

Abstract

The BA thesis explores selected writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne, who addressed in his works many themes that range from nature through difficult relationships of characters and their communities to Biblical allusions. Some of the prominent themes which can be explored in his novels (such as *The Scarlet Letter*, *The House of the Seven Gables* and *Fanshawe*) are the themes of violence, guilt and punishment. These chosen themes serve as topics that are treated individually in each novel. Consequently the novels are compared.

The thesis first focuses on an exploration of the theme of violence, to which extent it appears in Hawthorne's novels, which characters are victims and transgressors, and where violence leads to. At the same time it explores the feeling of guilt of Hawthorne's characters, and whether guilt appears after a committed violent act, as well as the consequences that come in the form of the transgressors' punishment. Namely, I explore the relationship of Hester Prynne with Arthur Dimmesdale and Roger Chillingworth (*The Scarlet Letter*), the two original families of the Pyncheons and the Maules and the influence of the ancestors on their heirs (*The House of the Seven Gables*) and the actions of the mysterious "angler" compared to the deeds of the individuals around Harley College (*Fanshawe*). Why, in some novels, is the reader confronted with the character's feelings of guilt after instigating violence whereas in other works they are simply left out? Why does Hawthorne choose different ways of treating these themes?

The thesis finally questions the author's possible biases when assigning a punishment for his characters. Naturally through its course, it refers to several critical works, such as *Hawthorne* by Henry James or critical essays in *Studies in Classic American Literature* by D. H. Lawrence.