

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE CUYO
FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA Y LETRAS
DEPARTAMENTO DE INGLÉS
TESIS DE LICENCIATURA EN FILOLOGÍA INGLESA. ORIENTACIÓN
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Hell, Heaven and Alchemy in Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter" according to Gnosticism

Name: Nora Celina Casanova
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Register Number: 18926
Project Director: Marcela Raggio

INTRODUCTION

Topic:

According to Gnosticism, the original sin which prompted man to be expelled from Heaven was the sin against the Holy Spirit. This offence would be strictly connected to sexuality, consisting mainly on fornication and adultery. The disobedient behavior towards the Lord's Laws, then, made God banish sinners to a place where they should suffer until they could be redeemed by their own good deeds and saintly conduct. In *The Scarlet Letter*, by Nathaniel Hawthorne, the main characters have to suffer the consequences of their sin and struggle against their own nature to achieve redemption and be purified.

Hypothesis:

If the contact Hawthorne had with esoteric fraternities made him aware of the purport of esoteric symbolism present in his novel, then it can be said that his work condenses his knowledge of the occult sciences (as explained by Gnosticism).

If Gnostic philosophy considers lust to be the original sin, then, from the Gnostic perspective, Hawthorne's novel would recreate human's expulsion from Eden and their transit through hell until they overcome their innate frailty and achieve the dignity to return to paradise.

Since an exoteric study of Hawthorne's work has been unable to solve the riddles of symbolism and allegory presented by the author, then an exhaustive examination of hermetic symbolism and its real meaning would be required.

If a same mould –esoteric Gnosticism- can serve to interpret the symbolism and allegories of the novel in an integral way- then an archetypal matrix could serve to explain other works by the same author.

Description of the problem:

Taking into account that the literary construction of the novel presents apparent ambiguities of symbolic elements, and therefore, the work seems to be at times contradictory or confusing, the current analysis pretends to redefine man's fall and his return to Heaven, in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*. In doing so, it will be inevitable to search within the deepest areas of human nature. As a matter of fact, when trying to define the problem, this complex narration presents us with Fred Marcus claims in his research that,

While further allegorical implications might be pursued, Hawthorne's ambiguities permeate the novel suggesting that absolutes of allegory be evaluated with caution. Hawthorne, like a twentieth century psychologist, permits his paradoxes in *The Scarlet Letter* to point to a pluralism more complex than allegory allows. (Marcus, 1962: 453)

Undoubtedly, most readers have probably noticed that the narration constitutes a very complex allegory and has been internally constructed according to parameters, symbolism and metaphors that, apparently, only the author could accurately explain. These devices also seem to be independent from the language used by his contemporary writers or whose connotation simply varies in an "irregular" way in comparison to other works from the author written more or less within the same time period. Taking into account that though this masterpiece reflects Hawthorne's stern preoccupation and impressive techniques to fulfill the requirements of textual unity, the great allegory of the novel may constitute an hermetic whole; and the "precisely appropriate point of view" –as the author himself would refer to these dilemmas- to decipher the allegory has not had a satisfactory explanation until these days. This study aims to unveil the riddle and decode the essential and profound purport of the work.

To illuminate these aspects, the reference to the Holy Scriptures will be indispensable. However, given the esoteric nature of Hawthorne's novel, it will also be necessary to appeal to a source which allows the detailed explanation of the complex signification processes that converge in an unusual way in *The Scarlet Letter*. Therefore, Gnosticism can be considered one of the most coherent approaches to explain the reality present in the novel as well as the rest of Hawthorne's work.

This analysis proposes a focus on the original sin, through alchemy, to be able to explain man's expulsion from Eden, his stay in hell and his way back to paradise.

Current state of the matter:

Although the topics previously mentioned have been thoroughly studied by critics, in general, none of the proposals has arrived at concrete and convincing conclusions not only about Hawthorne's works, but also about other important writers, whose deep knowledge of ultrasensorial realities –such as Shakespeare, Goethe, Dante, Shelley, Hesse, etc.- have kept in secret the true meaning of their writings. The truth is that all of these worldwide known celebrities share a common philosophy and the hermetic knowledge of a great secret which transcends historical and socio-cultural settings and could only be publicly known during the twentieth century through Samael Aun Weor and his disciples. This may be the reason why critics in general, disoriented, have not come up with the archetypal matrix that explains Nathaniel Hawthorne's creations in an integral way. Therefore, the different proposals have in several occasions explained certain aspects of some works in a very detailed way, but have irremediably failed to interpret the symbolism present in other works; or, on the contrary, have offered explanations that enlighten certain isolated elements but could never account for the enormous complexity, and at the same time, simplicity of the "germinal vision" – as Borges would call it- from where all Hawthorne's works emerged as individual manifestations of a same truth (Borges, 1974: 670-685)

Mankind's descent to hell and the alchemic practice to return to paradise have been taken as the pivot of this analysis because if there is something in which critics will unavoidably agree, it is the fact that in all Hawthorne's works the treatment of human existence and its moral and religious dilemmas seek to explore the most intimate causes and effects of people's dissociation with their Creator. Additionally, man's redemption or condemnation in each tale is invariably related to a woman.

Therefore, mention should be made of the fact that this novel (as Hawthorne's works in general) has not been formally explored from an esoteric perspective. By the way, the research works that have been carried out so far have in most cases been oriented from an *exoteric* view, that is to say, taking into account variables external to the works, such as the socio-cultural, religious or historical context in which they were written, or even the author's biography. Moreover, the adventurous ones who have tried to understand the most transcendental realities of the texts or the religious vision of the author, have been unable to give account of more than isolated aspects and always offer tentative answers, or moreover pose new questions like, for example, in the following cases:

James E. Miller, in his essay "Hawthorne and Melville: The Unpardonable Sin" (1955), offers an extremely simplistic and subjective analysis in relation to the *unpardonable sin*, as if it was a matter of personal opinion or consisted on subjective or conventional decisions, ignoring the real purpose of the author. Considering his own unfounded hypotheses and lacking real literary and scientific sustenance, he has unavoidably made mistaken judgments about the characters of the stories, only taking into account his own personal feelings. Thus, the taxonomy he offers about the "pardonable" and "unpardonable" characters cannot be seriously taken into consideration.

Likewise, critics such as Joseph T. McCullen and John C. Guilds, authors of "The Unpardonable Sin in Hawthorne: a Re-examination" (1960) do not represent a consistent source for this type of research, since they depart from Miller's text with the pretention of correcting the list of *unpardoned*, even claiming that it was Hawthorne who condemned or saved them, a fact that would constitute a really malevolent game, very far from the philosophical and poetical ideals of the American writer.

Perhaps authors like Neal Frank Doubleday in his "Hawthorne's Inferno" (1940), Henry G. Fairbanks in "Sin, Free Will and 'Pessimism' in Hawthorne" (1956) and D.G Kehl, in "Hawthorne's Vicious Circles: The sphere circle imagery in the four major novels" (1969) may contribute, each from different angles, to confirm the necessity of a logic such as the Gnostic philosophy, that explains the human drama, man's fall and the infernal circle in which humankind seems to be trapped.

Other analyses that may in some way help to comprehend Hawthorne's spiritual thirst to study and transmit a transcendent truth may be "The personality of Hawthorne" (1903) by William Dean Howells; "Three aspects of Hawthorne Puritanism" (1963) by Joseph Schwartz; "Hawthorne's Theory of art" (1968) by R. K. Gupta; and the chapter called "Nathaniel Hawthorne" by Morton D. Zabel (1950); which represent the basis to understand that as all transcendentalists, Hawthorne believed in a reality existing beyond matter that at the same time limits tangible realities according to superior laws.

Objectives:

This study aims to offer an integral interpretation of the novel, being the allegory of man's fall and redemption the crucial elements which convey the main concern of Hawthorne's work. Thereby, the main objective of the research consists on explaining, from the Gnostic perspective, the allegory of man's banishment from Eden, his transit through hell and subsequent efforts to regain paradise in *The Scarlet Letter*. To do so, the following objectives will need to be fulfilled:

- to explore the allegorical setting in Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* and the reasons for man's fall
- to analyze the allegorical roles the characters play in it
- to describe the process the protagonists need to achieve to return back to Heaven
- to analyze the profound reasons Hawthorne offers to explain humans' suffering and the consequences of their sin.

Justification:

On the one hand, as already anticipated, this research will be carried out from an esoteric perspective; that is to say, enlightening aesthetic and philosophical unsolved conflicts, which have been veiled from remote times until today (the reason for this secrecy will not be explained here due to obvious space constraints). Therefore, this kind of study has practically no precedents because of the secrecy not only occultists but also literary geniuses from all times, for instance Hawthorne, have respected and learned to hide

within their valuable writings. At the same time, this arcane philosophy has been a way to keep undisclosed the mysteries that mythology and classical literature of all times has - according to hermetic postulates- hidden from those who did not deserve to have access to the greatest truths of the intangible reality.

On the other hand, this kind of research will unavoidably collaborate not only to explain Hawthorne's novel and work, but also many of the classical texts whose canonic interpretation, often incoherently, has been transmitted (in some cases from ancient times) as the only absolute truth, leaving no possibilities to be publicly reexamined in a scientific and sensible way. Therefore, in most cases, criticism has behaved as an "opinologue" of the Fine Arts. From ancient, mythological and medieval writings, to the greatest renaissance and romantic classics, Gnosis (as well as other few schools) has always offered a constant, and at the same time, specific and integral explanation of each symbol, character, and element for this type of literary writings. However, the mere formulation of the present research does not intend to thoroughly explain everything that has been written until today, since any system of representation which attempted to imitate reality should be endless as the very Truth, but warrant that the source from which light emanates, the truth about universal literature, Gnosis, may be found in the core of this study as well as in the nucleus of every classic.

This research does not intend to affirm that Nathaniel Hawthorne was a Gnostic either. Gnosticism has been just one of the several coherent attempts¹, perhaps one of the most ancient though not the only one, to logically understand human existence. However, Aun Weor's synthesis and explanation of the esotericism of all religions is the most detailed and revealing philosophical and religious approach to explain literature and any phenomena concerning not only literary but also anthropological, genetic and physiological studies, among others.

1 Gnosis: from Greek, *knowledge*.

Method:

This study will appeal to the comparative method between literary text: *The Scarlet Letter*, and a philosophical-religious approach, constituted by a group of Gnostic studies, mainly Samael Aun Weor's to restrict the scope, appealing also to Juan Capazzo, one of Aun Weor's disciples and author of the book *Los Misterios Ocultos del Divino Daimon*. Not only does this viewpoint enlighten the short story from such a coherent and original (in fact esoteric and unknown) perspective, but also offers a strong spiritual support to understand the story at the same time that it provides valuable information to the fields connected to symbolism.

The Holy Bible will also play an important role in this analysis, which necessarily should be confronted with Hawthorne's novel, not only because Hawthorne himself was an esotericist, but also because of the historical and textual references to Puritanism, a doctrine which also understood to a certain extent the negative consequences sexual deviations bring for the soul. In this way, once symbols are detected in Hawthorne's novel, they will be explained through a comparative analysis with the sources mentioned above.

General structure:

The paper will be organized into four major chapters, which encompass the most relevant aspects of the conflict:

- **Man's fall and his seclusion in hell:** analysis of the allegorical treatment of their present condition and the reasons for their banishment from Eden, in order to understand the symbolism used by the author and the allusions to sin in the dreadful drama the characters seem to be trapped in.
- **Lucifer, the Proserpine and the liberation of the human soul:** analysis of the allegoric purport of the antagonists and the role they play in the human drama according to Gnosticism.

- **The sexual alchemic practice and the creation of the existential bodies:** explanation of the real sense of the unpardonable sin stated in the Bible and how the ancient and secret method to go back to Heaven is artistically recreated by Hawthorne in his novel.
- **The rebirth of the Divine Androgynous and the return to paradise:** description of the way in which human redemption is exemplified in the novel and Hawthorne's position in relation to it.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

The conflict over obscure symbols and allegories in Hawthorne's work:

Although a lot has been said about the celebrated author and his emblematic work, criticism has scarcely arrived at concrete, coherent conclusions about the allegorical essence of his stories. The drama of human existence is the central theme in all of them, and therefore, it is crucial to interpret the special way in which Hawthorne deals with this topic. To do so, a thorough analysis would necessarily appeal to the very source from which the works emanated, that would not be Hawthorne, but his spirit, forever present in his writings. This is the reason why, although the current research intends to give an account of the human drama and the allegoric representations in *The Scarlet Letter*, at the same time, it also seeks to offer a concrete interpretation that functions as the basis to understand the rest of his fiction.

In relation to his religious ideals, they have been a frequent source of interest for criticism. It is known that the writer was raised within a Puritan family, in Salem, during the 19th century. Many of his writings, such as his master work *The Scarlet Letter*, reflect the historical, social, cultural and religious context in which he grew up and lived. In addition, even if Hawthorne was always respectful towards Puritanism, it is also known that he showed himself reproachful towards the morals of the time on several occasions (Schwartz, 1963: 192-208). An evident consequence of his discomfort was his participation in the Brook Farm project, through which he tried to "achieve the divinity of his personality"(Zabel, 1950: 175). Regarding the fraternity Hawthorne conformed, Morton Zabel claims that,

It was a kind of idealism whose main doctrines were based upon the supremacy of intuition and consciousness. It held that there is something within man's nature which transcends human experience, **an intuitive and personal revelation of what is good and evil** (...) man is divine because of being man; they believed that this divine individualism must find its discipline in human brotherhood. (...) that was the community that Hawthorne entered in 1841 (Zabel: 176).²

² "Era una especie de idealismo cuyas doctrinas principales se basaban en la supremacía de la intuición y la conciencia. Sostenía que en la naturaleza del hombre hay algo que trasciende la experiencia humana, una revelación **intuitiva y personal de lo que constituye el bien y el mal**. (...) El hombre es divino por ser hombre; y creían que este divino individualismo debe encontrar su disciplina en la hermandad humana (...) Esa era la comunidad en la que ingresó Hawthorne en 1841."

Although the writer deserted some years later, frustrated at the fraternity's project and powerless against the world's destiny, he declared he never felt repentant of being hopeful that the world might change (Zabel, 177). Apparently, this had always been the writer's purpose in writing and although his experience within the fraternity was temporary, the strong influence on Hawthorne's works is noticeable, mainly in the esoteric nature of his creations. This phenomenon can be observed in his allegoric and symbolic use of the language, which has always been a matter of debate. Neal Frank Doubleday describes the reality of the works when claiming that: "Hawthorne does not, in these stories we are surveying, use symbols of definite contemporary reference, even when the themes are obvious in denial of current assumptions about the nature of man" (Doubleday, 1940: 667).

In addition, Gupta also agrees with the fact that the writer's symbolism is closely connected to the world of spiritual truths, which is the pivotal concern of his stories:

Hawthorne regarded symbolism as the chief avenue of communication with the spiritual world. Like Emerson and other transcendentalists, he believed in the pre-eminence of spirit over matter. Hence his preoccupation with symbolism, his habit of looking at material facts as "pasteboard masks", unimportant in themselves, but significant as emblematic of spiritual truths (Gupta, 1968: 319)

For instance, in the introductory chapter of the novel, Nathaniel Hawthorne demonstrates his awareness in respect to his own inner mysterious sphere since he presents himself as "a citizen of somewhere else" (Hawthorne, 1966: 70). Additionally, when describing his relation with the General at the Custom House he refers to himself as one of his "esoteric friends" (Hawthorne: 47). Not only do these comments constitute a kind of warning for those who penetrate his fiction, but also contribute to understanding Hawthorne's previous remark in the same chapter: "The truth seems to be, however, that when he casts his leaves forth upon the wind, the author addresses, not the many who will fling aside his volume, or never take it up, but the few who will understand him better than most of his schoolmates or lifemates" (Hawthorne: 23). In this way, he accepts that his works are unintelligible for the majority of readers as it could be for his closest friends or relatives. Evidently, the reason for this mystery lies on the fact that the truths his work

encloses transcend intellectual or subjective considerations, being only comprehensible for those whose noble and courageous soul has the grace to penetrate its secrets. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize that studying Hawthorne is not an easy task. Yet, the answer to the riddles seem to be in the works themselves, perhaps even in the apparently most insignificant details, and although disentangling the complex net of symbols may be hard and tiresome, it also becomes an exciting and promising challenge. The author claims in the novel that: “there are few things whether in the outward world, or, to a certain depth, in the invisible sphere of thought—few things hidden from the man who devotes himself earnestly and unreservedly to the solution of a mystery” (Hawthorne: 101), and those words will be the guidelines for this study.

Gnosticism as a primary tool to elucidate the meaning of the short story

The current analysis aims to examine the ideals that inspired Hawthorne and functioned as the matrix of all his works. To do so, it is necessary to appeal to Samael Aun Weor's Gnosticism due to the fact that Gnosis comprehends the basic principles of all religions and scientifically explains the profound meaning of any material and spiritual phenomenon. Aun Weor asserts that:

We the Gnostic assert that there is just only one great Religion, and it is TRUTH. We strongly believe that just the one who experiments Truth is deeply religious (...) We should distinguish between Religious ways and Religious Principles (...) The Religious ways are the different systems to teach those principles. The Great Universal, Cosmic, Infinite Religion acquires different shapes, according to the needs of each race and each historical period. In this way, Religious ways have followed one another through millions of years; the successive line of all Religions that have ever existed in the world always reveals the same immutable principles of Truth.

Religion is a property inherent to life as humidity is to the water. A man could not belong to any religion, but in spite of this, be deeply religious. Anyone who is able to experience Truth is deeply religious although he does not belong to any religion (Aun Weor, J, 2003: 46).³

³ “Nosotros los Gnósticos afirmamos que sólo existe una sola gran Religión, y ésta es la VERDAD. Creemos firmemente que sólo aquel que vivencia la Verdad es profundamente Religioso (...) Debemos distinguir entre las formas Religiosas y los principios Religiosos (...) Las formas Religiosas son los distintos sistemas de enseñar esos Principios. La Gran Religión Cósmica Universal Infinita asume distintas formas, según las necesidades de cada raza y de cada época. Así las formas Religiosas se han sucedido unas tras otras a través de millones de años; la cinta sucesiva de todas las Religiones que han existido en el mundo revela siempre los mismos principios inmutables de la Verdad.”

“La Religión es propiedad inherente a la vida como la humedad al agua. Podría un hombre no pertenecer a ninguna religión. Y sin embargo ser profundamente religioso. Todo aquel que sea capaz de vivenciar la Verdad es profundamente religioso aunque no pertenezca a ninguna religión”

Therefore, Aun Weor equates Gnosis to Truth, since he asserts that it constitutes a principle that explains any phenomenon. Additionally, he claims that, "*Gnostic Movement teaches the doctrine of synthesis, contained in substance in all the religions of the world*" (Aun Weor: 73)⁴.

The fact that Gnosis does not contradict what different religions have always claimed, but encompasses them and explains them all, would provide a solid basis to deduce that this philosophical line will contribute to solving this and any other intellectual or religious debate that may rise during the analysis. For this reason, Gnosticism provides the necessary tools to penetrate any kind of doctrine or symbolism without having to appeal to the socio-cultural or historical context of the work, since it is evident that although the author should contextualize his stories in a concrete setting, the transcendental truth he aimed to transmit has nothing to do with cultural, temporary or social limitations.

Jorge L. Borges, in his chapter on Nathaniel Hawthorne in *Otras Inquisiciones*, also agrees with the fact that there is an absolute truth, which was at the root of all his works. The Argentinian writer states that, "in Hawthorne, the germinal version was true, the false, the eventually false were the moralities that he added at the end of the last paragraph or the characters he designed, he made up to represent it" (Borges: 680)⁵.

Secondly, Gnostic doctrines have been interested from their beginnings in the struggle between good and evil in a particular way, which erases the Manichaeian division of reality into two poles, and which functions perfectly to frame Hawthorne's controversial fiction. Literary critics seem to have also noticed this intimate relationship. Doubleday reflects upon the incongruities that arise when trying to distinguish or classify the reality Hawthorne presents in his works according to good and evil when he claims that, "good and evil make a pattern beyond comprehension; yet, obscurely, the design seems to be complete" (Doubleday: 662). That is to say that this philosophical approach offers solid

⁴ "El Movimiento Gnóstico enseña la doctrina de la síntesis, contenida en sustancia en todas las religiones del mundo".

⁵ "En Hawthorne, siempre la versión germinal era verdadera, lo falso, lo eventualmente falso eran las moralidades que agregaba en el último párrafo o los personajes que armaba, que ideaba para representarla".

explanations to understand that good and evil are the two sides of a same plan- two opposing forces operating in nature- which human beings need to transcend in order to reach absolute happiness. Aun Weor considers that:

Good and evil do not exist. One thing is good when it is convenient for us, and it is bad when it is not convenient for us. Good and Bad are just a matter of evil conveniences and mental capriciousness (...) Every moral is based in the words Good and Bad, and that is why every Moral transformer is in fact a reactionary person. The terms Good and Bad are used to justify our own mistakes.

WHO JUSTIFIES OR CONDEMNS DOES NOT UNDERSTAND. It is intelligent to understand the development of Evolutionary Forces, but it is not intelligent to justify them through the term "Good". It is intelligent to understand the development of Involuntary Forces, but it is stupid to condemn them through the term "Bad" (...)

Good and Bad do not exist. Such terms are just useful to elude responsibility and evade the deep and thorough study of our own mistakes (Aun Weor, F, 2012:84).⁶

Good and evil have always been a subjective matter of likes and dislikes which have served to justify relative truths, placing human beings far from an objective comprehension of reality. Therefore, taking into consideration that the limits and relations in Hawthorne's fiction have always disoriented more than one scholar, Gnosis undoubtedly proposes a different focus from the mainstream fragmented vision, allowing readers to objectively understand the precise role of each element in the referred works.

Thirdly, this philosophy, and not any other, contains the necessary tools to comprehend the novel, mainly because it offers an integral interpretation of Eden and Hell which transcends the traditional myth and coherently explains the reasons of human existence at any point in history; a reason that Hawthorne utterly knew and hid behind the most diverse masks of his fiction. Gupta concurs with the fact that Hawthorne's works were realistic not because the circumstances were plausible, but because of the fact that the themes and experiences the characters underwent are related to what is common to all

⁶ "El Bien y el Mal no existen. Una cosa es buena cuando nos conviene, y mala cuando no nos conviene. El Bien y el Mal son cuestión de conveniencias egoístas y caprichos de la Mente. (...) Toda Moral se fundamenta en las palabritas Bien y Mal por eso todo transformador Moral es de hecho un reaccionario. Los términos Bien y Mal sirven siempre para justificar o condenar nuestros propios errores."

"QUIEN JUSTIFICA O CONDENA NO COMPRENDE. Es inteligente comprender el desarrollo de las Fuerzas Evolutivas pero no es inteligente justificarlas con el término "Buenas". Es inteligente comprender los procesos de las Fuerzas Involuntivas pero resulta estúpido condenarlas con el término de "Malas" (...)"

"El Bien y el Mal no existen. Dichos términos solo sirven para buscar evasivas y eludir el estudio profundo y detallado de nuestros propios Defectos."

people, or in other words, concerned with the universal conflicts of human existence. She claims that “he was more of a realist than many of the so called realistic novelists, and his realism was of a kind superior to and of more enduring significance than theirs- a realism of theme and character as opposed to the realism of circumstance” (Gupta: 318).

Evidently, Hawthorne had a deep scientific knowledge about the topics that inspired him, and without underestimating his works at all, it could be anticipated that his job as an artist, as all the greatest artists, consisted on aesthetically transcribing the most profound and concealed realities of human beings.

General notions of Gnosticism

Basically, Gnostics understand that millions of years ago, human beings were androgynous, that is to say, hermaphrodites and thus, masculine and feminine humanities remained embodied by a same person. Likewise, "man" was one with his soul, which is his feminine aspect, and until that moment, human kind lived happily in paradise, since they were in contact with their divine aspect. However, after several millennia, when Eve, representing the most spiritual facet of humans, was removed from Adam, androgynous humanity divided into men and women. Aun Weor explains this in relation to the Genesis (notice how the words *genesis* and *gene* share the same root):

The HOLY BIBLE tells us in the Book of Genesis the following: “So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (Gen. 1, 27). That is to say that God created mankind hermaphrodite, male and female he created them. He created them at His image, because God is hermaphrodite (Aun Weor, J, 2003: 11).⁷

Aun Weor holds that man and woman, material manifestations of both human aspects, were unconscious of their angelic state and absolute happiness, but ignored the reasons of their existence. Therefore, when they were tempted by the serpent (also an allegorical explanation of the sin men and women committed), they were expelled from Eden to the earth (dust, matter) with the purpose of achieving the conscious knowledge that led them

⁷ “La BIBLIA nos dice en el GENESIS lo siguiente: "y creó Dios al hombre a su imagen. Y a imagen de Dios lo creó: varón y hembra los creó... (Vers. 27. Cap. 1: GENESIS) Es decir, Dios creó al hombre hermafrodita; varón y hembra los creó. A imagen y semejanza de Dios, porque Dios es hermafrodita.”

to transcend their dual physical and spiritual state. One should not forget that after eating the forbidden fruit of the tree that taught them good and evil, they were limited to understanding everything in relation to positive and negative stimuli. Yet, the expulsion from the place where humankind so happily lived, represents a kind of punishment for having violated the most sacred law, which is the law of Love, and which is at the same time the banishment from the ideal spiritual state of one whose soul is pure and innocent. Therefore, the dreadful current state of humanity would not be eternal, but could be reverted for those who decided to recover their soul and be under God's grace. This would happen only if men and women learned to consciously unite their fragmented essences and love each other and the rest of creation.

Thus, consciousness would be acquired overcoming antitheses and duality, understanding the purpose of the soul over the earth, and reconciling with their complementary sex, which would lead individuals to regain their souls and make their spirits become divine androgynous, thus recovering the angelic state human beings once lost.

Gnosticism also holds that the sin that men and women committed and made them be expelled from paradise, the original sin, was *fornication*. In this respect, it is necessary to clarify that Gnosticism considers fornication to be the spillage of the *genesic waters*, also called by alchemists the *ens seminis*, and thus different from the commonly-held meaning of adultery. This would imply that lusty intercourse may be held even between spouses who achieve orgasm. Adultery would constitute another way to attempt against the Holy Spirit and the self, inner portion of divinity. Yet, any type of violations of the sacred laws of divine generation constitute not just *any* sin, but the sin against the Holy Ghost, which according to the Holy Scriptures is not forgiven. Still, it can be compensated through pain (therefore man is sent to suffer to the Earth until he decides to get back to God through authentic Love). In this way for Gnosticism, lust is the reason why humankind is sent to suffer in this adverse world until they are able, through huge super efforts, to become inhabitants of Eden once again.

Another important requirement to return to paradise is sanctity. Aun Weor explains that any egoistic impulse within the individual, prevents him or her to be united with the

supreme Creator, and thus, calls the terrene inner impulses *egos*. When explaining the implications of the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life, he asserts:

What is the use of studying the Being if we do not know Sexuality? Both Trees are from Eden and they even share their roots (...) Wisdom is the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and Love is the Tree of Life. Ancient Egyptians thoroughly studied the doctrine of both trees. The fatal shadow of the Tree of Life is the “ego”. The fatal shadow of the Tree of Knowledge is fornication. People take shadows for reality. The one who eradicates the process of “ego” self-realizes. The one who abandons fornication becomes a Christ (Aun Weor, B, 2012: 94).⁸

The Holy Bible also holds in relation to this topic:

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Gen 2, 16-17)

And when the woman saw that the tree (was) good for food, and that it (was)pleasant to the eyes, and that a tree to be desired to make (one) wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. (Gen 3, 6)

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way the tree of life. (Gen 3, 22-24).

For Gnosticism, the Tree of Life is the force that makes a human being immortal, and therefore, by expelling humanity from Eden, God prevented them from being sinful immortal creatures. However, the ones who find (through sacrifice and love) the way back to Eden and the tree of Life, will deserve eternal Life and the company of God and Angels.

The intention of this study is to analyze *The Scarlet Letter* within this frame, trying to give account of the perfection with which the author has excelled in representing such complex truths in his masterpiece, *The Scarlet Letter*.

Women in Hawthorne's work

⁸ “¿De qué sirve estudiar al Ser si no conocemos el Sexo? Ambos árboles son del Edén y hasta comparten sus raíces (...) La Sabiduría es el Árbol de la Ciencia del Bien y del Mal y el Amor es el Árbol de la Vida. En el antiguo Egipto se estudiaba a fondo la doctrina de los dos árboles. La sombra fatal del Árbol de la Vida es el “yo”. La sombra fatal del Árbol del Conocimiento es la fornicación. La gente toma las sombras por la realidad. El que acaba con el proceso del “yo”, realiza al Ser en sí mismo. El que acaba con la fornicación se convierte en un Cristo.”

In addition to the reasons previously mentioned, there is one more reason to analyze this novel from the Gnostic perspective, closely related to the importance Nathaniel Hawthorne as well as Samael Aun Weor attribute to women. Erlich holds in his essay that “the role of woman in the Fall brings us to the very center of Hawthorne’s concern, perhaps to the very source of the obsession with the Fall itself. That Hawthorne displays ambivalent feelings toward women, especially to his dark exotic ones, is apparent in many ways (...)” (Chasson Erlich, 1968: 164). For this reason, the role of woman would be the clue to elucidate the complex reality about man's fall. In this sense, the Gnostic author declares that, "Without the woman, nothing is achieved and the woman without the male does not achieve anything. Everything is achieved with sexual magic. There is nothing like the joy of love" (Aun Weor, N, 2011: 92)⁹.

It is important to signal that the clue to all esoteric mystery is kept in the practice of the "AZF arcane". This mystery, which according to Gnosticism is the basis of human regeneration, is the famous "Secret of the Alchemists", hidden behind a hermetic symbolism, which for centuries made its comprehension impossible according to occult principles for worldly people who did not deserve access to such sacred formula. This knowledge is the same that many ancient cultures and secret organizations and fraternities have always valued and shared in silence.

Presumably, Hawthorne must have known all these mysteries in relation to sexuality, woman and man's fall, since he himself participated in a secret fraternity which, as several others, nucleated people who decided to "transcend" material reality. According to Zabel, Nathaniel Hawthorne considered that *“human idealism surpasses the best that earth can offer, because man was made for essence, not for existence; for Eternity, and not just for Time”* (Zabel: 180).¹⁰

⁹ “Sin la mujer no se consigue nada y la mujer sin el varón no consigue nada; con la magia sexual se consigue todo, no hay como la dicha del amor”.

¹⁰ “(...) el idealismo humano supera a lo mejor que puede ofrecer la tierra, pues el hombre fue hecho para la esencia, no para la existencia; para la Eternidad, y no solo para el Tiempo”.

CHAPTER 1: MAN'S FALL AND HIS SECLUSION IN HELL

It is true that as one of the main representatives of American Romanticism, Nathaniel Hawthorne displays in his works a tendency to include elements of the fantastic or set his tales in gloomy places, therefore, reviving the Gothic style and especially recreating the dark Salemite spirit of the seventeenth century. However, the inclusion of black magic, witches and devilry in his works is never capricious, hazardous or circumstantial, but closely connected to the content and highly relevant to the purpose of his writings. In this way, the constant references to fire, devil, Satan, darkness, shadows and suffering in *The Scarlet Letter* give the reader the impression of infernal events taking place in New England. Likewise, the characters' nostalgia and their desire to return to Old England, would equate this later place with paradise, their only chance to definitely stop suffering. In this way, the author's decision to begin the story in a prison and a cemetery is not casual or merely ornamental. Not only is his purpose to describe the inferno, where the characters seem to be trapped, but also to offer a possible explanation for them to be there and a formula to leave that place. This first chapter of the analysis aims at clarifying some aspects of hell, or what should be understood by it.

To begin with, it is important to signal that all religions have traditionally considered the existence of an underworld which shares more or less the same features in spite of the different names it has received -the Roman Averno, the Greek Tartarus, the Oriental Avitchi, the Western inferno, etc.-. Darkness, endless torments, eternal fire, the laments of the ones trapped in there, and the presence of devilish monsters governed by a dreadful deity are invariable elements in every religious tradition. In this sense, Gnosticism appeals to quantum physics to explain the existence of spheres of matter-energy coexisting in lower or higher levels according to their degree of vibration, which confirms Dante's description of hell in his *Divine Comedy*, as a reflection of the regions described by ancient cabbalists in the sephirothic tree. Its mere variation perhaps with the rest of the approaches is that hell does not necessarily need to constitute an invisible sphere, though it necessarily does in some levels of manifestation, but in simple words, it also depends upon the degree of -spiritual- consciousness of the divine grace upon one's existence. Therefore, according to Gnosticism, the circumstances presented by Hawthorne in his

novel would undoubtedly give account for an infernal way of existence, though not too distant from earthly human life, since the characters seem to have lost their connection with their Creator, Grace, and suffered indescribable sorrow and misery.

First of all, it is necessary to explain what Hawthorne's hell, or earthly hell, consists of and thus evoke the narration of the Genesis about man's fall, closely related to man and woman's original sin. It is important to mention that this sin, the pivotal topic in Hawthorne's works and one of the most controversial for criticism, also constitutes the central theme in this novel, embodied by the infernal token, the Letter A, and Hester and Dimmesdale's torments. It is interesting to consider the author's effort to present this inferior world as the concrete setting of the story and not just as a merely metaphoric configuration. For instance, the supernatural elements in the following passage and the dark connotation achieved by the qualifiers illustrate this reality:

They averred that the symbol was not mere scarlet cloth, tinged in an earthly dye-pot, but was red-hot with infernal fire, and could be seen glowing all alight whenever Hester Prynne walked abroad in the night-time. And we must needs say it seared Hester's bosom so deeply, that perhaps there was more truth in the rumour than our modern incredulity may be inclined to admit (Hawthorne: 116).

The last sentence certainly emphasizes the degree of certainty the narrator attributes to his description, highlighting the truth contained in the rumor. In order to explain the reason for the characters to inhabit this underworld, first of all it is necessary to refer to the biblical explanation of man's expulsion from Eden, closely related to man and woman's original sin. The Bible, as well as the holy books of all religions, has always presented the origin of man and universe from a symbolic or metaphoric perspective, since the knowledge intended for the spirit should be transmitted through the adequate language for it, adopting the form of parables, allegories, metaphors, etc. This fact would explain the conflicts raised during Medieval Times, an age in which the biblical Genesis was interpreted literally until science started to evolve and, with Copernicus and Galileo, the literary reading of this book started to be mistrusted. However, although there were strong conservative complaints, along the years, science progressively became a great collaborator of religion, helping to confirm the hidden realities of the religious books.

In relation to the expulsion from Paradise, the Book of Genesis explains that after man and woman committed the original sin, the land was cursed as well as themselves, who lost Lord's grace and were doomed to suffer and battle against their own concupiscent nature to survive. This parable clearly describes God's punishment, which is in fact the consequence of having violated the Laws of Love between man and woman. While woman is condemned to be ruled by her husband and suffering when bringing forth children, man is condemned to suffer to obtain the food to survive, and to endlessly return to dust:

Who told thee that thou (wast) naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest (to be) with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, what (is) this (that) thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this thou (art) cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire (shall be) to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed (is) the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat (of) it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust (art), and unto dust shalt thou return. (Gen 3, 11-19)

According to the Gnostic interpretation, the forbidden fruit, symbolic representation of the original sin, is nothing but the sin against the Holy Ghost. The Sacred Scriptures hold that this is the only one which is not forgiven, and therefore, man is expelled from the garden. The Bible repeats in several segments that "all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation". (Mark 3, 2-29) These last words help understand the characters agony and endless shame, since in the novel, the biblical allusion has an echo in Dimmesdale's words when rhetorically referring to God's punishment: "do we not hereby say that the Heavenly Father, the creator of all flesh, hath lightly recognized a deed of sin, and made of no account the distinction between unhallowed lust and holy love?" (Hawthorne: 146).

Aun Weor explains that owing to its magnitude, this sin cannot be pardoned but purified through pain, for it harms human divinity, and to erase this offence, humankind needs to learn what its consequences are through suffering. Therefore, the expulsion from Eden symbolically stands for the loss of plenitude and happiness of human beings. This pain would not be endless, but could end for those who become repentant and find the way back to Heaven. This is the reason why Hester and the minister have to stand terrible humiliations and tortures in order to purify themselves from their lethal sin and also convert to a new saintly lifestyle. For instance, when the narrator claims, "Let men tremble to win the hand of woman, unless they win along with it the utmost passion of her heart! Else it may be their miserable fortune" (Hawthorne: 219), it is easy to see the connection between lust and a dreadful fate.

Another crucial aspect to bear in mind is related to the biblical allusion to man returning endlessly to dust as a punishment until he decides to subdue his own earthly instincts and free himself from his conspicuous nature. Genesis describes this wheel as the endless cycle of the man who is born, grows up, reproduces and is always returning to the earth, unable to penetrate Paradise. This is his punishment for having eaten the forbidden fruit, which represents the sin unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit, the profanation of the sacred temple of the Lord and the sacrilege against human divinity. God's punishment is the condemnation of the human race, until they decide to turn their faces again towards their Heavenly Father, and is embodied by His words when He predicts that, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust (art), and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen 3, 19).

There are several references to this aspect in the novel, mainly in the introduction, when the author describes his ancestors, the Salemite people, stained by original sin, as representing the whole humankind, who unable to find the way back, is currently trapped in a terrible circle of pain, caused by the complicated way of life in which their original sin submerged them:

The boy, also in due time, passed from the forecabin to the cabin, spent a tempestuous manhood, and **returned from his world-wanderings, to grow old, and die, and mingle his dust with the natal earth.** This long connection of a family with one spot, as its place of birth and burial, creates a kindred between the human being and the locality, quite

independent of any charm in the scenery or moral circumstances that surround him. It is not love but instinct (Hawthorne, 32).

Notice the reference to the original sin and the similitude between the biblical verses and the highlighted expression. The constant allusion to the repeated cycles is not an isolated phenomenon in this novel, neither is it in the rest of his works. Kehl refers to this in his essay titled "Hawthorne's vicious circles: the sphere circle imagery in the four major novels". In relation to the spheres that keep the characters trapped, he holds that:

Mankind occupies an eccentric position in the great circle of existence; he has distorted the Great Chain of Being, for "nature in beast, fowl and tree, and earth, flood and sky, is what it was of old; but sin, care, and self consciousness have set the human portion askew (...)

"The fact that Hawthorne's characters rarely attain to this degree of felicity renders it true that 'no great mistake, whether acted or endured, in our mortal sphere, is ever really set right' (The house of seven Gables, p. 313). Thus the circles are vicious in the basic sense of the Latin stem *vitium*, "sin" or "vice".

The failure to "purify that inward sphere" and thus to "set right" the "outward spheres" results in a veritable "vicious circle", a chain reaction creating new circles or spheres (...) Although not all circles or spheres are "vicious" in the sense that they are the direct result of sin, most are vicious in the sense that they are the indirect result of the "original wrong" with its various ramifications" (KEHL, 1969: 10).

Through a thorough analysis, Kehl explains that one of the features repeated in all the stories is the cyclic recurrence of events, weaknesses and sins which have confined the characters since the occurrence of the original wrong, or "original sin", from which this situation started to worsen until they were immersed in complete desolation. He claims that Hawthorne believed that going the opposite way, that means, purifying the inner sphere, humanity could regain happiness, since consequently, people would be purifying the external spheres that submit them to suffering. The following excerpt condenses the same idea in relation to Hester:

Tomorrow would bring its own trial with it; so would the next day, and so would the next: each its own trial, and yet the very same that was now so unutterably grievous to be borne. The days of the far-off future would toil onward, still with the same burden for her to take up, and bear along with her, but never to fling down; for the accumulating days and added years would pile up their misery upon the heap of shame. Throughout them all, giving up her individuality, she would become the general symbol at which the preacher and moralist might point, and in which they might vivify and embody their images of woman's frailty and sinful passion (Hawthorne: 106).

The eternal burden Hester Prynne carries making her life a synonym of damnation, -and which never decreases but increases with the passing of time- is directly connected to her failing. Gnosticism analyses this same reality alluding to the famous Samsara Wheel of

Hinduism, in which human souls are trapped, unavoidably returning on and on to the world until they are able to purify all their sins through pain and find the only way of salvation that would lead them back to paradise, as Pythagoras describes in his “Metempsychosis”. Likewise, analyzing Ouspenski’s similar theories about physics and mechanics, Aun Weor explains:

“I knew that the Samsara Wheel endlessly turns around in an evolutionary and involutory way and that essences, after passing by the intellectual animal Kingdom, descend millions of times to the horrific abyss to disintegrate the Subjective Elements of Perception.

Just entering the Path of the Intimate Rebelliousness, just stepping out of the evolutionary and involutory roads of the Samsara Wheel, we could become authentic, legitimate and true Men (Aun Weor, H, 2012: 165).¹¹

He also adds

We are talking unquestionably about the wheel of Samsara, which rotates eternally. All of us, without any exceptions, have rotated many times with this great wheel and if continuous movement is not interrupted, it is due exclusively to the infinite quantity of dispensable elements (...)

Each of us has not only passed through the windmill many times, but also through each of the teeth of the windmill. With this saying, I want to emphasize the news that we incessantly rotated through successive eternities on the wheel (...)

With this we want to talk very clearly and say: One evolves up to a perfectly defined point through nature and then one involutes. (Aun Weor, E, 2012: 65).¹²

The ego is never immortal, it has its beginning and its end; either we voluntarily annihilate it or nature takes care of disintegrating it in the Avernus. We should choose; we face the dilemma of being or of non-being of philosophy (Aun Weor: 55).¹³

¹¹ “Bien sabía que la Rueda del Samsara gira incesantemente en forma evolutiva e involutiva y que las Esencias después de su paso por el Reino animal intelectual, descienden millares de veces al horroroso precipicio para eliminar los Elementos Subjetivos de las percepciones(...)”

“Sólo entrando por el camino de la Rebelión Intima, sólo apartándonos de las sendas evolutivas e involutivas de la Rueda del Samsara podremos convertirnos en Hombres auténticos, legítimos y verdaderos.”

¹² “Estamos hablando incuestionablemente de la "Rueda del Samsara", la cual gira eternamente. Todos nosotros sin excepción alguna, hemos girado muchas veces con esta Gran Rueda, y si el Movimiento Continuo no se ha interrumpido se debe exclusivamente a la infinita cantidad de elementos desechables (...)”

“Cada uno de nos, no solamente ha pasado por el molino muchas veces, sino también por cada uno de los dientes del molino”. Con este dicho quiero enfatizar la noticia de que incesantemente hemos girado a través de sucesivas eternidades en la Rueda (...) Con esto queremos hablar bien claro y decir: Se evoluciona hasta un punto perfectamente definido por la Naturaleza y luego se involuciona.”

¹³ “El Ego jamás es inmortal. Tiene un principio y un fin: O lo aniquilamos voluntariamente, o la Naturaleza se encarga de desintegrarlo en el Averno. Nosotros debemos escoger. Estamos ante el dilema del "Ser y No Ser" de la Filosofía.”

In sum, on the one hand, one could admit that souls, in their transit through this painful existence, have the mission to reach the supreme knowledge which, through the voluntary and conscious decision of love, would join them completely self-realized with Divinity. Aun Weor claims that the cyclic mechanisms experienced in the current sphere has the intention to teach human beings how to suppress their own frailty and conspicuity in order to recover the angelic state they once lost. On the other hand, it is important to understand that after millions of years, humankind has experimented pain and learned to adapt to new conditions and manifestations of their own nature, which have made them acquire more possibilities whether of becoming perfect, or going mad, depending on their decisions out of free will.

In each new cycle, humans are forced to cope with the consequences of the sin they have committed in their previous existences –called karma for Hinduism- and this is the reason why chronologically speaking, life upon earth becomes gradually harder while time goes by. This notion of growing degeneration which increases agony is also expressed by Hawthorne in his novel, referred to as a spell in several occasions:

The spell survives, and just as powerfully as if the natal spot were an earthly paradise. So has it been in my case. I felt it almost as a destiny to make Salem my home; so that the mould of features and cast of character which had all along been familiar here—ever, as one representative of the race lay down in the grave, another assuming, as it were, his sentry-march along the main street—might still in my little day be seen and recognised in the old town. Nevertheless, this very sentiment is an evidence that the connexion, which has become an unhealthy one, should at least be severed. Human nature will not flourish, any more than a potato, if it be planted and re-planted, for too long a series of generations, in the same worn-out soil (Hawthorne: 32-33)

It is interesting to analyze how he refers to Salem as the present doomed soil, out of paradise, in which the generations are unable to evolve owing to the strength the spell casts on them.

Aun Weor also explains that the reason for this terrible machinery to torture human beings has to do with the lessons they need to learn in order to purify themselves from the evil tendencies they carry within, as if perfection was the only fate for humanity. He also holds that, “a genius achieves geniality because he has struggled in millions of existences to achieve perfection (...) We have come millions of times to this world, and

we will have to go on existing until we become perfect” (Aun Weor, D, 2002: 7)¹⁴. However, people’s degree of egotism and ignorance perceive the laws of nature as hostile.

On several occasions Hawthorne highlights this idea of the pedagogy of evil to guide humankind towards good, which seems to be a recurrent perspective in his writings. Accordingly, in “Sin, Free will and ‘Pessimism’, Fairbanks explains that: “if evil was rooted tenaciously in the heart of man, Hawthorne did not regard it as ineradicable. By the inscrutable operation of Divine will, sin was even convertible to good” (1956). That would reveal that Hawthorne’s idea of evil was related to a kind of transition towards good. The critic also claims that:

What we have observed of Hawthorne’s balance between “universal depravity” and “natural goodness” applies equally to the sanity of his position on the “perilous matters” stirred up by his probing into the educative power of sin. Again he stands in *via media*. Though he repeatedly asserts the mysterious transformation of evil into good by a superintending providence, he never succumbs to the idea that man’s growth depends intrinsically upon sinning (...) For Hawthorne, however, sin is *neither a condition, nor a cause of good*. It is the *occasion* of good through the operation of Divine Providence. Hawthorne holds that good can come from evil, not that it must come from evil if it is to come at all (Fairbanks, 1956: 979)

This explanation leads the reader to believe that Hawthorne uses evil in his stories as a way to redeem characters from pain and frustration and lead them to grace, as it happened with Hester:

Hatred, by a gradual and quiet process, will even be transformed to love, unless the change be impeded by a continually new irritation of the original feeling of hostility. In this matter of Hester Prynne there was neither irritation nor irksomeness. She never battled with the public, but submitted uncomplainingly to its worst usage; she made no claim upon it in requital for what she suffered; she did not weigh upon its sympathies. Then, also, the blameless purity of her life during all these years in which she had been set apart to infamy was reckoned largely in her favour. With nothing now to lose, in the sight of mankind, and with no hope, and seemingly no wish, of gaining anything, it could only be a genuine regard for virtue that had brought back the poor wanderer to its paths (Hawthorne: 199-200).

The excerpt then reveals that if Hester’s virtuous behavior is a consequence of the lessons she learnt after having committed the original sin, it can be said that human fall, as well as suffering, are necessary for humanity to become aware of the happiness, and the divine grace they have lost. The nostalgia felt by the loss of happiness would then serve to guide them back to their Lord. From these ideas, some may consider that the fall of man must

¹⁴ “Un genio llega a ser genio porque en millones de vidas ha venido luchando por perfeccionarse (...) Hemos venido millones de veces a este mundo, y nos toca seguir viviendo, hasta que nos volvamos perfectos.”

necessarily have taken place because, otherwise man could not be conscious of his own existence. Coleridge wrote in 1830 that, "A Fall of some sort or other- the creations it were, of the non absolute- is the fundamental postulate of the moral history of man. Without this hypothesis, man is unintelligible; with it every phenomenon is explicable" (Coleridge, 1830: 65).

CHAPTER 2: LUCIFER, THE HECATE-PROSERPINE AND THE LIBERATION OF THE HUMAN SOUL

Having understood the necessary role evil plays in the liberation of the human souls towards higher spheres of consciousness and happiness, it is necessary to explain the allegorical roles the antagonists fulfill. The difficulties Hawthorne's allegories present the reader with have already been mentioned. The main obstacle seems to be the variability of the purport each element carries. Presumably, the answer to this riddle has always lied on the different levels of signification at which the same element may operate. In the same way that the conception of hell may vary without losing its essential traits according to different levels of vibration, or distance from God's grace, the role the participants of the great allegory fulfill varies. Their function changes according to a relatively restricted range which enables them not to lose their essential features, though it sometimes disorients the reader for its external manifestation may appear contradictory or confusing.

Firstly, the roles the antagonists fulfill will be studied before fully describing Dimesdale, Pearl and Hester's. To explain how Gnosticism understands the existence of evil, it should be mentioned that after humans' banishment from Eden, though they keep a portion of divinity –a portion of soul (called buddhata in Hinduism) and not a complete soul as most religions preach (LUKE 21,19)- most of the conscious or unconscious impulses or instincts that drive them to carry out their daily activities are rooted in some of the evil tendencies that subdue human souls, known in many religions as the *capital sins*, as well as all their perverse forms of derivation and manifestation. Samael Aun Weor claims that:

Three-brained bipeds do not have any individuality; they do not have a Permanent Center of Consciousness, PCC. Each of his thoughts, feelings and actions depends on the calamity of the 'I' so that at a specific moment it may control the capital centers of the human machine (...) Really, the human being cannot have continuity of purposes because he does not have the PCC, he is not an individual and he has an I which is a sum of many small "I".

Many are those who await the eternal Beatitude with the Death of the Physical body, however, the death of the body does not resolve the problem of the 'I'. Beyond death, the *loose cathexis* – the ego- continues enveloped in its molecular body. The human biped ends but the *loose cathexis* continues, the energy of the ego in its molecular body and then, later, the ego perpetuates itself in our descendants, it returns to satisfy its desires and to continue the same tragedies.

The hour has arrived to comprehend the necessity of producing within us a definite Integral Revolution in order to establish a PCC, a Permanent Center of Consciousness; it is only in this manner that we individualize ourselves, it is only in this manner that we cease to be legion, it is only in this manner that we become conscious individuals. Today's man is similar to a ship full of passengers, each one has his own plans and projects. Today's man does not have a single mind, he has many minds. Each 'I' has its own mind. Fortunately within the human biped exists something else, the Essence. Seriously reflecting on such principle, we can conclude that this is the most elevated psychic material with which we can give shape to our Soul. By awakening the Essence we create a Soul. To awaken the Essence is to awaken Consciousness. To awaken Consciousness is equivalent to creating within us a PCC. Only the one who awakens consciousness becomes an individual (Aun Weor, I, 2003: 5-6).¹⁵

Approaching the characters under this light, it is easy to see them as fragile creatures enslaved by their own devils, which have driven them towards inferior regions far from God, and realize the real sense of infernal damnation represented by Hawthorne in the novel. It is true that the original sin, the unpardonable sin committed against the Holy Spirit, was the first one, the one which expelled men from perfect happiness; but the rest of the demons, that is to say, the psychological deviations learned and practiced during millions of years, prompted humankind into lower regions each time, until they voluntarily decided to get rid of these mechanic and mostly unconscious practices to rejoin Divinity.

Though devils have concrete forms of existence and manifestation below our third dimensional world, the constant presence of these subhuman creatures, invisible to human perception, is unknown by most people. This is the reason why the explicit presence of devilish creatures does not always impress the characters or the people from

¹⁵ "Los bípedos tricerebrados no tienen individualidad alguna, no tienen un Centro Permanente de conciencia, CPC. Cada uno de sus pensamientos, sentimientos y acciones, dependen de la calamidad del yo que en determinado momento controle los centros capitales de la máquina humana. (...) Realmente, el ser humano no puede tener continuidad propósitos porque no tiene el CPC, no es un individuo y tiene un yo que es una suma de muchos yoes pequeños."

"Muchos son los que aguardan la Bienaventuranza eterna con la muerte del cuerpo físico, empero la muerte del cuerpo no resuelve el problema del yo. Después de la muerte, la catexis suelta - el ego- continúa envuelta en su cuerpo molecular. El bípedo humano termina pero continúa la catexis suelta, la energía del ego, en su cuerpo molecular y luego, más tarde, el ego se perpetúa en nuestros descendientes, retorna para satisfacer sus deseos y continuar las mismas tragedias."

"Ha llegado la hora de comprender la necesidad de producir dentro de nosotros una evolución Integral definitiva a fin de establecer el CPC, un Centro Permanente de Conciencia sólo así nos individualizamos, sólo así dejamos de ser legión, sólo así nos convertimos en individuos conscientes. El hombre actual es semejante a un barco lleno de muchos pasajeros, cada pasajero tiene sus propios planes y proyectos. El hombre actual no tiene una sola mente, tiene muchas mentes. Cada yo tiene su propia mente. Afortunadamente, dentro del bípedo humano existe algo más, existe la Esencia. Reflexionando seriamente sobre dicho principio, podemos concluir que éste es el material psíquico más elevado con el cual podemos darle forma a nuestra Alma. Despertando la Esencia creamos Alma. Despertar la Esencia es despertar la Conciencia. Despertar conciencia equivale a crear dentro de nosotros un CPC. Sólo quien despierta conciencia se convierte en individuo (Aun Weor, I, 2003: 5-6)."

the town, who have gradually become less sensitive to perceive the psychological traps they have set themselves, without suspecting the subtle peril they represent for the soul. In this sense the reader may understand why Hester, Pearl or Dimmesdale, though somehow perturbed are not impressed to see or talk to flying Mistress Hibbins, haunting devils or black magicians, but take these occurrences as something natural.

The familiarity with which the characters relate to evil creatures reinforces the idea of Salem as inhabited by demons, an infernal place. However, the main characters are more tormented by the consequences of sin rather than its causes, or its presence, and this seems to be related to the fact that they are used to coexisting with their own evil creatures, though they loath suffering and the regions where these subhuman elements transport them. The narrator illustrates this phenomenon when describing Hester's heart as possessed by "a stern and severe, but yet a guardian spirit, who now forsook her; as recognizing that, in spite of his strict watch over her heart, some new evil had crept into it, or some old one had never been expelled" (Hawthorne: 224).

In connection to the regents of this diabolical place, represented in the novel by Chillingworth and Mistress Hibbins, they will be described separately, regarding the roles they particularly perform in relation to the protagonists.

Concerning Chillingworth, to begin with, it should be explained that esotericism asserts that in the same way that each human being embodies a particular deity –with unique and concrete traits though absolutely and endlessly perfect¹⁶ -each deity has its infernal counterpart, struggling to carry the innocent son towards inferior regions. When describing Lucifer, Aun Weor claims that, "Satan's glory is Adonai's shadow, and Satan's throne is the Lord's footstool"(Aun Weor, M, 2009: 67).¹⁷ He adds that, "each of us has his own Lucifer deep inside his consciousness, and each will see it according to the degree of purification in the elimination of psychological aggregates. The more failings we have, the most horrible and dreadful it will be. The purer and cleaner we are, the most radiant he

16 According to the Kabalah, the countless number of souls conforming altogether the Army of the Voice, the unpronounceable name of God: JHVH.

17 "(...) la gloria de Satán es la sombra de Adonai, y el trono de Satán es el escabel del Señor."

will look like” (Aun Weor: 67)¹⁸. The same author, who was responsible for the interpretation of the Nag Hammadi library -also known as the Apocryphal Gospels-, reveals in his thorough study of these books that “the individual Lucifer of each of us is a reflection of the Logos inside ourselves, that is why he is called Christus-Lucifer. Lucifer gives us the sexual Impulse, and therefore, Lucifer is staircase to ascend and staircase to descend. Defeating Lucifer we go up, ascend” (Aun Weor, O, 2008: 7).¹⁹

Undoubtedly, the naive souls who still have not delivered from the infrahuman elements that subdue them, unable to defeat their own inner Lucifer, have become shadows, servants of the inferior wills. Likewise, the ones who decide to rebel against the self inner enemies, find Lucifer as a necessary trainer, the tempter, whose power diminishes as the individual becomes able to transcend evil impulses. Esotericism knows that without luciferic temptation, spiritual perfection would never be achieved, since goodness or better said, a voluntary or conscious goodness –real wisdom- is not an innate quality of the soul, but is achieved by learning to eliminate all possibilities of evil manifestation. Therefore, Gnostic instruction has always praised luciferic impulses, also called conspicuity, or natural instincts within human beings, because they may constitute the sacred impulses for a noble person to rejoin with his Creator, if learning how to transcend them. The opposite is also true. Luciferic impulses may also lead souls to eternal damnation if they are weak to overcome temptation, therefore deserving to inhabit the inferior regions, the underworld.

All in all, the role occupied by this being, described by Christian religious traditions as once the second most glorious angel of Heaven, is to educate, defy and instruct noble souls who look for Redemption. However, from Heavenly dimensions through earthly ones towards hell, in the same way that energetic vibration decreases, the inferior regions

¹⁸ “(...) cada cual tiene el suyo en el fondo mismo de su conciencia, y de acuerdo al grado de purificación en la eliminación de los agregados psicológicos así lo verá. Entre más errores, defectos y vicios tengamos, más horrible y espantoso será. Entre más limpios y puros seamos, pues más radiante será”

¹⁹ Excerpt from Pistis Sophia, by Samael Aun Weor, the revelation of the Nag Hammadi Library written in Copt and discovered in Egypt dating from around the 4th century D.C.:

“(…) el Lucifer individual de cada uno de nosotros (es una reflexión del Logos en nuestro interior, por eso se le llama Christus- Lucifer. Lucifer nos da el Impulso sexual, Lucifer es, por ello, escalera para subir y escalera para bajar. Venciendo al Lucifer, subimos, ascendemos”.

reflect as an inverted mirror, the denser features of the souls, and therefore, Lucifer also splits into dreadful beings. In *The Scarlet Letter*, Chillingworth would be the one who alternatively fulfills the roles of Lucifer and the devil, closely connected the one of the Black Man. This is how Capazzo describes Lucifer:

In the same way that the planet has its own Divine Christos Lucifer, there also exists the particular Christos Lucifer of the initiate. The particular Divine Christos Lucifer is Tipheret, the Human Soul, who has kept constantly looking for the necessary and sufficient knowledge to achieve the "Donum Dei" and acquire the responsibility to direct the Great Work of the Father from that moment on. Tipheret achieves, after intense struggle and great prodigies, greater strength each time, until it becomes the mythological Hercules, who fights the dark armies of the ego, which have created their empire within our personal world (Capazzo Pinto, 2011: 139-140).²⁰

It is important to bear this in mind to distinguish Lucifer from Satan, personified in Hawthorne's novel as "The Black Man", carrying a book in his hand to write down the names of the condemned, and setting the unmistakable letter on their bosoms. In relation to this character, Capazzo claims that

Then evil is also a derivation from the same Lucifer, but in a lower aspect, as it is Mother Inferior Nature.

Much has been said about devil, perhaps more than enough. There are so many comments, legends, and even genuine stories about devil. Many assert that they talked to and made a pact with him that were then completely fulfilled after they offered their souls in exchange. There are many volumes written about his mischiefs and terrible deeds; countless people were burnt alive for having been labeled heretics or for having collaborated with evil.

What does evil have inside? Two elements, it keeps having Fire, because it keeps its own wisdom and in addition, shadows and darkness, that is why his aspect is dark and negative.

Some authors consider devil, Lucifer and Satan as the same dark entity. However, thoroughly analyzing these three elements and applying a superior logic we can realize that the three of them are different aspects of a same force, very distant one from another, and that it is very important to learn the difference among them, not to go on committing the same mistake of the rest of humanity (Capazzo Pinto: 163-164).²¹

²⁰ "Así como existe el Divino Cristo Lucifer del planeta, existe también el Cristo Lucifer particular del iniciado. El Divino Cristo Lucifer particular es Tipheret, el Alma Humana, que ha permanecido constante en la búsqueda de la sapiencia suficiente y necesaria para lograr el "Donum Dei" (don de Dios) y sustentar la responsabilidad de dirigir la Gran Obra del Padre a partir de ese momento. Tipheret logra, después de intensas luchas y grandes proezas, fortificarse cada vez con más intensidad, hasta transformarse en el Hércules mitológico, quien se encarga de enfrentar las huestes tenebrosas del ego que han formado sus imperios en el mundo personal"

²¹ "El diablo entonces, también es un desdoblamiento del mismo Lucifer, pero en un aspecto menor, como lo es la Madre Naturaleza Inferior."

"Del diablo se ha hablado mucho, tal vez más de la cuenta en todas las épocas. Existen tantos comentarios, leyendas e inclusive historias verídicas sobre el diablo. Muchos aseguran que conversaron e hicieron pactos con él, que luego se

Notice how in the following passage the highlighted expression confirms Gods design to allow Lucifer to manipulate, for a certain period of time, human souls in order to lead them towards spiritual triumph over evil.

This diabolical agent had the Divine permission, for a season, to burrow into the clergyman's intimacy, and plot against his soul. No sensible man, it was confessed, could doubt on which side the victory would turn. The people looked, with an unshaken hope, to see the minister come forth out of the conflict transfigured with the glory which he would unquestionably win. Meanwhile, nevertheless, it was sad to think of the perchance mortal agony through which he must struggle towards his triumph. Alas! to judge from the gloom and terror in the depth of the poor minister's eyes, the battle was a sore one, and the victory anything but secure (Hawthorne: 162).

The previous explanation also complements the other traits of the character mentioned by the author, for instance his wearing a "black velvet tunic", his "hard experience written in his wrinkles", "the learning and intelligence of which he possessed more than a common measure" and even his name, Chillingworth, clearly referring to a frightening or dreadful being. The fact that he was "acquainted with hidden virtues in what was valueless to common eyes", which allowed him to cure or sicken at will is explained by Samael Aun Weor, who holds that illnesses and death are the direct consequence of sin (Aun Weor, L, 2003), because if human beings had achieved spiritual perfection they would not suffer from any imperfection. This topic will be then briefly explained, but it is necessary to mention it in order to realize the physician's exaggerated knowledge about evil and how to subdue it to cure, or use it against his victims, as reflected in the following words Chillingworth utters to Dimmesdale:

"“Thus, a sickness,” continued Roger Chillingworth, going on, in an unaltered tone, without heeding the interruption, but standing up and confronting the emaciated and white-cheeked minister, with his low, dark, and misshapen figure, — ‘a sickness, a sore place, if we may so call it, in your spirit hath immediately its appropriate manifestation in your bodily frame. Would you, therefore, that your physician heal

cumplieron a cabalidad a cambio de entregarle el alma. Cantidades de volúmenes han sido escritos sobre sus travesuras y hechos horripilantes; un número incalculable de personas fueron quemadas vivas o encarceladas de por vida por haber sido tildadas de herejes o por haber colaborado con el diablo.”

“¿Qué posee el diablo dentro de sí? Dos elementos, sigue teniendo Fuego, porque posee su propia sapiencia y además, sombras y tinieblas, por eso su semblante es oscuro y negativo.”

“Existen autores que consideran al diablo, Lucifer y Satanás como una misma entidad tenebrosa. Sin embargo, al hacer un desglose pormenorizado de los tres elementos mencionados y aplicando la lógica superior nos damos cuenta de que se trata de diferentes aspectos de una misma fuerza, muy distantes la una de la otra, y que es demasiado importante a prender a diferenciar, para no caer en el mismo error en el cual está enfrascada la mayor parte de la humanidad”

the bodily evil? How may this be unless you first lay open to him the wound or trouble in your soul?" (Hawthorne: 171-172).

These magical cures he operated through the essence of plants and his intellectual activity, are in fact part of the role he plays in the novel which has to do with his purpose for disclosing the secret mechanisms that govern human action –unconscious, evil behavior that leads people to unhappiness and death- and therefore reveal the occult, dark realities of those who look for truth and light. In the same way that Chillingworth has the ability to inspect the deepest areas of a human soul in order to cure it or make it ill, Lucifer has the ability to physically and psychologically regenerate or degenerate human beings. Then, one may understand the dual role Chillingworth plays, since it is him who allows Dimmesdale and Hester's redemption after their struggle against evil forces. In the following passage, the process in which the reverend, assisted by his inner Lucifer, starts to explore his internal spiritual miseries and overcome them through his understanding, is reflected in the role of the physician, who becomes an actor within the reverend's private world and discloses his evil triggers:

It mattered little for his object, whether celestial or from what other region. By its aid, in all the subsequent relations betwixt him and Mr. Dimmesdale, not merely the external presence, but the very inmost soul of the latter, seemed to be brought out before his eyes, so that he could see and comprehend its every movement. He became, thenceforth, not a spectator only, but a chief actor in the poor minister's interior world. He could play upon him as he chose. Would he arouse him with a throb of agony? The victim was for ever on the rack; it needed only to know the spring that controlled the engine: and the physician knew it well. Would he startle him with sudden fear? As at the waving of a magician's wand, up rose a grisly phantom—up rose a thousand phantoms—in many shapes, of death, or more awful shame, all flocking round about the clergyman, and pointing with their fingers at his breast! (Hawthorne: 176)

Again, notice how the author refers to the evil creatures within Dimmesdale's soul, described as frightful phantoms being taken from his heart after countless painful sessions reflecting upon his own miserable reality. Likewise, Cappazo claims that, "the particular Christus Lucifer takes control of the 'Psychological Death'²², in the process that the initiate should live within the Occult Mysteries, with the marvelous aim of being able to change

22 Gnosticism calls "Psychological Death" or "Mystic Death" the voluntarily task of disposing of the inner unconscious mechanisms which subdue human beings to darkness and death, enabling the birth of virtues and the creation of the soul. This relatively long process is achieved through meditation and transcendental comprehension of the inner egos, in order to definitely and completely eliminate them from the psyche.

his intimate esoteric aspect and integrate with his spirit" (Capazo Pinto: 142)²³. As it has been explained, although this same being also embodies the inferior impulses, Satan constitutes its reflection in even inferior regions, where the condemned souls inhabit. Therefore, one may understand why Hawthorne also compares Chillingworth to Satan or Satan's emissary when claiming that "it grew to be a widely diffused opinion that the Rev. Arthur Dimmesdale, like many other personages of special sanctity, in all ages of the Christian world, was haunted either by Satan himself or Satan's emissary, in the guise of old Roger Chillingworth." (Hawthorne: 161-162). In this sense, according to Cappazzo, Satan being the inferior aspect of Lucifer, who embodies the most dreadful features of the same force, it can be said that Chillingworth, constituting the devil, was the closest character to this horrifying entity, and therefore, Hawthorne compares him to Satan or his emissary.

In relation to Mistress Hibbins, in the same way that there exists a feminine divine aspect²⁴, it is not very difficult to understand that the feminine counterpart of evil is embodied by this lady witch, as an equivalent of the Roman Proserpine, or Greek Hecate, the queens of witchcraft and the underworld. Cappazzo claims in relation to this being that:

The last aspect of the Blessed Mother is known as the Hecate-Proserpine or Mother Death. According to the ancient wise men, she is a deity who fulfills an incomprehensible role for us in the depth of the abyss, where she experiences a dreadful pain when she sees his sons suffer. Sometimes she takes the form of a giant and terrible serpent who devours the inhabitants of hell in order to liberate them from that place of misery and sorrow.

When the Mother Inferior Nature takes her sons to hell, she gives them to Mother Hecate-Proserpine, who swallows them once they have been purified from their bad deeds paying, with profound sorrow all the sins or mistakes committed against humanity, and above all, against the Holy Spirit (Capazzo Pinto: 120).²⁵

²³ "El Cristo Lucifer particular toma las riendas de "la Muerte Psicológica", dentro del proceso que debe vivir el Iniciado en los Misterios Ocultos, con la meta maravillosa de poder cambiar sus aspectos esotéricos íntimos, que le permiten la integración con su espíritu".

²⁴ See the following chapter and its connotations in relation to the "Divine Androgyn".

²⁵ "El último aspecto de la Bendita Madre, lo conocemos como Hécate-Proserpina o Madre Muerte. Según los antiguos sabios es una deidad que cumple para nosotros una misión incomprensible en las profundidades del abismo, donde el dolor que soporta viendo sufrir a sus hijos es realmente aterrador. Asume algunas veces la forma de una gigantesca y terrible serpiente que devora a los moradores" del infierno, con la finalidad de liberarlos de ese lugar de penas y dolores."

It is interesting to see how she is recreated in the novel because among the roles she fulfills, she also leads devilish creatures and when one of these infernal beasts is expelled from a soul, she takes it with her and carries it towards where it belongs. In the following passage, which describes Dimmesdale's chilling scream when he discovers with horror his own sins and dark reality on the scaffold, Mistress Hibbins appears as having interpreted in the cry the voices of the demons with whom she entertained herself in the forest:

He looked like a ghost evoked unseasonably from the grave. The cry had evidently startled him. At another window of the same house, moreover appeared old Mistress Hibbins, the Governor's sister, also with a lamp, which even thus far off revealed the expression of her sour and discontented face. She thrust forth her head from the lattice, and looked anxiously upward. Beyond the shadow of a doubt, this venerable witch-lady had heard Mr. Dimmesdale's outcry, and interpreted it, with its multitudinous echoes and reverberations, as the clamour of the fiends and night-hags, with whom she was well known to make excursions in the forest (Hawthorne: 186).

Therefore, in the same way that Lucifer has a role to fulfill in the spiritual path of a being who is searching for illumination, mother Hecate-Proserpine, who utterly loves her evil sons, appears to take with her, to the region of the dead, the corpses of the demons who are chased out from the heart of beings who have set free from their domain. The explanation Cappazzo adds subsequently enables the reader to more easily grasp the idea of the characters inhabiting hell, since he describes why human beings need to suffer:

There are three ways of paying the evil produced during lifetime; through pain; through severe illnesses or through the service offered to humanity. Once in hell, there is no other way than doing it through pain, since physical body has already disappeared and cannot cancel the debts with illnesses or offer any service because he has no human expression in the tridimensional world anymore.

In the underworld souls really suffer unimaginable pain, and that is when they discover the time they have lost after one hundred and eight existences and after millions of years of great opportunities received to transit the way back to their Father.

Hell is a place where time goes by so slowly that it seems to have completely stopped, making the permanence even more painful. However, the condemned to involution have millions of years to reflect upon their insignificance, in comparison to God's creation. This is the place where there is no rush or stress, where souls surely can realize that they are miserable beings of the ephemeral human existence and despite this fact, they dared to become despotic, proud, irascible, fornicator people and even demanded respect from the rest of their peers (Cappazzo Pinto: 120-121).²⁶

"Cuando la Madre Naturaleza Inferior lleva a sus hijos al abismo, se los entrega a la Madre Hécate-Proserpina, quien se encarga de tragárselos una vez que hayan purgado las penas correspondientes, pagando con profundo dolor todos los pecados o errores cometidos contra la humanidad, y sobre todo, contra el Sacratísimo Espíritu Santo".

²⁶ "Hay tres maneras de pagar el mal producido durante el transcurso de la vida; por medio del dolor, con graves enfermedades, o a través del servicio realizado en bien de la humanidad. Una vez en el abismo, no hay otra forma de

Having described the roles the antagonists fulfill in the novel, Hester and Dimmesdale's torments can be understood under a new light, for their endless reclusion in hell seems to be the compensation for the terrible sin committed by them against the Holy Spirit.

hacerlo que no sea con dolor, ya que el cuerpo físico ha desaparecido y no puede cancelar con enfermedades, ni puede realizar servicio alguno por no disponer de la expresión humana en el mundo tridimensional de la materia.”

“En ese mundo infernal las almas sufren realmente lo inimaginable, es allí cuando descubren el tiempo perdido durante ciento ochocientos años y durante miles de años de estupendas oportunidades recibidas, para recorrer el camino de retorno al seno del Padre.”

“Es un lugar donde el tiempo pasa tan lento que parece haberse detenido de forma definitiva, haciendo la permanencia aún más dolorosa. Sin embargo, los condenados a la involución disponen de miles de años para reflexionar en su insignificancia, comparados con la creación de Dios. Es el sitio donde no existe la prisa ni el estrés, en el cual las almas seguramente pueden caer en la cuenta de que son pobres parias de la efímera existencia humana, y a pesar de todo tuvieron el atrevimiento de convertirse en déspotas, orgullosos, iracundos, calumniadores, fornicarios y hasta exigentes de querer ser servidos o respetados por los demás.”

CHAPTER THREE: THE SEXUAL ALCHEMIC PRACTICE AND THE CREATION OF THE EXISTENTIAL BODIES

This chapter deals with the existence of human life in ancient times, when people had not committed the original sin yet, and thus, resembled refulgent angels inhabiting paradise. Human beings were immortal, had divine powers and most importantly, enjoyed God's protection and grace. However, after they committed the original, mortal sin, that is to say, the sin against The Holy Spirit, they lost Divine Grace and descended towards earth in order to learn from their mistakes and acquire the knowledge to voluntarily return to paradise and not to fall once again. Gnosticism finds an explanation for man's origins in the following excerpt from the Holy Scriptures:

(T)he LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This (is) now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed (Gen 2, 21-25).

Despite the fact that this story has prompted serious debates among adepts of different philosophical and religious schools, Samael Aun Weor proposes a concealing interpretation and explains in one of his several books that:

The Hebraic scriptures tell that Adam lived alone in paradise. That Adam from Hebraic mythology is just a symbol; it refers to ancient humanity. Before humanity had divided into opposite sexes, there existed ADAM-SOLUS; and in fact, Eve was taken from Adam's rib. But we should not think about an anthropomorphic Eve; no, let's think about the ETERNAL FEMININE... Undoubtedly, through the ages sexes were dividing little by little (Aun Weor, A, 2011: 83-84).²⁷

We know that man's nipples are atrophied glands; we know that female clitoris is the atrophied PHALUS and gathered up with nervous ligaments (Aun Weor: 83).²⁸

²⁷ "Las mismas escrituras hebraicas nos dicen que Adán vivía sólo en el Paraíso Terrenal. Ese Adán de la mitología hebraica es tan solo un símbolo; se refiere a la humanidad antigua. Antes de que la humanidad se hubiese dividido en sexos opuestos, existía el "ADAN-SOLUS"; mas, en verdad, Eva fue sacada de la "costilla" de Adán. Pero no pensemos en una Eva antropomórfica; no, pensemos en el ETERNO FEMENINO... Incuestionablemente, a través del tiempo los sexos se fueron dividiendo poco a poco."

²⁸ "Bien sabemos nosotros que las tetillas del varón son glándulas mamarias atrofiadas; bien sabemos que el clítoris en la mujer es el PHALUS atrofiado y recogido con ligamentos nerviosos."

According to Gnosticism, the narration about creation then stands for the genetic and biological transformation, after many centuries, of the whole human race, allegorized by Adam and Eve, who were, at the beginning, an androgynous human being created by a superior force (God), who made this primitive human similar to himself (God is not male or female, but both at the same time). After millions of years, this hermaphrodite being, allegorizing all the human beings that inhabited the Earth, divided into male and female. This division of genders, at the same time represented the split between the human soul and the divine soul, or in other words, the separation of an aspect which embodied the human soul (masculine), and the aspect that embodied the divine soul (feminine). It is necessary to explain that within the androgynous Adam (Adam-Solus), the three principles of the Trinity were in perfect harmony, personified by a same individual. When sexes split up, that is to say, when human beings lost their divine soul (their feminine aspect), the Trinity physically and spiritually dissolved. Humans kept just a portion of their divinity (a portion of their human soul), and therefore needed to join with their complementary aspect in order to regain their plenitude and become celestial beings once more.

This union did not imply just physical connection between man and woman but also required a profound love between them to give birth to the third aspect, (the concealing one or Neuter), which means the Holy Ghost, who would rejoin through an authentic bond, the two dissociated aspects that had initially formed the Divine Triad within man, making him a worthy image of the Creator and commendable inhabitant of Eden.

In several classical and famous texts, this spiritual aspect of the divine soul is symbolized by women, such as Beatrice in Dante's masterpiece. When defining the "Intimae" (or "Atman"), or in other words, the divine inner triple principle of a Man that has reached perfection, Aun Weor appeals to the *Divine Comedy* to define Him: "The Being, the Inner Self, the Monad, has two Souls; the first is the Spiritual Soul, the second is the Human Soul. The former is Dante's Beatrice, Beautiful Helen, the Shulamite of the wise Solomon, the ineffable adorable wife, the Buddhi of Teosophy. The Latter is the Human Soul, the

Causal Principle, the Noble Husband, the Superior Manas of Theosophy (Aun Weor, Q, 2011: 54).²⁹

Then he also adds that “Atman is the Divine Spirit (an emanation of the Logos) who has two Souls, Buddhi and Manas; it is vital to understand this. In the Middle Ages when the medieval knight went out to battle for his lad, it was no other than the Human Soul fighting to win his Spiritual Soul”. (Aun Weor, P, 2011: 123).³⁰

The oriental concepts *Atman-Buddhi-Manas* would then constitute a Theosophical analogy of the Holy Trinity within the Human Being. Therefore Atman refers to the “Intimae” (Neutral, omniscient and perfect soul within a self realized individual); Buddhi to the Divine Soul (feminine principle, that humanity must conquer to self realize), and Manas to the Human soul (portion of the soul, a masculine aspect, within each creature that may lead him or her towards the Lord again). Taking into account this explanation, one could draw a parallelism between the Divine Soul and Hester. Evidently, she would represent, according to the allegoric sense of the tale, the spiritual principle (divine soul) of man, represented by Dimmesdale, who only possesses a portion of his spirit and needs to learn how to love in order to achieve redemption. In relation to the third element of the triad, it would be represented by Pearl, at first as a fruit of the parents’ sinful intercourse, but finally redeemed by their mutual love. This character will be analyzed in the following and last chapter of this study.

In the same way that a portion of the soul of human beings is trapped in hell, there is also an atom, a Divine Triad within the human organism of a person who searches for truth and decides to return to God, and which has its correspondence in Heaven. According to Gnosticism, chemically, the three particles of the divine atom –Proton, Neutron and Electron-, the core of the main stem cell which contains the essential features of the

²⁹ “El SER, el ÍNTIMO, la MONADA, tiene dos ALMAS; la primera es el ALMA ESPIRITUAL. La primera es la BEATRIZ del DANTE, la BELLA HELENA, la SULAMITA del SABIO SALOMÓN, la inefable esposa adorable, el BUDDHI de la TEOSOFÍA. La segunda es el ALMA HUMANA, el principio CAUSAL, el NOBLE ESPOSO”

³⁰ “ATMAN es el Espíritu Divino (es una emanación del Logos) que tiene dos Almas, Buddhi y Manas. Comprender esto es vital, en la Edad Media cuando el caballero medieval salía a luchar por su dama, no es más que el Alma Humana peleando por conquistar a su Alma Espiritual.”

individual, conforms the Holy Triad which needs to self-realize within three dimensional matter.

These explanations allow the reader to understand the metaphorical role the characters fulfill in the novel, and why their adultery attempts against their happiness, love and union. To illustrate how these notions are reflected in *The Scarlet Letter*, it is also necessary to refer to the fact that according to the Gnostic perspective, in ancient times, immediately after the division into male and female, husband and wife maintained sexual intercourse as a sacrament, which prevented them from death and illnesses:

Deep inside ourselves that Adam and that Eve, who were not just two people, but the human race in general, it is scientifically proved that that degeneration of Adams and Eves, from an androgynous root that really existed, because we can scientifically demonstrate that men's nipples are atrophied breasts and women's clitoris are atrophied phallus.

(...) Because then it would be incomprehensible the sleeping of the consciousness for science if we do not go to the origin of that deep sleep which consists of the original sin, an abuse the human race committed, scientifically demonstrable and which prompted the psychic daze and the decomposition of the organic machine. At the same time, that scientifically produced the expulsion from a paradise, because before, human beings had a series of organic, spiritual, chemical, principles. When the organism degenerated, they really went out of paradise (...) when humanity got divided into opposite sexes, then cooperation was necessary to create life ... In those times, sexuality was considered something sacred (...) none would have dared to make the sexual act without the Temple (Aun Weor, A, 2011: 67).³¹

Notice how the following excerpts equate the original sin with a poison that infects Dimmesdale's substance. The connection with the devil is compared to the universal principle which prompted men to fall:

Mr. Dimmesdale, conscious that the poison of one morbid spot was infecting his heart's entire substance, attributed all his presentiments to no other cause. He took himself to task for his bad sympathies in reference to Roger Chillingworth, disregarded the lesson that he should have drawn from them, and did his best to root them out. Unable to accomplish this, he nevertheless, as a matter of principle,

³¹ "En el fondo de nosotros ese Adán y esa Eva, que no fueron dos personas únicamente, sino la raza humana en general, científicamente se comprueba que esa degeneración de los Adanes y las Evas, a partir de un tronco Andrógino realmente existió porque podemos demostrar científicamente que los pechos en los hombres son senos atrofiados y el clitoris en la mujer es un falo atrofiado."

"(...) Porque sería entonces incomprensible el adormecimiento de la conciencia para la ciencia si no nos vamos a las raíces de ese adormecimiento que están en el pecado original, en un abuso que cometió la raza humana científicamente demostrable y que permitió precisamente el aturdimiento de la psiquis y la descomposición de la máquina orgánica. Eso produjo a su vez científicamente la salida de un paraíso, porque el ser humano antes tenía en orden una serie de principios orgánicos, anímicos, químicos, etc.; Cuando esto se degeneró, se salió de un paraíso realmente (...) Cuando la humanidad se dividió en sexos opuestos, entonces fue necesaria la cooperación para crear (...) Por aquella época, el sexo se consideraba sagrado (...) Nadie se hubiera atrevido, en aquella época, a realizar el acto sexual fuera del Templo."

continued his habits of social familiarity with the old man, and thus gave him constant opportunities for perfecting the purpose to which—poor forlorn creature that he was, and more wretched than his victim—the avenger had devoted himself (Hawthorne: 176-177).

On the one hand, this previous excerpt clearly describes the reverend's friendship with Chillingworth, which increases his suffering, and unable to get rid of him, of his evil nature, Dimmesdale is led towards even inferior areas within his soul. On the other hand, the next quoted fragment alludes to the degeneration of the body because of their transgression:

Tempted by a dream of happiness, he had yielded himself with deliberate choice, as he had never done before, to what he knew was deadly sin. And the infectious poison of that sin had been thus rapidly diffused throughout his moral system. It had stupefied all blessed impulses, and awakened into vivid life the whole brotherhood of bad ones (Hawthorne: 272).

This last passage refers to the loss of Dimmesdale best traits, to which Aun Weor refers as the organic, chemical and emotional principles human beings had in order before being infected by sin.

However, according to Gnosticism, if a sinner recognizes the origin of his suffering, and commits himself to rooting it out, his life undergoes a change and becomes able to be redeemed from his past deeds. In connection to the novel, at first, the minister is unaware of the peril Chillingworth's company represents. The following utterance not only expresses the role of evil within man's mind, but mainly the victim's unawareness when the physician states: "You search his thoughts. You burrow and rankle in his heart! Your clutch is on his life, and you cause him to die daily a living death, and still he knows you not" (Hawthorne: 212). While Dimmesdale starts to realize his naivety and ignorance, he recognizes the origin of his wretchedness and moral decay, and becomes repentant for the sin he committed and discovers of his inner reality, as in the following remark:

None—nothing but despair!' he answered. 'What else could I look for, being what I am, and leading such a life as mine? Were I an atheist—a man devoid of conscience—a wretch with coarse and brutal instincts—I might have found peace long ere now. Nay, I never should have lost it. But, as matters stand with my soul, whatever of good capacity there originally was in me, all of God's gifts that were the choicest have become the ministers of spiritual torment. Hester, I am most miserable!' (Hawthorne: 236).

As soon as the reverend recognizes that his enemy inhabits within himself and decides to fight him with all his strength, he discovers that the original sin he once committed has

prompted him to take to other countless vices that now he must learn to overcome. In doing so, his inner trainer will tempt him so that he demonstrates his victory over evil:

‘What is it that haunts and tempts me thus?’ cried the minister to himself, at length, pausing in the street, and striking his hand against his forehead. ‘Am I mad? or am I given over utterly to the fiend? Did I make a contract with him in the forest, and sign it with my blood? And does he now summon me to its fulfilment, by suggesting the performance of every wickedness which his most foul imagination can conceive?’ (Hawthorne: 270)

The minister’s final victory is foreseen when he finally decides to reject Chillingworth’s medicine, or better said, his sinful deeds, in order to have a saintly behavior. The next section expresses the relief he feels after having defeated his enemy:

The decision once made, a glow of strange enjoyment threw its flickering brightness over the trouble of his breast. 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, unchristianised, lawless region. His spirit rose, as it were, with a bound, and attained a nearer prospect of the sky, than throughout all the misery which had kept him grovelling on the earth. Of a deeply religious temperament, there was inevitably a tinge of the devotional in his mood (Hawthorne: 248-249).

Notice also the reference to the sphere where evil had chained him up as “an unredeemed, unchristianised, lawless region”, resembling a hellish area he has now been delivered from. This is the reason why towards the end of the novel the leech shouts at him: “Thou hast escaped me!” (Hawthorne: 311), because Dimmesdale is finally able to transcend his own nature and step into Christ’s Kingdom.

On the one hand, Dimmesdale achieves redemption after having defeated evil. On the other hand, the reverend’s triumph is also strictly connected to the fact that he learns to love a woman with purity. His spiritual transformation can only be explained by his sincere repentance after having cowardly abandoned Hester and Pearl and decided to form a family with them, even publicly recognizing his mistakes and miseries. Gnosticism holds that love is the supreme and most powerful force which leads man back to paradise, but in relation to sexuality, esotericism has always known the secret of alchemists, and disguised it under symbolic elements. Samael Aun Weor holds that alchemy is, strictly speaking, a sexual sacred practice, to sublimate the inferior, grotesque human energies (ens seminis) and transmute them into gold. This technique would consist of not fornicating, that is to say, spilling the seminal fluids, but making them ascend through the

spine towards the brain. The chalice of all religions esoterically represents the sacred wines of the gods, the elixir of immortality. Aun Weor reveals in one of his several books about alchemy, *La Piedra Filosofal o el Secreto de los Alquimistas*, the symbolic connection between woman and the Grail:

“There is no doubt either that in the Cup or Chalice, the Holy Grail as it is known, for which the Medieval knights fought when they left towards the Holy Land during the times of the Eucharistic Crusades, represents the feminine Yoni, the eternal feminine (...) they never found it, obviously” (Aun Weor, K, 2012: 261).³²

Undoubtedly, the Holy Grail has conveyed a symbol of redemption for many religious traditions. The waters kept in the cup, make allusion to the sexual liquors that the valiant men do not spill, their demonstration of power and chastity. On the contrary, the empty cup would represent for hermetic sciences, the spillage of the sacred waters. Waters have a great importance for esotericism because they represent the strength of the courageous man, who never pours out the “Elixir of Eternal Life”. In the novel the symbol of the cup is explicitly mentioned:

Be not silent from any mistaken pity and tenderness for him; for, believe me, Hester, though he were to step down from a high place, and stand there beside thee, on thy pedestal of shame, yet better were it so than to hide a guilty heart through life. What can thy silence do for him, except it tempt him—yea, compel him, as it were—to add hypocrisy to sin? Heaven hath granted thee an open ignominy, that thereby thou mayest work out an open triumph over the evil within thee and the sorrow without. Take heed how thou deniest to him—who, perchance, hath not the courage to grasp it for himself—the bitter, but wholesome, cup that is now presented to thy lips! (Hawthorne: 93)

In the passage previously quoted, Dimmesdale advises Hester to take the cup, though bitter, as the most honorable deed and deny her passions, all her fears of Chillingworth. Undoubtedly, sexual alchemy challenges human strengths in order to completely temper holy men. When the author claims that, “The wine of life, henceforth to be presented to her lips, must be indeed rich, delicious, and exhilarating, in its chased and golden beaker, or else leave an inevitable and weary languor, after the lees of bitterness wherewith she had been drugged, as with a cordial of intensest potency” (Hawthorne: 278), he refers to a “golden beaker”, resembling the Holy Grail, and contrasting it with their previous sinful way of having sexual intercourse. He refers to their previous intimate way of relating as

³² “No hay duda también de que en la Copa o Cáliz o el Santo Grial como dicen, por el cual pelearon todos los Caballeros de la edad media cuando salieron para la Tierra Santa durante la época de las Cruzadas Eucarísticas, representa al Yoni femenino, al eterno femenino (...) jamás lo encontraron, es obvio”.

“lees of bitterness” where Hester had been drugged, evidently also making reference to the poisonous substances the human body produces which intoxicate and damage it.

Aun Weor explains in his book *Las Sagradas Escrituras Confirman la Gnosis* that in the Bible there are countless allusions to the mystery waters involve. Here it is a transcription of one of these references to Christ’s words:

“Jesus answered and said unto her: Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again”. Here Christ refers to physical water, the natural element that we use for our subsistence (John 4:14)

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life”. Here Christ refers to seminal waters, which all human beings have within and if we know how to drink that water within matrimony, we will obtain a spiritual fountain that will make us immortal” (John 4:15)

“The woman said unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw”. Christ does not ask the woman for the vase to get water from the well, but orders her to bring her husband in order to teach her how to transmute with him the seminal waters which lead to eternal life. We should clarify that it is within matrimony that one should drink the pure water of life, but in the loyal, chaste and respectful matrimony (Aun Weor, G, 2009: 74-75).³³

In *The Scarlet Letter*, as in many other occultist literary works, alchemy is practiced by the lovers in order to achieve redemption. This activity is recreated by the author in an allegoric way, and therefore, set in the dark forest, resembling the intimacy of the lover’s intercourse and surrounded by nature, always making reference to a brook (sexual glands and fluids). In the occasions where the characters meet in the woods, they have to undergo critical experiences such as saving Pearl’s life or struggling against Chillingworth, who symbolizes human passions.

It must be acknowledged that as the characters and element of the scarlet letter constitute dual symbols, the forest also offers a binary interpretation. On the one hand, its

³³ En respuesta, Jesús le dijo: a todo el que bebe de esta agua le dará sed otra vez”. Aquí Cristo se refiere al agua física, al elemento natural que utilizamos para nuestra subsistencia. (Juan 4:14)

“A cualquiera que beba del agua que yo le daré de ningún modo le dará sed jamás, sino que el agua que yo le daré se hará en él una fuente de agua que brotará para impartir vida eterna”. Aquí Cristo se refiere al agua seminal, la que todo ser humano tiene dentro de sí, y si sabemos beber de esa agua en el matrimonio, obtendremos una fuente espiritual, que nos tornará inmortales. (Juan 4:15)

“La mujer le dijo: Señor, dame esta agua, para que ni tenga sed, ni siga viniendo a este lugar a sacar agua”. Cristo no le pide a la mujer la vasija para sacar agua del pozo, sino que la manda a traer al esposo, para enseñarle a transmutar con él, el agua seminal que da vida eterna. Aclaremos que es en el matrimonio donde se bebe el agua de vida pura, pero en el matrimonio fiel, casto y respetuoso de Dios.

virginity, solitude and wilderness offer the characters a shelter from people's hostility and embody a place where the lovers can secretly meet and enjoy love. Yet, on the other hand, its licentiousness also represents a threat for the protagonist's spiritual regeneration since the perfect way of loving they must achieve requires temperance and self control. Therefore, in order to regenerate their own nature, they must fight against their wild inner impulses, represented externally by the chaotic forest, and organize the cosmos - perhaps exercising a divine power within their humanity?- as a perfected and virtuous soul.

The following passage while referring to the forest expresses Dimmesdale's hope to find white man's track, as a kind of pure representation of himself in a new world of happiness, far from Chillingworth's threatening presence, that is to say, far from his faults, vices and mistakes:

Deeper it goes, and deeper into the wilderness, less plainly to be seen at every step; until some few miles hence the yellow leaves will show no vestige of the white man's tread. There thou art free! So brief a journey would bring thee from a world where thou hast been most wretched, to one where thou mayest still be happy! Is there not shade enough in all this boundless forest to hide thy heart from the gaze of Roger Chillingworth? (Hawthorne: 243).

Samael Aun Weor explains that when bestial passion is transformed, or transmuted (as Alchemists would say) the physical body and spirit of a person undergo changes in its chemical and physical constitution, thus filling the person with health and light. Or in other words, with the practice of sexual alchemy, the physical characteristics of the human organism would be renewed since the matter would acquire spiritual features that would allow the human existence to become angelic. Those type of features would constitute what Gnostics call "the Existential Bodies". These changes have to do with the process of liberation of microscopic gold particles contained within human seeds into the human organism, which alchemists symbolically define as "transmuting lead into gold", or in other terms, changing "heavy matter into something subtle". These internal processes would make the person *fill the chalice* and receive illumination, thus being able to enjoy eternal life. Hawthorne has represented these facts for example in excerpts such as the following:

Never, from the soil of New England had gone up such a shout! Never, on New England soil had stood the man so honoured by his mortal brethren as the preacher!

How fared it with him, then? Were there not the brilliant particles of a halo in the air about his head? So etherealised by spirit as he was, and so apotheosised by worshipping admirers, did his footsteps, in the procession, really tread upon the dust of earth? (Hawthorne: 305)

Notice even the explicit reference to the radiant halo of sanctity over the minister's head and the description of his glorious redemption. Other mentions to the light produced through love and the practice of sexual alchemy can be found in the various episodes lived by the lovers in the forest:

All at once, as with a sudden smile of heaven, forth burst the sunshine, pouring a very flood into the obscure forest, gladdening each green leaf, transmuting the yellow fallen ones to gold, and gleaming adown the gray trunks of the solemn trees. The objects that had made a shadow hitherto, embodied the brightness now. The course of the little brook might be traced by its merry gleam afar into the wood's heart of mystery, which had become a mystery of joy.

Such was the sympathy of Nature—that wild, heathen Nature of the forest, never subjugated by human law, nor illumined by higher truth—with the bliss of these two spirits! Love, whether newly-born, or aroused from a death-like slumber, must always create a sunshine, filling the heart so full of radiance, that it overflows upon the outward world. Had the forest still kept its gloom, it would have been bright in Hester's eyes, and bright in Arthur Dimmesdale's! (Hawthorne: 250-251)

The description above clearly draws a parallelism between nature and the lovers' relationship. The author, symbolically representing the alchemic elements, or better said, the lovers' organism in nature, equates the fallen leafs with their habitual spillage of the sacred liquors, which are now transmuted into gold; the gray trunk of the solemn trees resemble the sacred columns known in esotericism as Jachin and Boaz, the serpents of the hermetic Caduceus portraying the spinal channels through which light ascends towards the brain³⁴; and finally the brook, whose waters flow towards the core of the forest representing the arrival of the sexual energy at its final destiny, human heart, after having enlightened the whole body. Other passages are equally significant. The allusion to the bank of fallen leaves and the giant trees rising to the sky is repeated in other passages too:

Thus conversing, they entered sufficiently deep into the wood to secure themselves from the observation of any casual passer along the forest track. Here they sat down on a luxuriant heap of moss; which at some epoch of the preceding century, had been a gigantic pine, with its roots and trunk in the darksome shade, and its head aloft in the upper atmosphere. It was a little dell where they had seated themselves, with a leaf-strewn bank rising gently on either side, and a brook flowing through the midst, over a bed of fallen and drowned leaves. The trees impending over it had flung

34 See Kundalini and Sahja Maithuna. For more information also see Samael's Aun Weor's "La Piedra Filosofal o el Secreto de los Alquimistas"

down great branches from time to time, which choked up the current, and compelled it to form eddies and black depths at some points; while, in its swifter and livelier passages there appeared a channel-way of pebbles, and brown, sparkling sand. Letting the eyes follow along the course of the stream, they could catch the reflected light from its water, at some short distance within the forest, but soon lost all traces of it amid the bewilderment of tree-trunks and underbush, and here and there a huge rock covered over with gray lichens. All these giant trees and boulders of granite seemed intent on making a mystery of the course of this small brook; fearing, perhaps, that, with its never-ceasing loquacity, it should whisper tales out of the heart of the old forest whence it flowed, or mirror its revelations on the smooth surface of a pool. Continually, indeed, as it stole onward, the streamlet kept up a babble, kind, quiet, soothing, but melancholy, like the voice of a young child that was spending its infancy without playfulness, and knew not how to be merry among sad acquaintance and events of sombre hue (Hawthorne: 230-231).

Yet, the most important element in this description is the reference to the huge rock covered with lichens. This element undoubtedly symbolizes the fundamental stone, the “Philosopher’s Stone” of the alchemists. This stone is the fundament of the Magnum Opus, the definite union of man and God through self realization. In this case, the stone – also called the corner stone or the stone of scandal in the Bible- is covered by lichens in the description since in this particular stance, the couple has not started their loving practice yet. The brook felt nostalgic because the lovers had not learnt how to love each other purely. In this sense, the forest represents not just a physical place, but also the forbidden intercourse between a man and a woman, whether it is fornication or adultery. This is the reason why the Black Man, Satan, appears in this place, writing down the names of the condemned in his book.

Other passages in the forest are worth mentioning too, since they contain elements which help clarify the terrible difficulties such a business implies. For instance, the chapter which describes Pearl’s risky maneuver to catch the scarlet letter in the brook and the parents’ attempts to save her, also stand for their wrestle to redeem the androgenic creation they had both made, since the girl, as mentioned before, represents the spiritual fruit of the couple’s sexual intercourse. Likewise, the chapter which describes Chillingworth’s appearance is not a mere ornamental peripety in the novel but a relevant description to complete the couple’s struggle not to succumb to temptation during their sexual work. Since the physician represents the passionate and intelligent element, he may prompt characters to be either redeemed or doomed. His appearance while the lovers are in the

forest stands for their battle against their own instinctive impulses. It is also relevant to analyze how the author has anticipated this feature of Chillingworth in previous passages:

Now there was something ugly and evil in his face, which they had not previously noticed, and which grew still the more obvious to sight the oftener they looked upon him. According to the vulgar idea, the fire in his laboratory had been brought from the lower regions, and was fed with infernal fuel; and so, as might be expected, his visage was getting sooty with the smoke (Hawthorne: 161).

This reference to fire brought from inferior regions, undoubtedly refers to the magician's regency in hell, but the allusion to a laboratory certainly highlights the alchemic notion of a kind of fire belonging to the inferior parts of the human body, the sexual glands. The hermetic postulates hold that, "as above so below, as within so without" (Hermes Trismegistus, *Emerald Tablet*) and as the latest experiments on the fields of physics confirm, any particle of the universe has its correspondence in the rest of it, in the same way that all the universe can be reflected in one of its simplest particles. In this sense, Gnosticism equates cosmic regions or dimensions (macrocosm) with the individual ones (microcosm). Therefore, the fuel from inferior regions, our luciferic instincts can be compared to a kind of self inferno, according to the individual degree of chastity. For Gnosticism, light must necessarily come from darkness, and therefore, a man or a woman cannot be chaste unless, after they have transgressed the Holy Laws, they shed their own demons in order to achieve perfection. This is the reason why Lucifer, may be considered as a dreadful creature for the fragile souls who are unable to overcome temptation, but may also be the trainer and guide for the valiant ones who decide to go beyond their own nature and recover their soul. When a man achieves complete purity, its inner Lucifer also becomes a refulgent white angel and these explanations allow the reader to understand why, after Dimmesdale has achieved redemption, Hawthorne also mentions Chillingworth's transformation:

Each, in its utmost development, supposes a high degree of intimacy and heart-knowledge; each renders one individual dependent for the food of his affections and spiritual life upon another: each leaves the passionate lover, or the no less passionate hater, forlorn and desolate by the withdrawal of his subject. Philosophically considered, therefore, the two passions seem essentially the same, except that one happens to be seen in a celestial radiance, and the other in a dusky and lurid glow. In the spiritual world, the old physician and the minister—mutual victims as they have been—may, unawares, have found their earthly stock of hatred and antipathy transmuted into golden love (Hawthorne: 316).

Also using language which refers to alchemy, the author claims that both Dimmesdale's

love and Chillingworth's hatred are transmuted into golden love, as if both sides of reality complemented to constitute perfection: light and darkness (as the oriental yin yang) are both necessary for human beings to step up the stairs towards Heaven. These ideas reflect the truth contained in the verses of the Genesis which hold that the woman took the forbidden fruit because it was "desired to make one wise" (Gen 3,6).

The aim of alchemy has to do with the redemption of man and woman through Love, which is born when the couple learns to physically and spiritually relate with purity, chases out the inner evils and enjoys sexuality as a sacrament which leads them back to their Creator. The recovery of the angelic state humanity lost is crucial to deserve the entrance to Heaven. Understanding these concepts is important to comprehend why the birth of the Divine Androgynous is required. Through the practice of the Great Arcane, the Sexual Magic, man and woman make not a fleshy creature, but a spiritual one. This Holy Baby which represents the perfect relationship of the two members of the couple united through Sacred Love, is born within the soul of the lovers, containing the features of both man and woman perfected through the supreme sacrifice and chastity. The Holy Trinity within a human being invests them with truly golden garments, the Existential Bodies, which humans lost when they committed the original sin. Their emptiness is represented in Genesis by the couple's nakedness in front of God's eyes. This immaculate attire is also alluded in Jesus' parables as the wedding garment God required to attend a marriage, the marriage of the souls (Mathew, 22, 1-14). Samael Aun Weor claims in relation to the existential bodies:

The oriental esotericists know that when the positive and negative currents of Mercury come into contact in the Triveni, close to the coccygeal bone, a third force awakens by an electric induction. This force is the Kundalini. When the Kundalini awakens in the body, it is designed as a spiral, serpentine fire that is developed in the body of the ascetic, near the coccygeal bone. That sacred fire (...) ascends through the medullar spinal canal to the brain, awakening the superior centers of the brain. The surplus of this Mercury fertilized by Sulfur must cause the virtual creation of the existential superior bodies of the Being. (...)

In order for the bodies to be recovered by the distinct parts of the Being, they must be perfected. They must be converted into vehicles of pure gold. However, these vehicles cannot be converted into instruments of pure Gold unless the dry Mercury and the Arsenic Sulfur are eliminated. What is Dry Mercury? It is the 'I' ego). What is the Arsenic Sulfur? It is the carnal, bestial fire of the atomic infernos of the human being (...)

Only thus can these vehicles of pure Gold (...) serve as a covering for our King, our Intimate Christ. Christ rises from His sepulcher in the instant in which this type of covering exists. He covers himself anew with it so that He may manifest himself here, through the senses, in order to work for this suffering humanity (...)

When the interior, profound Lord has completed the entirety of the Great Work within the crystal sepulcher, He is then born as a child within the heart of the human being. He must develop himself during the esoteric work. He must live the Cosmic Drama within the human being and He is responsible for all our mental, volitive, and emotional processes. In a few words, he makes himself a human among humans and suffers all the temptations of the flesh, like everyone. He must defeat and be triumphant. Now all of His bodies are of pure Gold and one can dress with these bodies and live in the world of the flesh as a completely resurrected Adept, triumphant in the Universe. (Aun Weor, K, 2012: 104).³⁵

In this way, the refulgency falling upon minister Dimmesdale after being redeemed from his sins and his resemblance with Christ allude to these ideas of the “Son of Man” turned into the “Son of God”:

According to their united testimony, never had man spoken in so wise, so high, and so holy a spirit, as he that spake this day; nor had inspiration ever breathed through mortal lips more evidently than it did through his. Its influence could be seen, as it were, descending upon him, and possessing him, and continually lifting him out of the written discourse that lay before him, and filling him with ideas that must have been as marvelous to himself as to his audience. His subject, it appeared, had been the relation between the Deity and the communities of mankind, with a special reference to the New England which they were here planting in the wilderness. And, as he drew towards the close, a spirit as of prophecy had come upon him, constraining him to its purpose as mightily as the old prophets of Israel were constrained, only with this difference, that, whereas the Jewish seers had denounced judgments and ruin on their country, it was his mission to foretell a high and glorious destiny for the newly gathered people of the Lord. But, throughout it all, and through the whole discourse, there had been a certain deep, sad undertone of pathos, which could not be interpreted otherwise than as the natural regret of

³⁵ “Los esoteristas orientales creen que cuando las corrientes positivas y negativas del Mercurio hacen contacto en el Triveni, cerca del hueso coxígeo, despierta, por inducción eléctrica, una tercera fuerza que es el Kundalini. Este Kundalini, designado únicamente como fuego serpentino anular, que se desarrolla en el cuerpo del asceta cerca del hueso coxígeo, despierta en el cuerpo. Ese fuego sagrado (...) asciende por el canal medular espinal hasta el cerebro, despertando los centros superiores del cerebro. El excedente de ese Mercurio, fecundado por Azufre, es el que debe hacer la virtual creación de los cuerpos existenciales superiores del Ser (...)”

“Para que los cuerpos puedan ser recubiertos por las distintas partes del Ser, deben perfeccionarse, convertirse en vehículos de oro puro. Pero, no podrían esos vehículos convertirse en instrumentos de oro puro sino se eliminaran el mercurio seco y el azufre arsenicado. ¿Cuál es el mercurio seco? Los Yoes. ¿Cuál es el azufre arsenicado? Pues el fuego carnal, bestial, de los infiernos atómicos del hombre (...)”

“Esos vehículos de oro puro (...) vienen a servir de envoltorio para nuestro Rey, nuestro Cristo íntimo. El se levanta de su sepulcro en el instante que hay un envoltorio de esa clase y se recubre con ese envoltorio para manifestarse aquí, a través de los sentidos, y trabajar por la Humanidad doliente (...)”

“De manera que, cuando el Señor interior profundo ha terminado la totalidad de la Gran Obra, dentro de ese sepulcro de cristal, nace como un niño en el corazón del hombre. El tiene que desarrollarse durante el trabajo esotérico, tiene que vivir el Drama Cósmico dentro de uno mismo y se hace cargo de todos nuestros procesos mentales, volitivos y emocionales. En una palabra, se hace un hombre entre los hombres y sufre todas las tentaciones de la carne, de todos. Tiene que vencer y salir triunfante. Ya son todos sus vehículos de oro puro y puede uno vestirse con esos cuerpos y vivir en el mundo de la carne, como todo un Adepto resurrecto, triunfante en el Universo.”

one soon to pass away. Yes; their minister whom they so loved—and who so loved them all, that he could not depart heavenward without a sigh—had the foreboding of untimely death upon him, and would soon leave them in their tears. This idea of his transitory stay on earth gave the last emphasis to the effect which the preacher had produced; it was if an angel, in his passage to the skies, had shaken his bright wings over the people for an instant—at once a shadow and a splendour—and had shed down a shower of golden truths upon them.

Thus, there had come to the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale—as to most men, in their various spheres, though seldom recognised until they see it far behind them—an epoch of life more brilliant and full of triumph than any previous one, or than any which could hereafter be. He stood, at this moment, on the very proudest eminence of superiority, to which the gifts or intellect, rich lore, prevailing eloquence, and a reputation of whitest sanctity, could exalt a clergyman in New England's earliest days, when the professional character was of itself a lofty pedestal. Such was the position which the minister occupied, as he bowed his head forward on the cushions of the pulpit at the close of his Election Sermon (HAWTHORNE: 302-304).

The explicit reference of the Holy Spirit coming over minister Dimmesdale, his prophecy of Glory to the people, his resemblance to an angel, his sanctity and his subsequent miraculous death, portray him as similar to Christ. The narrator claims towards the end, that “it is singular, nevertheless, that certain persons, who were spectators of the whole scene, and professed never once to have removed their eyes from the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale, denied that there was any mark whatever on his breast, more than on a new-born infant's.” (Hawthorne: 314) Though this notion immediately refers to the absence of the scarlet letter on his breast, it also has an echo in the fact that his breast, his heart, was like a new-born baby's, which means that he had become pure like a child, or a that baby had been born in his heart, as Samael Aun Weor puts it.

Moreover, the allusion to a broken spell when Dimmesdale publicly recognizes his fatherhood has to do not only with his own redemption, but also with Pearl's and Hester's. In this case the little girl, representing the parents' mutual love, has become a pure, divine creature. This character and its features will be described in the next section.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE REBIRTH OF THE DIVINE ANDROGYNOUS AND THE RETURN TO PARADISE

The previous chapter described the way in which Hawthorne represents Alchemy in his description of nature. However, there is a more encompassing reality hidden in the metaphor of the lost paradise of Europe, their Old England, and the current hellish soil they inhabit in New England. It seems that these two distant places not only stand for physical territory but also different spiritual degrees of existence. While Salem condemns them because of the misery and sorrow they have to stand, Europe represents the land they miss and which makes them feel nostalgic, but also hopeful³⁶. There are many comments in which this opposition can be observed:

‘Then there is the broad pathway of the sea!’ continued Hester. ‘It brought thee hither. If thou so choose, it will bear thee back again. In our native land, whether in some remote rural village, or in vast London—or, surely, in Germany, in France, in pleasant Italy—thou wouldst be beyond his power and knowledge! And what hast thou to do with all these iron men, and their opinions? They have kept thy better part in bondage too long already!’

‘It cannot be!’ answered the minister, listening as if he were called upon to realise a dream. ‘I am powerless to go. Wretched and sinful as I am, I have had no other thought than to drag on my earthly existence in the sphere where Providence hath placed me. Lost as my own soul is, I would still do what I may for other human souls! I dare not quit my post, though an unfaithful sentinel, whose sure reward is death and dishonour, when his dreary watch shall come to an end!’

‘Thou art crushed under this seven years’ weight of misery,’ replied Hester, fervently resolved to buoy him up with her own energy. ‘But thou shalt leave it all behind thee! It shall not cumber thy steps, as thou treadest along the forest-path: neither shalt thou freight the ship with it, if thou prefer to cross the sea. It shall not cumber thy steps, as thou treadest along the forest-path: neither shalt thou freight the ship with it, if thou prefer to cross the sea. Leave this wreck and ruin here where it hath happened. Meddle no more with it! Begin all anew! Hast thou exhausted possibility in the failure of this one trial? Not so! The future is yet full of trial and success. There is happiness to be enjoyed! There is good to be done! Exchange this false life of thine for a true one (Hawthorne: 343-244).

Undoubtedly, Hester’s words compel the reverend to have faith in God’s mercy and start a new life, a saintly life represented by Europe. This is the reason why she invites her to travel there as a way to achieve salvation. The fact that they have to cross the sea is also related to alchemy, since the aim of the Sacred Waters is to travel along the spine in order

36 The notion of a hellish Salem can also be confronted with the feeling of disillusionment Puritans had after having abandoned their native lands and reached the promising America. They had left Europe believing that the “Promised Land” was a place of opportunities and a new start. However, their own mistakes turned it into a hostile country. The metaphor developed also by other writers serves as an inspiration to configure Hawthorne’s novel.

to join the inferior regions of the human being with the upper ones. This is the triumphal ascent of the Kundalini, uniting both spheres to allow divinity to manifest on Earth. The seminal liquors need to cross along the spinal conducts of the lovers defeating their passionate nature in order to overcome their own fragility, miseries, and ultimately be able to overcome death. This metaphor is also intertwined with that related to the occult regions of the forest:

By this time Pearl had reached the margin of the brook, and stood on the further side, gazing silently at Hester and the clergyman, who still sat together on the mossy tree-trunk waiting to receive her. Just where she had paused, the brook chanced to form a pool so smooth and quiet that it reflected a perfect image of her little figure, with all the brilliant picturesqueness of her beauty, in its adornment of flowers and wreathed foliage, but more refined and spiritualized than the reality. This image, so nearly identical with the living Pearl, seemed to communicate somewhat of its own shadowy and intangible quality to the child herself. It was strange, the way in which Pearl stood, looking so steadfastly at them through the dim medium of the forest gloom, herself, meanwhile, all glorified with a ray of sunshine, that was attracted thitherward as by a certain sympathy. In the brook beneath stood another child—another and the same—with likewise its ray of golden light. Hester felt herself, in some indistinct and tantalizing manner, estranged from Pearl, as if the child, in her lonely ramble through the forest, had strayed out of the sphere in which she and her mother dwelt together, and was now vainly seeking to return to it.

There were both truth and error in the impression; the child and mother were estranged, but through Hester's fault, not Pearl's. Since the latter rambled from her side, another inmate had been admitted within the circle of the mother's feelings, and so modified the aspect of them all, that Pearl, the returning wanderer, could not find her wonted place, and hardly knew where she was.

'I have a strange fancy,' observed the sensitive minister, 'that this brook is the boundary between two worlds, and that thou canst never meet thy Pearl again (Hawthorne: 256-257).

In addition to the explicit remark in relation to the two different regions which made Pearl and the mother feel estranged, and the comparison of the brook³⁷ as the boundary between two worlds, it is relevant to see how in this episode the couple struggles to reach the refulgent child on the other side of the brook and how the angelic "refined and spiritualized" reflection of Pearl is "magically" formed, resembling the Divine Androgynous created by the lovers, which inhabits subtler superior lands of endless happiness. The following paragraph continues with the description of the majestic baby, the spiritual creation of the lovers, who through alchemic practice aim at definitely

37 Notice how "the brook" not only symbolizes the sexual glands whose occult powers may unite God and men, but also may be related to the place in which Hawthorne probably acquired this knowledge, "Brook Farm". The idea of the symbol may have also been taken from this name.

“crossing the brook” one day and therefore conquer the Philosopher’s Stone and the Elixir of Eternal Life:

Pearl still pointed with her forefinger, and a frown gathered on her brow—the more impressive from the childish, the almost baby-like aspect of the features that conveyed it. As her mother still kept beckoning to her, and arraying her face in a holiday suit of unaccustomed smiles, the child stamped her foot with a yet more imperious look and gesture. In the brook, again, was the fantastic beauty of the image, with its reflected frown, its pointed finger, and imperious gesture, giving emphasis to the aspect of little Pearl (Hawthorne: 257-258).

Along the novel Pearl acquires a contradictory purport, since her nature is sometimes described as wild but at the same time as spiritual. People often call her in a derogatory way “elfish child” or “witch-baby”. The reason for this is related to the passionate way in which she has been conceived, that is to say through adultery and fornication, and therefore she really is a “demon offspring”, an inferior spiritual creature, who starts to be transformed into an angelic being as soon as the parents start to learn how to “chisel the Stone”³⁸. Notice how in the following passage, after Dimmesdale asks Hester to pacify the passionate child, the woman confesses that the spell which falls on her at first hinders her from setting completely free from passion, in the allegorical form previously described:

‘I know nothing that I would not sooner encounter than this passion in a child. In Pearl’s young beauty, as in the wrinkled witch, it has a preternatural effect. Pacify her if thou lovest me!’ (...)

‘Was ever such a child!’ observed Hester aside to the minister. ‘Oh, I have much to tell thee about her! But, in very truth, she is right as regards this hateful token. I must bear its torture yet a little longer—only a few days longer—until we shall have left this region, and look back hither as to a land which we have dreamed of. The forest cannot hide it! The mid-ocean shall take it from my hand, and swallow it up for ever!’ (Hawthorne: 259)

Undoubtedly, Pearl’s awareness of her connection with her parent’s sinful behavior compels her to constantly remind them of their sin and she will not “be pacified” until they are redeemed. The narrator claims that she existed “to remind her, [Hester] at every moment, of her fall, but yet to teach her, as if it were by the Creator’s sacred pledge, that, if she bring the child to heaven, the child also will bring its parents thither!” (Hawthorne: 147).

³⁸ Esotericism uses the expression “to chisel the Stone” to refer to the sacred practice of Sexual Magic. Accordingly, Jesus Christ also chose the symbol of the stone to set the basis of his Church and Peter (Keter, Patar, or “stone”) would be its symbolic leader, as a way to signal the ideal of chastity required by its members.

Towards the end, the lovers having achieved their divine purpose observe their new creature. Pearl now resembles the flower embroidered girl they had seen reflected in the pool in the forest, as a kind of first glimpse of the aim they have attained.

But how strangely beautiful she looks with those wild flowers in her hair! It is as if one of the fairies, whom we left in dear old England, had decked her out to meet us.' It was with a feeling which neither of them had ever before experienced, that they sat and watched Pearl's slow advance. In her was visible the tie that united them. She had been offered to the world, these seven past years, as the living hieroglyphic, in which was revealed the secret they so darkly sought to hide—all written in this symbol—all plainly manifest—had there been a prophet or magician skilled to read the character of flame! And Pearl was the oneness of their being. Be the foregone evil what it might, how could they doubt that their earthly lives and future destinies were conjoined when they beheld at once the material union, and the spiritual idea, in whom they met, and were to dwell immortally together; thoughts like these—and perhaps other thoughts, which they did not acknowledge or define—threw an awe about the child as she came onward.

'Let her see nothing strange—no passion or eagerness—in thy way of accosting her,' whispered Hester. 'Our Pearl is a fitful and fantastic little elf sometimes. Especially she is generally intolerant of emotion, when she does not fully comprehend the why and wherefore. But the child hath strong affections! She loves me, and will love thee!' (Hawthorne: 254-255).

The description of the girl purified from evil accounts for the perfection of the androgynous which united them spiritually and materially and which revealed the mystery encompassed by the scarlet letter from the beginning. The notion of the girl representing "the oneness" of the parents stands for the conjunction of the three elements of the Holy Trinity contained in only one being, the fruit of the couple's love. In the following excerpt, the characters realize how they had lost their perfect union after having broken the Sacred Laws of the Holy Spirit and violated their "reverence each for the other's soul":

Pearl kissed his lips. A spell was broken. The great scene of grief, in which the wild infant bore a part had developed all her sympathies; and as her tears fell upon her father's cheek, they were the pledge that she would grow up amid human joy and sorrow, nor forever do battle with the world, but be a woman in it. Towards her mother, too, Pearl's errand as a messenger of anguish was fulfilled.

'Hester,' said the clergyman, 'farewell!' 'Shall we not meet again?' whispered she, bending her face down close to his. 'Shall we not spend our immortal life together? Surely, surely, we have ransomed one another, with all this woe! Thou lookest far into eternity, with those bright dying eyes! Then tell me what thou seest!'

'Hush, Hester—hush!' said he, with tremulous solemnity. 'The law we broke I—the sin here awfully revealed!—let these alone be in thy thoughts! I fear! I fear! It may be, that, when we forgot our God—when we violated our reverence each for the other's soul—it was thenceforth vain to hope that we could meet hereafter, in an everlasting and pure reunion (Hawthorne: 311-312).

Once the lovers learn how to purely love each other, their perception of reality changes because they experience real existence and enter Heaven once again. Making allusion to Jesus' words which verse that "straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew, 7, 14), Samael Aun Weor explains that humankind can only return to Heaven understanding that man and woman are potential gods, and only learning to profoundly love each other they can reenter the place from where they once were expelled. There, they will be able to eat again from the tree of Life and become immortal and perfect forever.

The tree of life is our Real Being. The tree of life is represented in our physical body by the spinal column (...) When man returns to Eden, he will be able to eat of the fruits of the Tree of Life, which are in the middle of the Lord's paradise (Revelation 2:7). Eden is sex. We went out of Eden through the door of sex and only through that gate we can return to it (Gen 36). The tree of life is the breath of the Absolute, it is the Absolute (Aun Weor, B, 2012: 18).³⁹

This is the way in which Gnosticism has always seen evil, as a painful step towards good, a sacrifice which allows the existence of supreme good. In other words, chastity and beatitude would not genuinely exist in somebody who has not experienced passion and lust. The same author comments in relation to this idea that:

The two Souls must be fused; the masculine Human Soul with the feminine Spiritual Soul. This is not achieved without having eliminated the 'I' and without having eliminated the Body of Desires. The two souls must be One.

This is the great Alliance between the medieval knight and lady; we find this in the books of chivalry, 'El romancero', ballads, Count Roland, the wandering troubadours. The knight who fights for his lady is the Human Soul, the lady is the Spiritual Soul. The knight must fight for his lady, if he does not so he remains without her (Aun Weor, P, 2011: 161).⁴⁰

This is the reason why Aun Weor emphasizes the fact that human beings may only leave the abyss and return to Paradise as long as they demonstrate that they have learned to perfectly love their partner as well as the rest of the creatures. They need to go back to the place where they came from, God's Kingdom, and thus need to learn to love like Gods.

³⁹ "El árbol de la vida es nuestro Real Ser. El árbol de la vida está representado en nuestro cuerpo físico por la columna espinal (...) Al regresar al Edén podemos comer de los frutos del Árbol de la Vida que está en medio del paraíso de Dios, Apocalipsis 2,7. El Edén es el mismo sexo. Nosotros salimos del Edén por las puertas del sexo y solo por esas puertas podemos regresar al Edén. Génesis 36. El Árbol de la Vida es el hálito emanado del Absoluto. Es el Absoluto mismo."

⁴⁰ "Deben fusionarse las dos Almas: el Alma Humana Masculina con el Alma Espiritual Femenina. Esto no se logra sin haber eliminado al Yo, y haber eliminado al Cuerpo de Deseos. Las dos Almas deben ser una."

"Esta es la Gran Alianza entre el Caballero y la Dama Medievales; esto lo encontramos en los libros de Caballería, "El Romancero", las Baladas, el Conde Roldán, los Juglares Trovadores. El Caballero que pelea por su Dama es el Alma Humana, la Dama es el Alma Espiritual. El Caballero tiene que pelear por su Dama de otro modo se queda sin ella."

This could only be achieved through sanctity and innocent union between the sexes, through the reverence of sexual libido, which would give them the divine capacities they have lost:

It is impossible to achieve cosmic consciousness without Sanctity. It is impossible to obtain Sanctity without Love. Love is the path of Sanctity. The most grandiose manifestation of Love, is found during Sexual Magic. In these moments the man and woman are a single, terribly divine hermaphroditic being (Aun Weor, C, 2012: 68).⁴¹

⁴¹ “Resulta imposible llegar a la Conciencia Cósmica sin la Santidad. Es imposible lograr la Santidad sin el Amor. El Amor es el camino de la Santidad. La forma de manifestación más grandiosa del Amor, se consigue durante la Magia Sexual. En esos instantes el hombre y la mujer son un solo ser hermafrodita, terriblemente divino.”

Conclusions

After having analyzed the allegorical representation configured in *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, the setting where action takes place represents a kind of underworld where Salemmites, allegorically representing all human beings, are secluded in order to compensate for the original sin they committed, which prompted them out of Heaven. Taking into account the Gnostic conception of the original sin, the inhabitants of New England are trapped in that vicious place because they have committed fornication and adultery. Unaware of their degraded spiritual condition, they are born and die in the same corrupted soil endlessly, far from God's grace, but convinced of their innocence.

Hester Prynne and Reverend Dimmesdale, the main characters of the novel, have also committed adultery and feel the burden of their bad deeds upon them. While she has to bear the mockery of the whole town, the minister should endure Chillingworth's revenge. According to the Gnostic perspective, owing to the magnitude of having yielded to lust, humanity is sent to the Earth to live long cycles of existences in order to learn through suffering what happiness, innocence and Heaven really mean until they decide to go back to their Creator. These repeated experiences would constitute what Hinduism calls "the Samsahra Wheel" and the retribution for the sins humans commit, or the lessons they learn, would be called karma and dharma, respectively.

The regents of these spheres would be the negative reflection of God, and therefore, in the same way that there are angelic hierarchies below the Creator, the infernal creatures obey Satan. According to Cappazzo's explanation, in the novel, God's antagonists are represented by Chillingworth and Mistress Hibbins. On the one hand, Chillingworth alternative fulfilling the role of Lucifer or the devil, intends to take revenge on Dimmesdale, but at the same time collaborates in leading him to discover his inner frailty and darkness. After the reverend decides to be truthful to himself and mend his bad deeds, a new life starts for him because he is able to learn from his past mistakes and is therefore filled with strength, light, and power to overcome temptation. On the other hand, Mistress Hibbins, would play the role of the mother of inferno. She has the mission to carry dead beings to hell, so that they are purified, as well as the corpses of devilish

creatures which have been expelled from human souls. This is the reason why she is depicted as a dead woman who appears as a witch and is surrounded by devils, tempting the characters and threatening them.

In this sense, New England would represent a hellish underworld, while Old England or Europe in general, stands for the lost paradise, the place the characters miss and long for. Samael Aun Weor explains that although Hell and Heaven are matter-energy dimensions different from the tridimensional one, these realities can be experienced on Earth according to the degree of Divine Grace a soul bears, and therefore, inherit the same degree of happiness it has been able to generate, as the consequent payback. He explains that happiness and Heaven can only be achieved by eliminating the egos, the psychological unconscious mechanisms which drive people to failure and sorrow, called devils in religions, and that are encompassed by the so called seven capital sins, the hidden triggers that prompt souls to offend their Lord. As a consequence, beings would incarnate Virtues and be able to genuinely love other beings. In the novel, the sinners are finally redeemed from their sinful behavior after they are able to love each other with purity and innocence. After Dimmesdale decides to form a family with Hester and Pearl, their daughter, the spell is broken.

However, Dimmesdale and Hester achieve real Love through the practice of sexual Alchemy, which trains them to completely eliminate lust or any trait of passion from their internal spheres and create the existential bodies to re-enter Heaven. In this sense, Pearl, representing at first the product of the union of two degenerate souls, would then transform into a beautiful, angelic and innocent creature, losing her wild nature. This character would stand for what Aun Weor calls "the Divine Androgynous", that is to say, the spiritual creature that is born when a couple transmutes their sexual energies into pure love and subtle chemical substances. This energetic creature which is born within human beings resembles the Baby Christ which redeems sinners and leads them towards paradise, as he did with Dimmesdale towards the end of the novel.

Alchemy is represented in the novel in several ways. Two of them have been described in this research: the first one in relation with the allegory of the forest, and the second one,

with the allegorical description of the journey towards the Old World. Samael Aun Weor analyzes in many of his books the symbolism of the ancient Philosopher's stone and Elixir of Eternal Life of the alchemists, also represented by Masonry in their cornerstone and alluded by the stone of scandal or fundamental stone of all Christian religions. Though the symbols may vary, very subtly in some cases, the esoteric meaning of the elements used for religious celebrations which aim at joining human creatures with divinity, embody the mystery of the return towards Heaven. In this sense, according to the Gnostic perspective, the Holy Grail -the Sacred cup of wine- stands for the feminine womb, where divinity is conceived because it allows a valiant man to be born again from his spirit. Then, the dark forest would recreate the intercourse between a man and a woman, which is illuminated by Hester and Dimmesdale's presence when they meet there. However, it may also stand for damnation, because in this place, the Black Man, Satan, appears to write the names of the people who through fornication and adultery sell their souls to him.

The symbol of the brook, present in both allegorical representations of alchemy, is crucial to understand the journey of the seminal waters towards the brain, to fill the chalice and to completely realize the role of Pearl during her parent's encounters. In the same way that the Kundalini should ascend to reunite God and man, the lovers decide to cross the sea towards Europe, their lost paradise. There, they would live a perfect life, and Pearl, purified by their parent's love, would live like a little beautiful and bright angel or fairy queen embroidered with flowers. The three members of the family would therefore constitute the Holy Trinity, represented by Pearl, who symbolizes "the oneness" of the parents.

At this point one last observation should be made in relation to the analysis devoted to Hester Prynne. Though the role she plays in the novel has been described in relation to Dimmesdale's redemption, her function in isolation has been rather neglected in this study, and though it might at first glance appear to constitute a weak point for the investigation, the reasons for this intentional omission in fact have to do with the great amount of information required to fully explain how Hawthorne has designed the female protagonist to create meaning in different levels of the work at the same time. In general terms it can be said that woman represents in universe the forces of nature. Gnosticism

claims that from celestial spheres up to hell, the same feminine force derives into different aspects which can also be reflected in the protagonist's constitution. Such analysis conducted in depth would probably be the departure point for further analyses and as mentioned above, cannot be contemplated in the present work.

Finally, if there were doubts concerning Hawthorne's connection to esotericism, his brilliant configuration of the text and the subtle but concrete implications of the symbols, metaphors, and allegories he uses to convey a more transcendental meaning through his novel, reveal that he is well acquainted with the essence of alchemic elements and their purport. In addition, the revelation of the genuine meaning of this set of concepts add to his creation a value which transcends literature and could even lead to reexamine the generic classification of his work. For instance, after having studied the profound meaning of *The Scarlet Letter*, its didactic purpose acquires more relevance, specially oriented to the religious union of men, God and the Universe. The global scope determines a unique, clearer storyline which encompasses and trespasses all the events and perypeties, explains the essential features of characters and justifies the detailed descriptions of their attitudes, the settings, and even the apparent less relevant comments of the narrator. For the naive reader, the novel is still appealing with its capricious turn of events, the detailed and impressive descriptions, and its mysterious characters. However, Hawthorne's constant warnings about the difficulties that understanding his work represent may be supplemented by an attentive reading which seeks to see beyond material realities.

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