

Metaphors as the Construction of Ideology and Power Relations in *The Scarlet Letter*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of metaphors in constructing ideology and power relations in *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne using the Critical Discourse Analysis framework proposed by Norman Fairclough. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method with textual data derived from metaphorical expressions in the novel. The analysis is conducted through three dimensions: text, discursive practice, and social practice. The findings reveal that metaphors function not only as stylistic devices but also as ideological instruments that represent moral values, social stigma, and mechanisms of control within Puritan society. Metaphors such as scarlet letter, moral wilderness, and dungeon of his own heart construct meanings related to sin, isolation, and internal conflict, while simultaneously reflecting oppressive power relations. Furthermore, the study shows that metaphors also serve as a medium of resistance, where symbols of punishment are transformed into sources of identity and empowerment. Thus, this study demonstrates that metaphors play a significant role in constructing, maintaining, and negotiating ideology and power relations in literary texts.

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INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals understand social reality, particularly through literary texts that reflect cultural values, beliefs, and power structures. Literature is not merely an artistic expression but also a medium through which ideology is constructed, maintained, and negotiated. In this context,

language functions as a social practice that is closely related to power and ideology. According to Norman Fairclough (1995), discourse is a form of social practice that contributes to the production and reproduction of social structures, including relations of power and dominance. Therefore, analyzing language use in literary works is essential to uncover the underlying ideological meanings embedded within the text.

One of the most significant linguistic features in literary texts is metaphor. Metaphor is not only a stylistic device but also a conceptual tool that shapes how individuals perceive and interpret reality. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) argue that metaphor is fundamental to human cognition, enabling people to understand abstract concepts through more concrete experiences. In literary discourse, metaphors often carry deeper meanings that go beyond literal interpretation, representing emotional states, social conditions, and ideological perspectives. Recent studies indicate that metaphors play a significant role in framing social realities and constructing ideological meanings within discourse. In addition, metaphor has been widely discussed as a persuasive and ideological tool in discourse, particularly in shaping how individuals perceive social reality (Charteris-Black, 2004; Kövecses, 2010). From a broader linguistic perspective, language also functions as a social semiotic system through which meaning is constructed and interpreted within specific contexts (Halliday, 1994).

The novel *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne is a prominent literary work that richly employs metaphorical expressions to depict the complexities of Puritan society. The novel portrays strict moral values, social judgment, and systems of punishment that regulate individual behavior. Through the character of Hester Prynne, Hawthorne illustrates the tension between individual identity and societal norms, particularly in relation to sin, guilt, and punishment. The metaphors used in the novel not only enhance its aesthetic quality but also function as a means of representing ideological structures and power relations within the society.

Previous studies have examined *The Scarlet Letter* from various perspectives, including psychological, feminist, and moral approaches. However, many of these studies tend to focus on thematic interpretations without deeply analyzing the linguistic features that construct those meanings. On the other hand, recent research in Critical Discourse Analysis highlights the importance of examining language as a tool for ideological construction and power negotiation. Studies by Liu (2025), Mahmudah (2026), and Mohammed (2025) demonstrate that metaphor serves as a powerful instrument in representing ideology and shaping social perception. Nevertheless, research that specifically integrates metaphor analysis with Critical Discourse Analysis in literary texts, particularly using Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, remains limited. Furthermore, Critical Discourse Analysis has been applied in various contexts to examine how discourse reproduces power

and ideology, including in media, political, and literary texts (van Dijk, 2008; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). However, the integration of metaphor analysis within this framework in literary studies remains underexplored.

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze the role of metaphors in constructing ideology and power relations in *The Scarlet Letter* using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis. This research focuses on identifying both explicit and implicit metaphors and examining how they function across three dimensions: text, discursive practice, and social practice. By doing so, this study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how language, particularly metaphor, operates as a medium of ideological construction and power representation in literary discourse.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the use of metaphors in *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. A qualitative method is chosen because this research aims to interpret and explain the meanings embedded in the text, particularly those related to the construction of ideology and power relations. The study focuses on understanding how metaphorical expressions function within the discourse rather than measuring them quantitatively.

The data for this study are drawn from the novel *The Scarlet Letter*, specifically the sentences and phrases containing metaphorical expressions. The data consist of both explicit and implicit metaphorical expressions identified from the text. Data were collected through documentation techniques by carefully reading the novel, identifying metaphorical expressions, and classifying them based on their types and relevance to the research focus.

The data analysis is carried out using the Critical Discourse Analysis framework proposed by Norman Fairclough (1995; 2001), which consists of three dimensions: text, discursive practice, and social practice. In the text dimension, the analysis focuses on linguistic features such as vocabulary, sentence structure, and metaphorical expressions used in the novel. In the discursive practice dimension, the analysis examines how the metaphors are produced and interpreted within the literary context. In the social practice dimension, the analysis explores how these metaphors reflect broader social, cultural, and ideological structures, particularly those related to Puritan society.

The process of data analysis involves several stages, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction is conducted by selecting relevant metaphorical expressions that relate to ideology and power relations. Data display is presented in the form of descriptive analysis to explain the meanings of the metaphors and their functions within the discourse. Finally, conclusions are drawn

based on the interpretation of the findings in relation to the theoretical framework used in this study.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study applies theoretical triangulation by comparing the analysis results with relevant theories of metaphor and Critical Discourse Analysis. In addition, repeated examination of the data is conducted to maintain consistency and reliability in interpretation. Through this method, the study aims to provide a systematic and in-depth analysis of how metaphors construct ideology and power relations in literary discourse. This approach is also supported by previous discourse studies which emphasize the importance of analyzing language as a social practice that reflects ideological structures (Gee, 2014; Fowler, 1991).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings reveal that metaphorical expressions in *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne function not merely as stylistic devices but as significant linguistic resources that construct ideological meanings and reflect power relations within Puritan society. Through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis, metaphors are analyzed at the textual level as well as in relation to broader discursive and social contexts. The analysis identifies recurring patterns of metaphor usage that represent control, stigma, isolation, and resistance.

“The founders of a new colony, whatever Utopia of human virtue and happiness they might originally project, have invariably recognized it among their earliest practical necessities to allot a portion of the virgin soil as a cemetery, and another portion as the site of a prison.” (Hawthorne, 1994, p. 40)

This excerpt exemplifies the metaphor “Utopia of human virtue and happiness”, which initially constructs an idealized vision of Puritan society. However, the juxtaposition with “cemetery” and “prison” disrupts this idealism, revealing an underlying structure of control and punishment. At the textual level, the contrast between idealism and institutional discipline highlights the paradox of a society that claims moral perfection while simultaneously relying on mechanisms of repression. Discursively, this metaphor frames social order as inseparable from punishment, thereby normalizing control as a foundational necessity. Socially, it reflects an ideology in which moral authority is legitimized through surveillance and discipline.

"But she, – the naughty baggage, – little will she care what they put upon the bodice of her gown! Why, look you, she may cover it with a brooch, or such like heathenish adornment, and so walk the streets as brave as ever!" (Hawthorne, 1994, p. 44)

The metaphorical labeling "naughty baggage" functions as a discursive tool of social judgment that reduces Hester to a morally inferior identity. At the same time, the ironic use of "brave" suggests a subversive reinterpretation of her position. Linguistically, this reflects evaluative metaphor, where meaning is shaped through judgmental language. Discursively, the community's voice constructs a stigmatized identity for Hester, reinforcing gendered moral expectations. Socially, this metaphor exposes patriarchal control embedded within Puritan ideology, where women's bodies and behaviors are subjected to public scrutiny.

"It had the effect of a spell, taking her out of the ordinary relations with humanity, and enclosing her in a sphere by herself." (Hawthorne, 1994, p. 46)

The metaphor "the effect of a spell" represents social stigma as an almost supernatural force, while "sphere by herself" constructs isolation as a separate social reality. At the textual level, this metaphor intensifies the emotional and psychological impact of exclusion. Discursively, it naturalizes marginalization by presenting it as an inevitable consequence. Socially, it reflects how ideological systems enforce exclusion, positioning individuals outside the accepted social order.

"It was the exhilarating effect – upon a prisoner just escaped from the dungeon of his own heart – of breathing the wild, free atmosphere of an unredeemed, unchristianized, lawless region." (Hawthorne, 1994, p. 172)

The metaphor "dungeon of his own heart" portrays internal guilt as imprisonment, while "wild, free atmosphere" represents liberation beyond societal constraints. Linguistically, this contrast establishes a binary between confinement and freedom. Discursively, it frames emotional struggle as a consequence of ideological pressure. Socially, it reveals the tension between individual desire and rigid moral structures imposed by Puritan society.

"The Scarlet Letter was her passport into regions where other women dared not tread." (Hawthorne, 1994, p. 170)

The metaphor “passport” signifies a shift in meaning from punishment to empowerment. At the textual level, the symbol of shame is reinterpreted as access. Discursively, this indicates that meaning is not fixed but negotiated. Socially, it reflects resistance, where imposed stigma becomes a source of identity and agency.

“She had wandered, without rule or guidance, in a moral wilderness.”
(Hawthorne, 1994, p. 170)

The metaphor “moral wilderness” constructs deviation as a loss of direction. Linguistically, it associates morality with spatial orientation. Discursively, it reinforces the idea that moral deviation leads to social dislocation. Socially, it reflects how ideology frames nonconformity as chaos.

“The child could not be made amenable to rules. In giving her existence, a great law had been broken; and the result was a being whose elements were perhaps beautiful and brilliant, but all in disorder.” (Hawthorne, 1994, p. 76)

The metaphor describing Pearl as “in disorder” reflects the perception of her existence as a disruption of social order. At the textual level, identity is constructed through moral violation. Discursively, this positions Pearl as a living representation of sin. Socially, it reveals how ideology shapes identity even at the level of birth.

“The very ideal of ignominy was embodied and made manifest in this contrivance of wood and iron.” (Hawthorne, 1994, p. 47)

This metaphor transforms the scaffold into a physical embodiment of shame. Linguistically, abstract humiliation is materialized. Discursively, punishment becomes a public spectacle. Socially, this reflects how power operates through visibility and public discipline.

“The Scarlet Letter had not done its office.” (Hawthorne, 1994, p. 141)

Here, the metaphor personifies *The Scarlet Letter* as an agent with a function. The failure of this “function” indicates the limits of symbolic control. Discursively, it challenges the effectiveness of ideological enforcement. Socially, it suggests that individuals can resist imposed meanings.

“She stood apart from moral interests, yet close beside them, like a ghost that revisits the familiar fireside and can no longer make itself seen or felt; no more

smile with the household joy, or mourn with the kindred sorrow” (Hawthorne, 1994, p. 71)

The metaphor “like a ghost” constructs Hester as socially invisible. Linguistically, presence is contrasted with absence. Discursively, she is acknowledged yet excluded. Socially, this reflects marginalization within a moral community.

“But, mother, tell me now! Is there such a Black Man? And didst thou ever meet him? And is this his mark?’ ‘Wilt thou let me be at peace, if I once tell thee?’ asked her mother. ‘Yes, if thou tellest me all,’ answered Pearl. ‘Once in my life I met the Black Man!’ said her mother. This scarlet letter is his mark!” (Hawthorne, 1994, p. 158)

The metaphor “mark” associates sin with ownership and identity. Discursively, religious ideology frames sin as a permanent label. Socially, this reinforces moral control through symbolic marking.

“No, Hester, no!” replied the clergyman. “There is no substance in it! It is cold and dead, and can do nothing for me! Of penance, I have had enough! Of penitence, there has been none! Else, I should long ago have thrown off these garments of mock holiness...” (Hawthorne, 1994, p. 163)

This metaphor critiques religious hypocrisy by framing holiness as clothing. Linguistically, identity is shown as performative. Discursively, it exposes contradictions within moral authority. Socially, it challenges institutional power.

“O Hester, thou art my better angel!” (Hawthorne, 1994, p. 172)

The metaphor “better angel” represents moral guidance and redemption. Discursively, it constructs a narrative of transformation. Socially, it reflects the possibility of moral negotiation.

“...the ghastly miracle” (Hawthorne, 1994, p. 217)

This metaphor dramatizes confession as both horrifying and transformative. Discursively, it amplifies public reaction. Socially, it shows how truth disrupts established norms.

“...clear as the mid-day sunshine... a false and sin-stained creature of the dust.”
(Hawthorne, 1994, p. 220)

The metaphor equates truth with absolute clarity and human nature with impurity. Discursively, it reinforces moral absolutism. Socially, it reflects rigid ideological structures.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that metaphorical expressions in the novel consistently construct meanings related to social control, stigma, and resistance. These metaphors operate across multiple levels, shaping both the narrative and the ideological framework of the text. Through these patterns, the novel reveals how language functions as a powerful tool in representing and negotiating power relations within society.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that metaphorical expressions in *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne function as central discursive mechanisms that construct, reproduce, and negotiate ideology and power relations within Puritan society. Drawing upon the Critical Discourse Analysis framework proposed by Norman Fairclough (1995; 2001), this discussion elaborates how metaphors operate across the three interrelated dimensions of discourse: text, discursive practice, and social practice. The analysis demonstrates that metaphor is not merely a stylistic device, but a key linguistic strategy through which social meanings are produced, contested, and transformed. This finding is consistent with van Dijk (2008), who argues that discourse plays a crucial role in reproducing power relations and ideological dominance within society. Similarly, Wodak and Meyer (2016) emphasize that Critical Discourse Analysis investigates how language contributes to the maintenance of social inequality and power structures.

At the textual level, the metaphors identified in the novel function as cognitive and representational tools that shape how abstract concepts such as sin, guilt, punishment, and identity are understood. In line with the theory proposed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), metaphors are fundamental to human cognition, enabling individuals to comprehend complex experiences through familiar conceptual domains. For instance, expressions such as “moral wilderness” and “dungeon of his own heart” transform abstract moral and psychological states into spatial and physical experiences. This conceptual mapping allows readers to perceive moral deviation as a form of disorientation and internal suffering as imprisonment. Such metaphors do not merely describe the characters’ conditions; they actively construct a particular way of understanding morality and human experience. This

perspective is further supported by Kövecses (2010), who states that metaphor functions as a conceptual mechanism that shapes human understanding of abstract experiences. In addition, Charteris-Black (2004) highlights that metaphor carries persuasive power in constructing ideological meanings within discourse.

Moreover, the textual analysis reveals that metaphors frequently operate through binary oppositions, such as purity versus sin, freedom versus confinement, and visibility versus invisibility. These oppositions are evident in metaphors like “prison” and “wild, free atmosphere”, which contrast restriction with liberation. This binary structure reinforces ideological distinctions between conformity and deviance, suggesting that individuals who adhere to societal norms are positioned within order, while those who deviate are associated with chaos or isolation. Thus, metaphors contribute to the formation of a structured moral universe within the text, where meaning is organized through oppositional categories.

At the level of discursive practice, metaphors function as tools for constructing and circulating social meanings within a particular cultural and historical context. The representation of Hester Prynne through expressions such as “naughty baggage” and “like a ghost” reflects how discourse produces and reinforces social identities. These metaphors are not neutral descriptions but are embedded in the collective voice of the Puritan community, which imposes moral judgment upon the individual. As Fairclough (1995) argues, discourse plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals are represented and understood within society. In this case, metaphor becomes a means of labeling, categorizing, and controlling individuals through language.

The discursive construction of Hester’s identity illustrates how power operates through representation. By repeatedly associating Hester with metaphors of shame, isolation, and deviance, the discourse positions her as an outsider within the social structure. This process reflects what Fairclough describes as the ideological function of discourse, where language contributes to the maintenance of social hierarchies and power relations. The metaphor “sphere by herself”, for example, constructs Hester’s exclusion as a separate social reality, reinforcing the boundary between the “normal” community and the marginalized individual.

In addition to constructing identities, metaphors also shape how social practices are interpreted and justified. The metaphor of the scaffold as the “ideal of ignominy” transforms punishment into a symbolic spectacle that reinforces moral norms. Through this metaphor, punishment is not merely a physical act but a performative event that communicates social values to the community. This aligns with Fairclough’s concept of discourse as a social practice that both reflects and shapes institutional structures. The public nature of punishment in the novel demonstrates how discourse operates as a mechanism of social control, where individuals are disciplined through visibility and shame.

At the level of social practice, the analysis reveals that metaphors in the novel are deeply embedded in the ideological framework of Puritan society. The recurring themes of sin, guilt, and redemption are constructed through metaphors that reflect religious beliefs and moral values. For example, the metaphor of the “Black Man” represents sin as a tangible and external force, reinforcing the idea that moral transgression is associated with evil and spiritual corruption. This metaphor reflects the influence of religious discourse in shaping moral understanding, where abstract concepts are personified to make them more concrete and impactful. From a functional linguistic perspective, Halliday (1994) explains that language operates as a system of meaning-making that is closely tied to social context, reinforcing the idea that discourse reflects and constructs social reality.

Furthermore, metaphors such as “garments of mock holiness” expose the contradictions within the ideological system. By representing holiness as a form of clothing, this metaphor suggests that moral identity can be performed rather than genuinely embodied. This challenges the authenticity of religious authority and reveals the potential for hypocrisy within the social structure. In this sense, metaphor not only reinforces ideology but also provides a means of critiquing it.

Another significant finding is that metaphors in the novel allow for the possibility of resistance and reinterpretation. The transformation of *The Scarlet Letter* into a “passport” illustrates how imposed meanings can be redefined by individuals. Initially intended as a symbol of shame, *The Scarlet Letter* becomes a source of identity and empowerment for Hester. This shift in meaning demonstrates that discourse is not fixed but dynamic, allowing for alternative interpretations. Similarly, the metaphor “*The Scarlet Letter* had not done its office” indicates the failure of symbolic control, suggesting that ideological mechanisms are not always effective in shaping individual behavior.

This aspect of resistance is particularly important in understanding the relationship between language and power. While discourse can be used to impose control and maintain social order, it also provides opportunities for individuals to challenge and negotiate dominant meanings. As Fairclough (2001) suggests, discourse is both a site of power and a site of struggle, where competing interpretations coexist. The findings of this study support this view by showing that metaphors in the novel simultaneously reinforce and challenge the ideological structure of Puritan society.

In relation to previous research, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on metaphor and ideology by demonstrating how these elements operate within literary discourse. While studies such as Liu (2025) and Mahmudah (2026) emphasize the role of metaphor in constructing ideological meanings, they primarily focus on political or media discourse. This study extends their findings by applying a Critical Discourse Analysis framework to a literary text, highlighting the relevance

of CDA in literary studies. By integrating linguistic analysis with social and ideological interpretation, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of how meaning is constructed in literature. Recent studies also support these findings, such as Obasi and Andy (2025), who demonstrate that metaphor plays a significant role in shaping ideological framing in discourse, and Wafa (2025), who highlights how language constructs leadership and power relations in social contexts.

Additionally, the findings of this study highlight the importance of examining metaphor within its broader social and cultural context. Rather than treating metaphors as isolated linguistic features, this study demonstrates that they are embedded in complex systems of meaning that reflect historical and ideological conditions. The Puritan society depicted in the novel is characterized by strict moral codes and hierarchical power structures, which are reinforced through language. By analyzing metaphors within this context, the study reveals how language functions as a tool for both maintaining and challenging social order.

Overall, the discussion confirms that metaphors in *The Scarlet Letter* play a crucial role in constructing and negotiating ideology and power relations. Through the interaction of textual, discursive, and social dimensions, metaphors shape how individuals perceive and understand moral values, identity, and authority. They not only reflect social realities but also actively contribute to their formation. Therefore, metaphor can be understood as a central element in the relationship between language and power, particularly within literary discourse.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that metaphor is a powerful discursive resource that operates across multiple levels of meaning. By applying Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, the study reveals how metaphors function as tools of ideological construction, social control, and resistance. This highlights the importance of linguistic analysis in understanding the broader social and cultural implications of literary texts, as well as the dynamic interplay between language, ideology, and power.

In addition to the previously discussed dimensions, it is important to emphasize that metaphors in *The Scarlet Letter* also function as a means of constructing collective memory and shared moral consciousness within Puritan society. Through repeated metaphorical patterns, the narrative reinforces a communal understanding of sin, punishment, and redemption that becomes internalized by both characters and readers. This process aligns with Norman Fairclough's notion that discourse not only reflects social reality but also actively shapes it by embedding certain meanings as "common sense." For example, metaphors associated with shame and visibility, such as the scaffold and *The Scarlet Letter* itself, create a shared symbolic system through which moral values are communicated and maintained.

Furthermore, metaphors in the novel contribute to the construction of what can be described as moral surveillance. The constant visibility of Hester's scarlet letter

functions as a metaphorical extension of societal observation, where the individual is continuously monitored and judged. This reflects a broader social mechanism in which power is exercised not only through institutions but also through internalized norms. The metaphorical language used in the text reinforces this system by making surveillance appear natural and inevitable. In this sense, metaphor operates as a subtle yet effective tool of ideological control, shaping how individuals perceive their own actions and identities within the social structure.

Another significant aspect of metaphor usage in the novel is its role in mediating emotional and psychological experiences. Metaphors such as “dungeon of his own heart” and “sorrow-blackened” translate internal struggles into tangible imagery, allowing readers to engage more deeply with the characters’ experiences. This supports the cognitive function of metaphor as proposed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, where abstract emotions are conceptualized through physical or spatial domains. However, within the context of Critical Discourse Analysis, these metaphors also reveal how emotional experiences are shaped by social and ideological pressures. The characters’ internal conflicts are not purely personal but are influenced by the expectations and judgments imposed by society.

In this regard, the interplay between individual agency and social constraint becomes particularly evident. While metaphors often reflect the dominance of ideological structures, they also provide a space for alternative interpretations and meanings. The redefinition of *The Scarlet Letter* as a symbol of strength demonstrates how individuals can reinterpret imposed identities and challenge dominant discourse. This suggests that language is not only a tool of control but also a resource for empowerment. As Fairclough (2001) emphasizes, discourse is inherently dynamic and contested, allowing for the coexistence of multiple perspectives and meanings.

Moreover, the metaphorical construction of identity in the novel highlights the intersection between language, gender, and power. The negative labeling of Hester through metaphors such as “naughty baggage” reflects the gendered nature of moral judgment in Puritan society. Women are subjected to stricter standards of behavior, and their identities are more readily defined by moral transgressions. This indicates that metaphor plays a role in reinforcing gender inequality by shaping how individuals are perceived and evaluated. At the same time, Hester’s resistance to these labels demonstrates the possibility of redefining identity beyond socially imposed categories.

The analysis also reveals that metaphors contribute to the temporal dimension of discourse, linking past actions with present identities and future consequences. *The Scarlet Letter*, as a persistent symbol, serves as a metaphorical reminder of past sin that continues to influence the present. This temporal continuity reinforces the idea that identity is not fixed but is continuously constructed through discourse. It also reflects the Puritan belief in moral accountability, where past actions have lasting

implications. Through this mechanism, metaphor functions as a bridge between individual experience and collective ideology.

In addition, the findings suggest that metaphor plays a crucial role in shaping readers' interpretation of the narrative. By presenting complex social and moral issues through metaphorical language, the text invites readers to engage in interpretive processes that go beyond literal meaning. This aligns with the idea that literary discourse operates on multiple levels, where meaning is co-constructed by the author and the reader. Metaphors guide this process by providing conceptual frameworks through which readers can understand the characters and their experiences. As a result, the ideological messages embedded in the text are not passively received but actively interpreted.

Finally, the integration of metaphor analysis with Critical Discourse Analysis in this study demonstrates the value of combining linguistic and social approaches in literary research. While traditional literary analysis often focuses on thematic interpretation, this study shows that examining linguistic features such as metaphor can provide deeper insights into how meaning is constructed and conveyed. By situating metaphors within their discursive and social contexts, the analysis reveals the complex relationship between language, ideology, and power. This approach not only enhances our understanding of *The Scarlet Letter* but also contributes to broader discussions on the role of language in shaping social reality.

Overall, this extended discussion reinforces the argument that metaphor is a central element in the construction of ideological meaning within literary texts. Through its ability to represent, reinforce, and challenge social norms, metaphor serves as a powerful tool for both maintaining and transforming discourse. The findings of this study highlight the importance of considering metaphor as a dynamic and multifunctional aspect of language, particularly in relation to issues of power and ideology. By examining metaphor through the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of how language operates as a site of both domination and resistance in literary discourse. These findings also align with Simpson (2004), who emphasizes the importance of stylistic analysis in uncovering deeper meanings in literary texts, as well as Cameron and Maslen (2010), who highlight the role of metaphor analysis in revealing underlying patterns of thought and ideology.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that metaphorical expressions in *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne play a crucial role in constructing, maintaining, and negotiating ideology and power relations within Puritan society. Through the application of the Critical Discourse Analysis framework proposed by Norman Fairclough, the findings demonstrate that metaphors operate across textual,

discursive, and social dimensions, functioning as key instruments in shaping meaning and social reality.

At the textual level, metaphors serve as cognitive and representational tools that translate abstract concepts such as sin, guilt, punishment, and identity into concrete and relatable imagery. At the level of discursive practice, metaphors contribute to the construction of social identities, particularly in positioning individuals as either conforming members or marginalized subjects within the community. At the level of social practice, metaphors reflect and reinforce the ideological structures of Puritan society, where moral values are closely tied to systems of control, surveillance, and public judgment.

Importantly, the study also reveals that metaphors are not fixed in meaning but are dynamic and open to reinterpretation. The transformation of *The Scarlet Letter* from a symbol of shame into a source of empowerment illustrates how individuals can negotiate and challenge dominant ideological meanings. This indicates that discourse is not only a site of domination but also a space for resistance and agency.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the field of linguistics and literary studies by demonstrating the effectiveness of integrating metaphor analysis with Critical Discourse Analysis in examining literary texts. It highlights that language, particularly metaphor, is not merely a medium of expression but a powerful tool that shapes social perception, constructs identity, and reflects power relations.

However, this study is limited to the analysis of a single literary work and focuses primarily on metaphor as the main linguistic feature. Therefore, future research is recommended to explore other linguistic elements, such as symbolism, narrative structure, or intertextuality, and to apply different discourse approaches in analyzing literary texts. Expanding the scope of research may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how language functions in constructing ideology across various contexts.

In conclusion, metaphor in *The Scarlet Letter* functions as a dynamic discursive resource that not only reflects social reality but also actively participates in shaping and transforming it. Through its interaction with ideology and power, metaphor becomes a central element in understanding the complex relationship between language, society, and meaning in literary discourse. This study also contributes to the development of Critical Discourse Analysis in literary studies by demonstrating the applicability of Fairclough's framework in analyzing metaphor as a site of ideological struggle.

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