

**The Theme of Freedom in Nathaniel Hawthorne's  
*The Scarlet Letter* and Herman Melville's *Moby  
Dick***

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## **ABSTRAKT**

Tato bakalářská práce popisuje a analyzuje téma svobody v dílech Šarlatové písmeno od Nathaniela Hawthorne a Bílá velryba od Hermana Melvilla. Tyto knihy jsou považovány za jedny z vrcholných děl americké renesanční literatury v období 19. století. Obdobím americké renesance, specifickou skupinou spisovatelů, jimiž byli Melville a Hawthorne ovlivněni a samotným zařazením spisovatelů do kontextu americké literatury se zabývá první část práce. Následuje analýza tématu svobody ve zkoumaných dílech a podrobný rozbor jednotlivých postav a jejich vztah ke svobodě. Práce dochází k závěru, čím se svoboda v dílech zmíněných autorů vyznačuje a jakým způsobem je ve vybraných dílech vyobrazena.

Klíčová slova: Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, americká renesance, romance, svoboda, příroda, Moby Dick, šarlatové písmeno

## **ABSTRACT**

This bachelor's thesis describes and analyzes the theme of freedom in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. These books are considered to be one of the masterpieces of the literature of American Renaissance in the period of nineteenth century. The first part of this paper deals with the period of American Renaissance, the specific group of writers by which Melville and Hawthorne were influenced and also with the inclusion of these authors to the context of American literature. Analysis of the theme of freedom in explored books and detailed analysis of particular characters and their relationship to the freedom follows. Conclusion of this thesis says the way freedom is characterized and its portrayal in mentioned author's pieces.

Keywords: Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, American Renaissance, romance, freedom, nature, *Moby Dick*, *The Scarlet Letter*

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## INTRODUCTION

This bachelor's thesis will study and deal with the literary output of two significant American authors of nineteenth century – Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne. More precisely a detailed analysis of their masterpieces, encompassing *Moby Dick* and *The Scarlet Letter* will be researched. Studying of the period of nineteenth century will be necessary for this paper, because it represents the era of American Renaissance which is distinguished for the concentration of writers to importance and complexity of the inner side and uniqueness of human beings. With regards to the group of authors which was oriented to the emphasis of the magnitude of living creatures, there is a necessity to make reference to this point, because even Herman Melville and also Nathaniel Hawthorne were influenced by the ideas of this group, which was called Transcendentalists. This influence is connected with Transcendentalists' perception of nature as a place of elusive character. Moreover this thesis will deal with the theme of freedom as a motive which is highly linked with nature. The way of such oriented production and creation of these two writers of American Renaissance, their relationship and mutual influence to the more recent books writing will be explored. As mentioned before, this period of time places emphasis on the importance of individuals and this claim offers a thought of possible oppression of natural freedom or desire of capturing the influence of somebody else. Undoubtedly the romances of these two authors propose a kind of hidden intention of fight for freedom. That is the reason for following exploration of freedom concerning Puritanism and subsequent analysis in Hawthorne's masterpiece and Melville's masterpiece. Detailed study of individual characters will come after the analysis of freedom in both books. It is essential to scrutinize this concept from both positive and negative perspective and also to constitute the conditions for determination of character's positivity and negativity. After all of these procedures a comparison of common features which can be found in both analyzed romances will appear there.

The theme of freedom, which has a deep connection with nature, is crucial in both Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, though the way of its representation and expression is different in these two romances.

# 1 NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE AND HERMAN MELVILLE IN THE CONTEXT OF AMERICAN LITERATURE AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP

## 1.1 American Renaissance in literature

The period of American Renaissance (the beginning of 1830's to the beginning of 1860's) can be called the crucial for American literature. The penetration of European influence started to impact works of American writers. This influence was caused mainly by studying of for example German philosophy. As for this point the American Renaissance can be considered the new spiritual era. Young people started to be discontented with the old patriotism, a new belief of unparalleled literature appeared, people were not be absolutely interested in power of wealth of the society, they started to think and explore the more deeper concern – and it was the inner of human beings.<sup>1</sup>

When thinking of a possible almanac of the period of American Renaissance it seems to be essential to mention the book *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* by American scholar Francis Otto Matthiessen.

Matthiessen focused on pieces written by Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville and Whitman from which he identified a new approach to expression of the new style of artistry. When studying this certain group of authors Matthiessen, already aware of the threat of war, started to become persuaded that a new type of literature – literature for democracy – was created by them. The idea of national tradition was highly important especially for his providing of unmistakable and powerful heritage, forming American culture and national history.<sup>2</sup>

Period of American Renaissance is also distinguished by determination of gender hierarchy. American cultural field is classified as a complex of men's ascendancy which means that criticism and value in literary field is completely reserved for male authors and academic critics. The main idea of American Renaissance was to face to criteria of previous generation of writers. According to Charles Richardson, who was the Dartmouth professor, American Renaissance discourse helped to specify field of literary value for

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<sup>1</sup>See Peter, B. High. *An outline of American literature*. (New York: Pearson Elt, 1986), 41.

<sup>2</sup>See Richard, Ruland, and Malcolm Bradbury. *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature*. (New York: Viking Adult, 1991), 368.

American pieces of nineteenth century. Writings in American Renaissance show the gender discrimination of women's writing, which can be seen by interactions between women's history and past and current criticism. According to this theory, it is essential to mean Elizabeth Peabody's assertion which sounds that Hawthorne's and Melville's avoiding of expression of contemporary world and masculine humanism makes them the men of American Renaissance.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, there can be many different explanations how the period of American Renaissance can be understood and apprehended. Samuel Osgood, American devotee of European traditions, adhered to the conservatism of old English standards of culture, struggle for life against decline into the new cosmopolitan era.<sup>4</sup>

Nathaniel Hawthorne is the American Renaissance's author and his masterpiece *The Scarlet Letter* is characteristic for its human moral psychology. F. O. Matthiessen distastes this stiffness of style and characterization with appealing to redemption of the critical traditions. This statement vindicates that point of views to American Renaissance's pieces of work can really differ in many ways.<sup>5</sup>

In the center of American Renaissance, its thoughts and interests there was a group of artists, which were called Transcendentalists.

## **1.2 Transcendentalism as the influence of Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne**

An important artistic movement in American Renaissance whose ideas influenced Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne is called Transcendentalism. The main personage of this movement is an American clergyman and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson. His ideas are closely connected with German idealism and British philosophy, whose representatives are for example Bishop Berkeley or John Locke.<sup>6</sup>

The basic belief of Transcendentalism was putting emphasis on individualism of human beings and also the nature. Emerson's most famous piece *Nature* can be considered

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<sup>3</sup> See Charlene, Avallone. "What American Renaissance? The Gendered Genealogy of a Critical Discourse", *Modern Language Association*; Vol. 112, No. 5 (Oct., 1997): 1102 – 1114.

<sup>4</sup> See Ibid, 1105.

<sup>5</sup> See Charlene, Avallone. "What American Renaissance? The Gendered Genealogy of a Critical Discourse", *Modern Language Association*; Vol. 112, No. 5 (Oct., 1997): 1113.

<sup>6</sup> See Richard, Gray. *A History of American Literature*. (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 130.

the picture of the major transcendentalist ideas. Emerson claimed that nature can display the individual spirits and each human creates its own soul with the inner being with rhythms and pulses of nature. Nature and individuals have very close character between each others.<sup>7</sup>

Transcendentalists put stress on beliefs, desires or feelings of human beings, so it is quite obvious that they highly rejected the Puritanism and its strict rules and the restriction of freedom associated with them. For Transcendentalists the nature was the God or the Bible. The nature expressed the infinite freedom. For more comfortable conditions for their discussions and contemplation Emerson founded the Brook Farm Institute where they met together. But because of some different opinions, this community was divided into two parts – those ones, who were interested in reform and those ones, who were interested in individuals (like Thoreau or Emerson).<sup>8</sup>

### 1.2.1 Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville in Transcendentalism

After Emerson's settling in Massachusetts, he made a friendship with some significant people of that time, like Henry David Thoreau or later mentioned Nathaniel Hawthorne and many others. All these people had meetings in Emerson's house in which they had Transcendental Club (or Brook Farm Institute) and where they long-windedly discussed theology, philosophy and of course literature.<sup>9</sup>

When composing the *Moby Dick*, Herman Melville was highly inspired by Emerson's stress on individualism and Melville took the occasion for expression of Captain Ahab's personality with regard to Emerson's opinions and principles. According to him, both Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville had darker and more sceptical frame of mind.<sup>10</sup>

Transcendentalist authors had a special quality which was displaying the past in their present production and they also wanted to be kept in anonymity. In this case there was a considerable difference between Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville.

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<sup>7</sup> See Richard, Gray. *A History of American Literature*. (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 130-133.

<sup>8</sup> See Peter, B. High. *An outline of American literature*. (New York: Pearson Elt, 1986), 42.

<sup>9</sup> See Richard, Gray. *A History of American Literature*. (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 131.

<sup>10</sup> See Richard, Gray. *A History of American Literature*. (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 130-133.

Whereas Hawthorne continued in writing, but in concealment in his mother's house, reconciled with the fact that his books will not have readers, Melville's role was to accept that he is a rejected author. The interesting thing is that it was not a sad moment for him, because he said, that: "So far as I am individually concerned & independent of my pocket, it is my earnest desire to write those sort of books which are said to 'fail.'" <sup>11</sup>

This act of accepting the situation was a big gift for America, because a truly critical literature appeared here. <sup>12</sup>

### 1.3 Romance as the new genre of American literature

American Renaissance is also called the Romantic period and in this time a new genre of literature appears.

A romance, which can be treated as satirical and realistic view on the world offers new order of things. When considering American fiction, this is a crucial fact that came into existence as neoclassicism in accordance to Romanticism. The main thought of romance is to emphasize the values of reason and 'as managed sentimentality moved toward the disturbances of an era of imagination and feeling'. <sup>13</sup>

Even the romance is quite a subgenre of novel; there can be found a considerable difference between these two genres. The aim of romance writers is to arrange human experience into a clearer shape to make readers to understand their works more emotionally and intellectually. <sup>14</sup>

In books, written as a fiction in earlier times, artists endeavoured to display the reality of real world in their works. They emphasized the declaration of information they wrote to be truthful and relevant to life. In contrast to this statement, Edward Bulwer Lytton, English author of novels and romances argues, that writers should express their conception

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<sup>11</sup> See Richard, Ruland, and Malcolm Bradbury. *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature*. (New York: Viking Adult, 1991), 144.

<sup>12</sup> See Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> See Marshall Boswell, and Carl Rolynson. *Encyclopedia of American literature*. (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 85.

<sup>14</sup> See John, C. Stubbs. "Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter": The Theory of the Romance and the Use of the New England Situation" *Modern Language Association*; Vol. 83, No. 5 (Oct., 1968): 1439.

of experience, not just only the imitation of experience. And Nathaniel Hawthorne made an effort to reconcile these two attitudes.<sup>15</sup>

Nathaniel Hawthorne claims in preface of his work *The House of the Seven Gables*: “The romance, bound to the “truth of the human heart,” affords a “latitude” to the writer “to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer’s own choosing or creation.”<sup>16</sup>

According to his statement, the purpose of romance is a structured complexity. Writers of romance worked with balances of opposites. In their works of this genre there occur three interrelated opposites, which are: verisimilitude and ideality; the natural and the marvelous; and history and fiction. These three associations can be considered the best means for understanding of the romance.<sup>17</sup>

## 1.4 Nathaniel Hawthorne

Nathaniel Hawthorne was born in Salem in Massachusetts and then brought up in Puritan family. At his youth he had a tendency to spend time in seclusion which caused dejection to him and, on the other hand, also a lot of imagination. The origins of his creation were made up by romances. His first remarkable piece is *Twice-Told Tales*, a book which started a new period of Hawthorne’s life and works.<sup>18</sup>

He began to make a contribution to magazines, he also wrote several books for children, for example *Grandfather’s Chair* or *Liberty Tree*. He largely focused on the inner side of human beings to which he did not pay attention until that time. There was an attempt to live in an ideal community (Brook Farm Community, formed by Transcendentalists), but Hawthorne found this quite foolish which was caused especially by his distant temperament. So after his leaving this group he married his wife Sophia and then he was successful in writing short stories, beside other things contained in *Mosses from an Old Manse*. The background of his production is being set in Puritan period. His

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<sup>15</sup> See John, C. Stubbs. “Hawthorne’s “The Scarlet Letter”: The Theory of the Romance and the Use of the New England Situation” *Modern Language Association*; Vol. 83, No. 5 (Oct., 1968): 1440.

<sup>16</sup> See John, C. Stubbs. “Hawthorne’s “The Scarlet Letter”: The Theory of the Romance and the Use of the New England Situation” *Modern Language Association*; Vol. 83, No. 5 (Oct., 1968): 1439.

<sup>17</sup> See Ibid, 1440.

<sup>18</sup> See Ibid, 1440.

pieces and books display and express the transition from Puritanism to Romanticism for which he is admired and, on the other hand, also criticised.<sup>19</sup>

Nathaniel Hawthorne was a moralistic writer who was deeply interested in complex of human relationships, their feelings and reciprocal understanding.<sup>20</sup>

There exists one concept which is very typical for Hawthorne's artistic pieces and that is the nature, more exactly he pays attention to the natural environment and tries to remain true in visions of the world when expressing it in his books.<sup>21</sup>

Herman Melville admired Nathaniel Hawthorne for his proximity and relationship to the natural world.<sup>22</sup>

Hawthorne was such an immense admirer of nature so that he used a personification when writing about the nature. His rhetorical ability was proved to be endowing human's qualities to objects of nature, he was a master of emphasising the ability of nature to expose feelings, emotions or passion. For example his trees groan in fear or his waves laugh. The basic aspect of these phrases of personification are probably expressed because of fictional characters interacted with nature itself.<sup>23</sup>

This claim can be proved by reading Hawthorne's masterpiece *The Scarlet Letter* where sunshine and brook in the forest are personified. In this book the author compares human beings with the community of the nature. This can be clearly seen when thinking of Pearl, daughter of Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale. This little child who is pushed away from the Puritan society in large measure because of her origin can be the indicator of this aspect because obviously she was accepted by the nature as its constituent. Sunshine is described in the book as to be "glad of such a playmate", in which Pearl is that playmate.<sup>24</sup> As for this paragraph it may seem to be clear that the usage of personification is very important for Hawthorne because of displaying the importance of relationship between human beings and the nature.

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<sup>19</sup> See John, C. Stubbs. "Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter": The Theory of the Romance and the Use of the New England Situation" *Modern Language Association*; Vol. 83, No. 5 (Oct., 1968): 1440.

<sup>20</sup> See Richard, Gray. *A History of American Literature*. (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 201.

<sup>21</sup> See Daniel, Janice B. "'Apples of the Thoughts and Fancies': Nature as narrator in the Scarlet Letter." *Atq* 7, no. 4 (December 1993). Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost (accessed April 16, 2013).

<sup>22</sup> See Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> See Marshall, Boswell, and Carl Rolyson. *Encyclopedia of American literature*. (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 496.

<sup>24</sup> See Daniel, Janice B. "'Apples of the Thoughts and Fancies': Nature as narrator in the Scarlet Letter." *Atq* 7, no. 4 (December 1993). Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost (accessed April 16, 2013).

### 1.4.1 *The Scarlet Letter* the masterpiece of Nathaniel Hawthorne

Nathaniel Hawthorne is entitled to be considered a great American writer, but his most important and significant book, more precisely the masterpiece, is *The Scarlet Letter*, which is a romance. A story of *The Scarlet Letter* is set in Boston in Massachusetts in the period of seventeenth century and is about interpersonal relationships, love but also a tough life, all this taking into consideration the Puritan's way of life and way of thinking.

The main character, Hester Prynne, came to New England without her husband who is considered to be dead. In presumption that her husband deceased, she fell in love with reverend Arthur Dimmesdale with whom she has a baby later – a little girl Pearl. After this act a Puritan society rejects to accept her as an equal person and she is sentenced to stay in prison and then to wear the scarlet letter “A” which means “adulteress”. Hester lives with her daughter Pearl on the suburbs of the town and she does not care of anybody. Unfortunately her husband comes to Boston under the false name Roger Chillingworth. When he finds out what his wife had done, he starts to desire the revenge. Step by step he finds that the father of Pearl is Arthur Dimmesdale and under the pretext he is a doctor, he starts to destroy Dimmesdale's personality systematically. The story ends by Dimmesdale's death in Hester's arms and after that Hester further lives in a town, helping to unhappy women who have diverse personal troubles.

*The Scarlet Letter* begins by standing of Hester Prynne in front of the jail in which she was imprisoned because of the adultery. Readers may register a hint of contradiction here, because the displaying of jail and the rose bush in front of the jail's door, the expression of nature can be in contrast with possible feelings of Hester. Even though she is released from prison, it cannot be said that she goes towards freedom. Surveillance of Puritan society accompanies her and she is sentenced to wear the letter “A”.

The author also describes how the sun is shining, the grass plot and young garden bed of roses. It may seem that all of these natural phenomena are displayed there to give the feeling to the convict that nature forgives or regrets her, or to give her the strength to endure the stay in a jail or, on the other hand, her return back to everyday life.

One of the main themes in *The Scarlet Letter* could be the display of Hawthorne's own experience with Puritanism and his Puritan ancestors. When reading this romance, an obvious fight for freedom can be understood there, that is a contrast between the demands

of society and, on the other hand, the needs of individuals and their self-reliance. Hawthorne gave evidence in his journals that “there is evil lurking in every human heart”<sup>25</sup>. This claim can indicate, that even if he emphasised the inner side of human beings, he had still rooted Puritan qualities in his mind. When considering that each of the main characters of *The Scarlet Letter* knows his evil, which is a defense of oneself against the society, the romance remains open for the readers. The central problem is called “dark question” of womanhood, which deals with law and freedom. The main heroine of the story can look like a woman who fights against the strict system of society, who believes that this system can be torn down and a new one can be built up, and her separation can be freed.<sup>26</sup>

## 1.5 Herman Melville

Herman Melville, born in August 1819, is an American writer of poems, short stories and also adventure novels for which he is famous the most.<sup>27</sup> He was brought up in quite wealthy family thanks to his father who was a merchant. After his bankruptcy the Melville’s family moved to New York where Herman Melville started to attend a school to become a teacher later. Because after some time he found his job uninteresting and that is why he tried to become an engineer.<sup>28</sup>

Because of his father’s death, Melville needed to support their family financially. That is the reason why he ended up as a cabin boy on a merchant ship. His fate of becoming the sailor has its roots just right there.<sup>29</sup>

His attempt to find a job failed so he started to write short-stories into the newspapers. These were inspired by his experience from the sea. As a matter of fact a lot of his pieces have the motive of his adventures from the sea. The book *Typee* can be mentioned firstly, because in this piece Melville’s captivity in Polynesia where he got because of his escape from the ship *Acushnet* is displayed there. The familiar one is also *Omoo*, inspired by Melville’s stay in Tahiti. (An interesting point may be the fact that Hawthorne had a

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<sup>25</sup> See Richard, Gray. *A History of American Literature*. (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 206.

<sup>26</sup> See Richard, Gray. *A History of American Literature*. (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 204-206.

<sup>27</sup> See Marshall Boswell, and Carl Rolynson. *Encyclopedia of American literature*. (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 721.

<sup>28</sup> See Marshall Boswell, and Carl Rolynson. *Encyclopedia of American literature*. (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 720.

<sup>29</sup> See Peter, B. High. *An outline of American literature*. (New York: Pearson Elt, 1986), 208.

nickname for Herman Melville and it was *Mr. Omoo*).<sup>30</sup> In 1849 *Redburn* and *Mardi* were published; romances also inspired by sea experiences.<sup>31</sup>

### 1.5.1 *Moby Dick* the masterpiece of Herman Melville

All these pieces, based on experience from cruises on the sea are certainly worth mentioning, but surely Melville's most significant and remarkable book is *Moby Dick; or, The Whale*. This romance, perceived as Melville's masterpiece, is considered to be one of the American highly regarded books from American Renaissance period and the whole nineteenth century in American literature as well. *Moby Dick* would be just one another adventure novel without Nathaniel Hawthorne's intervention.<sup>32</sup>

Firstly this book was intended to be a descriptive book of whaling industry, including mostly facts related to whaling, treating of its fat for example which can be also seen in *Moby Dick* or actually the whole processing of captured whales and sperm whales. However because of Hawthorne's influence the adventure romance came into existence. Authors firstly meet each other in 1850. Melville found out really early that Hawthorne is a great person with enormous talent and he was absolutely excited by him. For this reason Melville wrote an essay *Hawthorne and His Mosses*. During many evening sessions these two men spent together, Nathaniel Hawthorne forced Melville to think deeper about pieces he writes. It is possible that *Moby Dick* would never be such a significant masterpiece because Hawthorne gave him an advice to focus on a fight of man against the nature.<sup>33</sup>

The story of *Moby Dick* is about the fight of man against the nature and there is an interpretation of the Great Leviathan which can be understood both the book and also the whale itself, expressing the gilding of the sea and life.<sup>34</sup>

Three main characters – Captain Ahab, who monomaniacally desires of revenge, Ishmael, the narrator and the *Moby Dick* itself can be considered the most important in the book.

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<sup>30</sup> See Edwin, Haviland Miller. "A New Life of Melville." *The New England Quarterly* 49, No 4 (December 1976): 627-633.

<sup>31</sup> See Boswell Marshall, and Carl Rolynson. *Encyclopedia of American literature*. (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 721.

<sup>32</sup> See Marshall Boswell, and Carl Rolynson. *Encyclopedia of American literature*. (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 721.

<sup>33</sup> See Richard, Gray. *A History of American Literature*. (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 209.

<sup>34</sup> See Richard, Ruland, and Malcolm Bradbury. *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature*. (New York: Viking Adult, 1991), 161.

## 1.6 Relationship of Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne

Herman Melville became a close friend of Nathaniel Hawthorne, who influenced the following production of Melville, especially of his masterpiece *Moby Dick*. First point the reader can notice in this adventure novel is the dedication to Hawthorne, which sounds:

“In Token of My Admiration for His Genius This Book is Inscribed to Nathaniel Hawthorne”<sup>35</sup> It was not an ordinary friendship between Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne. As readers can notice in Parini’s article: “For Hawthorne, it was a connection that stirred deep intellectual interest. For Melville, it was a matter of love.”<sup>36</sup> For a while Hawthorne was complimented by such a great admiration from Melville’s side but this started to grow into an enormous range. Under an ordinary excuse Hawthorne escaped, because he was not able to give Melville such a favour and deeper relationship than friendship. Several years later Melville said to Hawthorne’s son Julian that he is sure that Hawthorne had some secrets for all his life for which he was so successful and why he had such an awesome career.<sup>37</sup> The secret was that Hawthorne’s ability to display human nature is so realistic and unique that no other American writer is able to express.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Melville, Herman. *Moby Dick*. (London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1994).

<sup>36</sup> Parini, Jay. “Jay Parini on Herman Melville” *The Telegraph*,  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/bookreviews/8257013/Jay-Parini-on-Herman-Melville.html>  
(accessed December 30, 2012)

<sup>37</sup> See Jay, Parini. “Jay Parini on Herman Melville” *The Telegraph*,  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/bookreviews/8257013/Jay-Parini-on-Herman-Melville.html>  
(accessed December 30, 2012)

<sup>38</sup> See Marshall, Boswell, and Carl Rolynson. *Encyclopedia of American literature*. (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 496.

## 2 THE THEME OF FREEDOM AND THE WAY OF ITS DISPLAY AND EXPRESSION

### 2.1 Freedom in American literature (the way of display)

#### 2.1.1 Origins of Puritanism and its penetration to literature, concerning the theme of freedom

Puritanism has got its origin in arrival of Pilgrim Fathers into New World from Europe. In 1620 they settled the Plymouth Plantation in Massachusetts and afterwards they started to colonize the regions by the sea.<sup>39</sup>

There an extensive strength of religion came with Pilgrim Fathers' arrival which meant a certain restriction for the whole society.

Suddenly a suppression of natural and inborn desires (including sexual life or simply happiness from life) started to appear in society and it caused an incipient protest of American writers. For instance Henry David Thoreau or Ralph Waldo Emerson, the representatives of Transcendentalism, emphasized the importance of the human being's inner side and freedom. Other authors, protesting against the rigid morality of Puritans, were Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Their major intention was to make readers to understand that in their books there is not only a nondescript and run-of-the-mill story. If a reader is observant and looks into the plot of the book deeply, he can find something more. Evidently a hidden indictment of an asceticism and morality is expressed in their pieces, mainly in the *Moby Dick* and *The Scarlet Letter*.<sup>40</sup> In *The Scarlet Letter* this phenomenon can be seen quite obviously because of Hester's quiet inner fight against the Puritan strict society even by wearing the scarlet letter "A" on her chest and also by concealment of her love sin with the minister Dimmesdale.

On the other hand Melville claims that the aggression of fighting for freedom of every man is a reason for privilege which is absolutely inalienable. But this statement has also its opposite side, for example in Melville's masterpiece *Moby Dick* in which the crew of

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<sup>39</sup> See Richard, Ruland, and Malcolm Bradbury. *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature*. (New York: Viking Adult, 1991), 8.

<sup>40</sup> See Alvan, L. Barach. "Enhancement of man's freedom" *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*; Vol. 44, No. 4 (April 1968), 497.

Pequod could have survived and live if Ahab had not forced them to hunt and kill the white whale.<sup>41</sup>

## 2.2 Freedom in *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby Dick*

In this paragraph a claim that nature is highly interacted with the theme of freedom will be examined. When studying the masterpieces of literature from the period of American Renaissance which are *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby Dick* it is obvious that these books are not some ordinary stories. Both these novels have something in common – and it is the theme of freedom. The dominant characteristic of freedom in these books, and also in works of Transcendentalist writers and writers of American Renaissance, is the nature. Nature represents the place, where an inalienable events and actions take place and also the symbol of security. Nature has always been a space where human beings could feel free and where they could have behaved according to free will and consciousness. Nature represents an aspect which cannot be touched by human's intention to capture it or to even take it by force. In *The Scarlet Letter* the feature of freedom is expressed by forestry in which Hester, Pearl and Arthur meet together, also by Hester's inner defiance of strict society and in *Moby Dick* it is the whale Moby Dick itself, floating freely in the sea and cruising around the spaces so natural and acquaintance for him. The reader is performed with the story of Hester's fight for freedom during the whole novel. In the very beginning of the book the readers can see this young woman, proudly walking with her baby and the scarlet letter "A" on her chest towards her life on the suburbs of village. After straying way of life she even decorates the symbol of her adultery by the art she masters very well – the embroidery. This act can be understood the reconciliation with her fate but also the quiet struggle against Puritans and their conviction of her person. The forestry together with brook is natural symbol of freedom too, the reason for this statement is, that the only place where the minister Dimmesdale with Hester can meet and discuss the issues and topic they are not able to discuss anywhere else, like for example matters regarding their common daughter Pearl. The imaginary border between freedom and the obligation for behaving according to the common Puritan conventions is the brook in the forest. After its

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<sup>41</sup> See Alvan, L. Barach. "Enhancement of man's freedom" *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*; Vol. 44, No. 4 (April 1968), 499 – 500.

overstepping the characters appear in notional free world where they do not have to be worried to discuss everything coming to their minds.

When discussing Pearl, it is appropriate to mention that this little child cannot be surely regarded only as an ordinary character of the novel. Pearl should be represented as a child of nature. The explanation for this statement is following: when playing in the forest, Pearl perceives the manifestation of nature very sensitively and in quite different way than other people. Tinkling of water stream of brook in the forest, sunrays limping on her may be the evidence of this. Especially when sunrays drop only on her, but not on her mother Hester. Quite foolish demonstration from Pearl's side can be seen in this moment, because she makes a mock of her mother by saying: "Mother, the sunshine does not love you. It runs away and hides itself, because it is afraid of something on your bosom. Now, see! There it is, playing, a good way off. Stand you here, and let me run and catch it. I am but a child. It will not flee from me; for I wear nothing on my bosom yet!"<sup>42</sup> In this case readers are allowed to realize the meaning of the scarlet letter "A". This sign express the picture of Puritan society which represents the repression to act according to free will and that is why the sunshine is being deterred to shine on Hester's chest. The contrast between freedom represented by nature, and oppression represented by Puritan society is evident in this instance.

In *Moby Dick* the idea of freedom is the noticeable theme of this adventure novel, but expressed in quite different way than in *The Scarlet Letter*. The white whale Moby Dick, displaying the individuality, independence and absolutely impossibility to fulfill Captain Ahab's desire to catch it or kill it is the basic attribute of the liberty in this book. When mentioning Captain Ahab, he is a crucial character performing in Melville's masterpiece. Under his command, the crew of sailors sets out to the pursuit of sperm whales but mainly Moby Dick itself. The narrator, Ishmael, plays an important role in this adventure novel when talking about freedom, because he, and also the whole crew, is manipulated by Ahab's untiring obsession by revenge to Moby Dick and his killing, because only a stub of leg remained Ahab from the last meeting of himself and Moby Dick. Ishmael is forced to follow Ahab's intention to catch white whale and to return the attack of him, which means only one thing – a murder. Ishmael with the whole crew tries to persuade Ahab's

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<sup>42</sup> Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*. (London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1994), 156.

monomaniac doggedness to discourage him from this dangerous plan. But their effort is not successful. The controversial issue is to think about Ahab only as a negative, reluctant or insane person. His destiny is very complex one because on one hand he negotiates absolutely according to his free will which means that nobody forced him to search for and kill Moby Dick. But on the other hand he can be considered the victim of his compulsion of obeying his thirst for retribution which means a kind of suppression of his inner freedom or freedom of acting according to the human's independent will.

### **3 ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERS, THEIR SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES**

Each reader of *The Scarlet letter* and *Moby Dick* can notice that there are many similarities and differences in these two books. One of the main factors that can be found there is the fight for freedom by some characters, specifically by Hester Prynne, Moby Dick but also Hester's daughter Pearl and by the narrator of *Moby Dick* – Ishmael. On the contrary there are characters which can be considered negative ones, but it seriously depends on the perspective the readers understand the behavior of them. In this respect it is worth mentioning Roger Chillingworth and Captain Ahab.

The positivity but also the negativity of each character can be recognized by their relationship to the nature. There exists a clear evidence for this statement which can be suitable for proving that the theme of freedom and nature are closely interconnected. Positive characters, analyzed in both books *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby Dick* represent a close relationship of themselves with nature (forestry, Pearl and Hester in Hawthorne's romance) or nature itself (*Moby Dick* in Melville's romance). Thus this statement could be perceived as a concept which this paper deals with. As mentioned before nature should be understood as a device emanating freedom. And in case that it comes to someone's mind that it is in his power to conquer the nature (especially in case of capturing the whale *Moby Dick* by Captain Ahab and the whole crew of Pequod indeed) or overpower the freedom of someone else (in case of compulsion of Hester to her confession of her and Dimmesdale's sin by Puritan society), the readers can notice that this action results into failure just because of the strength with which the nature, and then also the freedom, is tempted to be taken by forced.

#### **3.1 Positive characters in *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby Dick* in connection with the freedom and the nature**

The positive characters can be mentioned first. In *The Scarlet Letter* there are several characters which are supposed to be mentioned in accordance with this concept. Hester Prynne and her daughter Pearl can be perceived the positive characters. When focusing on the minister Dimmesdale, it may be quite hard to make an opinion if he can be understood positive or negative one. His positivity can be called into question because of his fear of confession to the sin of love with Hester for almost the whole length of the romance. Furthermore he tries to redeem himself at the end of the book when he says the truth on the

pillory to the whole town's society and his following death. Unfortunately he does not succeed in this act because the society does not accept this confession.

When reading *The Scarlet Letter* it seems to be obvious to sympathize with Hester who has a sad fate. She comes to New England thinking that she will start a new life without her husband who is said to be dead. But when visiting minister Dimmesdale's house because of borrowing books, they fell in love together and the consequence of this forbidden love comes soon – and it is their baby, the daughter Pearl. After that the society starts to scrutinize who is the father of little Pearl and the reason why Hester does not want to say his name. This leads to Hester's stay in prison and after her release to wearing the scarlet letter "A".

The second perspective in which Hester Prynne can be seen is her moral failure regarding the sin of illegitimate which is a symbol of unethical and immoral behavior, perceived this way by Puritan society. But from human point of view there is an evident feeling which teases readers to sympathize with Hester, because she lived in surmise that her husband deceased. This woman had a right to love somebody else and in this case she could act according to her free will and conscience. But in compliance with society's opinions and principles her decision was not only her intention which can be determined just by Hester's free willingness. She offended against God's commandment and thus also, naturally, against Puritan rules, for which she subsequently needed to be punished.

As mentioned before, the symbol for freedom was the nature in both books. In *The Scarlet Letter* there is one character which can be considered the symbol of nature, but in a form of human being and it is Hester's daughter Pearl. Little Pearl who was engendered by Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester in act of love and who thus was understood as an extramarital child for whom she was sentenced to social exclusion. Pearl has very complex character. The Puritan society saw a devil in her inner mind. The character of this illegitimate child can be analyzed from several points of view, for example from Hester's point of view, but also from Dimmesdale's point of view and from the perspective of society as well. The statement that "Pearl is more than a link, more than a symbol"<sup>43</sup> is evident because of her complexity and self-contradictory personality.

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<sup>43</sup> McNamara, Anne Marie. "The Character of Flame: The Function of Pearl in THE SCARLET LETTER" *American Literature*; Vol. 27, Issue 4 (January 1956): 537.

Throughout the whole novel there are the indications and hints of ambiguity. Talking about Pearl, her ambiguous character bears witness to this. When considering her fate it seems to be obvious that she is not responsible for her destiny and the way of life.

On the other hand in the process of her maturing the readers can recognize, especially in the forest scene that she is cleverer, precocious and bewilderingly subtle that she seems to be in accordance to her age.<sup>44</sup>

During the conversation between Hester and Arthur Pearl is playing in the nature which represents the place of unrestricted possibilities and disarming freedom. More precisely she plays by the brook, by the imaginary boundary between oppression of society and freedom of human way of thinking. McNamara claims that: “*The Scarlet Letter* is the story of an extraordinary man redeemed by the extraordinary action of an extraordinary child.”<sup>45</sup>

According to this statement there is a necessity to mention Pearl’s role in Dimmesdale’s life and destiny. First of all he can be considered only as her biological father with whom she has almost nothing in common. In the course of time, particularly during the meeting of these three characters in the forest on the edge of the town, Dimmesdale feels the spirituality of Pearl. As for the Hester’s perspective, Pearl behaves as an ordinary child who can be perceived common and normal in relation to her mother. But from Dimmesdale’s perspective she behaves preternaturally as a “more-than-child,” and elf and spirit child.<sup>46</sup> This different point of view can be clarified when keeping in mind the researched theme of freedom. Both Pearl and Hester represent the nature and free will which is the reason why Hester understands Pearl as an ordinary child. To the contrary Arthur, regardless of his attempt to redeem his soul by the public confession, is still a respected member of Puritan society, which means a symbol of oppression and lack of freedom.

Hawthorne’s romance *The Scarlet Letter* is distinguished by its ambiguity and duality of details, because there can be found powerful double aspects of light and darkness of setting, love and contempt, desire and fear but also acceptance with rejection or reality with

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<sup>44</sup> See Anne, Marie McNamara. “The Character of Flame: The Function of Pearl in THE SCARLET LETTER” *American Literature*; Vol. 27, Issue 4 (January 1956): 539

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 538.

<sup>46</sup> See Anne, Marie McNamara. “The Character of Flame: The Function of Pearl in THE SCARLET LETTER” *American Literature*; Vol. 27, Issue 4 (January 1956): 540.

the supernatural. When analyzing the ambiguity of these aspects, two characters operating with this context should be mentioned – Pearl and Arthur Dimmesdale.<sup>47</sup>

Pearl's nature can be distinguished as two various aspects – natural and supernatural and in accordance to different directions oriented to known and unknown parent. In all cases her approach is influenced and determined by the nature of the desired effect. Because Pearl has always been used to seeing the scarlet letter "A" on her mother's chest, she is not able to understand the act when Hester tears off the embroidered letter and throw this away. She imperiously demands to put the symbol of sinful adultery back to Hester's clothes. When Hester surrenders to this insistence, Pearl, as an expression of satisfaction and alleviation, jumps over the brook which displays the representative of the border between oppression and freedom or repression and reconciliation, and gives her mother a hug.<sup>48</sup>

After this act of reconciliation, Hester asks Pearl to keep in mind that the reverend Dimmesdale loves both of them, their daughter replies by the questions which can be characterized as distrustful and quite naive: "Doth he love us? Will he go back with us, hand in hand, we three together, into the town?"<sup>49</sup>

Arthur is aware of Pearl's behavior because he needs to deal with the big life's dilemma. On one hand by the admitting of his sin, he could get Pearl's love and recognition, but on the other hand he would be damned by the Puritan society in defiance of the fact that he was admired for his wisdom, level of education and also for his humanity. Dimmesdale's character is distinguished by the ambiguity and misfortunate fate. The ambiguous temperament oscillates according to the perspective in which he is seen. On one hand he leaves Hester at the mercy of Puritan society which usurps her human nature by condemnation and social exclusion. On the contrary he has been fighting for many years because of the hidden blame and the torture caused by self-accusing of wimpish manners. However not even Puritan society was able to admit that man who was supposed to be absolutely obedient and devoted to God is going to plead guilty of sinful transgression. When he started to make his own redemption on the pillory, a crowd of

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<sup>47</sup> See Anne, Marie McNamara. "The Character of Flame: The Function of Pearl in THE SCARLET LETTER" *American Literature*; Vol. 27, Issue 4 (January 1956): 540.

<sup>48</sup> See Ibid, 540.

<sup>49</sup> Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*. (London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1994), 181.

Puritans thought about the fact, that “The men of rank and dignity, who stood more immediately around the clergyman, were so taken by surprise and so perplexed as to the purport of what they saw – unable to receive the explanation which most readily presented itself, or to imagine any other – that they remained silent and inactive spectators of the judgment which Providence seemed about to work.”<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless after his confession in front of the whole town, full of Puritans, he remains still the sacred person in memories of citizens.<sup>51</sup>

Just as in Hawthorne’s romance *The Scarlet Letter*, even in Melville’s *Moby Dick* a reader can find a character which can be perceived as a positive one in connection with the theme of freedom. In this case the speech bears on the whale Moby Dick itself. Moby Dick represents the concept of freedom in the book even because of his origin rooted in nature and also for his distinguished and noble elusiveness. After putting to the sea from the port of Nantucket, the pilgrimage of Captain Ahab’s crew on Pequod ship starts to perform the pursuit of one white whale. Even in defiance of the fact that this voyage is not convenient when considering the weather or the conditions of living on the board of the ship, no one is able to be confronted with Ahab’s obsession of capturing Moby Dick. None of the characters in the book is capable to make a stand against Captain Ahab, except of Moby Dick. But this statement could not be appropriately proved without mentioning that this white whale does not face him because of his own intention. When recognizing Ahab’s desire to hunt and kill him, he escapes successfully every time. And what is more, Moby Dick does not escape only from the raids of Pequod controlled by Ahab, but also from other ships which sail on the sea also because of whaling. One of them is the Samuel Enderby ship. Ahab invites the captain to a board of his Pequod and desires to know if the captain has seen the white whale. As readers can recognize later, a son of Samuel Enderby’s captain died when hunting the whales and sperm whales. This aspect shows that natural phenomena, as for example animals in this case, cannot be hurt or offended by human beings just when someone takes it to his head. Protection of its own freedom is absolutely inalienable for such kind natural phenomenon.

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<sup>50</sup> Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*. (London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1994), 215.

<sup>51</sup> See Jian, Wang. “Sweet” moral blossom: Comment on the main characters in Hawthorne’s *The scarlet letter*” *Sino-US English Teaching*, Vol. 4, No. 12 (December 2007); 66.

Ishmael, the narrator of the whole adventure of *Moby Dick; or, The Whale* seems to be quite neutral when considering the analysis of characters in view of nature or freedom. But his approach to Ahab's will and obsession is inclined rather to his sympathies with Moby Dick than with his Captain. This point can be seen by his quiet fight against Ahab and his straightforwardness when chasing for the white whale. After the deliberation that Ishmael together with Queequeg, a savage man coming from Polynesia, are going to get on board because of financial reasons, the obvious point is that these two men do not really act according to their free consciousness and will. On the other hand Ishmael feels free when sailing on the sea; his impressions and sensations are stimulated by cognizance that he can be far away from everyday worries.

During the analysis of these two romances, an evident comparison suggests itself. Symbols of nature, which is linked with the theme of freedom, are represented by the white whale Moby Dick and Pearl. These two natural creatures are characterized for its elusiveness and resistance to be defeated by someone's oppression and effort to conquer.

### **3.2 Negative characters in *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby Dick* in connection with the freedom and the nature**

It seems to be apparent that if there are the positive characters in the books, there must be certainly negative ones too. In case of *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby Dick* this matter seems to be evident. Starting with characters of *Moby Dick*, the first character which can come to reader's mind in connection with the expression 'negative' might be a portrait of Captain Ahab. This character can be compared with the biblical character of Jonah who broke the God's commandments. Ahab tries to face against the God's will which means the overpowering of nature, just by killing the white whale. Obviously this act is impossible, which is evident at the end of this Melville's romance.

This man often called the monomaniac, which means that he overturns everything to the way he wants to see it. This behavior could be perceived as malevolent and wicked because of his obsession of murder. More specifically by murder of the white whale. But when thinking of it deeper and more the readers can recognize the reason for this craving for the vengeance of hunting Moby Dick itself. In their previous clash which led to the struggle between Ahab and Moby Dick, the captain lost his leg, just because of the white whale's attack.

Moby Dick represents the nature in this ‘partly romantic sea tale, partly philosophical drama’.<sup>52</sup> Of course, there can appear a tendency to sympathize with Ahab’s endeavour of hunting and killing the white whale, because it seems to be normal to revenge the health detriment, considering the lost leg. But on the other hand, when thinking of the theme of freedom connected with nature, it is evident that Ahab attempted to make something unnatural – to kill the whale. Readers can notice that Ahab is obsessed by the murder of Moby Dick already from the very beginning of the book. Even immediately after the embarkation of the whole crew to the board of Pequod, after the leaving port, the symbol which is so usual and customary for romances appears and the reader can notice it. Captain Ahab takes the Spanish gold coin out of his pocket and shows to the whole crew. This doubloon is supposed to represent the reward for such man who firstly glimpses just the white whale Moby Dick. This gold coin is nailed down to the mast to arouse the motivation of the Pequod’s crew to pursue passionately and slaughter Moby Dick. Screaming of the crew shows Ahab’s force and power above their behavior and fate. “A sharp eye for the White Whale; a sharp lance for Moby Dick!”<sup>53</sup> Also Ahab’s obsession and monomaniac treatment of manipulating the crew intensifies, which seems to be evident, especially by exclamation: “Death to Moby Dick! God hunt us all, if we do not hunt Moby Dick to his death!”<sup>54</sup> Captain Ahab is highly determined to search for Moby Dick until his absolute capture and until the white whale will spout the blood from its noble body.

The naturalness is the Moby Dick’s defense, of course. There is no possibility to outwit the demonstrations of the nature, especially here. For example at the end of the book the readers can come to know the success of finding the white whale which the sailors were looking for. This moment, full of tension, excitement and also full of fear of the unknown event and environment performs the whole crew of sailor including also Ishmael and, of course, Captain Ahab. Naturally, this was Ahab’s aim to hunt and kill Moby Dick, but though there are some other characters which rather obey captain’s orders and follow his instructions. An obvious kind of pressure can be seen in this point, because throughout the whole book a reader could notice that the crew of Pequod, especially Starbuck, was not quite satisfied with Ahab’s conviction that setting out to the voyage and searching for the

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<sup>52</sup> See Clark, Davis. “An overview of Moby-Dick.” *Literature Resource Center*; Detroit: Gale 2012.

<sup>53</sup> Melville, Herman. *Moby Dick*. (London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1994), 166.

<sup>54</sup> Melville, Herman. *Moby Dick*. (London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1994), 170.

white whale is the right step to execute the cruel retribution. This is rather their own free decision, but it can be also perceived as the contravention of their freedom, more exactly of their personal freedom and the most important right in human life, which is a right for life. By sailing to kill the white whale there exist an inevitable possibility that the whole crew including listing really each member of Pequod is still exposed to death. And because Ahab cannot be dissuaded from his monomaniac action, no one from his crew can decide in accordance to his own consciousness which means that the freedom of decision making is highly restricted. The only member of the whole group of sailors, the narrator Ishmael, survives this process which can be paradoxically understood as redemption of Ahab and his soul. The reason for this statement is that after his death the inner side of this obsessed and biased maniac against the free will of nature itself, in this case represented by Moby Dick, is finally free, independent and can rest in serenity with consciousness he did his best for his own vengeance.

Negative characters can be found also in *The Scarlet Letter*, naturally. But it may be difficult to recognize whom the readers should apprehend as a negative one. Starting with the orientation to the Puritan society, the idea of grasping that Puritan society was right when judging Hester Prynne's behavior and act of sinful love appears. In the period of Puritanism the fear of God, the respect, the negativity of any kind of joy and pleasure was something absolutely natural and it was even inconceivable to denigrate these values and principles. In this perspective it could be common to accept this concept and thereby to acknowledge Puritan's relationship to Hester as a correct act. However when taking into consideration that this paper deals with the theme of freedom, the negativity of Puritan society should be perceived as legitimate feeling. Hester Prynne is an adult person who can be fully responsible for her acting which is naturally in accordance to her free will and conscience. After the revelation of the sin, Puritans start to try to master and command Hester's human nature, firstly by putting her in prison, then by forcing her to wear the scarlet letter "A" on her breasts and after that by forcing her to confess and disclose the name of Pearl's father. This action, performed from the side of society, must be naturally understood as negative in relation to Hester because, manifestly, Puritans try to restrict her personal freedom. And this does not concern only Hester, but also her daughter Pearl. Because of her origin she is sentenced to live on the periphery of the town with her mother and not to meet with other town people very often. This fact, evidently, leads to Pearl's close relationship of her person with the nature. The reader does not sympathize with

decisions and behavior of Puritans because it seems to be natural to sympathize with Hester and Pearl. Puritan society wanted them to admit their distinction of other inhabitants of the town and subsequently forced them to live in quite different way than others. This act of the suppression of their freedom, when considering the fact this all was done by force, seems to be apparent and negative in this point of view.

In *The Scarlet Letter* there is quite conspicuous character which can appear as the negative one. Roger Chillingworth is a convenient character in this case. Husband of Hester Prynne, who was considered dead, suddenly appeared in New England like a bolt from the blue. As a part of his perfectly planned intention, after the discovery that his wife has cheated on him and fornicated, he starts to repress Hester's psychological state and her free will. Chillingworth's pressure is running high, especially when he ascertains who is a father of little Pearl and thus Hester's lover. Under the pretext of assistance, concern of knowledge of books and also healing Arthur Dimmesdale's deteriorating health state, Chillingworth continues in his hidden maltreatment. His negativity is based on his persistent pressure on Hester's and Arthur's physical side especially when he tries to force both of them to make a confession of their sin. Roger Chillingworth seems to be quite complex character of the Hawthorne's romance. From one perspective it can be fairly comprehensible to perceive his manners because he demands the right for his wife Hester and the lucid point is his disfavor of Hester's concealed relationship with the unknown man, Pearl's father. But when concerning the freedom of the main heroine it seems to be obvious to put him into the notional negative column.

In fact he can be perceived as a negative character in this romance because his inner side is full of hate and anger. There has never been even any indication of love between Chillingworth and Hester so this results into his obsession of psychical torture of two lovers. From this statement the fact of his obsession of revenge is obviously inevitable. He apparently did not break Puritan laws or terms of the town society, but his disaster happened because of himself.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> See Jian, Wang. "Sweet" moral blossom: Comment on the main characters in Hawthorne's *The scarlet letter*" *Sino-US English Teaching*, Vol. 4, No. 12 (December 2007); 67.

This statement leads to the thought that he sympathizes with Puritan society occurring in town, which also means the oppression and lack of freedom.

Nevertheless his effort to destroy Hester's and Arthur's personality comes to an end in the moment of Dimmesdale's death. "Nothing was more remarkable than the change which took place, almost immediately after Mr. Dimmesdale's death, in the appearance and demeanor of the old man known as Roger Chillingworth."<sup>56</sup> This exact moment shows that Chillingworth's task of life finishes. This man lived on his obsession to torment and after Dimmesdale's death there is no other reason for staying alive because he has no one else to hurt and persecute.<sup>57</sup> The character of Chillingworth could be certainly understood as a smart and intelligent one, but he felt the lack of human nature, the perception of him as a ghost is entirely appropriate.<sup>58</sup> An indefatigable effort of questing for the secret destroys his soul and actually his whole personality. Thus after Dimmesdale's confession and his subsequent death, Chillingworth does not have any other reason to live because the fulfillment of his life was determined by the pursuit and the destruction of Hester and Arthur.

In both Melville's and Hawthorne's romances there are specific marks which are similar or identical. When analyzing negative characters in connection with the theme of freedom, this concerns Roger Chillingworth in *The Scarlet Letter* and Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick*. The equal feature of these characters is their obsession with the vengeance, even though the ways of its exertion and execution differ. The similarity, evident from the analysis, is their existence based on the oppression of freedom. Nevertheless Ahab dies during the fight with the white whale Moby Dick, but Roger deceases after the purpose of his action cannot be continued anymore because the source of his moral sustenance dies.

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<sup>56</sup> Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*. (London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1994), 220-221.

<sup>57</sup> See Nathaniel, Hawthorne. *The Scarlet Letter*. (London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1994), 220-221.

<sup>58</sup> See Jian, Wang. "Sweet" moral blossom: Comment on the main characters in Hawthorne's *The scarlet letter*" *Sino-US English Teaching*, Vol. 4, No. 12 (December 2007); 67.

## CONCLUSION

According to the fact that both Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne were deeply influenced by the group of Transcendentalists and moreover they were connected by the close friendship there can be an apparent indication for each reader to cross his mind with the idea that also their books and pieces may have several attributes and signs in common. With regard to the fact that this paper deals with the theme of freedom there appears a necessity to mention the truth that in both books readers find the connection between human beings and natural phenomena. Due to the fact that nature and natural symbols represent the theme of freedom in these pieces of work, there is obvious evidence that analysis of characters needs to include its continuity and relation with the nature. The main goal of this thesis was the discovery of the ways how the theme of freedom is displayed in both romances. Even though in both these masterpieces of Melville and Hawthorne there can be found similar and common features, those attributes are displayed in quite different ways.

Two characters who fight for freedom distinctively – Hester Prynne and the white whale Moby Dick – are one of the key figures performing in these novels. It is important to mention that the story of *The Scarlet Letter* is not being enacted in Hawthorne's times but is set in Puritan's New England in the period of seventeenth century. In view of this fact it is obvious to consider this book the historical romance which is typical for Hawthorne's writing. This fact is different in relation to *Moby Dick* which was written in nineteenth century, more precisely in 1850. On the contrary of Hawthorne's creations, Melville's romance of *Moby Dick* is oriented on adventure and risky venture, including pursuit of the white whale and on the other hand the oppression of the crew, sailing on the board of Pequod ship as well.

In both books the characters struggle for being free and elusiveness in different ways. The symbol of nature itself – the white whale Moby Dick – represents the infinite latitude which is distinguished by the impossibility of catching and killing it. In the course of this whole romance by Melville there is an omnipresence of the allusion that catching and murder of this white whale is absolutely unfeasible. Defiance of Captain Ahab's obsession and the disobedience to let him execute the revenge are characteristic for Moby Dick which shows the unacceptability to dominate and take control over the natural phenomena. The fact that no one is able to conquer the naturalness or freedom is also obvious from Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. Hester stands alone in front of the whole Puritan society

because of her profane sin of extramarital act of love with minister Dimmesdale who is the father of their illegitimate daughter Pearl. The sign of her struggle for freedom is perceived especially by her docility to wear the scarlet letter “A” on her chest, upbringing of her child and also by acceptance of living on the suburbs of the town. Symbols for freedom are represented by the forestry and also by Pearl who was born out of wedlock. Pearl is characterized for her spontaneity and naturalness which gives the Puritan’s society the impression of the hint that this little girl is a kind of devil, absolutely unruly to behave according to the standards and conventions.

Naturally if the positive characters occur there, it seems to be apparent to mention also the negative ones. In case of *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby Dick* there appear several phenomena which can be considered the unfavorable because of its effort to take possession of naturalness. Common feature of characters, founded in both books, is the desire of vengeance, deeply embedded inside the heart and mind of man. Talking about this issue more accurately, the way of this behavior is being expressed by the obsession of men to oppress the freedom of other human beings or natural phenomena. This instance concerns Captain Ahab, Roger Chillingworth but also Puritan society of Salem where the story of *The Scarlet Letter* takes place. The evil which is grounded in their mania to harm and injure someone else is being intensified by the inability to accomplish their goal. In case of Captain Ahab the readers notice that he suffers to the consequences of his craze for the retribution to capture and kill Moby Dick by death of Ahab himself and actually the whole crew of Pequod. Repression of freedom can be considered the joint feature of both books. Sea, the sperm whales and white whales express the natural symbols of free will and liberty in *Moby Dick*. Forestry, brook and illegitimate daughter of Hester and Arthur portray the natural signs of freedom in Hawthorne’s romance. Forest is the only place where a pair of lovers is able to talk overtly and without interdictions or commandments of Puritans. Brook displays the imaginary border between freedom and restriction closely connected with prejudices and conventions such as reverence of God or condemnation of joy and happiness, so peculiar for the Puritan period.

After my detailed analysis of the theme of freedom in two great writers’ masterpieces of nineteenth century which was the period of American Renaissance, I found out that *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby Dick*, the two romances were not only some of ordinary love stories or adventure stories. When realizing that Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville were influenced by the thoughts of Transcendentalists’ group, it is evident that

their focus and specialization will be heading to the nature. This is a correlative of the fact that the theme of freedom is closely connected with the natural symbols. Those authors possibly wanted to put the emphasis on the importance of individualism and the inner side of human beings, especially Nathaniel Hawthorne in his masterpiece, but this point concerns also Herman Melville because his Captain Ahab is very complex character who can be perceived from different points of view. This is the case of Roger Chillingworth as well. The key point of this statement is the perspective in which the readers understand the positivity and negativity.

Both these pieces belong to the masterwork of nineteenth century and actually the whole American literature and it is obvious that a large participation of the themes, so particular and specific for the period of American Renaissance, is the reason for this merit.

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