,” an idea which is related to “double predestination,” the belief shared with Calvinists. An ordinary day of a Puritan would include, above other things, a morning prayer, work and evening prayer which they would consider appropriate and by the Bible on which they strongly rooted their beliefs.⁷

For example, Hawthorne’s short story *Young Goodman Brown* reacts to the Salem witch trials from the Puritan angle as well as from the family history perspective, since Nathaniel Hawthorne’s great-grandfather John Hathorne was a judge during those witch huntings; furthermore, William Hathorne, his other paternal ancestor, was known for the persecution of Quakers. For that reason, as stated by Melanie Abrams in “Hawthorne’s Virtual Salem,” even though Hawthorne himself was a Puritan, he did not agree with the acts of his ancestors

⁵ Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, *From Puritanism to postmodernism: a history of American literature* (London, Penguin Books, 1991), 7-8.

⁶ Benjamin Ray, “Salem Witch Trials,” *OAH Magazine of History* 17, no. 4 (July 2003): 32, accessed March 15, 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25163620>

⁷ Leland S. Person, *The Cambridge Introduction to Nathaniel Hawthorne* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007): 16-20.

and so in order to disconnect from them, he added the “w” to his surname.⁸ Hawthorne’s attitude towards his ancestors is illustrated by the following quote from ‘The Custom House’ in *The Scarlet Letter*:

At all events, I, the present writer, as their representative, hereby take shame upon myself for their sakes, and pray that any curse incurred by them—as I have heard, and as the dreary and unprosperous condition of the race, for many a long year back, would argue to exist—may be now and henceforth removed.⁹

Hawthorne spent most of his life in Salem, between the years 1846 and 1849 he worked as a Surveyor of the Port at the Salem Custom House, an experience which led him to attach the preface ‘The Custom House’ to the novel *The Scarlet Letter* in order to make it less dark. Although he had not returned to Salem after the year 1850, Salem remained the setting of many of his works,¹⁰ including for example *The House of The Seven Gables*, a Gothic novel from 1851, in which he depicted three different types of female characters.¹¹

Women played an important role throughout all Hawthorne’s life, beginning with his mother Elizabeth, continuing with his sisters Elizabeth and Louisa and finally his wife Sophia; these women and many others have had a significant effect on his life and therefore on his female characters, which is reflected in his literary works.¹² As Margaret B. Moore suggests in her book *The Salem World of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, the position of women in Salem was not submissive to men, since women usually had to bear the responsibility for men’s work, either because men were most of the time at sea or the service. Therefore women not only looked after their homes; they were even “managing shops, tailoring, teaching school, operating boardinghouses, painting profiles, writing books and leading benevolent societies.”¹³ The power of women is declared there, which might have inspired Hawthorne to reflect the strength, individualism, and power of women through his female characters such as the one of Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*.

⁸ Melanie Abrams, “Hawthorne’s Virtual Salem” *Humanities* 25, no. 4 (July/August 2004): 24, accessed March 4, 2019, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/236426415?accountid=15518>.

⁹ Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 1850 (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 9.

¹⁰ Cathy Eaton and Melissa Pennell, “Biographical Information Relating to Nathaniel Hawthorne: Introduction,” Hawthorne in Salem, accessed March 6, 2019, <http://www.hawthorneinsalem.org/page/11708>.

¹¹ Cathy Eaton and Melissa Pennell, “The Three Female Characters in *The House of the Seven Gables* by Nathaniel Hawthorne,” Hawthorne in Salem, accessed March 6, 2019, <http://www.hawthorneinsalem.org/page/11414/>.

¹² Cathy Eaton and Melissa Pennell, “Women in Hawthorne: Introduction,” Hawthorne in Salem, accessed March 6, 2019, <http://www.hawthorneinsalem.org/page/10010>.

¹³ Margaret B. Moore, *The Salem World of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998.

The Byronic Hero is a standard character type to whom many scholars have paid attention in their literary research. On the other hand, there have not been many studies which would be devoted to describe precisely the provocative Byronic heroine. In order to fully understand Byron's characters, it is essential to include also women as a subject of investigation. An author is always reflected in all his characters, or at least he tries to communicate his attitude through them, irrespective of whether it is a male or a female. The exact idea applies to Byron as well as to Hawthorne and his characters, regardless of their gender. Byron's life has served as an inspiration to many authors for their further works, and this applies to his attitude towards women as well. Moreover, the Byronic heroine was created by Byron who is considered to be the creator of the most significant romantic male character type and therefore, it is impossible to exclude Byronic heroines from the research.¹⁴

Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* is "a nineteenth-century novel set in the Puritan New England of the seventeenth century."¹⁵ The setting is as important as the story itself, and this Bachelor Thesis will also deal with the role of the characters Hester Prynne, the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, and Roger Chillingworth, which are those characters to whom the concept of the Byronic Hero will be applied. Of course, Hester is no full-blown Byronic heroine, but what I want to show is that the definition of the Byronic also applies to her to a certain extent because she oversteps the moral boundary lines of her time while showing the kind of pride that has been called 'Byronic.'

¹⁴ Gloria T. Hull, "The Byronic Heroine and Byron's The Corsair," *Ariel* 9, no. 1 (January 1978): 71-2, accessed March 29, 2019, <https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/ariel/article/view/32254/26312>.

¹⁵ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 0.

1 HESTER PRYNNE

According to Darrel Abel in his “Hawthorne’s Hester,” he finds the traces of Hester Prynne in the French author George Sand and going even further, he points out a connection with the character of Eve from John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Hester was filled with passion when she committed the sin of adultery comparable to Eve when she sinned by offering the apple to Adam from the Tree of Knowledge. The biblical event is referred to as the forest scene, where Hester is responsible for Arthur’s acceptance of his passion, which is in correlation with the fact that the initiative is Eve’s.¹⁶ Hester’s and Eve’s initiative is considered to be a feature of individualism which is one of the fundamental characteristics of the Byronic Hero.

The very first inspiration for the character of Hester Prynne arose in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s mind while serving as a Surveyor in the Custom House. He happened to discover an ancient box from the seventeenth century which made him curious about the content. He came across the story of a woman who had been unfaithful to her husband and had an illegitimate child; he also found a small object which was included in the envelope. Soon after he recognised that it was a “needlework” made from a “fine red cloth” and that it showed marks of gold decoration. After a further examination, he described it as:

It was the capital letter “A.” By an accurate measurement, each limb proved to be precisely three inches and a quarter in length. It had been intended, there could be no doubt, as an ornamental article of dress; but how it was to be worn, or what rank, honor, and dignity, in by-past times, were signified by it, was a riddle which (so evanescent are the fashions of the world in these particulars) I saw little hope of solving. And yet it strangely interested me. My eyes fastened themselves upon old scarlet letter, and would not be turned aside. Certainly, there was some deep meaning in it, most worthy of interpretation, and which, as it were, streamed forth from the mystic symbol, subtly communicating itself to my sensibilities, but evading the analysis of my mind.¹⁷

He was so fascinated by the object that he even tried to wear it, an experience which he described as following “I happened to place it on my breast. It seemed to me—the reader may smile, but must not doubt my word—it seemed to me then that I experienced a sensation not altogether physical, yet almost so, as of burning heat; and as if the letter were not of red cloth, but red-hot iron. I shuddered, and involuntarily let it fall upon the floor,”¹⁸ considering the passion it evoked in Hawthorne, the novel was predestined to be a success from the

¹⁶ Darrel Abel, “Hawthorne’s Hester,” *College English* 13, no. 6 (1952): 307, accessed March 26, 2019, doi:10.2307/371782.

¹⁷ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 27.

¹⁸ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 27-9.

beginning. Leaving the narrator's observations on the "burning heat" aside – this seems just a preparation of the reader for what follows in the novel (Dimmesdale's story) – the embroidery of what was supposed to be a sign of shame in a woman seems to have "triggered" Hester's character and the Byronic traces she wears: defiance, scorn, and pride.

From the first scene, when Hester stands out on the scaffold, she has been wearing the embroidered letter "A" on her bosom, which creates a pattern of behaviour. The first moments on the scaffold are told by the author in the third person omniscient perspective which only suggests how Hester might feel under the eyes of all the people. However, Hawthorne includes his feelings from the time when he experienced the burning of the embroidery himself in the 'Custom House.' Hence the reader may better understand the feelings that Hester Prynne possesses, from the preface.¹⁹

Hawthorne's inspiration in fictional stories were not the only roots of the novel's story; he also reacted to historical events either from his period or from the past. However, he is often criticised with regard to historical accuracy. As Dana Medoro says in her article "This Rag of Scarlet Cloth: Nathaniel Hawthorne's Abortion:" the story is rather symbolic than historical."²⁰ Despite this fact, there is a perfectly possible resemblance between the fictional character of Hester Prynne and the historical woman Ann Hutchinson known from Massachusetts's history. Even though their life stories do not match, there is a link between the two in the sense of betrayal and sins committed against the Puritan society.²¹ Hawthorne informs the reader about the possible relationship between Hester and Ann in the very first short chapter 'Prison Door.' In this chapter, Hester is supposed to step out through the door to the opened air and show herself in the Market Place, which is due to this occasion full of the curious town's people.²²

Both of the women were pushed to the margins of society, initially because of their peculiar relationship with a parishioner. As far as Hester Prynne is concerned, the man is Arthur Dimmesdale and in the case of Ann Hutchinson, there is a relation to John Cotton. Moreover, not only is there a resemblance between the female characters, but also between the men, as both of them are very much appreciated in their society, and therefore they suffer

¹⁹ Sam S. Baskett, "The (Complete) Scarlet Letter," *College English* 22, no. 5 (1961): 327, accessed March 16, 2019, doi:10.2307/373473.

²⁰ Dana Medoro, "This Rag of Scarlet Cloth: Nathaniel Hawthorne's Abortion" *Studies in the Novel* 49, no. 1 (Spring 2007: 24-48) 145, 37, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1884767809?accountid=15518>.

²¹ Michael J. Colacurcio, "Footsteps of Ann Hutchinson: The Context of the Scarlet Letter," *ELH* 39, no. 3 (1972): 460-1, accessed March 15, 2019, doi:10.2307/2872195.

²² Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 45.

their secret sin while pretending the devotedness to God. The fact that Hawthorne was inspired by the story of Ann Hutchinson and John Cotton is demonstrated by the real-life partnership of Cotton and Wilson, after whom Hawthorne named one of his characters. For this reason, it is highly not probable that Hawthorne would not be aware of Cotton and at the same time included Wilson in *The Scarlet Letter*.²³

Ann Hutchinson with her husband settled for New England in 1634 in order to establish a Puritan community in Boston. She engaged a lot in religious debates which was not welcomed by the men in the community, as the society was patriarchal. The main role in the family was associated with the man, the husband and the father in relation to God. Women were supposed to take care of the family and house and not to speak in their favour as Ann Hutchinson did publicly. She protested against the fact that “women were excluded from the priesthood of all believers.”²⁴

After the English Reformation, most of the people became greater individualist, and Hutchinson was not an exception. Hawthorne reacts to her behaviour in one of his letters pointing out that if she had been born more recently, she would have fought for women’s rights.²⁵ Therefore, there is a visible connection between Ann and Hester in the sense of individualism and in the “theological meaning of sexuality,” which is described in detail by Michael J. Colacurcio as follows,

To this point, as I have indicated, Hawthorne seems open to the charge of a fairly radical sort of reductivism: he seems to have presented as historical woman whose heretical ideas once caused a profound religious and social crisis as a simple case of uneasy or misplaced sexuality; and the opportunity to reduce Hester Prynne to a woman whose sexuality got quite literally out of control and never did entirely recover itself is therefore ready to hand. Such a reduction is, presumably, as distasteful to old male literary critics as it is to new women.²⁶

In contrast to Ann Hutchinson’s public speeches, Hester’s silence, in connection with the motive of revenge, plays a significant role in *The Scarlet Letter*. Since the beginning she refuses to reveal the name of Pearl’s father and then when her husband arrives and calls himself Roger Chillingworth, she promises to keep his secret as well. Was she aware of the burden that had been since then on Dimmesdale’s shoulders, for seven years – in a row?

²³ Colacurcio, “Footsteps of Ann Hutchinson,” 465.

²⁴ Ben Barker-Benfield, “Anne Hutchinson and the Puritan Attitude toward Women,” *Feminist Studies* 1, no. 2 (1972): 66-71, accessed January 15, 2019, doi:10.2307/3177641.

²⁵ Colacurcio, “Footsteps of Ann Hutchinson,” 469.

²⁶ Colacurcio, “Footsteps of Ann Hutchinson,” 465.

Leland S. Person Jr. claims that Hester realised the torture Dimmesdale would carry with himself for the secret sin and the hidden suffering which would destroy him far more utterly than actually wearing the embroidery on his chest. Even keeping the secret of Chillingworth, Hester is a witness of his slow revenge upon Dimmesdale, and even though, she would not speak out for a long time. On the one hand Hester protects her lover with her silence, mainly because Chillingworth threatens her to come out with Dimmesdale's name and even much worse Chillingworth intimidates her by murdering him; but on the other hand "she makes the consummate torture possible."²⁷ Having observed the information that Hawthorne himself wished to seek revenge on Charles Upham, who was responsible for the Hawthorne's dismissal from the position of the surveyor of the Custom House, and having been aware of the fact that Hawthorne wrote *The Scarlet Letter* while he had been working there; it is inevitable to mention that his secret wish, to wreak vengeance is reflected through the characters' actions in the novel. Additionally, not only is the revenge reflected in the character of Chillingworth but also Leland S. Person in his article claims that Hawthorne was publicly ashamed like Hester in the first chapter.²⁸

Moreover, Hester is very well aware of the stand that the other people have taken on her behaviour, and she suffers appropriately, which was intended by the embroidery, but there is no evidence to think that she would repent of her action.²⁹ Practically, Hester makes the only manifestation in favour of herself throughout the novel, and that is when she demands Arthur Dimmesdale's support in the Governor's house. Hester argues that she does not have a man to fight for her and that she will not allow anyone to separate her from her daughter Pearl.³⁰ Hester even decides to remain silent in the "turning point of the novel: the scene of Dimmesdale's midnight confession on the scaffold," Dimmesdale asks for her help many times, being desperate about the physician, suggesting a great opportunity for Hester to speak out, but unsuccessfully.³¹ She is aware of the fact that she will carry the burden of the sin on her own because neither the name of her husband nor her lover is known.³² However, in a short time after this incident, she reconsiders the situation and decides to be straight with

²⁷ Leland S. Person, "Hester's Revenge: The Power of Silence in *The Scarlet Letter*," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 43, no. 4 (1989): 473, accessed March 15, 2019, doi:10.2307/3045035.

²⁸ Person, "Hester's Revenge," 466.

²⁹ Ernest Sandeen, "The *Scarlet Letter* as a Love Story," *PMLA* 77, no. 4 (1962): 425, accessed March 25, 2019, doi:10.2307/460567.

³⁰ Person, "Hester's Revenge," 476.

³¹ Sandeen, "The *Scarlet Letter*," 426.

³² Cathy Eaton and Melissa Pennell, "Introduction to Hester and Pearl in *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne," Hawthorne in Salem, accessed October 15, 2018, <http://www.hawthorneinsalem.org/page/10186/>.

Dimmesdale, which leads to the violation of the pact with Chillingworth. In contrast to the “silent torture,” she confesses her love towards Dimmesdale in the forest and she is prepared to continue wearing the embroidered letter “A” on her breast, because “her suffering is not the price she has agreed to pay for her guilt but the cost she is glad to bear for her love.”³³ In contrast to this idealistic interpretation, Leland S. Person Jr. suggests that Hester Prynne’s initial impulse is not as clear as it might seem from the romantic point of view. For the reason that she is even careless about Dimmesdale’s risk of dying at this moment since she answers to Chillingworth during their dialogue with these following words: “Do with him as thou wilt!”³⁴

As the forest was mentioned, the “conflict between nature and civilisation” is an essential symbol in the novel. Ernest Sandeen underlines in his “The Scarlet Letter as a Love Story,” that there is demonstrated the fight between a sophisticated city and a wild nature. “Whereas the town stands for reason and order, for the reign of law, both human and divine, the wilderness stands for all that is primitive, mysterious, dark and lawless,” and the conflict is even reflected in the characters. Hester is moved to the outskirts of the town, near the forest and therefore near the wild nature. She stands for the savage and the disobedient, whereas the town’s people are Puritans and they reflect the moral laws and their values.³⁵ The Puritan community is frightened by the forest and the wild, especially by the experience and meetings that they could experience there, and therefore by the possibility of being forced to fall into evil ways. The fear of the unknown is very well depicted in Hawthorne’s short story *The Young Goodman Brown*, where the main protagonist goes to the forest and meets a witch and the devil who are heading to the satan’s mass.³⁶ This event is considered to be the turning point of the short story, as well as the meeting of Hester and Dimmesdale in the forest is the climax of the novel, and both of them take place in the woods.

Throughout the novel, Hawthorne plays with the matter of what is spoken and what is unspoken. Even though Hester wears all the time the scarlet letter on her bosom, which is simultaneously the central symbol of the novel, there is not once mentioned the meaning of the capital letter “A” in the novel, hence it is understood by the people in the community as well as by the readers that it symbolizes the “adultery.” The same is applied to Dimmesdale

³³ Sandeen, “The Scarlet Letter,” 426.

³⁴ Person, “Hester’s Revenge,” 478.

³⁵ Sandeen, “The Scarlet Letter,” 430.

³⁶ Thomas E. Connolly, “Hawthorne’s ‘Young Goodman Brown’:” An Attack on Puritan Calvinism,” *American Literature* 28, no. 3 (1956): 370-75, accessed March 26, 2019, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2922590>.

whose guilt is suffered internally and who cannot confess to his sin honestly, by the divine service he is supposed to provide in the Puritan community. Dimmesdale's inner suffering and Chillingworth's secret about his real name and his close relationship to Hester, all those circumstances declare that the story is full of innermost secrets.³⁷

However, the letter "A" does not stand only for "adultery," though there are alternative interpretations of the letter, above those visible on the surface. Thus when Pearl is seven years old, there is a shift in the meaning of Hester's scarlet letter, which is still embroidered on her bosom. The scarlet letter now stands for "Able" similarly to the "Cross on a nun's bosom," due to her good deeds such as needlework and mainly because of her help to women while delivering a child.³⁸ Furthermore, according to Ernest Sandeen interpretations as "Admirable" or even "Amor" are suggested by the townspeople.³⁹ Moreover, Greil Marcus and Werner Sollors summarize the function of the scarlet letter A in *A New Literary History of America*, in the following sentences,

The embroidered letter *A* on Hester Prynne's bosom may be for Adultery when she first emerges from prison, but the narrator-surveyor's *A* is for the Ambiguity required of the consensus-phobic artist who must survive as a public servant. Hawthorne's *A* is for America, for Author, for Allegory, for Accommodation of the Alien, for Avoidance of the inconvenient.⁴⁰

According to William H. Nolte, Hester represents "the least Puritanical" character in the novel, and he even calls her "an anti-Puritan." However, she uses her freedom privately; hence she does not affect Puritan society. "Indeed it can be argued that even modifying the meaning of the letter, Hester has conformed to community expectations." She is made a victor in the story because people in the community change their opinions based on her good deeds.⁴¹

Women are usually made silent in works written by men in order to be seen as submissive to the male characters, which is a feature with which many critics of feminism disagree. Therefore it is an unexpected element in *The Scarlet Letter* because Hester's silence has the exact opposite effect. Through her silence, she is able to revenge herself upon

³⁷ Frederick Burwick, "Hawthorne's reception of Byron," *Neohelicon* 38, no.1 (2011): 151, accessed March 6, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11059-011-0089-6>.

³⁸ William H. Nolte, "Hawthorne's Dimmesdale: A Small Man Gone Wrong," *The New England Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (1965): 177, accessed April 7, 2019, doi:10.2307/363588.

³⁹ Sandeen, "The Scarlet Letter," 427.

⁴⁰ Greil Marcus and Werner Sollors, eds, *A New Literary History of America*, (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press), 2009, 270.

⁴¹ Person, "Hester's Revenge," 471.

Dimmesdale, who, ironically, has suggested to her not to reveal his name;⁴² it is also the silence connected with her good deeds which make her an honourable member of society. Moreover, being quiet is a kind of “female rebellion,” which, in order to serve its purpose here, has to remain unspoken.⁴³ Richard H. Millington claims that Hester’s character reflects masculinity, even though she gives birth to a child and she does needlework, Hawthorne placed her into the patriarchal society, where she acts independently. Hawthorne criticizes the gender system through Hester’s behaviour, giving her the power of free thoughts.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, Hester’s story continues after Dimmesdale’s death; she keeps the plan going, the program which she has arranged initially for her and Dimmesdale. Besides, the circumstance of Chillingworth’s death, and Pearl becoming the heiress, makes Hester and Pearl able to cruise to Europe. From this point of view, it can be concluded that Hester “successfully revenges herself upon both men,” leaving them both dead and sailing to Europe with her daughter Pearl.⁴⁵

Although Hester feels guilty and ashamed at the beginning of the novel, which even makes her think of committing suicide, she accepts her situation and develops into a strong, self-aware woman, regardless her awkward position in Puritan society.⁴⁶ She represents “a free-thinker, having drunk from the springs of European thought.”⁴⁷ She stands as an example of a female character more of the nineteenth century, whom Hawthorne placed into seventeenth-century Puritan society,⁴⁸ the idea is presented in the very last chapter in the novel, in which Hester comes back to New England of her own volition. The embroidery remains on her bosom, and the reader is told that it has never left its place. She assures women from the community that “a new truth will be revealed, in order to establish the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness.”⁴⁹

Based on this provided evidence Hester reflects features of the Byronic Hero. She is treated as an outcast and suffers from an unnamed crime, she is also seductive and sexually attractive, and moreover she has a distaste for social institutions and forms, while being socially dominant.

⁴² Person, “Hester’s Revenge,” 470.

⁴³ Person, “Hester’s Revenge,” 471.

⁴⁴ Richard H. Millington, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Nathaniel Hawthorne*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2004, 75.

⁴⁵ Person, “Hester’s Revenge,” 481.

⁴⁶ Nolte, “Hawthorne’s Dimmesdale,” 171.

⁴⁷ Nolte, “Hawthorne’s Dimmesdale,” 177.

⁴⁸ Nolte, “Hawthorne’s Dimmesdale,” 170.

⁴⁹ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 223.

2 THE REVEREND ARTHUR DIMMESDALE

Dimmesdale is mentioned for the first time at the beginning of the 3rd chapter, called 'Recognition.' He is introduced by Governor Bellingham, and his role in the community is explained with the following words: "a young clergyman who had come from one of the great English universities, bringing all the learning of the age into our wild forestland."⁵⁰ Dimmesdale's, as well as Hesters's, significant actions, take place on the scaffold which is one of the main symbols in the novel.⁵¹ It serves the Puritan idea that a sin of an individual is a sin of the whole community,⁵² which is an indication for Winthrop's words that "We shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us."⁵³ The historical man John Winthrop actually appears in *The Scarlet Letter*. Although included as a minor character, Winthrop's persona is worth closer investigation considering his life and especially his sermon called "A model of Christian Charity," including a section called the "City upon a Hill," which will be described below.⁵⁴

Moreover, the preface and the plot of the novel are set during different periods, "the introduction is set in the present and appears factual. The main narrative is fictional, although presented as historical fact." There is an apparent time switching, because of Hawthorne's decision to include the preface 'The Custom-House,' in which he reacts to the temporary events and describes his personal experiences from his life during the 19th century; in connection with the rest of the novel which is set during the 17th century. Hawthorne considers the introductory chapter crucial because otherwise, he would exclude the preface from the next editions.⁵⁵

However, Dimmesdale in *The Scarlet Letter* serves the purpose to reflect the strong Puritan beliefs which Hawthorne considered to be "both, good and evil." Built on this attitude towards Puritanism, Hawthorne is rather hesitant about his religious posture because he contrasts the basic Puritan beliefs with the idea of religious freedom, but the religious

⁵⁰ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 56.

⁵¹ Darrel Abel, "Hawthorne's Dimmesdale: Fugitive from Wrath," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 11, no. 2 (1956): 83, accessed April 6, 2019, doi:10.2307/3044111.

⁵² Abel, "Hawthorne's Dimmesdale," 89.

⁵³ Marcus and Sollors, *A New Literary History of America*, 26.

⁵⁴ Matthew S. Holland, "Remembering John Winthrop-Hawthorne's Suggestion," *Perspectives on Political Science* 36, no. 1 (Winter, 2007): 4, accessed April 4, 2019, doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.3200/PPSC.36.1.4-14.

⁵⁵ Constance C. T. Hunt, "The Persistence of Theocracy: Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*," *Perspectives on Political Science* 38, no. 1 (2009): 27, accessed March 4, 2019, https://doi.org/10.3200/PPSC.38.1.25-32.

freedom is not in correlation with the Puritans' actions such as the Persecution of Quakers and the Salem witch trials.⁵⁶

In addition, Hawthorne finds inspiration in Byron's life and his characters, since both of the authors struggle in their attitude towards Puritanism and Calvinism. Furthermore, Hawthorne is inspired by Byron's depiction of infidelity and adultery, also by his character type "noble outlaw" along with his mysterious past, and his exile in Italy.⁵⁷ Unlike Byron's characters who are determined to resist authorities at any costs, Hawthorne's characters suffer terribly from their prior sins. In contrast to Hester, who wears proudly the embroidered scarlet letter on her bosom, and Dimmesdale, who reveals the self-lacerated letter "A" during the last scaffold scene, Byron "flaunted his wickedness with paradoxical extremes of braggadocio and self-recrimination," which is related to the Satan's full-scale rebellion against God.⁵⁸

Hawthorne among other authors from the nineteenth century, who wrote about Puritanism, serves as a combining element of the Puritan's blooming beginnings and the sudden decline in the twentieth century.⁵⁹ John Winthrop, the author of the sermon "A Model Of Christian Charity," who was a significant persona from the Puritan perspective, his grace, in the eyes of many Americans, fell as a result of the strong criticism at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. Despite the fact, he has been quoted by the presidents of the United States, for example, Bill Clinton and John F. Kennedy. The reason Winthrop is well remembered by the American presidents lies in the idea that the first Puritan settlers should create a community which would serve as an example for the rest of the world as the "City upon a Hill;" an idea which he would lecture on aboard the ship *Arbella* while sailing for New England and which the presidents apply to America itself even nowadays.

Additionally, Hawthorne is one of the nineteenth century's critics, dealing with the question of how to perceive Winthrop, and Puritanism as a whole, from a historical angle. Hawthorne struggles over his perception of Puritanism, and therefore he hesitates about his attitude towards John Winthrop who is encountered in several of his books, including *The Scarlet Letter*. Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* is classified as the most influential

⁵⁶ Hunt, "The Persistence," 28.

⁵⁷ Burwick, "Hawthorne's reception of Byron," 141.

⁵⁸ Burwick, "Hawthorne's reception of Byron," 142.

⁵⁹ Lincoln Konkle, *Thorton Wilder and the Puritan Narrative Tradition*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006), 31, accessed April 5, 2019, <https://books.google.cz/books?id=b0hmkA--MFMC&lpg=PP1&dq=Thorton%20Wilde%20and%20the%20Puritan%20Narrative%20Tradition&hl=cs&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q=Thorton%20Wilde%20and%20the%20Puritan%20Narrative%20Tradition&f=false>.

novel, dealing with Puritanism, and therefore it is included on many American high schools' reading lists, which establishes a pattern of perceiving Puritanism nowadays,⁶⁰ which is important to consider in order to uncover the rebellion against Puritanism in the character of Dimmesdale.

The struggle in Hawthorne's attitude towards his religion is highly likely connected to the two possible approaches to understanding Puritanism. There is a difference between the macrocosmic and the microcosmic point of view. While macrocosm is based on the fundamental conflict between God and Satan, the microcosm interprets a fight on the field of the particular soul. While reading Puritan works, the macrocosmic background is always remembered by the reader; the microcosm is presented as the plot while the characters face their life-and-death struggles. This concept is reflected in the setting where the characters live in a realistic community while the communicated idea applies to the entire universe.⁶¹ Therefore Hawthorne's focuses are on the psychological development of the characters, but at the same time, he interconnects them with the historical background.

John Winthrop's character is mentioned for the first time in the chapter "The Minister's Vigil," in which Dimmesdale is depicted on the scaffold where "Hester had lived through her first hours of public ignominy."⁶² This moment is an important turning point in the story of the novel as well as it is crucial for the understanding of Hawthorne's perception of Winthrop "who had passed from heaven within that very hour."⁶³ According to Matthew S. Holland's article "Remembering John Winthrop — Hawthorne's Suggestions," Hawthorne admired Winthrop based on the following pieces of evidence from the novel. For example, the glittering letter A was visible in the sky when the death of Winthrop is referred to.⁶⁴ It indicates a symbol which stands for "angel" since one of the citizens tells to Dimmesdale the next day: "the letter 'A' which we interpret to stand for 'Angel,' for as our Governor Winthrop was made an angel this past night."⁶⁵ Neither is it possible that the A stands only for an angel nor is the term Antichrist appropriate, considering that Hester and Pearl are present at Winthrop's house that night, which suggests "a warm, appreciative relationship between the governor and these two figures of public scorn." The idea of Hawthorne's warm perception of Winthrop is included not only in *The Scarlet Letter* but also, for example, in

⁶⁰ Holland, "Remembering John Winthrop," 4-5.

⁶¹ Konkle, *Thorton Wilder*, 52.

⁶² Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 125.

⁶³ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 127.

⁶⁴ Holland, "Remembering John Winthrop," 6.

⁶⁵ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 134.

his short story *Main-Street*,⁶⁶ in which Hawthorne refers to his ancestors who were mentioned in the Introduction.

The concept of exceptionalism which is visible in Hawthorne's attitude towards Winthrop is reflected in the novel through the character of Dimmesdale, who even though that he has committed the adultery, continues to believe that he still acts in God's favour. One of his latest words are "God knows; and he is merciful! He hath proved his mercy, most of all, in my afflictions,"⁶⁷ which even multiplies his hypocrisy and his Byronic features.

Dimmesdale is considered to be the educated man who arrived in New England to spread his knowledge. On a larger scale, this is demonstrated by the fact that Puritans established the first university in America in 1636, called Harvard University.⁶⁸ In contrast, there is the character of Hester to serve the purpose of pointing out the differences between the two characters. She is the one who represents a behaviour based on passion and her feelings; while the character of Dimmesdale represents order and a devotedness to God, in which he fails. He is supposed to be the faithful reverend who serves as an example to behave in favour of the moral system for the whole community, and the only thing he sees behind the adultery is a sin. For this reason, it is always Hester and her enthusiasm, which marks significant turning points throughout their story.⁶⁹ This fact enlarges the idea from the first chapter of this thesis, where Hester stands for the "wild" and Dimmesdale for the "sophisticated," taking into account the struggle between nature and civilization. The Byronic features are visible through the characters' behaviour even though each of them represent different ones. Dimmesdale stands here for the intelligent and perceptive as well as self-critical and introspective, in contrast to Hester who behaves according to her emotions.

The concept of Original sin is included in *The Scarlet Letter*, by the resemblance between Hester and Eve, which was mentioned in the previous chapter devoted to Hester's character. However, Eve is not considered to be the only sinner; the attention should also be paid to Adam who would be demonstrated by the character of Dimmesdale in the novel. The "Fall" is repeated throughout the novel in connection to both characters. The narrator refers to the sinners, both man and woman, as the fallen man and the fallen woman throughout the whole story.

⁶⁶ Holland, "Remembering John Winthrop," 6-7.

⁶⁷ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 218.

⁶⁸ Heike Paul, "Pilgrims and Puritans and the Myth of the Promised Land," *The Myths That Made America: An Introduction to American Studies*, 180, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2014, accessed April 1, 2019, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1wxsdq.7>.

⁶⁹ Sandeen, "The Scarlet Letter," 428.

The characters have committed the sin of adultery in the novel which refers to the biblical Fall from Heaven. Adam and Eve ate the apple from the Tree of Knowledge and God sent them to the Earth in order to punish them. On the one hand, they were excluded from Heaven, but on the other hand, they made the creation of humankind possible because when they ate the apple, God made them human and Eve became pregnant because as Dennis Danielson claims “this eating is followed immediately by their knowing themselves to be naked.”⁷⁰

God’s omnipotence alongside with the existence of evil is a contradiction not only in *The Scarlet Letter* but also in *Paradise Lost*.⁷¹ Milton in his work adumbrates the difference between “divine foreknowledge and human free will,” which was suggested in the Bible, but left unexplained. He states that God created both, men and angels, to be strong enough to either avoid the fall or to fall, yet at their will; on the one hand this hypothesis limits the power of God, but on the other hand it only declares God to be “both all-powerful and wholly good.” Moreover, Dennis Danielson in his book underlines that the purpose of the free creation derives from the idea that if the angels and humans sin, it will not be the guilt of God. Nevertheless, Calvinists claim that if an individual can intervene, even the intervention is predestined by God.⁷²

Both authors, Hawthorne and Byron, play with the controversy between characters’ thoughts and real accomplishments, an act by which they intend to make their story perplexing,⁷³ considering, for example, Byron’s “The Dream” and Hawthorne’s “Fancy’s Show Box,” where the contrast between spoken and unspoken, is the most visible. The idea that a mind can be polluted by its gloomy thoughts is apparent in either Byron’s or Hawthorne’s characters. Moreover, Byron himself admits he reflected his existence into his works, Childe Harold being as an example, which means that he narrated the story in a more autobiographical way. Similarly to Hawthorne who reflects more of his personal life in his literary work than an average reader is able to identify.⁷⁴

Likewise, Ann Hutchinson and Hester’s resemblance was mentioned; John Cotton is the comparable historical person to the character of Dimmesdale. Even though Cotton is not physically present in the story, Hawthorne must have been aware of him while writing the novel, considering his behaviour which is reflected in Dimmesdale’s character. For example,

⁷⁰ Dennis Danielson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, 2nd ed, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1999, 147.

⁷¹ Danielson, *The Cambridge Companion*, 146.

⁷² Danielson, *The Cambridge Companion*, 149-150.

⁷³ Burwick, “Hawthorne’s reception of Byron,” 148.

⁷⁴ Burwick, “Hawthorne’s reception of Byron,” 149.

Cotton's son was suspended from his pastorship for committing the sin of adultery,⁷⁵ an act by which might have been Hawthorne inspired.

Hester's and Ann's sexuality is of crucial importance to the story. Not only is it their individuality which evokes sensation in their communities, but also the influence on their male counterparts who are overwhelmed by their physical appearance, which lead astray Cotton as well as Dimmesdale.⁷⁶ The *Scarlet Letter's* forest scene is a prototypical example of Hester's influence over Dimmesdale. Once she throws away the scarlet letter, for the first time since she has been released from jail, she feels freed and unties her dark hair, which symbolises a woman's sexuality. "Her sex, her youth, and the whole richness of her beauty, came back from what men call the irrevocable past, and clustered themselves, with her maiden hope and a happiness before unknown."⁷⁷ The interest in the opposite sex is indeed an impulse by which the parishioners should not be led. It declares the rebellion against Puritan society, and therefore the characters are compared to the Byronic Hero.

Unlike Hester who wears the scarlet letter on her bosom from the beginning, while being strong enough to adopt an attitude regardless of people's opinions; Dimmesdale suffers internally from the same moment, and he devotes himself to misery. He is the one who should compel Hester to reveal the name of "her partner in sin," from the position of the reverend.⁷⁸ He explains his position in these words,

I charge thee to speak out the name of thy fellow-sinner and fellow-sufferer! 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. What can thy silence do for him, except it tempt him— yea, compel him, as it were—to add hypocrisy to sin?⁷⁹

Through the sermons and speeches which Dimmesdale holds in the novel he always expresses his feelings implicitly; however, the audience receives it, as he would relate to the sins of humanity, not to his sufferings. The hidden purpose of his speeches is only perceptible by the people who are aware of the sin he has committed because he refers to the guilt generally from the third person perspective.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, Hester uncovers the information that he intends to pass on to her, understanding that the silence will be much heavier

⁷⁵ Colacurcio, "Footsteps of Ann Hutchinson," 465.

⁷⁶ Colacurcio, "Footsteps of Ann Hutchinson," 471.

⁷⁷ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 173.

⁷⁸ Hunt, "The Persistence," 29.

⁷⁹ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 57.

⁸⁰ Hunt, "The Persistence," 29.

punishment than the possible revelation. Hester recognises Dimmesdale's feelings, and she refuses to reveal his name when she expresses herself saying: "Never!"⁸¹ Finally, Hester is the only person who fully understands Dimmesdale's sermons and who reads between the lines. However, Chillingworth is determined to identify Hester's lover and therefore he also pays attention to the Dimmesdale's way of expressing himself.⁸²

Roger Chillingworth plays a crucial role in Dimmesdale's inner suffering because soon after Chillingworth's arrival in the colony, he follows the vulnerable Dimmesdale who lacks self-awareness and who deals with his inner conflict. Chillingworth often reminds the reverend of the sin and exhorts him to confess himself. Even though that Chillingworth pretends to be his physician he does not support Dimmesdale's health but, on the contrary, he harms his mental health even more.⁸³

Why would Dimmesdale want to suffer for seven long years voluntarily and then reveal his sin in front of all the town's people? According to Constance C. T. Hunt, "He cannot openly acknowledge his private guilt without undermining his public position in the community." One possible interpretation might be that Dimmesdale does not regret only the act of passion he has committed, but he suffers because he is unable to confess, which would torture him far more deeply. For this reason, Ernest Sandeen in his article "The Scarlet Letter as a Love Story," claims that his suffering "was more from the guilt of hypocrisy than from the guilt of his passion."⁸⁴ Furthermore, Dimmesdale's inner sufferings are rooted in his religious belief, being unable to associate himself with the sin in front of the community. He is unfaithful to God,⁸⁵ based on the Puritan values which are explained in detail in the following quote:

God requires the sinner to confess his guilt to his fellows, not because men have authority to judge and punish (being themselves fallible sinners), but because a sinner's preference of an untruth which preserves the good opinion of men to a truth which, though it gains the forgiveness of God, might forfeit the good opinion of men, is a preference of a worldly deceit to a spiritual reality. Furthermore, undetected sin among men, especially in their spiritual leaders, exposes the whole society to the "contagion of sin."⁸⁶

⁸¹ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 58.

⁸² Person, "Hester's Revenge," 473.

⁸³ Abel, "Hawthorne's Dimmesdale," 89-90.

⁸⁴ Sandeen, "The Scarlet Letter," 427.

⁸⁵ Abel, "Hawthorne's Dimmesdale," 89.

⁸⁶ Abel, "Hawthorne's Dimmesdale," 89.

According to Edward H. Davidson, Dimmesdale's "Fall" is his depreciation from a form of sainthood to reprobation. He begins as a holy man and ends in torment. Moreover, his Fall is inevitable as a consequence of the uncompensated sin while "he becomes, at last, his own savior and god, his own demon and destroyer," which is caused by the permanent investigation in his thoughts and soul. He believes that the physical body is independent of the soul and therefore they cannot affect each other.⁸⁷ On the contrary, Chillingworth attempts to implement into Dimmesdale's mind the opposite idea, that the real sins reflect in one's soul. This theory is Dimmesdale's pure torture and in order to uncover the truth he practices "fasts and vigils, flagellations and scourgings," yet he concludes that the body and the soul are not interdependent,⁸⁸ so he assures himself "that his soul has been freed from the torments of the flesh,"⁸⁹ which Davidson also applies to Adam's original sin.⁹⁰ Based on this evidence, Dimmesdale is self-critical, introspective and also self-destructive, which are typical Byronic features.

Since the first scaffold scene, Dimmesdale is often seen with his hand on the heart. Moreover, one woman reported while standing in the crowd: "that the Reverend Master Dimmesdale, her [Hester's] godly pastor, takes it very grievously to his heart that such a scandal should have come upon his congregation,"⁹¹ also, little Pearl asks her mother many times about the placement of his hand.⁹² However, it is not until the third scaffold scene, when the reader finds out about the "self-lacerated scarlet letter" on Dimmesdale's bosom, which is the effect of his physical punishments and Chillingworth's interventions.⁹³

Despite the fact that Chillingworth is made to be perceived as the most evil character in the novel, the perception of Dimmesdale cannot be misunderstood. Chillingworth's need for vengeance tempts the reader to feel sympathy for Dimmesdale, which would not be the correct interpretation in this context.⁹⁴ Contrarily to Hester, who feels love towards Dimmesdale throughout the whole novel, Dimmesdale looks at the adultery only as an act of passion, and he considers it to be his personal conflict with God. His hypocritical thinking, which leads him to damnation, is the direct opposite to the character of Hester, who develops

⁸⁷ Edward H. Davidson, "Dimmesdale's Fall," *The New England Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (1963): 358, accessed April 5, 2019, doi:10.2307/364062.

⁸⁸ Davidson, "Dimmesdale's Fall," 361.

⁸⁹ Davidson, "Dimmesdale's Fall," 362.

⁹⁰ Davidson, "Dimmesdale's Fall," 364.

⁹¹ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 44.

⁹² Fred H. Marcus, "'The Scarlet Letter': The Power of Ambiguity," *The English Journal* 51, no. 7 (1962): 453, accessed April 8, 2019, doi:10.2307/811308.

⁹³ Burwick, "Hawthorne's reception," 142.

⁹⁴ Nolte, "Hawthorne's Dimmesdale," 172.

into an admired and an honoured person in the community, regardless of the public shame and disdain she had to go through.⁹⁵ Based on the idea that one has to overcome an agony in order to understand himself fully, Edward H. Davidson suggests that Dimmesdale's sin only functioned as a conflict between him and God;⁹⁶ therefore Davidson places him in the group of Romantic heroes who are "demon-driven" alongside with Melville's Ahab and Byron's Cain.⁹⁷

Dimmesdale, as well as Cain, are rebels against society and moreover against God himself.⁹⁸ The first reference of Cain is in Genesis; Cain and Abel are Adam's sons. The conflict between them arises when God concludes that "Cain's sacrifice is not acceptable..., while Abel's is," and Cain murders Abel in affection. Cain is punished by "eternal wandering and penance." However, neither is Cain considered to be a hero nor is he idealised; instead he is regarded as the worst sinner.⁹⁹ In contrast, Dimmesdale committed the sin of adultery which is perceived to be even worse sin than a murder, according to Byron.

Surprisingly, Byron considers the sin of hypocrisy to be the worst monstrous sin, and he judges it wickeder than murder and "any sin named in the Ten Commandments."¹⁰⁰ Hawthorne includes an inner secret into each of the three main characters in the novel; however, the most hypocritical character is Dimmesdale and his estrangement from Puritanical rules. In the case of Hester, there are two possible interpretations. As it was earlier indicated, Hester's silence serves either as her tool for revenge or as a good deed towards Dimmesdale. Either way, it makes her the Byronic heroine for her development into a strong and respected woman. Dimmesdale, on the other hand, cannot reveal his secret due to his position in society and, on a large scale, because he is the most hypocritical Byronic Hero in the novel. Moreover, he has developed into a narcissistic and self-concerned man, which is demonstrated through an interest in his own fate together with omitting Hester's consequences. Finally, Chillingworth, who is driven by his desire for revenge and intentionally appears under a cover name, is as guilty as the two previous characters; therefore the definition of the Byronic Hero is adequate also for his character. All of the

⁹⁵ Nolte, "Hawthorne's Dimmesdale," 171-2.

⁹⁶ Davidson, "Dimmesdale's Fall," 367.

⁹⁷ Davidson, "Dimmesdale's Fall," 365.

⁹⁸ Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero*, 85.

⁹⁹ Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero*, 93-4.

¹⁰⁰ Burwick, "Hawthorne's reception of Byron," 150.

characters are “guilt-ridden” similarly to Childe Harold who is the quintessential Byronic Hero, “carrying the burden of guilt of an unnamed crime.”¹⁰¹

Despite the fact that Dimmesdale’s attitude towards Puritanism does not change during the novel; he has undergone an evident change in behaviour. He develops into a hypocritical narcissist to the detriment of his personal morality. He connects himself not only with the act of sin which happened between him and Hester but also with all the world’s sin that is associated with the act of adultery. Once Dimmesdale believes that he will not be redeemed, his desire to sin even more develops into a comical part of the novel, and besides that, it leads the reader to the final part of the story, the third scaffold scene.¹⁰²

William H. Nolte in his article “Hawthorne’s Dimmesdale: A Small Man Gone Wrong,” claims that Dimmesdale knows that he will either end up in Hell or Heaven in a few seconds, depending on whether he confesses or not;¹⁰³ it means that at the end of his life he still hopes that, regardless of the sin he has committed, he will be among those selected by God. His belief refers back to John Winthrop, yet to the American exceptionalism.

Considering the “A” standing for Alienation, it is reflected in Dimmesdale’s estrangement from Puritanism and simultaneously in the self-concerned character, into whom he develops. The alienation is a feature of an eighteenth-century Romantic character. An individual distances himself from society and starts to write poems, which is rooted in the position of strength.¹⁰⁴ The idea can be connected to the Dimmesdale’s behaviour after the forest scene. He sits at the table and starts to formulate the Election Sermon, “which he wrote with such an impulsive flow of thought and emotion, that he fancied himself inspired.”¹⁰⁵ Being led by his strong emotions, the sermon is received as the best sermon he has ever given. The Byronic reflections are the self-esteem and the pride he feels after the sermon, thus, his hypocritical thinking.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Burwick, “Hawthorne’s reception of Byron,” 151.

¹⁰² Nolte, “Hawthorne’s Dimmesdale,” 182.

¹⁰³ Nolte, “Hawthorne’s Dimmesdale,” 183.

¹⁰⁴ Sarah I. Davis, “Self in the Marketplace, Or, A for Alienation,” *South Atlantic Review* 54, no. 2 (1989): 76, accessed April 11, 2019. doi:10.2307/3200552.

¹⁰⁵ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 192.

¹⁰⁶ Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero*, 143.

3 ROGER CHILLINGWORTH

There is a sign of strangeness in the character of Roger Chillingworth from the very first time he appears in the novel. Hester is undergoing her three hours of shame on the scaffold when she recognises her husband, who has just arrived in town and whose identity remains unknown because he introduces himself as Roger Chillingworth.¹⁰⁷ Based on this order of events, it is necessary to mention that Chillingworth arrives long after Hester and Dimmesdale committed the sin of adultery; therefore “he is a consequence, not a cause, of this evil.”¹⁰⁸

Despite the fact that the novel’s primary focus is on the relationship between Hester and Dimmesdale, it is necessary to point out that Dimmesdale spends more time in the novel with Chillingworth than he spends with Hester. Both men are related more personally with each other than with the female character because they live together and in the end, they die soon one after the other.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, Chillingworth’s marriage with Hester was loveless; they got married because Chillingworth was growing older, and therefore he wanted to start a family; thus, Hester was immature and inexperienced at that time.¹¹⁰ Chillingworth’s role in the story is to stalk Hester’s lover and therefore uncover the name of Pearl’s father. However, there are no traces of further investigations; no one is suspected except for Dimmesdale. Soon after Chillingworth has his suspicion, he is determined to torture Dimmesdale to death.¹¹¹

According to Dan Vogel, Chillingworth’s purpose is to do the devil’s work; he is the representation of Lucifer’s intentions. Moreover, if there were not the characters of Chillingworth and Pearl, the horrific story of the sinners would have gone unnoticed. Both of them, Chillingworth and Pearl, serve as a constant reminder of the sin as they spend most of their time with the protagonists.¹¹² Soon after Chillingworth arrives, he tries to develop a close relationship with Dimmesdale, assuming that he might be the fellow-sinner, which he deduces from Dimmesdale’s behaviour. However, it is not until the scene in the Governor’s house, where all the three characters meet, and Hester demands support from Dimmesdale,

¹⁰⁷ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 51-2.

¹⁰⁸ Dan Vogel, “Roger Chillingworth: The Satanic Paradox in ‘The Scarlet Letter,’” *Criticism* 5, no. 3 (1963): 272-3, accessed April 9, 2019, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41938352>.

¹⁰⁹ Millington, *The Cambridge Companion*, 72.

¹¹⁰ Sandeen, “The Scarlet Letter,” 425.

¹¹¹ Millington, *The Cambridge Companion*, 73.

¹¹² David Leverenz, “Mrs. Hawthorne’s Headache: Reading The Scarlet Letter,” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 37, no. 4 (1983): 554, accessed April 10, 2019, doi:10.2307/3044683.

that Chillingworth is sure about Dimmesdale being the lover.¹¹³ While Chillingworth is the reminder for Dimmesdale, Pearl is the reflection of the scarlet letter embroidered on Hester's bosom. Ernest Sandeen calls her by the term: "a living scarlet letter."¹¹⁴ Moreover, when Hester and Arthur decide to leave their sins behind and leave to England, the reader finds out that Chillingworth has also booked a boat passage,¹¹⁵ which means that he would remain with them as a punishing symbol even if they left the community.

The relationship between the two characters, Dimmesdale and Chillingworth, might be built upon the Calvinist perception of the relationship between God and Satan. Therefore, based on Calvinism, if the author of the trial is God, Satan is the servant. This is where Calvinist inquisition starts, whether it is done by "will" or by "permission." Hawthorne does not directly engage in solving this question; rather he says that it does not matter because the "human consequences are the same." Therefore, he does not solve the problem for the reader, but he gives reasons for Chillingworth's behaviour.¹¹⁶

Furthermore, the relationship between Judas and Jesus is similar to the relationship of Hawthorne's characters. Whether by will or by permission, the author of the process was God. The sin committed against Jesus can be interpreted in two ways. The betrayal is considered to be the worst sin, but from a spiritual perspective it is held as an act of great respect. Therefore, Judas' treachery is similar to the one of Chillingworth's towards Dimmesdale, due to the desire of "triumphant ignominy,"¹¹⁷ which resulted for both of them in their death.

Besides, one more character within the story serves as an example of evil. Old Mistress Hibbins is mentioned several times in the story; and each time she appears, it serves the purpose of underlining evil intentions and actions, which is followed by her suggestion to join the list of the Black Man.¹¹⁸ The perplexing persona of the Black Man is never explained by the narrator, everything that the reader gets to know is through the characters' oral description. However, based on the myths that appear among people, it is known that the Black Man "lives in the forest, outside of the city, and that he carries a book and an iron pen which he offers to those whom he meets. If they inscribe their names, in blood, he places his

¹¹³ Abel, "Hawthorne's Dimmesdale," 91.

¹¹⁴ Sandeen, "The Scarlet Letter," 433.

¹¹⁵ Nolte, "Hawthorne's Dimmesdale," 183.

¹¹⁶ Vogel, Roger Chillingworth," 277.

¹¹⁷ Vogel, Roger Chillingworth," 278.

¹¹⁸ Darrel Abel, "Hawthorne's Pearl: Symbol and Character," *ELH* 18, no. 1 (1951): 55, accessed April 7, 2019, doi:10.2307/2872046.

mark on their bosom.”¹¹⁹ Unlike in *The Scarlet Letter*, the mark is connected to the biblical person Cain who sinned against God, and who is afraid that anyone who meets him will kill him; therefore God gives him a mark in order to protect him, which also means that he will be spared.¹²⁰

Hawthorne in his works uses the Black Man, Satan or the Devil in association with “psychological evil.” This is one of the reasons Hawthorne is considered to be the writer of psychological fiction, long before the psychology has developed into a field of study. Maria Stromberg suggests that “he used the fantastical world of Puritan belief as a metaphor to describe the inner world of the soul,” which is underlined by the fact that Hawthorne believes that evil is in everyone without exceptions. As he uses biblical metaphors to refer to psychological reality, he also connects them with social reality. Even though the main focus of the novel is on the characters, Hawthorne also connects them to the society’s context. “It does not seem far-fetched to declare that Hawthorne uses the symbols of Puritan religion to express the evil that inevitably exists in any society.”¹²¹

Having observed that Hawthorne reflects the macrocosmic understanding of Puritanism in his characters, there is a parallel between witchcraft and the domination which Chillingworth has over Dimmesdale. According to Davis, “the witch is the best neglected, suppressed, or aberrant self, combating, hated social roles, seeking companionship in suffering, striving for destruction of the autonomy of other because of its own subjection.” Hawthorne intends to underline the fact that the Puritan culture ruins individual human beings similar to witchcraft which condemned women whose behaviour was contrasting to Puritan norms.¹²²

When Pearl asks her mother about the Black Man and the origin of the scarlet letter, Hester’s replies: “Once in my life I met the Black Man!...This scarlet letter is his mark!”¹²³ Her words can be only interpreted as a reference to her and Dimmesdale, committing the act of adultery. The mark is a symbol for the estrangement from the society; they broke society’s law, and they are forced to wear the mark, however, each of them in a different manner. Besides, in the course of the novel, it is Chillingworth who appears to be more and more as

¹¹⁹ Maria Stromberg, “Hawthorne’s Black Man: Image of Social Evil,” *The Explicator* 67, no. 4 (2009): 274, accessed March 6, 2019, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/578498042?accountid=15518>.

¹²⁰ Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero*, 93.

¹²¹ Stromberg, “Hawthorne’s Black Man,” 274.

¹²² Davis, “Self in the Marketplace,” 83.

¹²³ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 158.

the Black Man,¹²⁴ considering the idea, which was described in the previous chapter, that the body and the mind are interconnected, it is possible that Chillingworth's dark thoughts ruin him internally, which is reflected in his physical condition.¹²⁵

Chillingworth is considered to be Satan's servant, and he is determined to revenge himself at his own command rather than feeling the need for vengeance from the position of a betrayed husband. "In fastening upon Dimmesdale, Chillingworth fulfils his character as a leech, not only in the sense of being a physician but also as a vampire, a member of the legions of the walking dead."¹²⁶ It is in the chapter 'The Leech,' in which the reader is familiarised with the fact that Chillingworth was not his original last name. However, the fact is presented only to the reader; thus, for the story his identity remains hidden. He is Roger Chillingworth, Dimmesdale's physician and a person, with whom Dimmesdale spends much time.¹²⁷ Therefore, the Byronic pattern of hypocrisy has been attributed to Chillingworth since the first scaffold scene, which is followed by his need for revenge according to his perception of justice.

One of the literary characters to whom the term Byronic Hero can be applied is Brontë's Mr. Rochester (in the novel *Jane Eyre*) who is comparable to the character of Roger Chillingworth.¹²⁸ Paul Pickerel in his article claims that the novel *Jane Eyre* reflects Milton's *Paradise Lost* along with the anti-hero Satan who is considered to be an ancestor of the Byronic Hero. Mr. Rochester is a self-aware man who falls in love with a governess at Rochester's domain, Jane. His character reflects a few of the Byronic features, most importantly narcissism and guilt, which is rooted in his obsession, in his appearance and his secret about a mad wife.¹²⁹ Like Mr. Rochester hides the truth of being married, Chillingworth hides the fact that he is Hester's husband.

Although the significant prototypes of the Byronic Hero are found in Byron's epic poems: *Don Juan*, *Manfred* and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Peter L. Thorslev claims that Don Juan has not been associated with the Byronic features to the same extent as the characters of the two other poems are. He argues that Don Juan does not reflect any of the Byronic features, and therefore he is not compared to any other Romantic hero. Thorslev

¹²⁴ Stromberg, "Hawthorne's Black Man," 275.

¹²⁵ Marcus, "The Scarlet Letter," 457.

¹²⁶ Davis, "Self in the Marketplace," 83.

¹²⁷ Burwick, "Hawthorne's reception of Byron," 151.

¹²⁸ Paul Pickrel, "Jane Eyre: The Apocalypse of the Body," *ELH* 53, no. 1 (1986): 168, accessed April 16, 2019, doi:10.2307/287315.

¹²⁹ Pickrel, "Jane Eyre," 169.

misses the “Gothic coloring,” as well as he considers the “metaphysical rebellion” unsatisfactory, while pointing out that Don Juan’s humour and irony do not correspond with the characteristics of the Byronic.¹³⁰

As it was already mentioned in the previous chapter, the sin of hypocrisy is severer than the want for revenge. Therefore, in that respect, the character of Chillingworth is presented as less evil than the character of Dimmesdale. However, the first impression of the reader is the opposite one. The author wants the reader to feel merciful with Dimmesdale while contrasting him to Chillingworth, who is depicted as the most evil character.¹³¹ Thus Dimmesdale himself justifies his sin of adultery with these words: “We are not, Hester, the worst sinners in the world. There is one worse than even the polluted priest! That old man’s revenge has been blacker than my sin. He has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart. Thou and I, Hester, never did so!”¹³² Even though Chillingworth’s need for revenge possesses him and defeats him internally, and despite being made a cuckold, he has always behaved well towards Hester and Pearl which is demonstrated by Pearl’s inheritance at the end.¹³³

Considering the self-destruction of Dimmesdale, which is endorsed by Chillingworth’s interventions, there is a parallel between the men. It seems that Chillingworth draws his power and intellect from Dimmesdale’s suffering while being the constant reminder of the sin. Therefore, there is a change in Chillingworth’s behaviour when Dimmesdale confesses and dies.¹³⁴ Despite the fact that he has become degenerated because of his dark thoughts in order to revenge, he dies within a year after Dimmesdale, which suggests that he has no longer the source of his power; and moreover, that his character has effectively fulfilled his mission and from now on he has nothing to live for.¹³⁵ In relation to the last scaffold scene O’Donnell notes: “By taking his place on the scaffold he [Dimmesdale] cheats Chillingworth and is triumphant: his physical defeat is his spiritual victory.”¹³⁶

Nevertheless, if the story did not end in Dimmesdale’s death, Chillingworth would victimise Dimmesdale when sailing to Europe with Hester, which is a plan they had designed in the forest because Chillingworth arranged his voyage to Europe as well. While Hester is

¹³⁰ Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero*, 13.

¹³¹ Nolte, “Hawthorne’s Dimmesdale,” 169.

¹³² Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 166.

¹³³ Nolte, “Hawthorne’s Dimmesdale,” 169.

¹³⁴ Charles R O’Donnell, “Hawthorne and Dimmesdale: The Search for the Realm of Quiet,” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 14, no. 4 (1960): 325, accessed April 22, 2019, doi:10.2307/3044263.

¹³⁵ Nolte, “Hawthorne’s Dimmesdale,” 184.

¹³⁶ O’Donnell, “Hawthorne and Dimmesdale,” 325.

aware of this arrangement, Dimmesdale is not, and he never discovers the truth because he decides to confess himself before his final breath.¹³⁷

Unlike Dimmesdale who is said to be lost in his perception of himself,¹³⁸ Chillingworth is the only character in the novel who is fully aware of his role.¹³⁹ He is only driven by his desire for revenge which Davidson connects with Hamlet's intention to wreak vengeance on Claudius who killed Hamlet's father.¹⁴⁰ Geoffrey Bullough in his review on *Hamlet and Revenge*, which is a book written by Eleanor Prosser, says that "revenge is destructive to the avenger," an idea which applies to Hamlet as well as to Chillingworth, both of whom revenge themselves to the extent of their own death. Even though two characters die at the end in *The Scarlet Letter*, in the case of *Hamlet* the story unfolds in death of most people of two families. Hamlet's degeneracy is visible through his aim to kill Claudius but also his indifference towards his mother and Polonius whom he kills by mistake when assuming it is Claudius standing behind the curtain.¹⁴¹

The process of Chillingworth's revenge towards Dimmesdale is continuous. Since the beginning Chillingworth considers himself to be Dimmesdale's physician. However, based on the previous information that he causes him more harm rather than treats him, it is possible that he poisons him. This is another idea connected to witchcraft because women who gathered herbs and gave them to people in order to solve whatever problem they faced, were accused of being witches. In contrary to Ann Hutchinson who used to give women herbs to support their conception,¹⁴² Johnson argues that Chillingworth is impotent and he wants to find herbs to treat that; and it is also Johnson, who argues that Chillingworth is the typical impotent man due to the fact that, usually those men are older than their young wives and later on the women cheat on them.¹⁴³ Hawthorne inclines to perceive the ability to have children as necessary, and therefore he reacts on the eighteenth century's possibility to annul marriage due to the impotence of men which was far more frequent than in the seventeenth

¹³⁷ Sandeen, "The Scarlet Letter," 432.

¹³⁸ Sandeen, "The Scarlet Letter," 427.

¹³⁹ Nolte, "Hawthorne's Dimmesdale," 170.

¹⁴⁰ Davidson, "Dimmesdale's Fall," 369-70.

¹⁴¹ Geoffrey Bullough, *The Review of English Studies* 20, no. 79 (1969): 339, accessed April 28, 2019, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/513188>.

¹⁴² Ben Barker-Benfield, "Anne Hutchinson," 80.

¹⁴³ Claudia Durst Johnson, "Impotence and Omnipotence in the Scarlet Letter," *The New England Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (1993): 596, accessed April 29, 2019, doi:10.2307/366035.

century, even though not impossible.¹⁴⁴ Therefore “he [Chillingworth] came to New World not only in the broad sense to be a new man but in the narrow sense to be manly.”¹⁴⁵

Chillingworth’s aims to come to New England may be unclear, whereas his behaviour after arrival is evident. Likewise Byron’s characters, Chillingworth is “driven by guilt,” and he demands justice.¹⁴⁶ However, Hester and Dimmesdale are the characters who are unfolded by Chillingworth and Pearl. They serve as a contradiction between Hester’s and Dimmesdale’s individuality and their position in society.¹⁴⁷ Even though it is perceived that there are three main characters in the story, Nolte claims that “Chillingworth is not the first importance in the story, neither to the reader nor to Hawthorne. He is the catalyst in the brew, the forwarder of the action. Bigger game is afoot-the malefactors who set the catalyst to work.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ Johnson, “Impotence and Omnipotence,” 598.

¹⁴⁵ Johnson, “Impotence and Omnipotence,” 600.

¹⁴⁶ Burwick, “Hawthorne’s reception of Byron,” 152.

¹⁴⁷ Davis, “Self in the Marketplace,” 81-2.

¹⁴⁸ Nolte, “Hawthorne’s Dimmesdale,” 170.

CONCLUSION

According to Darrel Abel, Hawthorne's aim was not to write a novel which would consist of a gradual story, but which would focus predominantly on the "spiritual" development of the characters. The narrated time takes approximately seven years, and the novel is divided into twenty-three chapters. Even though the climax happens in the twelfth chapter, it is not the middle of the narrative because Hawthorne included the seven years in the first part of the book and then the rest of the events happened only during a few weeks. The presupposition for the novel, the "adultery," happened sometimes during the two previous years ahead of the introductory chapter. The main symbol in the novel is the scaffold which serves as a base for all important events which happen within the story, as well as it stands there as a symbol "of the public accountability of wrongdoers." While the scaffold represents the actions, the scarlet letter A, the second fundamental symbol, indicates the crucial connotations of the novel.¹⁴⁹ However, not all of the symbols that Hawthorne uses are metaphorical, considering Pearl as an example of a vivid symbol within the novel.¹⁵⁰

The scarlet letter is once in the story visible not only on Hester's bosom but also in the sky, throughout the second scaffold scene. It is when Dimmesdale stands on the scaffold at midnight and encourages Hester and Pearl to climb up to join him there. The standing triad, Pearl being the connecting element while standing in between Hester and Dimmesdale, is related to the perception of the "A" as to "the human letter A" which also appears in the sky at that moment.¹⁵¹

The romantic movement of the nineteenth century is focused on individuality and self while rebelling against society. Moreover, this movement is considered to be the understructure for psychology as a field of study.¹⁵² Even though the romantic movement is generally connected with positive connotations, this thesis defined the negative aspects, which are hidden behind the optimistic word 'romantic.' The aim of this thesis was to identify the Byronic features which apply to Hawthorne's characters. In other words, the thesis uncovered the characteristics of Hester Prynne, Arthur Dimmesdale and Roger Chillingworth, all of whom have shown at least some features which relate to the term 'Byronic.'

¹⁴⁹ Abel, "Hawthorne's Dimmesdale," 83.

¹⁵⁰ Michael L. Lasser, "Mirror Imagery in 'The Scarlet Letter'," *The English Journal* 56, no. 2 (1967): 276, accessed April 6, 2019, doi:10.2307/811696.

¹⁵¹ O'Donnell, "Hawthorne and Dimmesdale," 326.

¹⁵² Davis, "Self in the Marketplace," 77.

However, based on the research, not all of the examined characters are considered Byronic Heroes to the same extent. To summarise the critical points of the analysis in order to underline the Byronic features, it is therefore essential to mention that Hawthorne focused on the psychological development of the characters. Therefore, even though the author wants the reader to perceive Chillingworth as the most evil character, and he certainly deserves this mark to some extent, his character is not as black as it seems. In other words, Chillingworth shows features of 'Byronic,' for example hiding himself under a false name while practising his endless revenge and being connected with the Black Man; but on the other hand he has been made the cuckold, and despite all these facts he bequeathes his belongings to little Pearl which also shows his good deeds. Moreover, Chillingworth did not undergo a psychological change, except his self-destruction; thus, considering his death in a while after the death of Dimmesdale, it is more likely to perceive Chillingworth as a symbol and a never-ending reminder of the sin than the full-blown Byronic Hero.

On the other hand, Hester and her development is far more fascinating. Although being treated as an outcast and a defiant at the beginning of the novel, Hester has made herself a worshipped and respected person in the society. People's perception of Hester has changed due to her good deeds in the community. She has become a self-aware woman who had to go through a public shame and a repudiation and still she was able to endure the agony and what is more, mentally grow and remain a strong character. This is symbolised by the scarlet letter which she is forced to wear. At first, Hester regards the embroidery as a terrible reminder of her sin, along with the vivid symbol Pearl, but in the end, she wears the badge proudly and gracefully which makes her worth the title Byronic heroine.

Finally, the last character to conclude is Arthur Dimmesdale. Through this character, Hawthorne demonstrates that there is a villain-like behaviour in everyone, even the priest. Dimmesdale is supposed to be the prototype of good nature, but he carries the burden of a secret sin which ruins him internally and changes him into a self-concern man who pities himself and does not care about the troubles of others. Taking into account his misery, into which he has reprobated himself, along with the help of both other characters, Hester's silent torture and Chillingworth's apparent need for revenge, Dimmesdale has become degenerated, initially because of the sin of adultery and finally by his narcissistic behaviour. His life-story reflects the most to the Byronic features described in the thesis and overall to the Byronic Hero type characters in the literature.

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