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Religious Hegemony and Self Emancipation: A Comparative Study of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh*, and Philip Roth's *Indignation*

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or qualification. Any sources or materials used in the preparation of this thesis have been duly acknowledged and referenced. I affirm that the content presented in this thesis represents my original ideas and insights, and any contributions made by others have been appropriately credited.

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A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to be 'Amir', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

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It is often said that a thesis is the result of a union between creativity and experience. If my creativity has provided the infrastructure on which this project is built, this whole project could not have begun without the unwavering support, the insightful feedback, and invaluable guidance of my supervisor. I would therefore like to express my deepest gratitude to **Dr. Fethi Haddouche**, whose constructive criticism has helped this once ignorant literature major to see literary texts through a new and more critical lens.

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Dedication

To my late brother *Mohammed*, I hope you are in a better place now.

To the two who gave me my life, *my mother* and *father*. You both poured your tears into the soil so my dreams could grow. This work is yours as much as it is mine.

To my dearest nearest kin, *my siblings*. Written in shared struggles and forged in collective hope, this work is not mine alone, it is ours.

To my *Sam*, my anchor and my sail.

Abstract

This thesis undertakes a comparative genealogical trajectory of religious hegemony across three different historical and literary settings as represented in *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Way of All Flesh* by Samuel Butler, and *Indignation* by Philip Roth. The study traces the metamorphosis of religious power and the relocation and redistribution of its concepts into secularized and capillary networks of control. Specifically, it uncovers a continuity of religious governance in the modern, and supposedly secular, society as depicted in the setting of Roth's *Indignation*. Ultimately, this comparative study investigates the complex networks of power along with the negotiations undertaken by the main characters: Hester Prynne, Ernest Pontifex, and Marcus Messner, to resist their respective hegemonic milieus. Through a close analysis of punishment, surveillance, and subjectivation, this thesis's core argument suggests that the protagonist's quest for emancipation is achieved not beyond the boundaries of power, but within its frameworks.

Keywords: Religious Hegemony, Governmentality, Discipline, Subjectivation, Self-emancipation, Resistance, Secularization

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List of Abbreviations

About the Concept: About the Concept of the “Dangerous Individual”

Discipline: Discipline and Punish

On the Government: On the Government of the Living

Security: Security, Territory, and Population

General Introduction

The concept of hegemony, when discussed, is often shallowly reduced to a synonym for coercive domination and the way this said domination is willed by a governing body over another governed body. While it is partially true, this perspective captures only the superficial layer of the concept. In his thesis, *Prison Notebooks*, Antonio Gramsci discusses the concept of hegemony in terms that transcend beyond the simple idea of one using crude force over another. Instead, his central argument suggests that it is a rather subtle, insidious, and usually pervasive form of control that stands on the foundation of manufacturing consent of those it controls. Consent, therefore, becomes an important pillar in understanding the concept as a whole. In fact, in some of the passages, Gramsci uses the concept itself synonymously with “spontaneous consent” (Litowitz 515). From this, I argue that hegemony is a coherent and commonsensical body of beliefs that people (un)consciously subscribe to simply because it seems natural and inevitable. In other words, instead of being looked at as constructed and unjust, hegemonic power comes to be legitimized and further reinforced. Henceforth, my investigation of religious hegemony necessitates an understanding of this Gramscian dialectic of force and consent as it provides a better grasp of the the interplay between power and morality, and how bodies, populations, and subjectivities are governed in the three selected corpus of this thesis.

Being the backbone of our work, Michel Foucault’s thesis on governmentality and biopolitics extends and deepens the discussion about the notion of hegemony, especially in reference to the chosen corpus. When Foucault introduces the term governmentality in his series of lectures entitled *Security, Territory and Population*, he uses the term to describe a specific form of political power. Foucault then defines this power as the “activity that undertakes to conduct individuals throughout their lives by

placing them under the authority of a guide responsible for what they do” (68). As suggested in the definition, Foucault highlights that to govern entails guidance rather than just coercion. In *On the Government of the Living* however, I see another definition that is slightly different. Foucault attests that the term must be “understood in the broad sense of techniques and procedures for directing human behavior ... of souls and consciences, ... of a household, of a state, or of oneself” (82). It is important to highlight that Foucault provides two different definitions not because he is inconsistent in providing definitions; instead, he is shedding the light on a fundamental shift in the exercise of that power.

In the first definition, Foucault links the art to govern to pastoral power where authorities claim benevolent responsibility for the subject’s welfare. The principles of this model are essentially derived from traditional virtues such as “wisdom, justice, liberality, respect for divine laws and human customs” (*Security* 364). However, this model began to dwindle to be eventually replaced by another one during the Eighteenth Century, especially after the emergence of the “*raison d’État*” or “Reason of state”. This latter therefore, marks the shift in understanding the concept of governmentality from one that is interested in guiding the individuals towards moral salvation into one that is more tilted towards managing populations through discipline and regulations. As highlighted in the second definition, governmentality expands to encompass more diffused techniques, discourses, and rationalities through which authorities can intervene and manage the habits and activities of its subjects. In contrast to the first modal, this gives way to an art of governing that prioritizes all that could strengthen the state and its power (*Security* 365). This marks what comes to be termed as “biopolitics”.

Therefore, biopolitics, or biopower since Foucault uses the two terms interchangeably in *The History of Sexuality Volume.1*, refers to the governing of life. Notably, what makes this new framework of power different from the old classical

sovereignty is that, unlike the sovereign's "right to take life or let live", biopower mirrors a "life-administering power". In more condensed words, Foucault pinpoints the pivotal shift in the power's aim; the novel does not focus on ending life but on investing in it through administering the bodies and managing the populations (136). One important aspect that Foucault wants to draw attention to is the fact that this shift marks not only an expansion of power but also a fundamental inversion and relocation of its logic. That is today, and contrary to the negative power that takes life through the sword and the right of the sovereign, biopower introduces a positive alternative; one that "ensure, sustain, and multiply life, to put this life in order" (138). As for its rationality, the right, the law, and the punishment of the sovereign are relocated in the technique, the normalization of intervention, and in control (89).

Being one of the most famous and most infamous philosophers of the Twentieth Century, Foucault is undoubtedly both demonised and idealised as one of the most influential figureheads of postmodern thought. This polarized reputation is largely translated into the different reactions to his views on what becomes his signature topic: power. Writing that he is "the theorist of paradox", David Garland in his review essay "Foucault's Discipline and Punish: an Exposition and Critique" writes that Foucault's perspective on things "has an out-of-the-ordinariness which never fails to provoke comments and discussions" (847). Whether in examining madness in *The History of Madness*, medicine in *The Birth of the Clinic*, or the carceral system in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault does indeed possess the habit of forensically interrogating self-evident modern ideas by diagnosing their historical evolution.

What Foucault tries to assert in the aforementioned works, and in most of his works as well, is that truth is but a historical category that needs digging. This distinctive method of research becomes a fundamental element especially when talking about power.

It has to be highlighted however that he is profoundly indebted to Frederisch Nietzsche. The latter, in his *Genealogy of Morals*, attests that to bring a certain concept to question requires a “knowledge of the conditions and the circumstances in which they grew, under which they evolved and changed” (20). Adopting such a methodology has allowed Foucault to ask the right questions as most of his influential thesis are built on the basis of the Nietzschean question “Why do men obey?” (Policante 235). Paul Rabinow praises this use of the Nietzschean genealogy as Foucault’s original contribution in political thought lies in his way of pursuing “the consequences of these [genealogical] questions with unparalleled systematicity and vigor” (12). In other words, Foucault rejects the notion of power and hegemony as an exclusively coercive force of a governor or as a purely ideological “spontaneous consent” of the governed. Rather, his aim is to shift the spotlight to the relation, to the set of strategic interactions of the two. As a result, his analysis is distanced from the simple theory of repression to the theory of subjectivity. Being the backbone of this thesis, I accordingly aim my gaze at not *what* power forbids, but rather at *how* powers within the selected corpus constitute individuals.

The questions of what power and how power has kept theorists, critics, and those interested in political philosophy occupied since the classical age. In his extensive work, *Frameworks of Power*, Stewart R. Clegg provides a multidimensional understanding of the concept by synthesising the classical and the contemporary views. Clegg explains that while Hobbes reduces the concept into a mechanical one by defining power as a causal force (26), Machiavelli, conversely, attests that power is a “tenuously produced and reproduced effect which is contingent upon the strategic competencies and skills of actors who would be powerful” (33). Positioning himself in the conversation, Clegg tilts more toward the Machiavellian stance but with a slight difference. Clegg explains: “the key to understanding resides in thinking of power as a phenomenon which can be grasped

only relationally. It is not a thing nor is it something that people have in a proprietorial sense” (207). This quote is very important as it also mirrors Foucault’s rejection of power as a commodity; it is not something that is “acquired” or “seized” (*History of Sexuality V.1* 94). Clegg and Foucault agree on the fact that power is a strategic game played across social fields; nobody ‘possesses’ power per se. Clegg further highlights that those who ‘do’, do that in so far as “they are relationally constituted as doing so” (207). Even in this case, it does not reflect a possession but it does in the space between them. Put simply, an individual is only ‘powerful’ because of their position within the network of relationships. Hence, this exercised power can be traced to “innumerable points” (Foucault, *History of Sexuality V.1* 94).

For this project my main argument based its infrastructure on this exact premise. The relational modal Foucault highlights becomes a fundamental pillar in my study because it highlights the fact that the concept of hegemony, in our case religious hegemony, is by no means a static system that is imposed from the above. Rather, I argue that hegemony represents a configuration that evolves historically. Put in simpler words, religious hegemony is a dynamic arrangement, a reflection of social norms, an institution, a practice of everyday life through the subject is constrained and simultaneously constituted. Accordingly, this project endeavor offers a comparative examination of three seminal texts: Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), Samuel Butler’s *The Way of All Flesh* (published posthumously in 1903), and Philip Roth’s *Indignation* (2008). Highlighting different historical periods, existing works of criticism often study these titles in isolation. However, the three novels share a common thematic ground as they dramatize the conflicting relationship between individuals, mainly the protagonists Hester, Ernest, and Marcus, with their hegemonic religious/quasi-religious orders.

When put into dialogue, the three novels become complementary to one another in the sense that they illustrate what I refer to as the genealogical trajectory of religious governance. Once analysed in a chronological order, Foucault's concept becomes clear as the novels illustrate the shift in governmentality to biopower through a metamorphosis of religious discourse. From the brutal and the spectacular as a visible exercise of sovereign power over the physicality of the body, through the subtle and "more civilized" mechanisms of carceral discipline, until we reach the bureaucratic manifestation of power, this progression illustrates how religious governance operates through conducting the conduct of the subject as well as the preservation of life rather than end it. In addition, this progression mirrors how religious discourses become the primary technology to legitimise and enforce the hegemonic orders even in the supposedly secular settings. Here lies the crucial claim that this comparative study tries to defend. Given that religious power is neither static nor confined to doctrinal belief, the themes of punishment and subjectivation in the novels expose the fact that the transition from the religious to the secular does not amount to a rupture. Instead, what we have is a relocation and a remolding of theological concepts to fit the new ideological matrices. What we have as a result are simply secularized theological concepts dispersed into a capillary network of control to produce the same old effect, molding the self into docility.

In regard to the aforesaid, this project addresses a dilemma in relation to the Foucauldian paradigm of power and how it is applied by literary scholars. The paradigm has often been applied to early modern or contemporary texts in isolation. Indeed, it is seldom that the paradigm extends across literary-historical trajectories. Accordingly, this study integrates Foucauldian genealogy with a literary close reading of three novels, set in three different historical epochs, to "dig out" the mechanisms through which religious hegemony works. Moreover, this study attempts to highlight the exact relocation of

concepts to eventually identify how the main characters, in turn, find their way to resist, reclaim autonomy, and destabilize order.

So far, I have recognised power as pervasive, as not a thing to be possessed. Rather, it is a relation. However, Foucault attests that the same force that “engenders states power” (*History of Sexuality V.1* 93) can ultimately engender resistance. “Where there is power, there is resistance” (95) Foucault attest highlighting that it is precisely this relational model that makes resistance not only possible but mostly inevitable. Marcus cannot stand outside the bureaucratic modal, but he has his chance to critique it through his indignation. Ernest and Hester as well, through an unmasking of the working of power-knowledge, locate a possibility of desubjection. Every character’s journey is defined by a navigation of a “field of possibilities” (Foucault, *Subject Power* 221) in an attempt to open an avenue to autonomy. Resistance is not refusal as it can be a “quick compromise” (*History of Sexuality V.1* 96).

Much has been written on the three selected novels, especially *The Scarlet Letter*, and the same could be said about Foucault’s theory of power. While the literature has undeniably yielded a rich insight, a distinct gap consists in it especially when it comes to the exploration of how religious hegemony operates transhistorically through these chosen literary texts. Such an exploration is often neglected by scholars as most of them often shed light on the socio-religious side within one author’s work while the existence of the continuous pattern across the other novels is barely noticed. In addition, while neglecting the genealogical continuity of power relations, self-emancipation is also often treated as an isolated act of rebellion rather than a part of the broader historical continuity of that power.

Thus, my primary aim in this thesis is to bridge that gap through an investigation into how the three narratives use punishment, surveillance, and truth production as

evolving instruments to ‘morally’ govern over the three protagonists. Foucault’s rejection, and ultimately mine, of power as repressive fundamentally informs the analysis of how the narratives depict regimes of moral authority. Furthermore, over the course of this thesis and while focusing on historical contingencies, this research will further unfold the complex negotiation between the external forms of power and the protagonists’ practices by which they are led to think of themselves, act upon themselves, and morally transform themselves within such structures.

Take for instance *The Scarlet Letter*, the puritans’ power is not focused on the physical confinement of Hester on the scaffold of the pillory. Rather, it is “the point which drew all eyes, and, as it were, *transfigured the wearer*—so that both men and women who had been familiarly acquainted with Hester Prynne were now impressed as if they beheld her for the first time” (Hawthorne 81 emphasis added). This relational gaze that “produces” more than it “represses”. Hawthorne’s statement exemplifies how the gaze “transfigures” Hester’s social reality.

Meanwhile, *The Way of All Flesh* illustrates the same productivity of power through Theobald’s and Christina’s pedagogical project. “The practical outcome of the foregoing was a conviction in Theobald’s mind, and if in his, then in Christina’s, that it was *their duty to begin training up their children in the way they should go, even from their earliest infancy*” (Butler 82 emphasis added). The production is explained by Butler as follows: “the first signs of self-will [are] carefully looked for, and plucked up by the roots at once before they had time to grow” (82). This quote shows that the system does not seek to mainly correct but fabricates a specific subject; one that is docile, uncritical, and most importantly self-policing.

The same pattern occurs in *Indignation* as well. The Dean of Men is “worried” because of Marcus’s “inability to adjust”. It is true that he does not physically punish but

his attention nonetheless casts Marcus in the dysfunctional individual light. The word individual here is not used at face value but rather denotes an effect of power, a subject of relations of power, not an autonomous agent. According to Foucault, “the subject is not one but split, not sovereign but dependent, not an absolute origin but a function ceaselessly modified” (*Foucault Live* 67). This perspective paints Marcus as a battleground of conflicting identities proceeding by power. Marcus is the “straight A student” while simultaneously being the “the odd...very odd”. He is essentially fragmented and these competing subject-positions come to express themselves in his indignation and his violent rupture at the Dean’s office. This action for instance is in itself a reaction to the overt “concern” of the Dean which, once again proves that Marcus is not an independent agent and every act is dependent on the power relations that envelop him.

Seeking to uncover the dynamic interplay between individual agency and systemic power, this inquiry is therefore guided by the following central questions. How do punitive mechanisms in *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Way of All Flesh*, and *Indignation* represent religion as a modality that extends beyond dogma into social discipline and what is the specific role of surveillance in such a process? In what ways do Hester, Ernest, and Marcus’s acts of defiance or conformity reflect the Foucauldian notion of subjectivity and care of the self? Finally, how do their fragmented and tactical responses to power carve out spaces for self-emancipation within, rather than outside the networks of power? By wording a cohesive answer to these questions, this research will ultimately deal with the texts as active sites where the logic of governance is staged instead of just passive reflections of historical power. Reading the three novels along each other will provide a long-view, transhistorical analysis, which consequently allows a better understanding of religious hegemony, its persistence, and its metamorphosis.

It is undeniably true that Foucault's theoretical framework on power constitutes the backbone of my study. Nevertheless, it does not mean that the thesis is confined to this exclusionary perspective. Indeed, this thesis consistently provides a fertile soil to have a dynamic dialogue between complimentary, and at times contenting perspectives. Accordingly, in the attempt to understand the psychological economy of punishment and its accompanying "resentment" that fuel the oppressed to go against the other oppressed, Nietzsche's creditor/debtor model of justice is brought to the discussion. In the same manner, Emile Durkheim's collective conscience provides a solid argument in suggesting how social solidarity unites the community against the transgressing Other. While Nietzsche and Durkheim provide a lens through which the "censure" force is directed towards the three transgressing characters, Antonio Gramsci allows us to move the conversation and interpret how the oppressed themselves become to perpetuate the system that they are subject to. Highlighting one of the fundamental notions of our research, Carl Schmitt with his *Political Theology* and Michel de Certeau with his *The Practice of Everyday Life*, help us identify Winesburg authority as a reincarnation of the pastoral power in a secular setting. This synthesised approach is particularly important simply because of the plethora of literary studies conducted on each of three primary texts under examination. In order to highlight the conceptual gap this thesis aims to fill, I shall engage in reviewing the distinct critical traditions for each novel.

In her thesis "Completing the Circle: A Study of the Archetypal Male and Female in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*", Kathy H. Hallenbeck offers a critical psychoanalytical perspective of the text. Given that achieving psychological wholeness is one of the core struggles in the novel, Kathy suggests that this struggle is a consequence of the repression of archetypal feminine, something that affects women and men alike, with Dimmsdale serving as a case study (11). What comes as a consequence of this is a

fundamental split in the human psyche. The resolution eventually comes in different forms. While Dimmesdale's death becomes his gate towards wholeness as he finally embraces his whole self and dies a “wiser one”, Hester on the other hand, reaches a wholeness within the confines of the marginal and the “magical” (47). The circle that Kathy refers to in her title is a symbol of this completeness that Hester and Dimmesdale are questing and its completion is fulfilled not through outside confrontation but through an inward one.

While Hallenbeck focuses on the psychological dimension, others anchor their analysis on more firmly external conflicts. Lehtie Chalise Thomson argues in her thesis that Hawthorne's aim is not to map an archetypal psyche but to deviate from specific Puritan doctrines to fit the 19th century Romantic worldview. For Thomson, the fundamental struggle is not within but between the oppressive theocracy and the individual. Her reading of the novel suggests that Hester is not repressed because she manages to forge a personal redemption through work. Essentially, she becomes the heroic “anti-puritan” (70) as she rejects the dogma of predestination, something that Dimmesdale fails to achieve due to his spiritual entrapment within the belief system. This championing of Hester however, Thomson suggests, is the “preferred model” that serves Hawthorne's literary purposes and it is historically inaccurate.

Building on this, Subhayu Bhattacharjee in his article “The ‘New’ World?: Space, Religion and The Identity of Hester Prynne in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*”, Hester identity is forged in spaces of ambiguity. In resisting the system, he argues that Hester is not straightforward as she is neither linear nor radical; rather her “subversive gestures” are sporadic and tempered by complicity (57-58). Drawing on Raymond Williams's lens of “emergent discourses”, Bhattacharjee suggests that this specific ambiguity is what makes Hester stand to power. In other words, by inhabiting and generating liminal spaces,

she consequently prevents the puritanic discourse from coming into completion as a hegemonic “closed text”. Therefore, Hester is capable of interrupting the completion and consolidation of an ideology.

Building on the aforementioned ideological, psychological, and socio-discursive analysis, a considerable scholarship on *The Scarlet Letter* is directed to address the gender dimensions of Hester’s struggles and quests. While often branded as the “silent rebel”, the feminist approach praises her as a resistance icon. One of the primary focuses of the feminist dialogue is to deconstruct the specific structures of power found in the Puritanic society. Sandra Johanson in her work “Spineless Men and Irrepressible Women?” for instance examines the patriarchal system of the colony and sheds the light on how a child’s legitimacy is bound to a male’s figure. Building her argument on Judith Butler’s theory of gender performance, she argues that one of reasons that Hester and Pearl are pushed outside of order is because they are not tied to a man. Criticising this institutional disempowerment, Claudia Durst Johnson as well argues in her book *Women’s Issues in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s The Scarlet Letter* that women, as characters in the novel, are not flat but complex. She continues arguing that their identities are “multi-dimensional” that continue to develop even in the absence of a male figure/protection (155).

Another unifying perspective of the feminist critic is the gradual transformation of pain into penance and punishment into power. Scholars like Nijat Ullah Khan, Ishaq Khan, and Syeda Sadaf Munir Kazmi argue it is just a sudden metamorphosis but a hard journey of suffering and reflection that Hester endures. They conclude that the eventual strength Hester acquires is more of a maturity and understanding of the world around her which allows her to exercise power even in her displacement (414). Displaced from

normal life, Hester therefore becomes able to create a space of her own to perform her agency albeit limited.

However, despite the rich literature on the novel, one of the concepts that I see lacking is the machinery of power: the techniques, the gazes, and the institutions that produce the characters as subjects and give meaning to what we can refer to as “their resistance”. This study aims to anatomize the specific political technology that constantly constructs the “culprit”, or in Hester’s case “sinner”, as a category to be managed. Accordingly, this thesis moves beyond the analysis of the protagonists’ identity and ideological and symbolic rebellion to step into the territory of Foucauldian dispositifs. Here, Hester’s journey is not perceived as a mere personal penance or feminist triumph; the journey is treated as a foundational, even archetypal, case study in our genealogy of punishment. While the other critics frame the scaffold as a site of hypocrisy, this thesis highlights it as a theater of sovereign alethurgy where truth is (re)produced through the exposure of bodies. Ultimately, I illustrate how the oppressed becomes the oppressor through a complicated gaze revealing that power operates not in spite of its subjects but rather through them. This focus on the microphysics of power within the novel provides us with an often overlooked territory that explains not just who Hester becomes, but the very condition of possibility of her becoming.

Moreover, as I previously mentioned, I am not working on Hester as an isolated character case. Rather, our primary contribution lies in taking Hester, and her spectacle, as part of a genealogical journey. The scaffold scene is indispensable in our case because it establishes the paradigm of sovereign power against the subsequent, more “civilized” disciplinary regimes in the other two novels at hand.

Samuel Butler’s *The Way of All Flesh* has often been studied as a critique of his Victorian time, especially issues of family morals and religious doctrines. J. L.

Wisenthal's study "Samuel Butler's Epistle to the Victorians: '*The Way of All Flesh*' and Unlovely Paul" for instance studies Butler's satirical attack on religious rigidity through his portrayal of Theobald and Christina Pontifex. In this reading, the figure of St. Paul is positioned by the two as the ultimate Victorian authority that embodies purity, asceticism, and obedience and therefore one to follow. For Butler however, St. Paul becomes a figure to mock. The main focus of this study is to highlight scenes of "theological satire" (27) as the novel champions the opposite philosophy.

In the same manner John B. Rosenman's study expands Butler's philosophical underpinning by highlighting the oppressive familial and social structure. Emphasising that the novel should be read as an indictment against 19th century Evangelicalism, Rosenman argues that the Pontifex family mirrors how the Victorian middle class exploited the "Elect People" status as a way to legitimize religious abuse and moral coercion (78).

These two ideological perspectives are complemented by the analysis of William H. Marshall in his article "*The Way of All Flesh*: The Dual Function of Edward Overton", in which he interrogates the narrative structure and the lens of perception. Known to be narrated by the supposedly ironic and detached Mr. Overton, Marshall examines and highlights the role the character occupies in the reader's understanding of Ernest's journey and struggles. Overton, suggests Marshall, functions as both a biographer and a philosopher given that he "establishes himself personally as the embodiment of the ideal relativistic position" (589). Consequently, Overton becomes the one responsible for the novel's moral and epistemic horizons.

From a slightly different approach, "Writing the Scientific: Samuel Butler and Hoy Fort" by Charlotte Sleight positions the work within Butler's wider intellectual and scientific interests. Sleight attests that the novel mirrors a debate on evolution. Known to

be a supporter of Darwin, Butler's, and Ernest's, bildungsroman becomes a scientific experiment of "personal metamorphosis", "rebirth", attempting to achieve "evolutionary transformation" (23). This aesthetic lens is also looked through by Rita Yeasted in "The Handelian Quality of Butler's *The Way of All Flesh*" focuses on how Butler uses his fascination with Handel's music as a way to build the novel's structure. According to Yeasted, music is used as metaphor to show the tension between expressing one's emotion and formal order. She argues that Ernest's admiration of music and how his environment forbids it reflects Butler's failure to obtain an ideal equilibrium between feeling and restraint.

As a bildungsroman, the novel is similar in so many ways to James Joyce's *The Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, *Ulysses*, and *Finnegans Wake*. In his comparative study "James Joyce and the *Way of All Flesh*", E. L. Epstein highlights the thematic parallels between Joyce's novels and Butler's work especially when it comes to the depiction of the father-son conflicting relationships (24). Through this comparison, the author consequently underscores Butler's work as a foundational text in the modern discussion of generational tension and trauma and the struggle for self-identification in literature.

Together, these critics effectively study the ideological satire, the narrative techniques, and the philosophical and scientific preoccupation of the novel. While they do that, power is treated as a broad monolithic force of "Evangelicalism" in relation to religious hypocrisy that the protagonist must "evolve" from. Our main occupation with the novel is to dissect the specific, insidious techniques, what shall be referred to in the analysis as "catechistic alethurgy", through which these religious forces are weaponized to construct and constraint Ernest. Theobald and Christina should not be analysed as only satirical figures. Through their usage of St. Paul's doctrines, they become technicians of

a hermeneutic hegemony. In addition, St. Paul is treated in our analysis as a “truth dispositif” that legitimises violence (the rod) and thus the production of the image of the “pathologized subject” in Ernest’s mind. Furthermore, while most reading neglect Christina as a relatively passive character, her complicity is read through the dimension of “the hegemony of the oppressed” in this present work. Her betrayal of Ernest and her exclusionary practices against the servant girl Ellen make her an active enforcer of the system that subjugates her. Understanding the mechanisms of subjection in Butler’s novel becomes a necessary step in this thesis as it works as a bridge to understanding the carceral archipelago found in the last novel, *Indignation*.

Philip Roth’s *Indignation* is mostly hailed for its ability to portray the journey of forging one’s own identity within an oppressive social, cultural, and religious pressure. Set in mid-twentieth-century America, the reader explores Marcus Massner’s life through the protagonist’s own voice. Derek Parker Royal attests that the novel is an “experimentation with narrative voice” (129) as he highlights Roth’s change of the first-person narrative found in the chapter “Under Morphine” to the detached third-person in “Out From Under”. For Royal, this shift encapsulates the novel’s meditations on memory, consciousness, and self-(de)construction. Through the perspective of this narrative voice, identity becomes a story to tell and not a fixed, stable essence.

Marcus’s struggle with his identity is situated by both Frederick Luis Aldama and Brittany Hirth within a specific historical context. Both critics suggest that when Roth situates his protagonist within parameters of the post World War II era, the Cold War and McCarthyism, the Korean War, family matrix, and the regimented life in college, as a character, Marcus is forced to a place where he does not wish to exist. Both Aldama and Hirth suggest that his tragic ending is both inevitable and purposeless simply because Marcus is placed in an impossible setting.

Similarly, in a comparative study “Identity Politics and Its Discontents in Philip Roth’s *The Human Stain* and *Indignation*”, Orçun Erkaya suggests as well that Roth’s protagonists, Coleman Silk and Marcus Messner, are punished by the American “persecuting spirit” mid their attempt act to self-invention. Erkaya also highlights the hypocrisy of the American values of individual freedom of expression. This study highlights how both characters face their tragic ending not in spite of, but because of exercising that very right ostensibly promised to them. Thus, the study uncovers the disjunction between the myth of liberty and the reality of surveillance and moral policing.

On the other hand, Maggie McKinley also looms over the themes of death when she argues in her study “Blood, Tradition, and the Distortion of Ritual in Philip Roth’s *Indignation*” that there is a ritualistic use of blood in the novel that goes beyond war and death. The “overtension” of these rituals, the Jewish Kosher practices, chapel attendance, and the slit on Olivia Hutton’s wrist all mirror a distorted ritual that attributes to Marcus’s anxiety and to his eventual death. Accordingly, these rituals involving blood dramatize the oppressive burdens put on Marcus’s psyche from different fronts which makes his quest for relinquishing traditions and communal obligations almost impossible.

These valuable critics have helped me in shaping our new perspective of the novel. It is true that they all identify the struggle Marcus faces when confronted with the oppressive forces of his milieu, they overlooked how Winesburg college is a secularized panopticon where religion is still strategically located into its bureaucratic apparatus. While the previous critics highlight the pressure Marcus faces, they tend to neglect Winesburg College as a set of concrete disciplinary techniques. Accordingly, my thesis frames the Dean as a secular ‘sovereign’ who keeps an “uninterrupted eye” through “legal pads” to keep “tradition” function. Our contribution lies in the analysis of the micro, the spatial partition, mandatory chapel attendance, and the recurrent meetings at

the Dean's office, to expose how modern power functions through normalisation rather than just prohibition. *Indignation* is therefore the final piece that completes the thesis's genealogical arc: Marcus, just like Hester is thumbed under an "unrelenting eye".

Accordingly, this thesis will thus consist of three chapters, each of which will be built on the Foucauldian framework to analyse the evolution of religious hegemony up to the modes of self-emancipation in the three selected works. The methodological approach I tend to employ in this thesis is a comparative, close text analysis of these novels.

The first chapter, titled "From the 'Rude Market Place' to Dean Caudwell's Office: The Panoptic Schema and the Anatomic-Politics of Punishment", explores the theoretical and historical groundwork as it examines the genealogical transformation of punitive power. Using Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* as a yardstick, the chapter reads the public spectacle in Hester's narrative as a mirroring of the sovereign power, the communal control, and focus of punishment on the physical body. Compared to the Victorian "gentle way of punishment experienced by Ernest, I highlight the death of public executions and the shift to a more secretive way of dealing with culprits. This chapter eventually culminates with an analysis of the modern carceral society represented in Roth's *Indignation*. The last portion of the chapter portrays the final shift of the transformation and how bureaucratic mechanisms enforce normalization through spatial and temporal regulation. Eventually, I come to the conclusion that, despite the shift from the violent to the subtle and from the public to the private, the body of the condemned is still the point of anchorage of a gaze.

The subsequent chapter under the title "'There Was Some Old Way of Life that Everyone Was Protecting': Earthly Divinity and the Relocation of Divine Right" further studies the trials of the three characters in the light of an ideological formation that aims

at legitimizing its power. In doing so, I demonstrate how religious discourse provides the infrastructure on which ideological formations, or what is referred to in the chapter as the “regimes of truth”, stand for the purpose of governing subjects in each distinct context. Based on the biblical commandments, Hester’s public shaming is thus interpreted as an alethurgy; a ritualistic performance that affirms the divine law against the sin of adultery. Ernest’s setting on the other hand reveals a catechistic alethurgy where a distorted interpretation of the Pauline doctrine holds Ernest in a cycle of abuse under a religious patriarchal authority. Crucially, focusing on the mandatory chapel attendance, the last part of the chapter reveals a secularized coercion where consent is systematically manufactured by transforming religious rituals into a secularized imperative for civic conformity.

Chapter three eventually shifts our focus from the mechanisms of power to the practices of resistance. Entitled “‘Arise Ye Who Refuse to Be Bondslaves!’: the Aesthetic of Defiance, this chapter is considered the last piece in our investigation as it complicates the hierarchical model of power by introducing the “hegemony of the oppressed” to highlight the complicity of the community, the family, and the students in the othering of the three main characters. Accordingly, this chapter contrasts the protagonists’ distinct attempts to chart their own territories. Through an internal and an epistemic awakening to the ideological conditioning of their settings, Hester and Ernest become able to negotiate their way to agency by becoming conscious of the ideological conditioning of their respective settings. In a stark contrast, Marcus’s defiance is external and vocal. Rooted in an “ethic of authenticity”, Marcus’s resistance necessitates existential self-determination through direct and principled confrontation, regardless of the tragic consequences.

Together, the three chapters chart a comprehensive trajectory of religious hegemony and its secularization, asserting the body and the self as enduring sight of power as well as emancipation within the chosen corpus.

Chapter One:

From the “Rude Marketplace of the Puritan Settlement” to Dean Caudwell’s Office: The Panoptic Schema and the Anatomic-Politics of Punishment in Hawthorne’s, Butler’s, and Roth’s Narratives

You may consider that no part of the Empire to be without surveillance; that no crime, no offence, no contravention must go unprosecuted, and that the eye of the genius that can illuminate everything encompasses the whole of this vast machine, without the smallest detail escaping its attention.¹

—Jean-Baptiste Treilhard, “Code d’Instruction Criminelle”

Introduction

In the opening chapter of *The Scarlet Letter*, entitled “The Prison Door”, the American dark romanticist Nathaniel Hawthorne lays the infrastructure of his narrative by depicting a public spectacle. Being one of the most remarkable, and arguably the most remembered aspect of the novel, what is peculiar about this chapter is how well the author is able to recognize a trajectory of how social order is being conducted. By sketching a gloomy image of a disruption that has violated a sacrosanct ideal of the colony where the narrative is set, the focus here is mainly on order and its reinforcing essence in what he later describes as the “utopia of human virtue and happiness” (Hawthorne 70).

Gloomy it might be, it is imperative to recognise that, according to the idyllic beliefs of the Puritans, the said violation particularly necessitates such a form of

¹ Foucault takes up this passage in his argument on the Panopticon in *Discipline and Punish*, 217. The exposition of the purposes of the *Code d’Instruction Criminelle* is generally attributed to Jean-Baptiste, comte Treilhard (1742-1810), who was involved in drafting the Code.

restitution. When the author logically, at the beginning, contradicts the ideal with the “practical necessities to allot a portion of the virgin soil as a cemetery, and another portion as the site of a prison” (70), as readers we realize later that this juxtaposition is far from incidental. As a matter of fact, it is Hawthorne’s way of foreshadowing the rigidity of both the place as well as its inhabitants. It follows, then, that the “Prison Door” of Boston, Massachusetts is swarmed by people who gather to not only passively ogle but to actually, and actively, condemn the culprit. Henceforth, Hester Prynne, a fellow adherent to the Puritan faith, as it will become evident in later chapters, stands convicted of the moral transgression of adultery.

In order to get into the roots of this, let us first establish that the Puritans were arguably and distinctively best known for their rigid and self-righteous governance. For instance, in his historical notes, “The Custom House”, Hawthorne writes about the intolerance that was routinely shown towards anyone who is perceived as *Other* within their colony, especially in relation to beliefs. This implies that they routinely cast culprits found guilty of acts that did not meet the societal and the religious expectations; Anne Hutchinson's is demonstrated as an example for that. In light of the aforesaid, being a part of that community, there is no doubt that Hester is no exception. Indeed, she is revealed to the public as a “noted culprit, on whom *the sentence of a legal tribunal had but confirmed the verdict of public sentiment*” (Hawthorne 74; emphasis added). In this quote, Hawthorne unequivocally demonstrates that the verdict comes not, exclusively that is to say, from the law. Instead, he emphasizes that it operates in servitude to the public sentiment; this sentiment is usually fueled by a feeling of censure towards the transgressing *Other*. In other words, the law does not function as an arbitrator. Instead it is the ceremonial consent of the inhabitants’ collective will. This brings us back to the main point highlighted in “The Custom House”. It is then safe to assume that the Puritans

did not punish despite their piety; rather, they punished because of it. Accordingly, with an illegitimate child and a stigmatising emblem of shame, Hester is led to fulfil her *amende honorable*; a ritualistic response that is seen as a penance that may retribute her moral wrong.

For Michel Foucault's readers, this punishment depicted by Hawthorne forcefully brings to mind the Damiens' incident of 1757. Indeed, the execution of Robert-François Damiens, the regicide who plotted to kill the king of France Louis XV, bears striking similarities with Hester's as both happen to live in an era where atonement for one's transgression is solely, and brutally, enacted upon the scaffold of the pillory.

As recounted in the opening chapter of his groundbreaking work *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault illustrates the spectacle of the regicide to further scaffolding a historical and interpretive framework for the different modes of punishment used throughout history by tracing the methods as well as the rationalities that govern them. From torture and execution until we reach imprisonment as a major form of punishment. This gradual transition over the course of the late 18th and early 19th centuries was in its essence, according to Foucault's thesis, driven by a plethora of economic, social, and political precedents. With the avowed goal to cure and rehabilitate the malfeasants instead of making them suffer under the blows of the sovereign's whip, Foucault's central aim of such an analysis is to offer an understanding of the complex entanglement of forms of punishment with forms of power. Through a genealogical approach therefore, Foucault dissects the punishment/disciplinary modalities of power to expose the biopolitical machinery that links the past (spectacle) to the present (surveillance) to create a "utopia of judicial reticence: takeaway life, but prevent the [condemned] from feeling it; deprive the prisoner of all rights, but do not inflict pain; impose penalties free of all pain" (*Discipline* 11).

With that in mind, let us turn once again to the cases at hand. Despite the highlighted similarities between the two cases, it is important to acknowledge that each culprit receives a distinct penalty. Put differently, though Hester and Damiens undergo a public punishment on a scaffold, each culprit receives a punishment that directly corresponds to the gravity of his/her transgression and how it is interpreted by their settings. In the discourse presented in Foucault's work, a transgression, by definition, is understood as a deviation from an ideal. Therefore, a careful calculation and evaluation of that act is required to rank it and eventually treat it accordingly. By that same logic, Foucault posits that punishment as an act is far from arbitrary but rather an act that is meticulously "calculated according to detailed rules" (*Discipline* 34).

A foundational assumption in this discourse is that graphic portrayal of Damiens' punishment would, undoubtedly, provoke sentiments of fear and horror to the contemporary perceiver. However, it must be kept in mind that in order for the act to be fully digested, one must not strip the act from its historical context. With this in mind, as well as the aforementioned suggestion by Foucault, the seemingly visceral and quite awful execution becomes rationalised as a contextualization of the prevailing norms and a symptom of that era's values. In essence, punishment was tightly related to the visual; everything was always in the public eye. Therefore, the scaffold was perceived as the only way to *react* to the actor's 'heinous' crime. That said, it is worth suggesting that this perceived distance between what once seen as rationale but perceived now as grotesque signals what Foucault recognizes in his *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* as the epistemic shifts in power dynamics in relation to the act of punishment (138).

Having said that, the contingency of punishment upon the designated definition of social order is apparent in Hawthorne's narrative as well. Hester, as an infamous adulterer, is portrayed in the novel as not only subject to the law and order of the colony,

but to the multitude's wrath as well. This discontent is sparked by a vision of their own world that is highlighted by their rigidity and self-control. Harold Bloom comments on the Puritan mind by saying that usually "all the bright notes are dulled, and happiness is disdained or ignored". However, Bloom tumbles out that "sin and the inevitable judgment of a vengeful God on the sinner are emphasized until they alone are visible" (Bloom, *The Scarlet Letter* 30).

Henceforth, the multitude by the prison door and around the scaffold feels obligated "to exhort her to repentance and to confession" (Hawthorne 98). What is to be understood from this statement is the fact that there is a communal aspect for justice among the New Englanders. In a type of Nietzschean spirit, the inhabitants get to experience a brutal type of justice that both invigorates and regulates. Embodying a paradox, Hester is seen as both a culprit for breaching the legal authority she once pledged to follow as well as an enemy to the puritanic pronouncement of modes of conduct. Therefore, evoking a profound aversion towards her, the community puts Hester, or her body as it is the very medium, on trial in a way that is "firmly wedded to retributivist ways of thinking" (Mackie 276). Illustrating a strong and profound abhorrence, the way the spectators are depicted by Hawthorne suggests the hate directed towards the sinner inevitably carries with it an inherent yearning for Hester's suffering. Therefore, as readers, we are compelled to accept that the scaffold of the pillory is the only way to achieve both legal and moral justice after her crime is committed.

In summation of the aforementioned cases, one might plausibly argue that there is a deep-seated relation between the affliction of pain and the commission of an act that is considered a disruption to the social order. This relationship is causal in its nature as it designates one as a necessary measure taken in reaction to a previously committed other, for the ultimate aim of restoring order and achieving justice. It is equally important

however, and it has been previously noted, to not look at punishment without its contextual meaning. This is important as the manner in which punishment is deployed defines not only its essence but also its cultural and socio-political framework. In accordance, punishment becomes a warning that “those individuals persisting in deviating from the utopian order can be subject to punitive measures deemed most expedient” (McBride 25).

McBride’s observation sets the stage for our analysis of the second work at hand, *The Way of All Flesh*. Samuel Butler’s protagonist, Ernest Pontifex, likely faces punishment for going against the grain; something that marks him as a being susceptible to corrective measures. Nonetheless, existing in a different historical epoch, the reaction to his said crime might seem less dramatic compared to that of Hester in the sense that we have progressed past the public spectacle. While corrective reactions still persist to some degree, Ernest’s time adopts a less brutal, a more civilized, and a more ‘humane’ mode of conducting punishment. Now, we enter the era of the prison, or what Foucault labels as “the gentle way of punishment” (*Discipline* 104). Foucault attributes this to how the definition regarding criminality and punishment has evolved and how one era usually lacks “the same chronology or the same *raison d’être*” of its precedent era(s) (*Discipline* 8).

Reflecting a completely different paradigm of law, and by extension the way to deal out penalties, Ernest’s Victorian setting tilts more towards a precision in prescribing a specific sentence for each type of crime. Contrasting it from the overtly authoritative manner we see in *The Scarlet Letter*, Ernest’s narrative mirrors the specific legal and socio-political differences that would help us identify as well as contextualise the modalities used for social control and order.

Historically, this shift in perspective could be attributed to the realisation that the rationalisation of the visual is an important thing for power and the community-enforced spectacle once seen in Puritan New England was neither valid nor applicable in Victorian England. This inadequacy resulted in an emergence of a more humanitarian way in dealing with culprits, one with more emphasis on fairness and proportionality. Quoting Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*, the “project stage” adopted an alternative form, “a new criminal legislation [...] characterised by less severe penalties, a clearer codification, a marked diminution of the arbitrary, a more generally accepted consensus concerning the power to punish” (89). Accordingly, this shift came to be reflected in a consensus regarding a more corrective mode instead of the previous destructive tendencies that once dominated the realm of punishment. The historical logic has been, therefore, that we have done away with the barbarity and this concept would continue to evolve throughout the following centuries and as we proceed with our analysis of the last selected corpus.

The thematic focus on order and punishment takes a central role in the third work at hand, with a nuanced complexity nonetheless. Consider the central character in Philip Roth’s *Indignation*, the parallels between Marcus and the other two aforementioned characters are striking despite the vastly different milieus. Set in 1950’s America, Roth’s novel revolves around, also narrated by, Marcus. In a stark contrast from Hester’s negative perception, Marcus is often depicted in positive terms. He is described by both the writers and most of the characters as “prudent, responsible, diligent”, “a hardworking student”, a “dedicated debater” who appears to live “happily enough within the adolescent norms” (Roth 3). However, much like Hester, he is strangely treated with the same exclusionary attitude from Winesburg’s “utopic order”, to use McBride’s expression once more. The seemingly benign and praiseworthy characteristics that Marcus possesses have certainly not spared him from being watched and gazed at. This

crystallises once he is summoned by the Winesburg authorities to be interrogated about a crime that he is unaware of committing. This leads us to the conclusion that Marcus's case is but a reflection of the consequences of centuries of punitive development. Primarily, his case illustrates the logic of an order that is found within every network needed for a society to function. A logic that has infested every fiber of one's being.

Thus, the meeting between Marcus and the Dean of Men, Caudwell, throws Marcus into a paradoxical state of simultaneous state of hyper-visibility as well as an unsettling invisibility of the state. Reflecting Foucault's idea that "visibility is a trap" (*Discipline* 200), Marcus realises during this interrogation that the most intimate aspects of his life are exposed, laid bare in front of the Dean. Left in a state of confusion and bewilderment, Marcus pleads desperately, "exactly what is the crime I have committed? So I have moved from one dorm room to another—can that considered a *crime at Winesburg College*? That makes me into a *culprit*?" (Roth 96; emphasis added).

Marcus's question provides us a gateway into our analysis as the following project endeavours to dissect the layers of power relations that underpin the infliction of punishment within the chosen corpus. Grounded on Foucault's theoretical framework, along with other theorists of power, we aim at developing an understanding of the power to punish through shedding light on its mechanisms, techniques, and procedures. Only then, it is possible to understand how a particular form of power, bi-power, becomes socially advantageous and politically useful more than that of the sovereign, and of course, while keeping the "the eye of a supervisor" (Foucault, *Discipline* 200).

To reach the mentioned objective, this chapter will present a genealogical development of the modes of punishment in relation to the concept of the gaze as manifested in the trials of the three main characters. The comparison and the deconstruction of the methods used in Hester Prynne, Ernest Pontifex, and Marcus

Messner's punishment highlights how, despite the different historical periods and the rationales of punishment, their bodies are still the locus of the political field. As it shall be illustrated, the body of the condemned, despite the abolition of the spectacle, is still being trapped under an all-seeing architecture.

1. **Theater of Pain: The Body of the Condemned, the 'Injured Sovereign,' and Punitive Spectacle in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter***

From its threshold, Michel Foucault's historical account of *Discipline and Punish* meets the reader with a visceral confrontation in a chapter entitled "Torture". Setting the stage for the dramatic documentation of "The Spectacle of The Scaffold" where "The Body of the Condemned" is executed as a means to exhibit the king's power. Foucault's graphically depicts the punishment of the condemned regicide, Damiens, and the following quote shows an image, where his body becomes a canvas for violence. The image is often compared to Dante's macabre descent to *Inferno* (Foucault, *Discipline* 34). Damiens' execution however, was not a literary creation but rather a grim episode that actually took place in one of France's public squares. On the account, Foucault writes describing the scene:

Before the main door of the Church of Paris [...] on a scaffold [...] the flesh will be torn from [Damiens] breasts, arms, thighs, and calves with red-hot pincers, his right hand, holding the knife with which he committed the said parricide, burnt with sulfur, and, on those places where the flesh will be torn away, poured molten lead, boiling oil, burning resin, wax, and sulfur melted together and then his body drawn and quartered by four horses and his limbs and body consumed by fire, reduced to ashes and his ashes thrown to the winds (3).

Inherently defined as “the infliction of an ill suffered for an ill done” (Grotius, qtd.in Hudson, *Justice Through Punishment* 2), punishment by its very nature involves elements of discomfort. Despite the fact that reading the aforementioned description through the lenses of the contemporary makes these descriptions disturbingly grotesque, it is equally incontrovertible that Damiens’s punishment was seen as one that was deserved. Essentially, the *ancien régime* reasoned that the severity of Damiens’s punishment was but a reflection of the harm caused by his crime in the first place. In other words, it reflects a retributive symmetry. Additionally, and more importantly, the gravity of his crime resided in the status of his victim, his King.

There are several interesting elements mentioned in Foucault’s quote that need our attention. The first of which is its spatial framing. Having the regicide punished next to the church gives the whole ceremony a liturgical sense. This implies that the church emerges in the scene as a symbol of divinity that elevates justice, gruesome as it is, to a sacred position. According to Émile Durkheim who argues in his work *Two Laws of Penal Evolution* that to err someone who is equal to one is perceived as reprehensible. However, when the same act “concerns someone who is superior to us; the horror which it produces can therefore only be calmed by a violent repression” (30). Taking this as a yardstick, the king of France was considered as a God-like figure, the thought of defying his will could get one killed, let alone plotting his murder. Having said that, the unpleasant aspect of Damiens’s punishment, according to Bean and Peters, was an indispensable element that was intentionally meticulously choreographed rather than occurring by chance (qtd.in Hudson, *Justice Through Punishment* 2).

According to the conventions of the time, Damiens’s transgression against the monarch’s body warranted the severest punishment. In this matter, Foucault emphasises the importance of the king’s physical body in the monarchical regimes by arguing that

the body of the king was not only seen as a symbol but also a tangible and sacred entity of the monarchy. This entity, adds Foucault, had to be respected, obeyed, and most importantly, preserved from harm (*Power/Knowledge* 55). Thus, as a punishment, Damiens had to pay body for body, which brings us to the second aspect of the quote that needs our attention.

When looking closely at the described scene, we notice a recurring aspect. The anchoring point of the punishment in the tactile body; the physicality that can be bruised, torn apart, quartered, and burned to ashes. Obviously, Foucault puts so much focus on the arms, the breast, the hands, and thighs as if to show that what matters during such a spectacle is not the crime committed and its eventual nullification per se. Rather, it is the body that is the focal point here, and the nullification of the crime is achieved through disintegration of the body and its parts.

That being said, Damiens punishment was based on a retributive premise. In its nature, retributive punishment usually insists on addressing the unjust done and nullifying it with a proportionate infliction of pain. In this fashion, the concept of retribution usually presents itself with the image of the scale of justice and how balance is sought. This discourse of balance, equilibrium, and geometry is usually evoked in analysing, describing, and applying the retributive punishment (Renteln 98).

In the same token, Nigel Walker explains that the prefix “re” in words such as reward, repayment, and retribution carries with it a retrospective meaning (69). In other words, there is an implication that suggests that past events must be considered in executing present ones. Likewise, when executing the *re*-action, and for it to be considered as fair, there is a need for establishing the same level of equivalence. Applied in the context of Damiens, he defied the established rules and according to Foucault’s analysis, these rules were embodiments of the monarch’s will and authority and to defy

them was interpreted as a direct attack on the sovereign (*Discipline* 34). In fact, he did not only defy him, he aspired to end his existence. Accordingly, reading his punishment within this historical context, one can easily discern that it was considered a proportional response to restore equilibrium, which, ipso facto, deemed the punishment fair and legitimate.

In his work *The Expressive Function of Punishment*, Feinberg argues that punishment can serve the purpose of voicing and expressing the indignation, the disapproval, and the condemnation felt by the wronged party (74). The argument advanced here is that the king was the wounded party and he was disempowered by one of his subjects. The graphic account of Damiens's spectacle became the king's ritual to *re-empower*, *reinforce*, and to *claim back* his authority over his subjects. As such, the spectacle becomes a reflection of a "legal code of pain". Therefore, as Foucault points out, "the body of the condemned man became the place where the vengeance of the sovereign was applied" (*Discipline* 55).

That being said, it is important to highlight that although there is, generally speaking, a consensus on the disapproval of inflicting harm on others, in this context, the acceptability of such an action hangs on two critical factors. Firstly, the act must be authorised by an institution whose rules of conduct have been violated (Hudson, *Justice Through Punishment* 2). Secondly, the inherent cruelty of the inflicted pain must be outweighed by benefits derived from it (McBride 6).

As established before, the victim in this case was the one assuming the highest position in the hierarchy of power, socially, politically, and religiously. Historically speaking, a monarchy without a king is just anarchy. In this sense, the public spectacle is framed within the reasoning of eliminating potential threats, to restore, and to maintain

social order. Once perceived like this, restoring order downplays the harsh realities of the means used, which brings us to the second factor.

The supposedly positive outcome of parading the body of the condemned was the gained docility of the masses. In other words, when witnessing the spectacle, the lines between “normalcy and deviancy” (Rothman 120) would be demarcated again and subjects would once again assume their subordinated position. This uniformity would lead to further docility and the interplay between authoritative compliance and social order would give a sense of necessity of the former in achieving the latter. This circular reasoning in itself paints punishment as a deterrent as it eradicates threats and reasserts accountability, and by extension preserving societal equilibrium, which eventually gives more power to the already powerful entity.

Despite causing pain and harm, Damiens’s punishment continued to be seen as upholding ethical and moral righteousness. Foucault comments on this by saying that the sole purpose of the spectacle was to display the criminal’s act as a truth. He further goes to suggest that “a successful public execution justified justice” as far as it was anchored on the body of the man to be executed (*Discipline* 44).

It is fair then to say that, when Damiens’s body was “quartered”, the display was, first and foremost, a parade of a dissymmetry of power. The spectacle became a tangible and visible manifestation of the king’s sovereignty. Additionally, it functioned as a political tool in the sense that it was set to remind the king’s subjects on how to balance, through violence, the equilibrium once upset by crime (Newman 192). The spectacle was thus set to exhibit an absolute power in the name of restoring balance. Through the instillment of values, by means of fear and coercion, into its spectators to discourage any potential rebellion. Using David Rothman’s word, “by demonstrating how regularity and

[torture] transformed the most corrupt persons, it would reawaken the public to these virtues” (105).

In the opening chapters of *The Scarlet Letter*, titled “The Prison Door” and “The Marketplace”, Hawthorne sketches the sinister atmosphere that overcast Hester’s public shaming. Standing at the centre of this theatre, Hester is asked to perform her theatrical role as a sinner. In doing so, her body becomes an anchoring point for moral judgement. These chapters pivot around Hester’s dual experience between confinement and exposure and how this full force of societal condemnation of the visible sin illuminates the power dynamics within the colony.

It is true that Hester’s spectacle of shame functions as an assertion of moral rectitude in the process of restoring the disrupted religious equilibrium. Given that “a secret punishment is a punishment half wasted” (Foucault, *Discipline* 111), Hester’s public execution is to be interpreted as a semiotic instrument and a corporeal arithmetic whereby the power of the Magistrates is manifested and restored. Given that these individuals are “designated as executioners” (Foucault, *Punitive Society* 9-10), they have the *prima facie* duty to seek revenge when injured and this revenge materialises on the body of the adulterer.

1.1. “It Was Meant, Doubtless, for a Retribution”: Lex Talionis and the Puritan Scapegoat Ritual

When looking at the episodes of Hester’s spectacle, there is no doubt that it depicts a ritualistic theatre that essentially aims at *reaffirming* the position of the authority as well as remedying the dignity of the Magistrates of the colony. It is no secret that the Magistrates have been scandalised by Hester’s act since their religious teachings have been openly challenged. Essentially, this challenge is interpreted as a dismissing of

their presence and influence in the colony. Hester is therefore exhibited on the scaffold to remind her who is in charge as well as to keep those thinking of wrong in line.

The scenes of the spectacle further reveal a deeper power dynamic as Hawthorne illustrates the ways in which influence is granted. As one of the spectators comments: “the godly pastor”, referring to Reverend Master Dimmesdale, “takes it very grievously to heart that such a scandal should have come upon his congregation” (Hawthorne 77). These remarks exemplify the perceived gravity of the situation and it also exposes the misguided focus of the spectators, and here where our focus must lay. As readers, we know that the one condemning Hester has played a complicit part in the scandal at hand. However, the concern of the populace is focused on the adulterer vis-à-vis the goodliness of her pastor and how her wrong is taken “deeply to heart” by the authorities as one of their church members is revealed to be morally corrupt. Unaware that the person they mourn is also a fraud, Hawthorne pushes this idea of performativity further as he keeps reiterating that the focus is concentrated on external stain.

That said, and as it has been hinted at previously, there is no doubt that the spectacle of power is often discussed in relation to the novel’s critiques. However, what remains understudied is the fact that Hester’s punishment is erected on a negotiation between the ruler and the ruled. For instance, Hawthorne and on several occasions reveal the myopic vision of the multitude. Hester becomes the condemned who is turned by their gaze into an abstraction rather than a fellow who is pleading to be understood. Hawthorne goes further to note that they pity the authority, magnify it, and grant consent to the harsh punishment “without a murmur at its severity” (Hawthorne 85). What we see here is an eclipse and a dismissal of any kind of empathy for Hester. Therefore, it is safe to say that the inhabitants do not only passively accept but rather actively internalise the

societal norms. Their gaze is participatory which eventually would give the authority a way to manoeuvre their retribution.

Undoubtedly, Hester's act goes against the established laws. Nonetheless, it is important to shed light on the fact that her predicament goes beyond the simplistic notion of violated laws. Her transgression is not simply a breach of the will of the magistrates as the offended entity takes on a divine character. Taking "God, as a direct consequence of [her] sin" (Hawthorne 130), Hester invokes divine judgement. Since the direct affront of the sacred order legitimises the infliction of the severest of punishments, the spectacle becomes a platform for the "God-fearing Magistrates" to *reassert* their perceived moral superiority and administer a form of retaliatory justice in the name of God.

In the course of accomplishing so, Hester is marked by a scarlet letter. Once again, what needs attention here is that the spectators are not really content with this sentence. One of the onlookers comments that the magistrates "should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne's forehead" instead (Hawthorne 77). Though the mark, comments Hawthorne, "ha[s] such potent and disastrous efficacy that no human sympathy could reach her" (130), it is still considered inadequate through the lenses of the spectators.

The most plausible conclusion here is that the community's expectations of retributive measures are more demanding and more graphic than that of the magistrates. This desire for a severe corporal punishment reflects a notion that is principally linked to retribution, that of censure. Simply speaking, censure as a concept holds the wrong-doer accountable for their wrong-done and conveys the message that the culprit has "willfully" injured another person or a community as a whole (Banks 110). Eventually, the culprit stands accused, hated, continuously condemned by the society, and eventually exiled from it.

From this understanding, it is fair to assume that Hester's punishment is focused on the effect it produces. By simply branding her as a sinner, Hester is publicised to the whole community as the perpetrator of communal values, resulting in her community collectively ostracising her. It is important to point out here that up to this point Hester as a character could be framed under the Foucauldian terms of Object and Subject of power especially in reference to her punishment because the scarlet letter could be seen as a permanent panopticon. While that is applicable as we shall be meticulously analysing in the coming chapters, the evidence Hawthorne provides when talking about the visceral reaction and comments of spectators suggests that it is also plausible to argue that Hester fits Julia Kristieva's notion of the Abject as well. Here, Hester is seen as a destabilising force that "disturbs identity, system, order", someone who "does not respect borders, positions, rules" (Kristieva, *Powers of Horror* 4). The decisive factor in this suggestion is the fact that she, as well as the scarlet letter, occupies the "in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (Kristieva 4) that the colony seems able to neither fully discard nor allow to reintegrate in the community. Put simply, Hester invokes a visceral reaction, be that out of disgust or/and censure, yet paradoxically she is still gazed at. It follows that the scarlet letter also functions as a liminal text as it is both a penal emblem, since it forces her to be docile, and it is productive in the Foucauldian sense, as it invents a new social category in the colony : the adulteress, the visibly damned. Bringing this back to Kristieva's notion of the abject and how it exists in the "in-between".

Hence, by making her shame visible to the naked eye, the authority figures of the colony would have their tarnished honour restored at the expense of hers. This visibility becomes a modality of both social control and social death to perpetuate a cycle of a lifelong indignation and retribution. Embodying sovereign figures, the Magistrates have both the power and capacity to dictate who is able to live and who must die (Mbembe

66). Going hand in hand with Krietieva's suggestion, what Mbembe suggests in his book *Necropolitics* is that death in such cases becomes purely social as the ostracised is neither fully integrated and nor fully erased. As a consequence, public shaming becomes not only an occasion to punish to balance, but also a ritual to reaffirm that power and that capacity.

Both a biopolitical and necropolitical means therefore, the spectacle ensures visibility and strips Hester of her dignity. By damaging that, the authorities' is restored and consequently their domination and power to dictate boundaries of what behaviour should be avoided, and what should be fostered. Though the exposure of Hester's sin is meant as a "second penance" to redeem her, it becomes clear that the aim of the spectacle is not to help her repent for her sins. Rather, it is a ceremony for the perpetrator to be subjected to an external judging gaze. This gaze effectively bolsters the magistrates' authority, and the comments of the spectators mentioned above prove that this aim is fulfilled.

It is clear that within the boundaries of the colony, religious teaching reigns supreme. Christianity becomes more than just a set of beliefs and practices. Actually, it becomes a pervasive framework and the strict adherence permeates every aspect in the life of the colonists. Religion then, in the words of Foucault in *The History of Sexuality Volume 2*, becomes the "cognitive apparatus" (181) that sculpts the finest line in the colonists' social life. This point is illustrated in the public spectacle. It has been established that the element that makes Hester's transgression so grave is the fact that it was committed against the divine laws. Having said that, and through this Foucauldian understanding, it could be argued that her punishment must involve an element of "supplice" (*Discipline* 33), which explain the demand for 'more' punishment from the spectators.

Through this analysis, a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of control is gained. As religion shapes the life of the colonists, the relentless scrutiny and gossip about Hester could also be regarded as a suppliance. The attitude against Hester that we see throughout the novel plays a vital role in the enforcement of the rigid and sanctimonious social order. The public punishment is only the beginning of a long lasting punishment that boxes Hester within a sphere of constant public scrutiny and ultimately self-censorship. This policing of behaviour reinforces the adherence to the Christian faith while discouraging dissent, which eventually ensures dominance.

While the community takes on that role, of policing and pressuring through surveillance, it is crucial to remember that the magistrates alone have the exhibition of her body at will. Reflecting the uncompromising adherence to religious codes, the job of punishing sinners is an exclusive right of the God-fearing magistrates. Hawthorne writes that “according to the received code in such matters, it would have been nothing short of duty, in a politician, to bring every one of those heads under the axe of the guillotine” (27). This quote illustrates how maintaining order is seen as a political imperative while highlighting how this political imperative is intertwined with both the religious and the social aspects within the colony. In essence, the quote presents a complex web of power in which the notion of duty is invoked and justified according to “received codes”. Because the latter is very important, the necessity to a strict adherence is seen as vital and any negligence is perceived as an unviable option.

It is now established that Hester’s community’s adherence to the Christian code is reflected in the way they govern and prescribe what actions, desires, and thoughts are allowed or prohibited. Consequently, the community’s obsession with this rigid religious orthodoxy makes it a breeding ground for inflicting harsh punishments on those who go against what’s prescribed as moral. Moreover, and since they are religious

fundamentalists, they are in support of “getting tough” with offenders (Unnever and Cullen 724). In consideration of Hester’s violation of one of the cardinal sins, “Thou shall not commit adultery”, it can be argued that she not only merits moral punishment but that it would also be inherently justifiable to exact vengeance upon her. When perceiving the attitude of the community, it is obvious that the spectacle is designed more to focus on spreading hate against Hester rather than helping her with her penance. This religious zeal and social censure leads the community to conflate religious beliefs with the thirst for enacting vengeance, which ultimately create a climate of both fear and social control instead of redemption and moral rectitude.

This collective hatred towards Hester could also be analysed through the lenses of Émile Durkheim who draws the link between forms of punishment and the society in which it takes place. His thesis suggests that crime and punishment are two integral components of the sociological enterprise of any given society. According to him, if these components are studied carefully, they can easily reveal the working mechanisms of the said society (*The Rules* 70).

In this matter, he suggests that for an act to be constituted as criminal, it has to befit some criteria. Firstly, Durkheim suggests that an act is considered a crime if it violates the core values of the society. Secondly, the act must be intense enough to warrant societal attention. Finally, the act must be clearly regarded as a wrong by the codes of the society (*Division* 73).

The act committed by Hester demonstrably mirrors Durkheim criteria. Looking at the Puritan community, we established that religion is the bedrock that the colony stands on. Moreover, Hester’s adulterous act not only a clear violation of the Christian faith, it also strikes at the heart of the colonists’ beliefs. Hester’s crime throws her into a direct conflict with what Durkheim terms as “conscience collective” (*Two Laws* 300),

inflicting a deep wound to the moral fabric of the community which consequently results in a sense of solidarity. A solidarity that is fueled by moral disapproval and a desire to maintain a facade of religious perfection.

What can be accumulated from what has been said so far is that the attitude towards Hester is based wholeheartedly on a retributive premise and her punishment affords what Bentham calls in his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals* a “vindictive compensation” (154) to the aggrieved party. Hester’s punishment is a payment to a debt owed to the people and the magistrates alike and the public spectacle is a way of “paying [her] debt to society” for the breach of its peace (Walker 73).

There are several instances in the novel where Hawthorne depicts this urge to make Hester pay. Often through ironic contrast, in one scene the author imagines an alternative image where Hester, “so picturesque in her attire and mien, and with the infant at her bosom”, could be easily compared to the Virgin Mary. Nonetheless, this is just a hypothetical gaze because the spectators ignore the image of the “sinless motherhood” and focus on the “taint of deepest sin” (Hawthorne 79). Moreover, Hawthorne’s usage of a hypothetical observer shows how the spectators witnessing her punishment have already considered her as one of the Damned. Their judgement is steeped in the belief that her sin could cause their community to run amuck because it does not only affect her individually, but also has made the world “darker”. Therefore, they dismiss the images of the Virgin Mary and only see the departure from the paradigms of religious righteousness.

Furthermore, the content of the quote shows the moralistic approach applied by the Massachusetts Bay Colony in dealing with malefactors who act irrespective of the laws. The inner peace is disturbed and “the men of rank, on whom their eminent position imposed the guardianship of the public morals” are injured (Hawthorne 249). The crime

is therefore against the “public authority and its representatives, the mores, tradition and [most importantly] religion, which offend the collective conscience and call forth violent repression” (Spitzer 614). Hester’s repression therefore shall remain as long as she lives by “being the object of severe and universal observation” (Hawthorne 51). Hester becomes the subject of censure which is basically the expression of disapproval, blame, and criticism towards her actions. According to Hirsh, censure conveys the message that perpetrators, who willfully injure the sovereign, must face the disapproval of society for that reason (qtd.in Banks 249).

Nevertheless, the fact that Dimmesdale, being the father of the illegitimate child, does not step forward to confess suggests that the focus of morals obscures the power dynamics at play. His silence raises the question of whether Hester’s punishment is truly about protecting morality, or is it only about reinforcing the authority of the ruling class within the colony. The restoration of balance forces Hester to suffer and it is required that Dimmesdale and the other Magistrates “take revenge for an affront to [their] very person” (Foucault, *Discipline* 48). Though he plays a role in this moral decadence, he still assumes the power to dictate her punishment and ensure its actuality, by treating her in accordance with the maxim of her crime. It must be highlighted that this punishment is not an illegitimate vengeance for the latter inflicted on innocent persons. Her punishment is a retribution carried out by a legitimate authority. This authority has decided on a set of rules, and they see these rules as a representation of the moral order and therefore Hester’s punishment is justified and its legitimacy is unquestionable. However, the selective punishment and focus on social control expose the limitations of the figures of power and their moral authority as it shows who gets to define “balance” and who gets punished for disturbing it, and at what cost. In such a matter, Banks states that:

Once society has decided on a set of legal rules, the retributivist sees those rules as representing and reflecting the moral order. Society's acceptance of legal rules means that the retributivist accepts the rules, whatever they may be; accepts that the rule makers are justified in their rule making; and claims that those who make the rules provide the moral climate under which others must live. (247-248)

Given that the colony operates solely on what the Bible says, we see a sort of consensus model that categorises actions as either right or wrong, moral or immoral. This simple binary model regards religious morality as inherently right and leaves little room to alternative perspectives regarding Hester's transgression and punishment. Consequently, punishing her becomes both a matter of responsibility and accountability which in turn makes it justified and deserved (Bean 17). In order for the right to be restored, a wrong must be inflicted.

It is important to highlight that the wrong, once done as a reaction, is legitimate and it is an edict that has transcendental approval as the notion of the *lex talionis* states that "punishment should inflict the same on the offender as the offender has inflicted on his or her victim" (Banks 248). In other words, Hester has to pay a debt as in "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life" (Hudson, *Understanding Justice* 38).

Nonetheless, this reasoning is flawed. Since the nature of Hester's transgression is more of a moral rupture and not a physical wound, the principle of an "eye for an eye" cannot be literally applied in her case. Put simply, her transgression against the divine is not physical in nature and the Magistrates choose to match its inherent gravity is addressed through "a punitive response that partakes of cognate features" (Kramer 77). What emerges from this analysis is the fact that Hester's punishment does not operate as

just payback, or as a proportionate response as the doctrine invokes. Rather it is more of a collective catharsis as it is both excessive and unending.

Hawthorne mentions that Hester's penalty is supposed to be death, but the Magistrates, "in their great mercy and tenderness of heart", substitute it to a "three hours on the platform of the pillory, and then and thereafter, for the remainder of her natural life to wear a mark of shame upon her bosom" (Hawthorne 93). Fundamentally, the retaliation weaponizes time itself in the sense that it becomes an infinite suffering where Hester's debt cannot be repaid. In other words, the three hours stance on the pillory is but a prologue to "a torture to be felt at many an unthought-of moment; a pang, a sting, an ever-recurring agony, in the midst of a troubled joy" (Hawthorne 175). The weight of evidence thus suggests that the scarlet letter is meant, doubtless for a retribution but also to keep Hester indebted in a necropolitical interest loop.

The remark from spectators, "a wise sentence," (Hawthorne 93) further exposes another aspect in action. We have established by now that her punishment is a calculated act that goes beyond the spectacle as it is evident throughout the novel as every interaction with her community becomes a reminder of her fall. Even Miss Hibbins, the witch, plays her role in reminding Hester that she has fallen from grace (Hawthorne 171). Knowing the unforgiving nature of the Puritan mindset, the Magistrates knew beforehand that once branded as a damned will always be regarded as so, and here comes the Giradian scapegoat mechanism into the picture. In his book, *The Violence and the Sacred*, René Girard attests that when it comes to order, most communities achieve it by uniting themselves in an antagonistic way against a surrogate victim (79). Fundamentally, Hester becomes the bearer of communalism and the visible vessel of the colony's moral anxieties in the sense that its members throughout the novels that all their ills are basically the fault of one individual who can be easily disposed of.

1.2. Unveiling the Sinful body “Under the Heavy Weight of a Thousand Unrelenting Eyes”

It has been stated earlier that Hester’s case shares notable similarities with Damines’s as both of their punishments focus on the exhibition of the body. Therefore, the body becomes the targeting point of intervention of the authorities, “pursuing [it] beyond all possible pain” (Foucault, *Discipline* 34). As the body of the condemned serves as a central component in the public exhibition of punishments, Hester is sentenced to stand “upon the platform, but without undergoing that grip about the neck and confinement of the head” (Hawthorne 47). Regardless of the fact that Hester’s spectacle excludes capital punishment, her sin is still conveyed to the multitude in a theatrical performance. This decision is not coincidental but rather a strategically orchestrated component of her punitive punishment.

Building upon the earlier discussion of Girard’s notion of the ritual of the scapegoat, Hester’s theatre becomes purely sacrificial. The way Hawthorne writes about the spectators’ attitude shows the channelling of a collective fear and anxiety. Consequently, what we see in these episodes is a ritual of explosive violence. This explosion, usually translated through the spectators’ comments and their “unrelenting” gaze, transforms Hester’s body into a “generative” sign for order because it becomes the absorbent of that unacted violence.

Being “the theorist of paradox”, Foucault looks at widely accepted beliefs with a willingness to question their often taken-for-granted nature (Garland, *An Exposition and Critique* 848). Therefore, and according to his understanding of the spectacle, Hester’s punishment takes on a complex and multifaceted role both morally as well as socially as it serves as a ritualistic manifestation of power. By publicly unveiling her body and her

sin, her child, the authority figures are given meaning, the norms are reinforced, and control legitimised.

It has been confirmed that the body is an indispensable element for the spectacle. Nonetheless, the spectacle, Foucault notes, loses its distinguishing nature if it does not involve an audience. Foucault goes further to suggest that the spectacle loses its ascribed meaning without spectators because “an execution that was known to be taking place, but which did so in secret, would scarcely have had any meaning” (*Discipline* 58). It is defensible then to claim that Hester’s spectacle becomes important precisely because there is a witnessing multitude. It is mentioned earlier that one of the spectacle’s main aims is to deter, making the spectacle an occasion to educate the masses. By simply witnessing the body on the scaffold punished for doing wrong, the crowd will automatically internalise the boundaries between wrong and right, which eventually results in a reaffirmation of the moral codes.

Girard’s theory once again sharpens this observation. Manifestly, the presence of a gaze is not merely pedagogical, especially if it is “unrelenting”. Rather, it is purely sacramental. When describing the spectators, Hawthorne mentions that there is a “grim rigidity” from their part, something that we can equate with what Girard calls in *The Scapegoat* “the prosecutors blindness” (3). We have mentioned earlier the myopia that surrounds the spectators discourse around the scaffold, a key point to highlight here is that there is no other mention of any other fact. The illegitimate child is the participation of two parties then that of Hester individually. Even the questions asked about the partner are given little importance in the ceremony. What this suggests is the spectators’ avoidant attitude towards anything that derails them from the surrogate body on the scaffold. Just like La Fontaine’s *Animals Sickened by the Plague*, Hawthorne’s spectators avoid and

deny anything in the search for the scapegoat, or the plague (Gerard, *The Scapegoat* 3); they insist only on the guilt and not on the rational acts of justice.

In *The Genealogy of Morals*, Frederick Nietzsche suggests that generally when punishing maleficients “there is so much that is festive” (Nietzsche 67). In *Discipline and Punish* on the other hand, Foucault tells the readers that Damiens was forced to hold the dagger used in his failed assassination attempt so his crime would be further accentuated. What Foucault suggests here is a punitive exhibition that becomes a “symbolic torture” (30). The scarlet letter in Hawthorne’s novel could be equated with Damiens dagger. Looking at these incidents from a Girardian point of view, the author of *The Scapegoat* would argue that the festiveness of the ritual is more memetic than symbolic. While Foucault’s suggestion is perfectly fitted to Hester’s spectacle, Girard’s perspective adds more depth into the understanding of the whole ritual.

It is imperative to recognize that the timing of the spectacle is a well calculated move by the Magistrates. Before Hester’s dramatic unveiling, Hester has been confined during her pregnancy. Moreover, the conception and the birth of Pearl are events that are kept shrouded in darkness as there is no mention of those episodes. Hester is only revealed both to the reader and to the public when her daughter is three months old. This leads us to suggest that this delay is strategic. Given that the criminal must be branded and marked as one (Foucault, *Discipline* 34), the delayed nature of Hester’s punishment adds another layer to her brand as a sinner. In the novel, it is mentioned that “Mistress Prynne shall be set where every man, woman, and child may have a fair sight of her brave apparel” (Hawthorne 46). The obvious goal of the delay is to humiliate Hester and as it is not only her body that is exposed to the public but also the actual embodiment of her sin, Pearl, the whole punishment becomes a sacred-profane ritual. The body of the infant becomes both the evidence and the mother the sacrifice and the anchoring point of the

cathartic violence as the community's gaze turns into a unified force of "unanimous violence" (Girard, *Violence* 99).

The fatal effect of the scarlet is undeniable as Hawthorne equates its effect to the effect of a "spell" that encloses Hester in a realm of isolation (81). Unlike this static symbol, it is her daughter, Pearl, who becomes the dynamic burden and the relentless reminder of her transgression. Compared to Pearl, the adornment's effect, though important, is arguably limited because Pearl is the consequence that Hester cannot get rid of. She is not a mere symbol but rather an amalgamation of complex notions and emotions. She is the "pang" within Hester's heart (77).

The child is illustrated throughout the novel as both a source of innocence and devilishness, a source of sadness and happiness simultaneously. In a conversation with Dimmesdale, Hester confesses the duality of feelings towards their child. "She is my happiness—she is my torture, nonetheless! Pearl keeps me here in life! Pearl punishes me, too!" (Hawthorne 165). This confession illustrates how, as a mother, Hester is trying to navigate in a world of inner shame and love and societal judgement and expectations. In this sense, Pearl's body, to use Foucault's words in *Discipline and Punish*, "[H]as produced and reproduced the truth of the crime" (47). Hence, Pearl's body plays a cathartic function in the equation as it materialises the sin and "confesses that the crime took place, admits that the accused did indeed commit it" (47). Once Foucault's perspective is converged with Girard's framework, a better textual understanding is offered in relation to the body of the condemned.

Given that "the flesh always confesses, even if it doesn't speak", as Foucault highlights in *Confessions of the Flesh* (10), Pearl's presence on the scaffold serves as a potent form of confession. Effectively, it seals the truth, validates Hester's public spectacle, and eventually "supports the operation of punishment and manifests its effects

in the most striking way (Foucault, *Discipline* 47). Therefore, it is fair to say that within this spectacle of guilt “relations of power and truth are to be found articulated on the body” (Smart 81), both Hester’s and Pearl’s bodies.

Pearl’s body in particular stands as a proof of Hester’s culpability. Her body, once its presence revealed, carries a deeper weight and profound meaning as it allows the magistrates to add weight to the already grave transgression. They know that revealing the illegitimate child would only ignite a profound repercussion on both the condemned and the community. In a religiously charged life, the concepts of crime and punishment are intricately linked in the puritan mindset to the extent where one cannot be conceived without the other. This idea embodies itself in the existence of Pearl as she becomes both the transgression and the punishment at the same time. This idea is felt even by her mother as Hester conveys to the Governor “See ye not, she is the scarlet letter” (Hawthorne 168). Undoubtedly, Hester, through her declaration, “transform[s] the sacrifice from an essentially private concern into one involving the whole community” (Girard, *Violence* 101). Put in simpler words, her statement crystallises the role of her child as the manifestation of sin. Unlike the scarlet letter however, Pearl becomes a “sign” for a vessel for collective censure. Hawthorne further captures this when he writes that “the young and pure would be taught to look at her, with the scarlet letter [...]—as the figure, the body, the reality of sin” (74).

This depiction reflects the societal scorn toward Hester and how this scorn is deemed acceptable, needed even. For them, the transgression is to be remembered. This suggests the irreversible nature of her action and how she is pinned to the adulterer status. For it to be remembered, the transgression is revealed through the body on the scaffold and the scaffold is not the exclusive punishment as it has been noted. It is how punishment is disseminated through gossip and watching eyes to ensure that everyone in her

community is aware of her sin. Though it is lenient compared to Damians as there is no turning the body into ashes, her stigmatisation as a sinner fixes a gaze on her, making her life a life-long ritual to purify the community. This is highlighted by Girard when he writes that “after all, the rite is designed to function during periods of relative calm; [...] its role is not [only] curative, but preventive” (*Violence* 102).

In portraying the crowd, Hawthorne explains how Hester is burdened by the eyes of the spectators referring to it as “the grim rigidity that pertifi[es] the physiognomies” (74). Adding that “the stings and venomous stabs of public contumely” and the “rigid countenances contorted with scornful merriment” fixes Hester as an object, making her existence an heteronomous one (85). Hester realises that from now onwards, her freedom is limited, if not entirely eliminated, and her existence is to be dictated by an external force, rather than her own. The crowd’s watchful eyes force her to navigate her life according to their expectations as well as judgement which eventually makes her docile. When Hawthorne writes “meagre, indeed, and cold, was the sympathy that a transgressor might look for, from such bystanders, at the scaffold (75), the quote reflects Barry Smart supposition that it is within this orchestrated spectacle is meticulously devised, particularly aiming “to arouse the crowd to participate by insulting and attacking the criminal and thereby offer a symbolic assistance to the sovereign’s pursuit of vengeance” (82).

As the Magistrates are the ones who have been wronged by Hester’s transgression, the spectacle of her punishment is intensified by the presence of church members and the invocation of God’s name. This serves to significantly amplify the severity of Hester’s crime. Caught between two fronts, Hester finds herself ensnared with the vengeful grip of the governing authorities and the eyes of the spectators who “took upon themselves the name of sage” (Beccaria, qtd. in Foucault, *Discipline* 101). She

becomes the enemy of the community and thus “judged, condemned, forced to perform tasks, and destined to live and die in certain ways by [this] discourse that [is] true” (Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* 25).

Given that spectacles are often executed in a grotesquely theoretical manner, Foucault argues that this manner is what usually drives people towards the spectacle. Evidently in the novel, Hawthorne does not filter the rather stifling puritanical attitude towards Hester as vividly describes how the “age had not so much refinement that any sense of impropriety restrained the [people] from stepping forth [...] into the throng nearest to the scaffold at an execution” (75). This eagerness to witness pleases the authority because Hester’s subjection to public display is meant for them as it functions as a powerful deterrent. In other words, it is meant to eradicate potential future crimes “by arousing feelings of terror by the spectacle of power letting its anger fall upon the guilty person” (Foucault, *Discipline* 58).

Therefore, it is clear that the subjugation of Hester’s body is the locus of power; however, the spectacle is strategically aimed to target the spectators, to purposefully instill a sense of fear and eventually docility. Foucault explains that the ceremony, though power is directly and explicitly exacted on the body of the condemned, the effect is felt by the spectators. This explains how much emphasis is put on the participation of the people as their presence becomes vital for the attainment of its intended efficacy. In this matter Foucault contends that “ “in the ceremonies of public execution, the main character is the people, whose real immediate presence was required for the performance” (*Discipline* 57). Clearly, the spectacle’s significance lies not on Hester perse, but rather in its transformative impact on those who are bearing witness to it unfolding.

In depicting the enduring role of the scaffold in shaping behaviour within the confine of the colony, Hawthorne writes, “in fact, this scaffold constituted a portion of a penal machine” highlighting the fact that it is simply “an agent, in the promotion of good citizenship”. Hawthorne goes on by saying that it is an “instrument of discipline, so fashioned as to confine the human head in its tight grasp, and thus hold it up to the public gaze” (83). Clearly, Hester’s exhibition unfolds to become a web of complex interplay between the colonists themselves.

As they actively participate in shaming Hester, they become actors. By simply being there and witnessing, they are being subjected to the spectacle's transformative impact. In other words, it is true that Hester is the one being shamed and humiliated and her body exposed to the public gaze; however, the sensation sought is felt by the onlookers. Their “scaffold service”, as Foucault terms it, becomes a dynamo that operates surreptitiously, concealed in the shadows, constituting “the silent basement of the great mechanics of power” (*Society Must Be Defended* 38). Put in more condensed words, the fear felt would eventually transform into actual actions that reaffirm the moral codes, which in its turn, reinforces the power hierarchy.

It is important to note here that this spectacle is not solely intended for adults taking the fact that it deals with subjects of adultery and other insensible topics. In fact, the children’s presence is compulsory. Though their comprehension of the gravity of Hester’s transgression is limited, as Hawthorne says that they “understand little of the matter in hand, except that it gave them a half-holiday” (Hawthorne 47), they should not be excluded. This is due to the fact that their inclusion is aimed at familiarising them with concepts of crime, punishment, and authority. Shaping their understanding from a very young age is vital as they would differentiate between good behaviour and wrong one,

between moral and immoral. The spectacle is therefore aimed to be a lesson for the children as well, and to quote Foucault at length:

This legible lesson, this ritual recording, must be repeated often as possible; the punishment must be a school rather than a festival [...] The duration that makes the punishment effective for the guilty is also useful for the spectators. They must be able to consult at each moment the permanent lexicon of crime and punishment. A secret punishment is a punishment half wasted. Children should be allowed to come to the places where the penalty is being carried out there they will attend their classes in civics. And grown men will periodically relearn the laws. [...This] discourse will become the vehicle of the law: the constant principle of universal recording [...] Children gathered around [the offender] will open their young memories to receive, in imperishable lineaments, the notion of crime and punishment, the love of law and country, the respect of the magistrature. (*Discipline* 111-112)

Foucault explains the pedagogical nature of the spectacle and how it works as a communicative tool that draws lines between right and wrong, right and obligation. This comprehensive awareness is evident in the novel as the children, even after the spectacle, are thought to hate and avoid Pearl as it is thought to be “An imp of evil, emblem and a product of sin”. Throughout the novel, it is not only Hester that is outcast, Pearl also is not allowed to mingle and she has “no right among christened infants” (Hawthorne 136). Again, showing how punishment extends beyond the scaffold of the pillory, Hester and Pearl are branded as others. However, Hester admits that those feelings are planted in the minds of the youth as she confesses that they are the children who are, when they are not with their parents, more sensitive and empathic towards her agony. Their innocence and

intuition are the first to perceive and respond to the mother's disquietude, yet whenever they see "the scarlet letter on her breast, would scamper off with a strange contagious fear" (Hawthorne 119). Reflecting their parent's fear, these children would grow and become docile bodies who eventually fortify and protect the existing social norms and consequently ensure the seamless operation of its disciplinary and punitive mechanisms, and by extension its transition from one generation to another.

2. "The Penalty of the Civilized Society" : the Carceral Evolution of Punishment in Butler's *The Way of All Flesh*

It has been reiterated that punishment, instead of being a static institution, is a dynamic act that is contingent upon the historical context in which it takes place. As mentioned previously, its modes are a reflection of societal anxieties, moral imperatives, and legal frameworks. This tight connectedness has ultimately resulted in punishment's ever-changing nature. According to Barbara Hudson in her book *Justice Through Punishment*, the modern penal system was significantly influenced by three main historical ruptures: the French Revolution with its abolition of monarchical absolutism, the Industrial Revolution with its reconstruction of social relations, and finally the advancement of science and technology as it provided a new different lens through which life was conceptualized (4). Hudson claims that these events did not only change the penal system drastically as they questioned some absolute powers that used to rule lives, they also redefined punitive logic by offering a new perspective to understand both the nature of crime and punishment.

To accommodate these changes, located in the late 18th century, the need for a more efficient and fairer justice system was indispensable. This implies that the spectacle system that subjected the body to repressive techniques confronted an imminent threat of annihilation resulting in the relocation of the focus of punishment. Foucault suggests that

the reforms made in the penal system resulted in replacing the arbitrariness of the scaffold with a system of proportionality while passing execution to only those convicted of murder (*Discipline* 73). That being said, it is important to highlight that the drastic shift from cruelty to leniency did not necessarily mean an absence of punishment. In fact, be it a necessary component in maintaining order, David Garland contends that the shift was mainly qualitative (*An Exposition* 850). In other words, the quantitative reduction of corporal cruelty represented a transformation in the power dynamic in relation to punishment in the sense of its redefinition and redistribution of forces across institutions. Unquestionably, punishment's unwavering dedication to "produce ideal behaviour in citizens, and punishing those behaviours that fall outside of the norm reaffirms the state's commitment to that ideal" remained intact (McBride 5).

With every change there must be consequences, and Foucault suggests that shifting to a more secretive punishment resulted in the following. Firstly, punishment becomes a matter of abstract laws rather than everyday perception. Secondly, punishment's power/effectiveness is derived from its own inevitability rather than its grotesque terror. And finally, it is the certainty of being punished and not the horrifying spectacle of public punishment that must discourage crime (*Discipline* 9). Evidently, the element of "supplice", the ritual of dismemberment of the body, was replaced by a method rooted in "asepsis". Fundamentally, the latter pathologized criminality through the adaptation of approaches such as quarantining the "degenerates" (*Power/Knowledge* 55). Hence, it is safe to suggest that the cessation of the era characterised by public spectacles marked the onset of a new era of "sobriety"; an era with an entirely novel punitive apparatus grounded in more "equitable principles" (*Discipline* 80).

Since there was a direct correlation between the scaffold and the monarchy, abolishing the former means that the preservation of the king's body and balancing the

scale of justice were no longer paramount in punishment. In essence, what became the priority of the new penology was safeguarding the social body as a whole. Instead of focusing on the preservation of the physicality of rulers, protecting the masses took precedence and, in Miller's words about prisons, "the confinement of those within seemed equally to provide for the protectiveness of those without" (58).

The provided literature highlights how the concept of the social body became to be considered as a living organism. Generally, for any organism to work properly, it must be kept healthy and free from diseases. Foucault suggests that when the social body is looked at in this way, a quasi-medical approach is adopted. In other words, and in the context of punishment, criminals came to be regarded as unhealthy elements, both physically and metaphorically. What once was exposed on the scaffold became to be isolated, segregated, monitored, and cured. Hudson, in alignment with this contention, asserts that the system of "incapacitating sanctions against the body, [morphed] to a system of reformist sanctions against the mind and the soul" (*Undertaking Justice* 5). Put simply, what once was spectacle became an enclosed institution of new terminology and procedures. Consequently, the criminal became to be perceived as an individual who is "estranged from society" due to their transgression of societal norms while simultaneously attributing their deviant behaviour to psychopathology (Foucault, *Penal Society* 35).

2.1. The Displacement in the Object of Punitive Operation: From Hester's Body to Ernest's Impure Soul

In Hester's analysis, we have established a vision of punishment specific to Puritan New England through the spectacle. This punishment emerges to correspond to Hester's crime, highlighting the scaffold of the pillory as a prominent tool in the hand of the magistrates to promote good citizenry. Echoing the notion of "one might just as well

be hanged for a sheep as a lamb” (Hudson, *Understanding Justice* 19), the spectacle that has left Hester marked has no place in Victorian England. By contrast, Ernest, the protagonist of Butler’s *The Way of All Flesh*, is subjected to a model of punishment that places more emphasis on reforming him internally rather than revealing him physically to public condemnation.

Contrary to the Hester’s, Ernest’s punishment has a distinct rationale. While the first novel focuses primarily on an archetypally pre-modern and retributive punishment that highlights Hester’s culpability of a past wrong done, Ernest’s narrative emphasises the potential future benefit. In other words, Hester’s public shaming is rooted in what Foucault calls “the economy of public execution” (*Discipline* 56) in the sense that it serves as a lesson through a ritualised humiliation of the condemned. In contrast, the approach used with Ernest, while not completely dismissing the idea of deterrence, does not put so much emphasis on retributing for his past act as the focus shifts towards the possible positive future outcome.

The shift towards a more proportionate penalty aiming to reform the offenders instead of corporally punishing them represents what Foucault associates with the rise of disciplinary institutions. Terming it as the “analogical punishment” (*Discipline* 105), such a punishment is one that is first and foremost privatised, individualised, and tailored to the one committing the crime. Based on Bentham’s suggestion that acknowledges that “no two people are the same, no two crimes are the same” (qtd.in Draper 2), penal institutions must not follow a standardised punishment. Accordingly, a more contextually sensitive punishment is put in place: one that outlines the perplexity and uniqueness of human behaviour and psyche.

Given that the offender’s circumstances are taken into consideration, Ernest’s punishment is not a one-size-fits-all, or to reiterate Hudson’s quote “one might just as

well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb” like we see in Hester’s narrative. In a stark contrast, and aligning with the approach of reformatory justice, in Ernest’s case the focus is not on the vice committed but rather its elimination. Unlike Hester who is marked by and reminded of her vicious act, Ernest’s punishment is tailored to cleanse the vice from him and to prevent him from committing it again in the future.

In spite of the difference in approach, the trials of the protagonists still have things in common as both put emphasis on the idea of exemplarity. While public shaming is the approach taken by the New Englanders to deter, Victorian England takes an approach that is based on a panoptic model of incarceration to discourage the engagement in similar behaviour through disciplinary techniques. Bentham mentions in the *Introduction to the Principles of Morals* that the aim is utilitarian in nature, arguing that the purpose of discouraging future criminal activities is achieved through a mechanism of altering the cost-benefit dynamics (178). In other words, the focus should be the practicality of punishment, one that assures the highest possible benefit from the transgressor with minimal exertion.

Hence, Ernest’s punishment must be swift and efficient and not be employed as a vengeful one. As noted before, Hester’s community puts so much emphasis on mainly punishing her and it is evident in their attitude towards her during the spectacle. What matters most for them is for her to be held accountable as they believe that she deserves it. Echoing the retributivist views articulated by Moore in *Placing Blame*, the fact that she is punished is in itself the good achieved from the whole spectacle. Put simply, once her body is paraded, the horror of her crime as well as the invincibility of the power to punish become visible. Additionally, given that the purpose is to overawe, “the more horrible the punishment, the greater its salutary” (Stearns 223).

Ernest's case is different on the other hand. Deterrence in his case is meant for securing the future of both Ernest and his milieu through rehabilitation. Ernest's punishment could be understood as a process of "recognizing the action of pain, unhappiness, or fear and defining their operation in specific directions" that are more beneficial for both the individual and the social body (Draper 11). Therefore, and for a better understanding of the aforementioned, an elucidation to the episodes surrounding Ernest's crime and imprisonment is vital.

One thing that Butler focuses on in his novel is the struggle of its protagonist Ernest. Being torn between what he wants and what everyone around him wants him to do and be, the young clergyman is constantly subjected to the coercive demands of different disciplinary institutions. While trying to conform to the demands of his patriarchal family, ecclesiastical hierarchy, and social conventions, Ernest finds himself suppressing his own authentic self. He is depicted by Mr. Overton, the narrator, as an "ignorant young fool" who is unaware of what is truly good or bad for him and reveals the protagonist's epistemic vulnerability. Raised in a very strict household, Ernest lives in a state of naivety; a naivety that stems from his lack of experience in most of life's matters. Overton recounts the years of Ernest's childhood at Battersby, the family house, as "long" and filled with "savage cruelty". He goes further to suggest that because Ernest has always been coerced to do things his father's way, his self esteem has been repeatedly crushed. As a result of this systematic subjugation of Ernest, our protagonist comes to deal with what we can call a crisis of recognition. Given that Ernest is left emotionally, intellectually, and sexually repressed, and eager to be acknowledged by others (Butler 204), he becomes pathologically dependent on external validation. This leads him to be easily drawn to anyone who acknowledges his presence and ideas. Living most of his life

as an inferior being, Ernest eventually finds solace in his senior curate Pryer for the mere fact that the latter treats him civilly.

Following his ordination, Ernest decides to widen his horizon as he realises that his knowledge of the world is limited. In doing so, he takes lodgings in Ashpit Place, in a boarding house owned by a Mrs. Jupp, in an attempt to assert his independence from his father's authoritarian dominance and, most importantly, to contribute to the church and become better at his profession. Infatuated by the idea, suggested by Pryer, of creating a "College of Spiritual Pathology where young men [...] may study the nature and treatment of the sins of the soul as medical students study those of the bodies of their patients" (Butler 179), Ernest sees it as an opportunity to break free from his father's dominance. He consequently decides to become one of those healers of the souls and join Pryer's quest of saving souls.

Putting this idea suggested by Pryer into its historical context, Victorian England witnessed a wave of priests who went by the name of the "Priests in Absolution". In essence, these priests were influenced by the pamphlet published in 1870 by the Anglican Church under the same name, *Priests in Absolution*. The main subject being confession, priests started propagating it as an important element to reveal "spiritual pathology" and cleanse the sins of one's soul (Shuttleworth 627-628). Nonetheless, in an era recognized by tension between religion and science, the idea sparked an outrage from both religious men and scientists as well. On the one hand, since the pamphlet implied that the clergymen could diagnose, in a quasi-medical fashion, and treat like doctors, it was perceived by psychiatrists as a hindrance in the advancements of the scientific approach. On the other hand, religious authorities, such as the Archbishop of Canterbury, considered it as shameful as it challenged the established and domestic hierarchy of the time. Given that the pamphlet allowed priests to ask explicit sexual questions, religious

leaders saw this as a challenge to the family hierarchies and a threat to the position of fathers as the children's confidants. Accordingly, the practices of the priests were considered unacceptable and punishable by law (231).

Falling prey to Pryer's persuasive rhetoric, Ernest becomes fascinated by the idea as he sees it as an opportunity to bridge the gap of his ignorance since Pryer suggest that priest are allowed both "absolute freedom to experiment [...] and absolute knowledge what the laity think and do" (Butler 177). Not aware of the ongoing controversy about the matter, Ernest embraces the idea wholeheartedly to the extent of investing time and money to "familiarise himself with the habits and thoughts of the poor by going and living among them" (Butler 180). This embarkation marks the turning point in Ernest's life as this College of Spiritual Pathology represents to him a rite of passage to prove his worth to his father and to himself. Ironically, this step leads him to his doom.

That being said, Ernest's transgression is completely different from Hester's. In fact, it does not originate from committing an actual act; rather, it is his misapprehension of presuming a respectable lady to be a prostitute that leads him eventually towards his punishment. What deserves our attention here is how his 'transgression' exposes the collision of institutional discourse and suppressed subjectivity. Previously, it has been noted that one of the apprehensions that the Priests in Absolution raised during Victorian England was the potential of probing into the individual's intimate life. The episode of Ernest with Miss Maitland, the lady he mistakes for a prostitute, is a manifestation of that apprehension as well as the confusion generated by those institutions who compete over sexual knowledge.

Consumed with the idea of healing souls therefore, Ernest decides to visit Miss Snow, the actual prostitute, after being given a negative account of her. To his surprise, he encounters his friend Townsley there and Ernest is left in a state of humiliation and

shame. Ernest's reprehension could be seen as a reflection of his repressed sexuality. The fear of judgement from Townsley, someone whom he considers above him, is an exemplar of Ernest's struggle with societal expectations. In a passage, that is worth quoting at length, Overton describes Ernest's anxieties and subjugation by saying that:

He was so anxious to do what was right, and so ready to believe that everyone knew better than himself, that he never ventured to admit to himself that he might be all the while on a hopelessly wrong tack. It did not occur to him that there might be a blunder anywhere, much less did it occur to him to try and find out where the blunder was. Nevertheless he became daily more full of malaise, and daily, only he knew it not, more ripe for an explosion should a spark fall upon him. (Butler 187)

The passage reveals that Ernest's internal turmoil and inability to confront his doubts is an embodiment of the societal anxieties of the era. What is depicted in the passage is a compulsive deference to an authority that is external to him. This observation reveals both the symptom and the cause of his psychological fragmentation. Not being able to distinguish between right and wrong and always relying on the people's perception of his actions reflects both an intellectual passivity and emotional naivety. As his self perception is distorted, what the passage shows us is an exemplary instance of an unsustainably repressed human being "ripe for an explosion".

Ernest's reaction once caught in the chamber of a prostitute, though being there to guide her to Christ, is "Fly, fly, fly-it was the only safety" (Butler 197). Looking at this panicked reaction from a Foucauldian lens, it is obvious that silence is considered the norm on the subject of sexuality; it is something that one must keep oneself away from. Moreover, it illustrates how Victorian sexual discourse operated through both prohibition and the production of a certain type of knowledge and ignorance. Looking at

Ernest's incidence from this lens, we come to the conclusion that he actually embodies this contradiction. Ernest is curious to know but once he is caught discussing it, especially outside the boundaries of marriage, becomes terrified. In the *History of Sexuality Volume I*, Foucault discusses how the subject of sexuality was hushed as it was only confined to the conjugal family during the Victorian era (9). Thus, Ernest becomes the perfect subject of this biopower as his desires are shaped, channeled, and eventually controlled.

This silence could be seen as a manifestation of biopower in the sense that sexuality is not perceived as naturally given but rather as constructed discourse by the institutions of power. Essentially, this repression, as suggested by Foucault, is meant to act as a roadblock to the unchallenged power dynamics. It is not about how sex is spoken about, it is more about who speaks of it, from what position, and through what institution and means (*History of Sexuality V.I* 10). This explains the clash between psychiatrists and the priests as every group aimed at exploring the discourse of sexuality and to sustain it and therefore remain relevant.

Having said that, it is clear that Ernest is not only sexually repressed, but his sexuality is also produced and shaped by the institutions surrounding him. Ernest, a product of his catholic upbringing, believes that the Bible has a clear codification of what one ought to do and not when it comes to sexuality. Pryer on the other hand tells him that "the priest must be absolutely sexless" and this is a "universally accepted" truth that "none shall venture to dispute" (Butler 177). Townsley, who is a reflection of the bourgeois class, is found by Ernest manifesting his sexuality openly and freely. These instances exemplifies how discourse concerning sexuality is constructed by different institutions and how Ernest, the sexually repressed, is subjected to these different views all at once.

Fascinated by sexual sin, his natural curiosity and his “will to knowledge” backfires at him spectacularly following his subsequent decision to visit Miss Maitland. “He knew well enough what he wanted now, and as for the Bible, he pushed it from him to the other end of his table. It fell over onto the floor, and he kicked it into a corner” (Butler 198). Eventually, Ernest finds himself incarcerated, for his actions have grievously tarnished Miss Maitland’s reputation due to his inability “to distinguish between a respectable girl and a prostitute” (Butler 296).

It is established that “all states punish in the name of an ideal” (McBride 5). Ernest fails to materialise the ideal of his time and become to be regarded as a disorderly individual who has fallen short of conforming to the codes of decency concerning sex. Seen as a defective element in society, Ernest is to be sent to prison for “six calendar months” (Butler 296). What makes this scene significant, in a Foucauldian sense, is the modality of punishment it depicts. Prison as an institution presents the new criminal legislation and it becomes to be considered a “house of correction” (Foucault, *Discipline* 215). This deprivation of liberty is essentially meant for a potential transformation. Since the spectacle is no longer relevant in Victorian England, the body of the condemned becomes less important as punishment is not inflicted corporally. This institutionalisation of the power to punish signifies that the primary objective of Ernest’s penal sentence is to achieve this preventive end through correction.

In sharp contrast to Hester’s punishment, which is executed directly upon the corporal, Ernest’s penalty is quantified in terms of the temporal extent during which his liberty is curtailed. The prison system operates with time as a crucial variable, a notion emphasised by Foucault, who posits that “there is only one variable in such a model [...] time. Prison is the system in which the variable of time replaces all the variables envisaged by the other models” (*Punitive* 70). In accordance with this paradigm, the

Judge endeavours to reposition the locus of punishment away from both Ernest's physical body. Instead, the focus is directed towards a different aspect, namely, the soul of the offender, which Foucault highlights as the underlying determinant of the criminal act. This substitution of objects of punishment, as it is no longer the criminal act that is the object of the penal justice, is precisely why Ernest is being punished. As articulated by Foucault, "The expiation that once rained down upon the body must be replaced by a punishment that acts in depth on the heart, the thoughts, the will, the inclinations.[...] Punishment, if I may so put it, should strike the soul rather than the body" (*Discipline* 16).

This idea of soul over body crystallises in the novel in a specific scene during Ernest's trial. To begin with, one major difference in Ernest's case is that it is trialled not on the scaffold but in the court of law. As it has been mentioned earlier, the change of the theater violence does not necessarily mean diminishing the theater of power. In this scene therefore, the Judge starts his verdict by addressing our protagonist and his case: "Ernest Pontifex, yours is one of the most painful cases that I have ever had to deal with" (Butler 202). Right from the start, his statement performs a ritual of its own as it is but an introduction of a litany, with an accusatory tone, that frames Ernest's crime not as a discrete act but a moral catastrophe. It is important to stress again that replacing the theatre results in replacing the violence. In Ernest's case, both the scaffold and its violence are replaced by the judge's psychological dissection.

Accordingly, and through a carefully constructed biography that is, according to the judge, one of uninterrupted privilege, our protagonist should have been immunized from any corruption. According to the judge, the fact that Ernest has "been singularly favoured in [his] parentage and education", "sent to one of the best public schools in England", and eventually "Cambridge" (Butler 202-203), shows that Ernest is

pathological and a flawed product of “blameless parents” (202). In light of this, we can safely assume that this verdict becomes a diagnosis of a pathology; one that needs a cure.

Through careful analysis of the verdict/diagnosis, it becomes evident that prison as an institution that has a sanitary value in the sense that it eliminates those who are considered as a threat to the societal body. In addition, by highlighting the “privileges” that Ernest has been enjoying since his birth, the Judge exposes how the truth about life is formulated. In other words, the institution of family, school, and church mentioned by the Judge represent the role played by them as fosterers of docility. This reflects the polymorphous techniques of power and the channels it takes to exhibit itself to the point where it seems spontaneous, but it is in fact orchestrated at a micro-level (*History of Sexuality V.I* 11). Since Ernest has been ‘fortunate’ enough to be only surrounded by a ‘healthy’ environment, his failing to conform is seen as a diagnosis of an underlying pathology. Accordingly, The Judge sentences Ernest to prison, an “apparatus of punitive justice [that] bites into this bodiless reality” (*Discipline* 17).

2.2. The Carceral Gaze: the Inversion of the Spectacle into Surveillance

It is clear by now that the repudiation of the public spectacle marked the transition in societal perception towards punishment. The retributive focus seen in the traditional modes of punishment was replaced by a more protective system; one that aims at protecting both the transgressor and the society. As a consequence, prisons have replaced the gallows in dealing with disorderly individuals. By means of this shift, a new field of knowledge invades the penal system. Put simply, we are referring to the transformation of punishment into a somewhat diagnostic practice: in order to cure, the one punishing should “take into account the profound nature of the criminal himself, the presumably degree of his wickedness, the instinct quality of his will” (Foucault, *Discipline* 98). Thus, this architectural shift symbolises the altered understanding of the

individual as a potential subject of reformation and rehabilitation instead of a culpable criminal who is deservant of torture (Hudson, *Justice Through Punishment* 11).

While the conventional historical narrative perceives the 18th century as a period of emancipation from the shackles of the old regime, Foucault has a different perspective. Offering a completely different one, he discerns the era as one that seemingly, and successfully, blurred the harsh lines between social control and social reform. Foucault suggests that the structures of control, “quadrillage”, were systematically established as a smooth continuation of the bodily violence once enacted on the scaffold (*Power/Knowledge* 56). Put simply, while the era is lauded as a progressive one, the refinement of punishment does not stem from altruistic motives because the change in its essence is an accommodation of the shift in governance, morality, and ideals. Foucault attests that this “ ‘Enlightenment’, which discovered the liberties, also invented the disciplines.” The aim therefore, is “not to punish less, but to punish better; to punish with an attenuated severity perhaps, but to punish with more universality and necessity; to insert the power to punish more deeply into the social body” (*Discipline* 82). It is exactly this shift that allows the Judge, as mentioned before, to judge because this new established mechanism’s aim is to judge, punish, to eventually remould the individuals into a more fitting subject. As this new technology of subjection does not concern itself with the body, it represents a more subtle and pervasive way for social control. This is achieved through signs and codes rather than relying on the overtly violent body marks (Foucault, *Discipline* 130).

In her book *Justice Through Punishment*, Hudson explores two images of the criminal. Based on the Platonic notion of the criminals, the first image depicts the “sick soul” that is in need of treatment. On the other hand, we find the “wicked soul” that is in need of punishment (2). The two images, when contrasted, reflect the two different

experiences that Hester and Ernest go through during their trials. The former is deemed “wicked” and deserving of punishment while the latter is perceived as a potential subject who could be saved and then remoulded into a law-abiding and productive individual through institutional intervention.

In the novel, this societal utility is achieved through proliferation of educational opportunities, medical services, and religious counselling. Since Ernest’s imprisonment is essentially a comprehensive evaluation of his characters, providing a “constructive” environment rather than a “destructive” one fosters the development of positive qualities and skills in the incarcerated individuals (Hudson, *Justice Through Punishment* 5). Aiming at having “double effect: a ‘soul’ to be known and a subjection to be maintained” (Foucault, *Discipline* 295), Coldbath Field Prison exemplifies this duality. Unlike Hester’s “brutalising restraints”, what Ernest experiences takes a distinct approach characterised by an application of a “systematic forms of control” (Smart 24) that become clear in his medicalised reception. Notably, Ernest is offered an opportunity to self-improvement both bodily and mentally. Butler explains how, when our protagonist’s health deteriorates upon his arrival to Coldbath Field Prison, the warder sends him for a doctor rather than assuming that Ernest is “shamming” like an “old gao-bird” (Butler 207). Recognising him as a clergyman, and therefore, as Hudson claims, “corrigible”, he is treated accordingly. Looking at this scene as such, one might detect how the carceral system employs mechanisms to assist not only with criminality of the inmate, but also with his well-being especially if he is known to be corrigible. Recognized by the warden to be a clergyman, Ernest is sent to be examined. This examination highlights how the carceral system adapts to individual differences while still recognizing each inmate’s unique situation. Recognised as not one “old gaol-bird” is a marker of how Ernest is

known as well as visible, which makes his medical examination a ceremony to further objectification to gain more knowledge about his character.

In the matter, Barry Smart explains that the fusion of the behaviour management with the deep understanding of the individual within the institution of the prison is considered a strategic step for the acquisition of knowledge (85). Essentially, jail becomes an “apparatus of knowledge” that works as a dividing engine. Accordingly, labels are assigned to the inmates by dividing them into groups. The basis of this division is based on their potentiality to rehabilitate; an inmate is either “corrigible” or “incorrigible”. In the matter Hudson explains:

There occurred a bifurcation of penal systems, with the incorrigible being dealt with by prolonged incarceration with no reformative or rehabilitative input - mere warehousing, keeping such people out of society for as long as possible - while the corrigible were dealt with more and more according to medical analogies. First of all they were to be diagnosed, then offered treatment, then released when they were deemed to be “cured”. (*Justice Through Punishment* 8-9)

This contrast between the two categories becomes apparent in the Coldbath Field Prison. In the novel, the incorrigible are referred to by the prison warden as the “old gaol-bird”. This category, once contrasted with Ernest who stands at the other end of the spectrum, “corrigible”, does not show any potential towards reformation. Consequently, those belonging to this category are usually subjected to an extended confinement without any efforts to rehabilitate them. That being said, exclusion from society is usually prioritised. Viewed as one who does not belong to “what is called the criminal classes” and recognised by the authorities as someone who is “eager to learn”, Ernest is therefore “treated kindly and almost respectfully” (Butler 221). Henceforth, Ernest, perceived as a

“corrigible” inmate, receives a different treatment that includes medical and educational assessment as he is offered three months’ apprenticeship in prison to become a tailor instead of the treadmill; another element that underscores the division. Butler writes that even the warden, upon Ernest’s release from prison, shows appreciation to how good he is with the craft saying that he is as good a tailor with his three months as many a man is with twelve (221). This comment shows the carceral logic of productivity and how reform is measured by utility.

It is important to not dismiss that when Ernest is sent to prison, his prison time included physical labour. Nonetheless, because of his illness, “he was saved from the treadmill, for which the doctor had said he was unfit as yet, but which he would probably have been put to in due course as soon as he was stronger” (Butler 223). The fact that the treadmill is mentioned as a potential punishment reveals the prison’s strategy of using physical exhaustion to discipline and control convicts. However, the staff deems Ernest’s body as unsuited, and this choice underscores the customization of one’s situation inside prison.

In addition, the specialised treatment is also reflected in his sentence. In the episode of the court, the Judge makes it clear to Ernest that “If I were to take a strict view of my duty, I should commit you for trial, but in consideration of this being your first offence, I shall deal leniently” (Butler 203). This statement showcases how the reformability of the transgressor directly dictates their judicial verdict, and consequently, the trajectory of their imprisonment.

Ernest’s rehabilitative journey however, is characterised by an unseen gaze that is firmly anchored on him. Oblivious to its constant surveillance, Ernest becomes a subject of knowledge to the governor, the doctor, and the warden. Through constantly surveilling, monitoring, examining, and questioning him, Ernest becomes a subject to a

disciplinary normalisation that is both subtle and insidiously invisible yet imposing a compulsory visibility on him (Foucault, *Discipline* 187). Foucault further explains that this disciplinary normalisation is why one should not understand punishment as just an architectural change, from spectacle to carceral. Rather, it is more about the way punishment is carried out and taught about. Contextualising this idea, Hesters is punished upon the scaffold, revealing her body to the public while Ernest is punished inside the prison and though he is behind closed doors, he is also the subject of constant surveillance. According to Foucault, what really defines punishment is the fixated gaze on the condemned because it defines the power imbalance in the two cases. Though the scaffold is long forgotten and the public is excluded from the equation, “the universal eye” still persists (*Punitive Society* 23). Moreover, what makes the eye in Ernest’s case more dehumanising than the one in Hester’s is the fact that it is in a sense invisible and insidious. Again, the idea of less severity and more leniency is put to question as those concepts are just hollow words.

That being said, the eye should be perceived as a modality of social control that helps in achieving reformation, and by extension a submissive body that is beneficial to the social body. During the six months spent in prison, Ernest’s body is seized and his spirit reformed by the help of the “technicians of behaviour: engineers of conduct, orthopaedists of individuality” whose role is to produce a docile and a capable body out of Ernest. Consequently, Ernest is ready to be integrated once again in society as an acceptable, and most importantly, productive member. Essentially this result is due to the “body of knowledge [that] was being constantly built up from everyday behaviour; it was organised as an instrument of perpetual assessment” (Foucault, *Discipline* 294).

3. The Carceral Archipelago and the Disciplinary Conception of Punishment in Roth's *Indignation*

Typically understood as a consequence for a wrongful act, punishment has been established to serve a sanitary objective. In essence, it is performed to address disorderly elements to maintain social order. On the surface, this conventional view on punishment does not fully apply to the case of Marcus Messner, the protagonist of Roth's *Indignation*, as he is depicted as a brilliant student with a long history of academic success. Furthermore, the fact that Marcus, who has been studying hard for years for one purpose, as he declares early in the novel “—I was determined to become valedictorian—” (Roth 34), is eventually seen by the authority of the Winesburg College as a menace deserving of expulsion suggests that being seemingly, and individually, “good” does not guarantee a deliverance from punishment.

It is clear that Marcus's punishment deviates completely from the literal infliction of pain (corporal punishment) or deprivation of liberty (prison) as we see with the other two characters. His punishment nonetheless still belongs to what Carlos. S. Nino considers as “the large family of measures involving intentional deprivation of a person's normally recognized right by official institutions” (289). This assertion, once again, underscores the non-static definition of what is considered a threat to society. Most importantly, it suggests a novel alternative modal to punishment, and ipso facto to power, that is contingent upon the societal anxieties of the protagonist's setting.

When analysing the case of Ernest, it has been highlighted that the protagonist's punishment inside prison aims mainly at remoulding his soul in order to be reintegrated once more as a productive citizen in society. Unlike Hester whose punishment is anchored on her body by an obvious and repressive force that focuses mainly on exiling her from society, Ernest's experience is highlighted by a decorporalized punishment as

the reform puts so much emphasis on a punishment that is spiritualized. Highlighting a new regime of thought, the spiritualized punishment evident in Ernest's case is a reflection of a disciplinary power that is perfected not by a central figure, from the top down, but rather by doctors, wardens, and priests within the walls of Coldbath Field Prison. Accordingly, and unlike Hester's, this power is not one that only "excludes", "represses", and "censors" but one that also "produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth" (Foucault, *Language, Memory, and Practise* 194).

Prison, therefore, becomes an institution of both correction and inspection as it relies heavily on a model that observes, examines, and individualises bodies for a better assessment. As prison aims at achieving more personalised punitive measures, the incorporation of disciplines from other fields of human sciences becomes indispensable. This explains the existence of the doctor and the priest within the walls of the prison, suggesting that punishment is still taking place but with the aim of attaining a cure through surveillance to eventually correct unwanted behaviours.

Foucault suggests that since this disciplinary power is "capillary", it extends beyond the spatial boundaries of the carceral institutions to non-custodial institutions. This carceral continuum is evident in the context of Roth's novel as it is represented in the educational institution of Winesburg. Depicted as a fully panopticised environment, Winesburg College and Campus operate at a microlevel that enables the authorities to touch the students' lives. This "politics of everyday life", as Foucault calls it, is achieved through a new kind of visibility that exploits the students as they are seen but not vice versa.

Envisioned by Bentham's eighteenth century architectural dream, visibility in the "carceral society" of the Winesburg College is not achieved through a watch tower as the latter morphs into a less tangible form. In fact, the modern panopticon relies not on the

visible architecture, it instead exerts power through subtle mechanisms. Insidiously and uninterrupted, power is present in every minute of the one being watched as it works without the need for an overt disciplinary measure. Foucault attests that such power is elegant in the sense that it does not need whips and chains to control people. Still, the effects of utility are “at least as great” and less costly and violent (*History of Sexuality* V.I 137). Unlike the spectacle in Hester’s case, the all-seeing eyes in Marcus’s case are not visible to him. Nonetheless, once he is aware of it this external look becomes a modality of power, projected by himself on himself. Simply put, he, as well as the other students, internalise the control by policing themselves and engage in a self-regulatory mechanism that eventually produces docile bodies. Consequently, this gaze creates a system where both those in power position to those without equally responsible for shaping reality. Eventually, this reality becomes the norm as it is reproduced through one’s actions and beliefs.

Since the prison system extends its influence beyond the confines of physical space, the juridical punishment evident in Ernest’s case becomes more disciplinary in Marcus’s in the sense that is more concerned with “infra-penalties” with the power to judge vested to “extra-juridical” entities, the Dean. As a consequence, Winesburg College’s students are “subject to a whole micro-penalty of time (latenesses, absences, interruptions of tasks), of activity (inattention, negligence, lack of zeal), of behaviour (impoliteness, disobedience), of speech (idle chatter, insolence), of the body (‘incorrect’ attitudes, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness)” (Foucault, *Discipline* 178). As power to control is not held by one entity but rather dispersed throughout institutions, this “political anatomy” of the body, according to Foucault, works basically through normalisation, its establishment of routines, and its employment of space (*Discipline* 233).

3.1. “There Were Twelve Fraternities on the Campus”: The Spatio-Temporal Control at Winesburg College

Marcus’s case outlines a new technology of subjection that exemplifies how bodies are invested by a power that works beyond the physical existence, yet still reaches the deepest point of the subject and defines who they are. According to Foucault, schools use a process of “normalisation” to easily manage students and eventually mould them into docile entities. Essentially, normalisation works by creating norms and expectations that the students are obliged to adhere to to the point of internalising them. In explaining the process of normalisation, Judith Butler highlights that the process should not be understood as only a sort of subordination where individuals are subjected to a set of norms. Rather, and most importantly, it is the process of constituting individuals as subjects through precisely such subordination (*Psychic* 66).

As will be demonstrated in the following pages, Winseburg’s students are depicted as individuals who are both produced by and productive of their college’s traditions. These traditions, put simply, are not only imposed, they are internalised by the students and play a role in shaping their sense of self. According to Foucault, in order to “carve out” these students, an “art of distribution” must be put in place: a distribution that focuses on organising individuals both spatially and temporally.

Upon Marcus’s arrival to his dormitory room in Jenkins Hall, he finds himself sharing it with three other students. To his surprise, Marcus finds that his roommates adhere to the Jewish faith. Suspicious of this circumstance, Marcus narrates, “the arrangement struck me as odd, [...] because part of the adventure of going away to college in far-off Ohio was the chance it offered to live among non-Jews” (Roth 18). This quote is significant because it summarises how Marcus is depicted in the novel as one who wants to strip himself from his inherited Jewishness. Living most of his life under the

dome of the Jewish faith, he considers religions as a source of misfortune. Driven by his ardent atheism, Marcus seeks to live according to his authentic self, away from anything related to established religions. However, his expectations of a commodious life with students from different backgrounds and cultures, in a supposedly non-sectarian college, are eventually crushed under Winesburg's policy of religiously segregating its students.

As a disciplinary institution, Winesburg's regulatory strategies are evident in the way students are expected to adhere to a rather mundane partition policy. Cultivating a sense of conformity, Marcus realises later that his placement in a Jewish surrounding is not at all random. In fact, Dean Caudwell reveals to him that partitioning students based on their religion is a policy followed by the college to better "assist" its students. It can be argued that this homogenization is intended to manage students while perceiving them, Marcus included, as qualifiable units. More specifically, as bodies that must be confined to specific predetermined spaces. This reveals why the strategic deployment of bodies is not exclusively used in dorms, but also extends to other areas within the college campus.

Marcus's first days on the college campus reveal to him the way in which students' social life is managed and controlled. Significantly, he becomes aware that the spatial positioning that the students are subjected to within Winesburg extends beyond dormitory rooms as it becomes more apparent in the way the students are divided within the campus as a whole. Indeed, it becomes clear to Marcus that all aspects of life within campus are one way or another controlled by this system of spatialization that no other student seems to be bothered by except himself.

In revealing the insular system that dominates the social life within Winesburg, Marcus observes that "[t]he social life of the college of some twelve hundred students was conducted largely behind the fraternities' massive black studded doors" (Roth 21).

Looking at Roth's choice of words, we can see how these doors evoke some kind of impenetrable barriers to integration both literally and symbolically. Further emphasising a system of partition, Marcus highlights that these fraternities are grouped based on the religion and the ethnicity of their members. Marcus highlighting that they "were conducted" reveals how the actors are somehow masked behind the systematic segregation. With the students segregated, each into their own exclusive and closed-off circle both in dorms and on campus, the spatial separation becomes the norm to be followed in Winesburg. This norm, it must be highlighted, is not only physical but also psychological.

Furthermore, the subtle and pervasive way in which this system of enclosing students in space is further revealed through these fraternities and the ways they function within the social framework of the college. Illustrating the normative lifestyle, Marcus explains that out of twelve existing fraternities, there are only two that are accessible to Jews while "the remaining ten were reserved for white Christian males, an arrangement that no one could have imagined challenging on a campus that so prided itself on tradition" (Roth 20). This point cannot be overstated as Marcus's hyperbolic language here does not only expose the use of tradition as a means to control, but also pinpoint how what is considered normal is but a constructed and manufactured consensus.

As evident in the aforesaid, such categorization/division/segregation reflects Winesburg's Christian, historical, and cultural legacy. Ironically, the tradition celebrated at Winesburg becomes a means to exclude. While the college seems to offer religious diversity, as it gives a chance for representation, this attempt is perceived by Marcus as superficial. These fraternities, regardless of the fact that two fraternities admit Jews, further reinforces Christian dominance. As the protagonist highlights, the limited option offered to non-Christian serves as an undeniable evidence of an entrenched inequality

within campus. Undoubtedly, non-Christians are put in a peripheral status where their difference is appropriated and utilised to maintain the central status quo. Accordingly, fraternities become a spatial dimension where students are, on the one hand, separated from one another, and on the other hand, classed and ranked (Christian/non-Christian), which in turn maintains Christian exclusivity.

The central argument here is, the fact that students are being systematically categorised and assigned, each one to his own specific faith, ethnicity, and space, the system of fraternities act as a microcosm of the broader social dynamic of the college. As a matter of fact, this spatial demarcation reveals how Winesburg becomes a fertile soil to a system of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of the students. Leading us to the conclusion that fraternities demonstrate how, once there is a differentiation from one another, a hierarchy is put in place: one that eventually makes Christianity the central discourse while simultaneously pushing the *other* religions to the margins. What needs our attention is the important point that this hierarchy is not maintained by a one-way force. In fact, this structure in itself is reinforced by the students themselves. Regardless of their peripheral position, Marcus's Jewish peers for instance, have a hand in gatekeeping the system that subjugates them. An idea that shall be detailed in the last chapter of this thesis.

Moreover, Winesburg's organisation of the students is not only exclusive to the spatial sphere as it goes beyond into creating a temporal routine that must be followed throughout the academic year. As mentioned before, though Winesburg is a nonsectarian college, students are strictly required to "attend chapel, between eleven and noon on Wednesdays, forty times before he or she graduates" (Roth 79). This compulsory structuring of time is a vivid example of what Foucault refers to as "the control of activity". This Foucauldian understanding reveals how Winesburg's distribution of

students becomes more than just a pedagogical requirement as this regimented schedule further demonstrates how a particular normative framework is being enforced.

On a fundamental level, mandating the chapel attendance at a specific time (from eleven to noon), on a specific day of the week (Wednesdays) could be seen as a way of temporally controlling the students' movement. Evidently, both the strict timing and the obligatory attendance, as not attending would result in one's failure to earn her/his degree, shows Winesburg's rigid system of holding its students "in its grip from day to day" (*Discipline* 121). This control over time according to Foucault works to establish "rhythms" and impose "occupations" (149). Dean Caudwell highlights that chapel attendance is a "long-standing Winesburg tradition" (Roth 100), hinting at a cycle that has not been broken by anyone for long. This structure establishes a punctuated rhythm, a pre-set regulated program that the students are expected to adapt to. It is noteworthy that this punctuated rhythm becomes a constraint as the movements of the masses are basically prescribed a specific direction (how to act) as well as a precise duration (when an action is supposed to be accomplished). Accordingly, just like the organisation of space, the authorities at Winesburg work at the level of the body while focusing on its minute movements to achieve an "anatomo-chronological schema of behaviour" (Foucault, *Discipline* 152).

Consequently, it is safe that Marcus is looked at as a "body" in space, one that must be distributed both in place and in time. As such, Marcus's body is localised and immobilised. Ostensibly, once Marcus is assigned a dormitory room or a fraternity, he is consequently put under a label, making it easy for the authorities to answer the question of what individuates this individual from the other ones within campus. Ultimately, the division allows better management of the students. Same applies to the chapel attendance, as soon as a specific time is set for a compulsory requirement, a routine is set in place.

Consequently, the students' movements in space are dictated and easily managed. This precise distribution of bodies in both space and time engenders a detailed knowledge of "presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual" (Foucault, *Discipline* 143).

The aforementioned, according to Jonathan Simon, reflects a focus on the distribution of the individual movement within a limited population through both space and time. He writes, "This distribution is around a norm, and power operates to close the gap, narrowing the deviation, and moving subjects towards uniformity (workers are to be made more efficient and reliable, prisoners more docile, schoolchildren more attentive and respectful)" (773). This suggestion is quite visibly actual in Marcus's case. When Marcus decides to change his room and have as roommate Elwyn Ayers Jr, who is non-Jewish, or when he declares his rejection of the chapel, his decisions and desires are seen by the authorities as an "unstable and dangerous coagulation" (Foucault, *Discipline* 14). Since Marcus is defined by his spatial existence, then to know his space is to have control over it, which thus explains the interpretation by Dean Caudwell of Marcus's acts as being "something to be attended to promptly and nipped in the bud" (Roth 107).

3.2. Marcus Under Scrutiny: Visibility and the Regulation of Conduct

The Winesburgian system, as it has been illustrated, relies mainly on a meticulously organised system that could be described as a "political anatomy of details" where each "individual has his own place; and each place its individual" (Foucault, *Discipline* 139). In essence, this system of designated places is considered an ideal norm that enables the college authorities to effectively manage its institutional population and meticulously "measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another" (184). Hence, the distribution of

students within space exemplifies a system of efficiency as it ensures a regulated movement in relation to what is to be expected of the students. Substantially, such a system allows a discourse of order to be normalised and constantly reproduced by the subjects themselves. To achieve such a goal, Winesburg relies heavily on a “diagram of power that acts by means of general visibility” (*Discipline* 171).

Henceforth, Winesburg’s system exemplifies the working dynamics of disciplinary power explained by Foucault, and how it primarily operates not through the grand spectacle of power but rather works at an atomic level by managing the students’ everyday lives. In addition, the system showcases the potentialities of this power to touch and exploit every aspect of the students’ being as it schedules and manages their social affiliations. Such mechanisms of control, and despite their banality, are more dominant because they subjugate both the students’ bodies and behaviour to a relentless, uninterrupted surveillance.

Highlighting the pervasive influence of such a power, Foucault posits in *Discipline and Punish* that generally, in a disciplinary regime, the power to command becomes “more anonymous and more functional” on those on the receiving end. Paradoxically, this anonymity operates through a system of hyper individualization. That is to say, instead of the physical and visual of the sovereign’s power, the latter becomes more diffused and bureaucratized. What is striking according to Foucault is that the subjects of such a power become intensely scrutinized as they are seen and cannot see. He goes further to add that this surveillance becomes the force that categorises the individual according to their adherence/non-adherence to the manufactured norms (192).

This suggestion from Foucault is best contextualised to one of the pivotal moments in the novel; the meeting between the Dean of Men and the protagonist. When Marcus receives Caudwell’s written communication, the former initially believes that the

requested meeting is just a formality that he has to go through because of, as the letter suggests, his “many changes of residency” (Roth 78). Nevertheless, Marcus soon realises he is effectively seen as a deviant from the expected order.

Fundamentally, what is expected from Marcus is a conformity to a specific group and an adherence to a specific rhythm of life; the one set by college, known, and internalized by its students. As Winesburg operates through a system of “located bodies, coded activities, and trained aptitudes” (Foucault, *Discipline* 167), being called to Dean Caudwell’s office suggests that Marcus has triggered the order of things, branding him as an anomaly. For the Dean, since both the dorms and the campus are partitioned in a way that best suits every individual, Marcus should readily adapt to his assigned space. Following this logic, the multiple relocations represent a lack of adaptability. According to the college institutional terms, Marcus’s actions represent something abnormal and irregular that warrants immediate investigation from the Dean.

While Marcus is perplexed at first to “Why should [he] ha[s] to go through this interrogation simply because [he]’d moved from one dormitory room to another?” (Roth 90), Caudwell offers him an answer that could be summarised by what Foucault called “the correlation of the body and the gesture”. That is, the Dean considers Winesburg’s system of partition as one that is meant for enforcing specific outlines to follow. In order to maintain this orderly system, cultivating an optimised relationship between who the students are and what they do (body and its movements) becomes vital. Taking that as a yardstick, it is thus expected from Marcus to adapt to the outlined distribution, irrespective of what he personally wants. According to the Dean’s perspective, Marcus’s attempt to control over his own space reflects an “[in]correct use of the body” within Winesburg’s outlined spaces (*Discipline* 153).

According to the Dean, a well-disciplined student is not only about “a stellar record of academic achievement” as he tells Marcus, “I know your grades. [...] it doesn’t look to me like you get along just fine. At least you don’t appear to get along just fine with the people you room with” (Roth 84-94). In this quote, Dean wants to show Marcus that a useful body is not enough, one must be a “subjected body”, one that is in alignment with the broader expected norms of the college. This attitude is evident throughout the meeting as he is consistent in drawing the line between what is normal and permissible from what is abnormal and impermissible. While talking to Marcus, the Dean puts so much emphasis on what is considered normative behaviour by judging what he considers abnormal with Marcus’s actions. According to him, Marcus has engaged in unprecedented actions, making the latter an exception. Being an exception for the Dean is indicative of a social illness as his statement places Marcus within the framework of what Foucault terms as “the pathologized subject”; one that needs to be “control[ed], monitor[ed, and] optimise[d]” (Foucault, *History of Sexuality V.I* 136).

In contesting the unusual nature of Marcus’s choice, the Dean posits, “Look where you’ve wound up—in the least desirable room on this entire campus. A room where no one has chosen to live or has had to live for many years now. Frankly, I don’t like the idea of you up there alone” (Roth 94). One crucial aspect to note in this statement is that Marcus is being judged based on a norm; he is looked at in terms of comparison and in reference to a followed rule. Strangely though, the way he is being judged is ostensibly benevolent. The “I don’t like the idea of you up there alone” statement is intended to frame the meeting under the guise of care and guidance. However, what is cloaked under it is a subtle disciplinary intent that is meant to push Marcus towards self-regulation and to internalise the norms. In more Foucauldian terms, he must be conducted back into alignment.

What is interesting about this scene is that Foucault's formulation of conduct exposes the Dean's double move. According to Foucault in *Security, Territory, Population*, conduct is literally defined as the activity of conducting (*conduire*); that is to say, to direct, to control and to guide the conduction (*la conduction*) (193). Applied to the scene, we can argue that room assignments based on ethnicity and the rules of the fraternities function as "conduction". By this logic, when the Dean calls Marcus to his office, highlights the proper behavior in campus, and his attempt to realign him with the norms, he is essentially conducting Marcus. This latter, on the other hand, thinks that changing rooms several times to find peace is "the way in which one conducts oneself (*se conduit*)" (193). To exercise autonomy, based on the Dean's definition of conduct is a failure to self conduct. Accordingly, the Dean expects Marcus to let himself voluntarily, or under coercion, "be conducted (*se laisse conduire*)" (193). He is thus perceived as a potential malleable object whose movement, postures, and personality must be controlled, to eventually mould him into a state of docility by conducting his conduct; the verb conduct here in the meaning of control, manage, and direct, the noun means behaviour.

Evidently, the Dean prioritises order and efficiency as he reiterates in his letter: "I wanted you to come in so we could meet and find out if I can be of any help to you in adjusting to Winesburg" (Roth 83). Like the dismissing of Marcus's straight A's, this quote once more illustrates Dean's adamant position in showing Marcus that his rejection of the prevailing homogeneity within the institution is seen as a recalcitrance that undermines the college's institutional norms. Residing in the least desirable room is perceived by the Dean as occupying an unseen and thus uncontrolled space. Since spatial positioning of the body makes it possible for the Dean to acquire knowledge about that body, Marcus is obliged to be receptive and accept the norms concerning space as the

whole space separation procedure is to make it possible for him to assess and control. Consequently, the meeting could be thus perceived as the Dean's endeavour to bridge the pathological "gap" between Marcus's nonconformity and the accepted normative behaviour within the college.

During the meeting, another significant factor emerges exposing the insidious working of the disciplinary power. Despite the lack of any prior encounter, Marcus is intrigued when he discovers that the Dean remarkably possesses a detailed knowledge of Marcus's life. From his academic achievements, through his religious background, to the unmentioned specifics of the profession of his father. Caudwell's, and the institution's, unobtrusive surveillance reflect the omnipresent power that Foucault discusses in *Discipline and Punish*: one that "is exercised spontaneously and without noise" (204). Take Marcus's religious background for instance, Marcus is confused as the Dean mentions information that the former has not explicitly provided in the college's registration form. The Dean adding the "kosher" label as a more accurate information than that of just a "butcher" reveals a disclosure of prior knowledge and not a mere assumption as the Dean claims.

The Dean's mentioning of the "kosher" label explains why Marcus was assigned Jewish roommates in the first place. Marcus realises that the Dean not only assigns him roommates based on a perceived religious background, but he seems to have known about his father's true profession beforehand. This highlights a crucial aspect of Winesburg's system: individual visibility precedes group categorization. In fact, the partition is predicated on this individualising visibility. As seen in the literature above, once Marcus's identity is perceived, he is accurately marked by the Dean regardless of Marcus's objection. Crucially, Marcus's body becomes to be involved in a political field of power as this exact categorization and the imposition of it on Marcus reflects the

college's need to divide masses in order to rule individuals through "a single gaze [that can] see everything, constantly" (Foucault, *Discipline* 173).

That being said, it is safe to say that once Marcus's life is laid bare to the Dean, this subsequently allows the latter the ability to exert alterations and control over the former's self-representation, assuring a constant subjection without being overtly visible. The assertion of the "kosher" label on Marcus could also be interpreted as an invasion of Marcus's personal space by an institutionalised gaze that is both unseen and furtive. In fact, as the meeting proceeds, Marcus realises that this gaze and its extensive sight has crept deep into his most private matters to the point of appropriating his space, life, as well as decisions. As a consequence, Marcus's own transparency fuels the meeting and makes the circulation of power possible as those who gaze have both access to and power over the body and gestures of those who are gazed at and not vice versa.

Thus, this asymmetrical character of the gaze gives Dean Caudwell leverage in the sense that he has a hold on details concerning the location of bodies, their movements, their habits, and desires. In the case of Marcus, his visibility is essentially accomplished through the "legal pad" that the Dean holds in his hands. Marcus mentions that whenever the Dean asks a question, he refers to "the legal pad in front of him—which had my name written in his script across the top—" (Roth 86). Essentially, the pad is a detailed transcript that documents the trajectory of Marcus's personal life and effectively encodes his behaviour during his academic journey, making his body a text on which to inscribe a discourse. "It says here your father is a kosher butcher", "It says here you played for your freshman baseball team" are statements that show how that transcript serves, as Schmelzer argues, as a means of "meticulous control" as it ensures "perfect visibility" of Marcus, which eventually grant the college to control the "network of power relations" and thus sustain the regime of truth through surveillance (in Sheridan 2).

With this considered, the meeting exemplifies both the insidiousness and the pervasiveness of the disciplinary power where Marcus's life is not only pruned and actively being constructed as "a body of knowledge that is accumulated and centralised" (Foucault, *Discipline* 208). Essentially, the constant observing and record-keeping allows the Dean to exercise an elevated degree of control over Marcus. Nonetheless, this wielded power is not steeped, as Žižek suggests in *The Structure of Domination*, from the acquisition of the knowledge itself (402). In fact, it is not solely the possession of knowledge that makes one powerful, it is rather the production of knowledge and the state of legitimacy that engenders. Put simply, the interrogation becomes a ritual, "a ceremony of [Marcus] objectification" (Foucault, *Discipline* 187) in the sense that whenever he is answering the Dean's questions, he simultaneously affirms the laws within Winsburg. to understand more, Foucault posits in the matter:

When the judge [Caudwell] demands the accused [Marcus] to admit his guilt, to acknowledge his crime, to humiliate himself, we get the feeling that the judge wants to crush the accused. But it is the opposite. The judge is asking an enormous favour. He is asking the accused to say: "Yes your honour, it is not you who judges, it is society as a whole, and since I'm part of society, I demand to be punished. It is I who seek my own punishment, and therefore absolve you. (Foucault: *Beyond Good and Evil*)

Dean Caudwell's questions such as "You're socialising enough?", "What's the problem with your accommodations, Marcus?", "You had to move out? There was no other choice?", and "Are you often unable to reach a compromise with people whom you don't see eye to eye with?" (Roth 88-89) exemplifies a complex negotiation between one who is judging and another who is being judged. While Marcus thinks that those questions are

an attempt to humiliate him as he becomes emotionally distressed during the meeting. Caudwell on the other hand aims to push Marcus to confess that what he has done is unacceptable, which is simultaneously a reinforcement of the societal norms and laws of accepted behaviour. In other words, Marcus's disorder becomes productive in the sense that it provokes discursive justification for this meeting as necessary and not by any means a breach of privacy. Once that is achieved, Marcus accepts his position as subject, "an element that may be placed, moved, [and] articulated" (Foucault, *Discipline* 166) and legitimises the authority that does so.

Winesburg's panoptic gaze transforms Marcus from a disorderly element into a cog in its disciplinary machine. As he becomes aware of the ever-watchful eye, Marcus starts to internalise the Dean's surveillance as he eventually becomes his own warden. Throughout the meeting, Marcus persists on challenging the Dean as he complains that "nothing that I've done have I impinged on anyone's rights. If anyone's rights are being impinged on, they are mine" (Roth 99-100). However, knowing what information the pad contains, he starts calculating every answer he gives to the Dean as he feels he is exposed. This is particularly evident in the way Marcus starts answering the Dean's question after realising that the latter has the knowledge. When asked if he is socialising enough, Marcus answers 'Yes, sir' and then adds, "I waited for him to ask me to list those I had met so far, expecting he would then record their names on the legal pad" (Roth 90). This quote illustrates how Marcus is intimidated by this knowledge as well as the imbalance between the two.

In such regard, it becomes obvious that Marcus is self-conscious, afraid, uncertain of his answers, and most importantly fractured between his authentic self and Dean is imposing on him. "'Why wouldn't it be accurate, sir?' Shut up, I told myself. Shut up, and from here on out, stop marching on! Only I couldn't" (Roth 97). Evidently, Marcus

does not want to be expelled; however, Marcus is being the subject of two actors: the pad and the Dean. That being said, the “legal pad” transforms from a mere object into a weapon wielded by the Dean, at times, an active actor that can operate almost independently from social actors. The knowledge it provides, of being seen, leads Marcus, though to not fully submit, but at least regret challenging the Dean in the first place. Eventually, as the novel nears its conclusion, Marcus marches on willingly to the Dean’s office to confess what will become his reason for expulsion, making him “the bearer of his own subjection” (Gaonkar et al 564).

Conclusion

When we look at what has been said so far, the punitive methods that are highlighted in Hester Prynne’s, Ernest Pontifex’s, and Marcus Messner’s trials exemplify a genealogical metamorphosis of the power. Through an exploration of corporal and non-corporal punishment, this chapter has catalogued the transition from the brutal and theatrical vengeance of the sovereign to the subtle and the insidiously panoptic discipline of modern institutions. Each novel captures in its own fashion a distinct episode of this historical evolution. *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Way of All Flesh*, and *Indignation* illustrate the contingencies upon which the act of punishment is rested and how despite the shifting of social anxieties, its fundamental function remains unchanged: to produce docile bodies.

Starting from the public ritual found in Hawthorne’s novel, we have come to the conclusion that Hester’s shaming is not solely set to chastise her but re-affirm the moral order within the colony. The pillory, the emblem of shame, and finally the infant herself function in the novel as instruments of power that eventually morph Hester’s physicality into both a warning and a site of communal catharsis. Another important point highlighted in the chapter is the fact that the suffering Hester endures should not only be framed as retributive as it is also generative in the sense that it reinforces the boundaries on the one hand and satisfies the collective urge for moral purification. As the gaze is

one fundamental element in the spectacle, the rigid and the unrelenting eyes of the inhabitants transforms Hawthorne's noted culprit into an "abject"; an embodiment of the colonists' repressed desires and anxieties, a figure that both repels and fascinates.

The Way of All Flesh on the other hand, illustrates a completely different setting that is highlighted by the absence of the spectacle. Replaced by a more "gentle way of punishment", Ernest is dealt with according to the Victorian way; soul-reforming discipline. Contrary to Hawthorne's protagonist, Butler's becomes the subject of a privatised and diagnostic form of justice. As prison becomes the main modality to punish, Ernest has not faced the same visible brutality as Hester. Instead, Ernest is meticulously observed, assessed to be eventually corrected. Essentially, the system does not focus on the body as much as it focuses on the soul. According to Foucault's reasoning, it is the habits, the inclinations, and the psyche that come to occupy this institutional intervention because the aim of prison is not mainly exile and destroy the culprit, the goal is to render Ernest, once again, docile.

Nonetheless, and in our final corpus studied, *Indignation* by Philip Roth illustrates a more insidious and unobtrusive form of disciplinary power. What we have illustrated is a continuum of the spectacle. The institution of Winesburg is shown in the last title of this chapter as concrete evidence of Foucault's argument of how power operates through an overtly coercive system that is legitimized by normalization. The scene at the Dean's office exposes the omnipresence of administrative control. Macus, despite not seeing the power that coerces him, realises that he is perpetually visible to that power.

Despite the distinct approaches to punishment in each novel, what unites the three protagonists is the persistent role of the body. Whether the body is marked, imprisoned, or scrutinized, the three narratives show that "it is always the body that is at issue — the body and its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission" (Foucault, *Discipline* 25). Moreover, this chapter has shown that punishment is not only reactive but rather productive as the prolongation of the spectacle is based on the axiom

of “give your body and I will give you a meaning, I will make you a name and a word in my discourse” (Certeau 139).

To conclude, our trajectory, from the spectacle through the carceral to the bureaucratic apparatus, has detailed how, despite the repudiation of the archaic public arena, the modern disciplinary power is but a logical extension of one that controls, manages, and governs the body and make it “a concrete space of perception” (Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic* 9). Hence, the provided comparison of the three novels provides an opportunity for critical reflection on how power dynamics reflect the intricate negotiation between societal demands and the pursuit of political order within the respective regimes.

Chapter Two:

“There Was Some Old Way of Life that Everyone Was Protecting”: Earthly Divinity and the Relocation of Divine Right

All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularised theological concepts not only because of their historical development—in which they were transferred from theology to the theory of the state, whereby, for example, the omnipotent God became the omnipotent lawgiver—but also because of their systemic structure, the recognition of which is necessary for a sociological consideration of these concepts.

____ *Carl Schmitt, Political Theology*

Introduction

It has been detailed by far that one of the compelling views on punishment that highlights its complexities as a social institution is its recognition as an “infliction of pain” (McBride 10). Here, this pain could be inflicted both physically and cerebrally. Moreover, the trials of the three protagonists, as it has been analyzed in the previous chapter, reveals that punishment is but a sacralized ritual of sovereignty. With that being said, McBride argues that in order for punishment to be stripped from its negative connotation, it must be accompanied by a strong justification and a well-established rationale in order for it to be perceived as legitimate. According to the author of *Punishment and Political Order*, if this said rationale is not comprehensive enough in conveying ideas of justice and fairness, “punishment becomes simply the exercise of brutality by one person over another with less power” (McBride 10). However, what

makes this endeavour more complicated is the fact that the concepts of pain and justice are located at the two opposite ends of the moral axis. Thus, this inherent incompatibility, fused with lack of legitimacy, makes punishment prone to be perceived as more of a weapon to oppression rather than just a means of achieving justice and maintaining order.

Legitimization as a concept is defined by Canton as the process of giving a justification for an act by illustrating that the said act is morally necessary, permissible, or at least preferable than other alternatives (57). Putting this in the context of punishment, the legitimization of the act is founded on the premise of a justified response to a prior transgression that is said to be a threat to the well-established order of the group. Accordingly, punishment becomes to be perceived as a counter act that aims at restoring the disturbed order. This restoration, as it has been explored in the first chapter, might invoke arguments based on retributive, deterrent, rehabilitative, or disciplinary measures.

By now, it is obvious that much of punishment is linked to it being the nullifier of crime and the maintainer of order. However, a foundational assumption in the debate discussed in the first chapter is the argument that the act of punishment transcends this mere immediate, reactive, purpose. It has been highlighted that it is also sovereignty's liturgy. Essentially, as Hegel posits, punishment also becomes the embodiment of the authority as well as the the reinforcer of its legitimacy (178). Put in simpler words, punishment should not exclusively be framed as a reaction to a prior breach of law because Hester's scaffold, Ernest's prison, and Dean's office are but alters where power is essentially ritualised to eventually reaffirm its (power) divinity. Given that "punishment is where sovereignty becomes most evident "(McBride 61), it also mirrors the specificity of the authority that punishes, its adaptability as well as its capacity to enforce the exact law that has been breached while maintaining its own legitimacy and masks its own violence.

This opinion could be actually perceived in the acts of punishment of the protagonists of the three novels, Hester, Ernest, and Marcus. Evidently, the depicted scenes around those punishments reveal that the act is not merely about reacting to the supposedly protagonists' individual misdemeanour for the purpose of maintaining an orderly system. Rather, despite the importance of the aforementioned aim, punishment, as an operative within a strategic field of power, is also about demonstrating the enduring relevance of the authority *to punish* and by extent, those who inflict it. The prescient example of this is apparent in the fact that, although punishment varies from one novel to another, the act is still executed in the name of an authority nonetheless. In addition, every authority, as it will be shown here, claims either divine or quasi-divine legitimacy. Therefore, what links the first novel to the last is simply the fact that the act of punishment is increasingly incorporated into a continuum of apparatuses that regulate life and by extension, the persistence of its liturgical function.

In reference to the works, the varied portrayal of punishment across the three novels provides an insight into how the definition of the 'criminal' act, and by extension the act of punishment itself, mirrors the silhouette of the authority that executes it. Besides, since authority is but a reflection of its society, punishment credits its execution to the cultural context it constructs its meaning from. Accordingly, the authorities in the three settings choose who deserves to be punished, how they must be punished, and when they should be punished.

In the previous chapter, the analysis has focused mainly on the examination of the metamorphosis of punishment, with a focus on its panoptic fixation on the body, across the different settings of the three selected works. Drawing on Michel Foucault's understanding of biopower, we have highlighted different mechanisms of punishment and the different technologies of power. More specifically, how the dramatic and the

exhibition of justice has morphed into a more positive modality that focuses more on preserving life by making it productive rather than repressing it. All of this is achieved while still having the body pinned under a unidirectional gaze. Through regulations, normalisation, and the conduct of the individuals' conduct, we have seen how punishment has cloaked itself under the humane shield while simultaneously continuing to perpetuate bodies.

Having discussed the previous points in the first chapter, this complementary chapter is intended mainly to focus on three major points upon which inquiry is so greatly needed for a better understanding of what has been said in the first chapter. Firstly, it will examine the different social receptions/meanings of transgressions in the texts under examination. Philip Smith, in his book *Punishment and Culture*, attests that the different attributed meanings to punishment is a crucial factor in shaping the societal attitude towards it. In other words, alongside its practical aspect, understanding its cultural significance and the way it is understood within a particular society can significantly help us understand its actualized legitimacy while having the same "geometry [that] is defined by the sacred and evil, the pure and polluted" (1).

This analytical gaze ultimately highlights the experiences endured by both Hester and Ernest under their respective setting, given that their environment is heavily influenced by religious/moral codes of conduct as well the homogenous consensus. Eventually, given that the "otherworldly powers" we see in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Way of All Flesh* "are not as evidently fallible as worldly ones and less contestable" (McBride 60), this is an attempt to answer how a secular governing entity, as presented by the setting of *Indignation*, can project an image of justice while simultaneously engaging in the administration of punishment. This analysis will therefore lead us to the central contention of the chapter of how religion is used as both a means to punishment

as well as a legitimising device to “give meaning to its permanent oppression” (Foucault, *Discipline* 65).

1. The Politics of Truth and the Valorization of Religious Reality in Punishment’s Rituals

According to Philip Smith’s argument in his book *Punishment and Culture*, for a better understanding of punishment and its inherent role in maintaining order, one must understand its function within a given system of power relations. Smith carries on arguing that punishment essentially aims at “balancing the scales of justice, controlling deviance, expressing power, deterring crimes, to [ultimately] keep a lid on things” (1). Upon analysing the three novels at hand, it is established that each narrative portrays a different historical episteme: i.e., the set of social conditions which require and permit a particular historical form of discourse to exist (Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge* 191). However, despite the particularization of time and space, we have witnessed how the characters’ distinct experiences eventually intersect in the aftermath of their transgression of the said frameworks of normativity. Going against the grain inevitably leads Hester, Ernest, and Marcus to a shared destiny of being punished by a given authority.

What stands out significantly here is that while the application of punishment is manifested in distinct forms and by distinct authorities, the societal imperative behind it remains consistent throughout the three novels: the eventual consecration of an order (truth) that has been erupted. To put it in the words of President of Winesburg, Albin Lentz, punishment assures that “everything and everyone will be put back into its *proper place*” to eventually have “*order restored*”, “*decency restored*”, and “*dignity restored*” (Roth 223; emphasis added).

In view of this, punishment, as different as it might seem, throughout the three selected novels could still be understood as an assemblage of technologies of power; “a

series of validated efforts aimed at producing a better world through the regulation of unwanted activities” carried out by the three main characters (Smith 2). Based on this Smithian perspective, there seems to be an absence of arbitrariness in the reaction to the protagonists’ transgressions as punishment is essentially recognized by each system as a means against undesirable actions; or, to put it in Thomas Hobbes’s word in *The Leviathan*, a “present means to obtain a future apparent good” (72).

In the same token, McBride holds that punishment, in its essence, is the mere reflection of the complexities of the political order because it mirrors the fears, the aspirations, and the priorities of the society under which it occurs (37). Whether it is the fear of sin and moral decadence in *The Scarlet Letter*, the aspiration for filial obedience and religious indoctrination within the institution of family in *The Way of All Flesh*, or the maintenance of conformity over the students’ campus lives in *Indignation*. Henceforth, it is fair to suggest here that punishment is profoundly enmeshed in the social paradigm in which it occurs because “what is called ‘penalty’ need not be a [only called] punishment but, rather, a mechanism for the defence of society” (Foucault, *About the Concept* 193).

Looking at it from a cultural stance, David Garland suggests, using a distinction first developed by W.H. Sewell Jr, that in social and the historical analysis of punishment culture takes on a dual role. On the one hand, culture becomes a compass to differentiate the individual acts as either “*cultural* and *not cultural*” within one specific society (*Concepts of Culture* 422). In other words, the dominant culture within a certain setting becomes a determinative force that creates distinct dispositifs that deals with deviance and consequently shapes that society’s penal practices.

Echoing the notion of historical contingencies, the second distinction made by Sewell understands culture in terms of different cultural contexts and milieus, “*this*

culture as opposed to *that* culture”, each with its unique way of perceiving crimes and inflicting punishments. Here, the focus is not the difference within a whole but rather one different whole compared to another whole that is understood as a distinctive culture (422). To further underscore this point highlighted by Garland, let’s consider Hester’s case as a model in reference to Marcus’s².

The punishment assigned to Hester, while it is ostensibly a reaction to her adulterous act, it should not exclusively be interpreted as such. Rather, it should be equated with its culture because it serves an ideological function as it essentially mirrors the Puritan’s patriarchal as well as hierarchical discursive formation. Because if we were to view it only from the prism of the former, punishment would have consummated itself the moment of her descending the scaffold.

Yet, the reality of her punishment is more complex simply because her public spectacle is to be understood as the manifestation of her sinful being as well as the beginning of a lifelong sentence of condemnation. This idea of the ongoing manifestation of her identity becomes inseparably linked to her transgression is indeed encapsulated in almost every page of the novel as Hawthorne notes that Hester spends her life as a representation of “a living sermon against sin until the ignominious letter be engraved upon her tombstone” (93). Henceforth, the spectacle functions as a ritualised manifestation of a concept that corresponds to, and eventually reinforces, an external cultural reality.

Given that nothing has any meaning outside of the spatial and the temporal frame of its occurrence (Foucault, *Truth and Power* 114), the spectacle taking place in the novel is rather by the mere necessity of the circumstances. Put simply, it is meaningful solely

²Here, Butler’s narrative is not dismissed as it shall be integrated into a comparative analysis with the two mentioned works later in the paper. The juxtaposition of *The Scarlet Letter* and *Indignation* is motivated by their significant temporal and conceptual differences, highlighting the evolution of crime, punishment, and culpability from the Puritan era to the Postmodern age.

because it grounds itself on the religious nature and the way her action is framed as a violation of the sacred. Since religion enjoys an authentic and unquestionable status in the colony, Hester's public shaming is not perceived as something grotesque or inhumane by both the authority and the spectators. Rather, it correlates precisely to the order of things within the colony. Foucault eloquently captures this idea when he talks about Damians. He states that "the fact that the guilty man should moan and cry out under the blows is not a shameful side-effect; it is the very ceremonial of justice being expressed in all its force" (*Discipline* 34).

What we are left with is therefore a symbiotic relationship between punishment and culture that is vital in comprehending how Hester's punishment has manifested itself the way it has. More importantly, why should that manifestation be understood as the right thing, despite its overly coercive nature, to do. Since ethics is broadly defined as the systematic assessment of what is right and wrong, as well as the most suitable way for individuals to conduct their lives (Banks 25), it becomes paramount in policy decisions relating to punishment and its rationale. The decision, to have the adulterer suffer on the scaffold for instance, is "desirable not because they express absolute truth", as Peter Singer argues in his book *How Are We to Live?: Ethics in an Age of Self-Interest*; rather, it is Hester's community's version of the truth that serves to reinforce the "normal circumstances" (175).

Her public shaming is thus intended as a rite to *restore* the symbolic economy of moral righteousness within the colony. Taking into account that the Puritans deny the possibility of internal and self-purification once one sins, but believe in the exposure of the sinfulness of the self (Paden 69), our previous contention of Hester's *exposé* is not solely about addressing her act becomes valid. Instead, it is designed for the restoration of "normal circumstances", the moral order that has been disrupted by her act, through a

dramatic display of the sin in front of the whole community on the scaffold of the pillory. The scaffold henceforth becomes a boundary marker, a means of establishing “the correctness of what is true” in relation to “the false that is refuted”, and in Hester’s case, what is moral and what is immoral, respectively (Foucault, *On the Government* 6).

What is of importance to consider from the aforementioned perspective is that when Hester’s and Marcus’s transgressions are juxtaposed, Marcus’s seems as minor infraction and laughably insignificant to bear the same label as Hester’s sin. Still, it is escalated into a grievous crime and is reacted to by Winesburg authorities accordingly. Moving from one dorm room to another, as the main stated reason for Marcus being a spectacle at the Dean’s office, is comparably of less severity. Reflecting what Marcus’s father says at the beginning of the novel, “the tiniest misstep can have tragic consequences” (Roth 12), his act brings with it a series of misfortune events that provokes a response from the Winesburg College. At the end, Dean brands the protagonist a “culprit” who would eventually “be thrown out of school, [...]. For moving too many times[...] to be asked to leave Winesburg. That’s how this is going to wind up. Thrown out, drafted, sent to Korea, and killed” (Roth 88).

Given the two contexts, one might plausibly argue that the aforementioned disproportionality contests the supposition that the way these acts are defined, perceived, given meaning, and then responded to is dependent on something rather than the act itself. Using this point as a part of departure it becomes evident that punishment becomes a mere outcome of a plethora of historical, socio-political, and cultural forces. Essentially, these forces are validated on the grounds of their proximity to “what is true”. In more condensed words, and according to the conceptualization of culture spelled out by Franz Boas as “the totality of the mental and physical reactions and activities that characterise the behaviour of the individuals composing a social group” (159), each protagonist’s

society mirrors “a distinctive universe of meaning, distinctive form of life” that distinguishes it from others (Garland, *Concepts* 422).

Hence, intrinsic criminality is not inherently woven into the character’s individual action itself ; rather, the assignment of the criminal label hinges on the way society bestows such classification. These discursive formations define, to use Foucault’s words once more, “what is refuted” and allow certain acts to be considered and eventually preserved as truth. Winesburg values religious tradition, something as Marcus notes is “diluted into—or camouflaged as—a talk on a high moral topic” (Roth 79), which is basically what constitutes its truth. Consequently, it is what renders Marcus, as declared by Dean Caudwell “an agitator” and “an iconoclast on the order of a Russell or a Nietzsche or a Schopenhauer” (Roth 106). Therefore, in addressing this relativity, Smith writes in the matter:

All punishments [...] have a signifying or expressive dimension, albeit with varying degree of centrality and reflexivity. They are intended to say something about the nature of society, the qualities of the criminal, the features of a good society, the evil of crime, or the properties of the criminal justice itself. The public execution is useful because it displays this ambition in its clearest and most intuitively available form. (37)

Given this shift in societal “rules of formation” that govern moral and ethical judgments (Foucault, *Truth and Power* 114), the definition of a just response is not a fixed or universally agreed upon concept, it is rather relative and reflective of what society thinks justice means. What we could refer to as “ethical relativism” (Banks 29) consequently underscores the contextual subjectivity inherent in deciding what is meant for a transgression/response within that specific reality. Understood in a Foucauldian sense, reality here reflects the corpus of knowledge, techniques, and the produced discourses

that are recognized and accepted in each of the systems that the protagonists inhabit. What is accepted is therefore defined as a “truth”, what is suppressed and marginalised is “error” and both notions are politically related to the notion of a regime that eventually shapes reality.

In defining this “regime of truth”, Foucault makes it clear in *Society Must be Defended* that such a regime is in its essence a reflection of a power that makes certain divisions between “true” discourses and “error” (164). In this context, discourses are not solely understood as articulations of what is “true”; rather, they are more evident and effective in their performative entities as they actively shape, transform, and maintain reality. Hence, it is the “conceptual terrain in which knowledge is formed and produced” as Foucault explains in *The Order of Discourse*. It is not simply what is “thought or said per se”, it is instead “all the discursive rules and categories that [are] a priori assumed as a constituent part of discourse and therefore of knowledge” (48). Specifically, when applied to punishment, discourses transcend mere description as they become agents of change with tangible consequences. They operate as concrete occurrences in themselves characterised by a delimitation of the “field of objects”, “the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge” and the fixation of the norms for a better elaboration of concepts (*Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* 199). In this way, the effects of the regime of truth is to make it impossible to think outside of what is considered as “true”. To be outside of it is, by definition, to be linked to “error” and to be beyond order and therefore a “culprit”.

It is also worth noting that this power to divide truth, moral, and normal from their apparently natural antithesis error, immoral, abnormal is neither objective nor self-evident per se. Rather, it is historically determined and, as such, analysable and debatable. Simply put, what is knowable and acceptable to be a “truth” within a given period does

not have an inherent or an objective quality. Above all, truth becomes a production of multiple constraints in reference to mainly, as Foucault suggests, social norms, cultural values, and power structure (*Political Function* 13). Consequently, it becomes strongly linked to the exercise of power in a circular manner as it is (truth) itself both constituted by, and ensures the reproduction of, the system through forms of selection and exclusion.

As truth is what constrains and what enables, the punishments of Hester, Ernest, and Marcus gain their justifications simply because they associate themselves with specific systems and power structures that not only define what is considered deviant behaviour but also provides the modalities through which such deviance is punished. In Foucauldian terms, it is the “historical a priori” that essentially underpins the discursive framework through which truth is constructed and sustained. In other words, these conditions, the Puritanical religious frameworks, Victorian familial structures, and modern institutional priorities in favor of conformity and tradition, is what allows both the subjects (the adulterer, the prodigal son, the iconoclast) and the the objects (adultery, filial disobedience, breaches of dormitory codes) to exist and be understood within a particular regime of truth.

Since every society constructs its own version of truth, we find that truth in Puritan Boston is anchored in religious values. Deriving from strict biblical commandments, “thou shalt not commit adultery”, adultery is thus a capital sin . This religious discourse of sin does not only define sin but also recognize certain practices and rituals in reference to its punishment. The label “sinner” is thus a historically constructed one because it is shaped by those historical conditions.

In the same way, in *The Way of All Flesh*, Victorian England’s regime of truth, especially within the institution of the family, operates through a patriarchal framework which in itself is rooted in religious morality. This framework that prioritises family,

obedience, and moral conformity constructs the subject, Ernest, as a prodigal son and a moral failure. Once again, this label is grounded in biblical injunctions. The strict religious indoctrination based on St. Paul's "one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man knows not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God", propagates a strict patriarchy within the household making "le père de la famille capable du tout" (Butler 26). These doctrines shape the practices of governance that Ernest must follow to be considered a moral and obedient son. To not follow these familial and religious expectations locates Ernest outside of "truth", a place where "error" is essentially located.

Contrary to the first two novels, in *Indignation* there is a convergence of societal underpinnings and a transformation in the modality of power. This is evident in the shift of the overtly displays of power into a more subtle one. Above all, and it has been hinted at in the first chapter, the exercise of power in the novel is not done through direct religious commands or overtly corporal punishment. Instead, it is exercised through creating an institutional culture that favours specific norms mainly patriotism, religious observance, and conformity. Marcus's case therefore reveals "the functioning of language with respect to objects" as the Puritan scaffold and the Victorian fatherly rod are dismissed because of their perceived cruelty. These new ways of dealing with wrong doers are replaced by mechanisms that operate based on a scaffold of knowledge, which reflects a "redistribution" of power and truth at Winesburg compared to the other two settings.

After what has been stated so far, establishing a definitive resolution on the rationale underpinning punitive measures remains elusive. This is due to its inherent ambiguity that arises from the collision of cultural underpinnings making the act of punishment both of a substantive significance as well as an overarching sense of futility

(Garland, *Frameworks* 4). Recognizing that the act in itself is not absolute but rather produced, allows a compass to understand the ‘morality’ and ‘justice’ behind it. In the cases at hand, the shift from the public shaming to the “soft machine” of punishment found in Marcus’s time (Hudson, *Justice Through Punishment* X) sketches an image of each society’s constructed truth about its rationale, shaped by a production and a reproduction of truth.

By considering what Schmitt calls the “sociological reality” in each novel (*Political* 45), we shall eventually unravel in detail: firstly, “the types of discourse [every novel] harbours and causes to function as true”. Secondly, “the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true from false statements” and “the way in which each is sanctioned”. Thirdly, “the techniques and procedures which are valorized for obtaining truth”. Finally, “the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true” (Foucault, *Political* 13).

1.1. “Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery”: the Dramaturgical Manifestation of Alethurgy in *The Scarlet Letter*

In his thesis *Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault attests that once a given society adopts a certain ideology/discourse, this ideology/discourse begins to significantly play an important role in shaping both the political as well as the social framework that governs it (26). In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne echoes this concept as he depicts a community that is embedded in a profound utilisation of religious doctrines.

Having been born into the same “world of gloom and decay of Salem, Massachusetts” (Bloom, 11), Hawthorne renders the puritan mindset more vividly than any other American writer does. According to Deborah Madsen, “*The Scarlet Letter* embodies Hawthorne’s best-known representation of the stern and gloomy Puritans that characterised colonial New England” (516). Therefore, it is important for the purpose of

the analysis at hand to refer, whenever necessary, to the historical aspects of this sternness to better understand the ideology adopted by the puritan character within the novel. This is mainly done to better appreciate its thematic implications, especially in relation to punishment.

It is true that the historical reality of the colony may have been more complex and multifaceted than it is depicted in the novel, nevertheless, Hester's story undoubtedly provides a foundation to understand Hawthorne's forefathers grim nature. With regard to this, the author of *The Scarlet Letter* therefore, and especially in his introductory chapter "The Custom House", sheds light on his community's religious repressiveness and he often refers to it in the novel as the "Puritanic gloom" (Hawthorne 345). One might plausibly assume that this gloom is religiously based and it is, in a sense, what engenders the stern and intolerant characters that the reader of the novel encounters throughout its pages.

Confronting the reader with a dark image of the colony as a whole, Hawthorne consistently provides images of its inhabitants and how they are but a community that "wore the blackest shade of Puritanism" (345). This statement, needless to say, is the result of an existence that is intricately fused with static religious perceptions and shared environmental conditions. What is engendered therefore is a state of mutual predictability among the individuals. In other words, each individual in the colony is rendered a replica of the other both physically (we are referring here to their attire) and morally.

It remains to be shown however that this bleak image of homogeneity that the author sketches does not only include the attitude of the "bearded men, in sad-coloured garments and grey, steeple-crowned hats" and "the stern-browed and unkindly visaged women" (Hawthorne 87). It is rather far-reaching and inclusive. In addition to the adults,

Hawthorne also sheds light on the fact that the children of the colony are not spared the harsh realities of their environment.

According to what is depicted by Hester, despite their young age, children are already confined into the community's strict moral mould. This is highlighted in the novel throughout different instances. Nonetheless, in one memorable passage, Hester talks about the children's occasional engagements in some grim and joyless activities that essentially reflect their inability to break free from the rigid confinement they are part of. In delineating this, Hester mentioned that she once "saw the children of the settlement [...], disporting themselves in such grim fashions as the Puritanic nurture would permit". This grim fashion is in reference to them "playing at going to church, perchance, or at scourging Quakers; or taking scalps in a sham fight with the Indians, or scaring one another with freaks of imitative witchcraft" (137).

This quote captures the intolerance of the children toward anyone who is either religiously or culturally different from them. The fact that they are nurtured to deal with the aforementioned groups with exclusionary tendencies indicates, to use Bloom's words, a "rigidity and warlike attitude toward the world" (30). For that reason, the casual reenactment of violence by the children against groups of Quakers, Indians, and witches attributes to a perpetuated indoctrination that hails homogeneity, especially when it comes to religious beliefs. The point to be made by the preceding observation is that anyone who is seen differently is ipso facto disdained and ostracised.

Another depiction of life in the colony that validates the assertion of how it is indeed intricately and inexorably interwoven with gloominess is depicted in the Puritan mood during one of their holidays. Hawthorne captures this when he writes: "[t]he Puritans compressed whatever mirth and public joy they deemed allowable to human infirmity; thereby so far dispelling the customary cloud, that, for the space of a single

holiday, they appeared scarcely more grave than most other communities at a period of general affliction” (342). The picture which emerges from this brief quote conflicts with the previous. While the previous quote depicts joyless and grim activities that are actually enjoyed by the Puritan children, actual festivities are devoid of all joy. What is obvious to plain observation is a pathologization of joy, not through explicit prohibition, but framing it as something to be avoided.

At its core, and it has been previously hinted at, this gloom comes from the fact that within the colony there is this system of prohibitive beliefs that the inhabitants seem to rigidly adhere to, exercise, and maintain. In its essence, the colony’s system functions under a law that is nearly indistinguishable in nature from religion. In the first chapter of the novel, Hawthorne emphasises that in New England “religion and law were almost identical and [...] thoroughly interfused” (75). Given this context, this indistinguishable character, to such a degree that the two concepts are used uncritically synonymously, does not only define the moral groundings upon which laws are built, but also showcases how religious codes offer a particular lens through which reality is perceived. Significantly, as religion unfurls explicit guidelines for virtuous conduct, needless to say, it becomes a natural state of being with a pivotal influence in the orchestration of societal norms.

Elizabeth Hoffman attributes the supposition when she says that the Puritan believe that their community “holds a covenant with God”, “therefore the laws that govern them hold a relation with the Divine”(17). As a community that has often been referred to as the “Bible Commonwealth”, the Puritans are historically espoused with the permeating beliefs of covenantal theology, particularly drawing upon biblical interpretations. Among the most necessary practical arrangements of these colonists’

belief system is the concept that political and social order, much like their church, must be founded on a covenant (Eusden 1).

Aspiring to create a moral and religiously guided society epitomised by the aspiration to build what Winthrop calls a “City upon a Hill” (Murphy, 371), the colony served as a model of Christian virtue while founding itself on an “ideological” and “superstructural” regime (Foucault, *Truth and Power* 132). As a consequence, the prohibitive character of the law that we see in the novel functions through a classification that delineates the line that distinguishes religiousness from irreligiousness the same way it does with lawfulness from lawlessness. According to this classification, the Bible shapes and creates meaning that eventually gains the status and the currency of the “truth” simply because it reflects the word passed down from God.

Given that they deftly unearth scriptures to make laws, divine guidance dominates the way of interpreting things and moral scaffolding is thus elevated into a rigorously defined and ever-present construct. As a result, life within the colony becomes static and “exhausted by interdictions, exclusions, [and] refusal” as this centralised religious power generally dictates the “no” (*Power/Knowledge* 30) on anything that falls outside the boundaries of religious order. In this context, individual desires. Such discourses are seen as “untrue” and for that reason they must be marginalised and subjugated. As such, the contours of life are thus defined and highlighted by this theocratic system that forces the community to accept it and build up their conduct in accordance with it, declaring the Bible the source of its cohesive and orderly system.

By blending the moral with both the lawful and the political, religious texts are given the power to uphold an “insistence of the rule” (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 30) over life, both collective and personal. Hence, religious discourse could be seen in this sense as “modes of action” that “structure the possible field of action of others” (*Subject*

and Power 221). As it is “juridical”, it is generally equated with laws/authority figures that enforce compliance through rules and punishment. This creates a sense that power in the colony exists to impose limitations. Reflected in the novel, the word of God is essentially institutionalised and legally codified as its doctrines are turned into applied laws. This fusion of the two is what further enhances the harsh system of punishment that falls upon Hester. Joseph Schwartz specifically corroborates this observation, noting that the puritan “law itself was severe, and severely was it carried out” (203). Admittedly, Hawthorne states in the novel that “the mildest and severest acts of public discipline were alike made venerable and awful” (75).

As it has been illustrated in the first chapter of this thesis as well as at the beginning of the novel itself, Hester has committed an act that is in its nature blasphemous and irreligious, and thus unlawful. Essentially, Hester has breached her covenant by not being obedient to one of the Ten Commandments. Bremer stresses that “commandments [are] laws, not suggestions” (30). Her defiance of these faith-driven standards inevitably casts her within the shadow of transgression. Hester is thus forcibly, both symbolically and literally, held within what Foucault describes as “a set of constraining commitments” epitomised by a state of subjectivity that holds her “to a network of obligations that are multiplied and intensified in comparison with the traditional network of obligations of [normal] existence” (*Punitive* 7). These obligations are apparent through the consistent intervention of the colony, both through the constant gaze of the inhabitants and the interference of the God-fearing Magistrates, into her tiniest individual actions and rights.

Given that the irreligious, the unlawful, and the untrue is localised in her being, “the hussy” is dragged out of prison and forced to stand on the scaffold to reveal herself as a sinner to the entire community. Based on this punishment, Hester symbolises a

wrong-doer (adulteress) of a truth-teller (thou shalt not commit adultery) making her act the antithesis of sacredness, holiness, and religiousness and consequently, an exemplar of what Garland refers to as a “not cultural” element. Moreover, the adulterer assumes the position of a “subject” in the double sense of the word. As delineated by Foucault in *On the Government*, she becomes both a “subject in a relation of power”, and subject “through which [...] the truth is manifested” (81).

Concerning her being the “subject in relation of power”, let’s consider Hester’s excommunication as it reflects Foucault’s concept of biopolitical subjection. After she is branded as a sinner, the protagonist is subsequently banished into peripheral existence and also prohibited from being a part of the sacred places, the church. This logically entails that she is put in a different category as the protagonist is both physically excluded and symbolically redefined by both law and religion. As such, Hester’s position blends seamlessly with Foucault’s contention because she is subject to a power that “applies itself to [her] immediate everyday life and categorizes [her], marks [her] by [her] own individuality, attaches [her] to [her] own identity, imposes a law of truth on [her] that [she] must recognize and others have to recognize in [her]” (*Subject and Power* 331).

Building on Foucault’s supposition, we can see throughout the novel how the colony’s religiously grounded power exerts a force that is neither abstract nor distant. Rather, it is basically embedded in mundane practices of daily existence as a “set of actions upon other actions” that shape and guide the transgressor’s choices within a constrained field of possibilities (*Subject and Power* 341). Probably one of the scenes that most forcefully conveys Foucault’s ideas of the protagonist as a subject in relation to power can be found in the chapter entitled “The Elf-Child and the Minister”.

In this chapter, Hester is summoned before Governor Bellingham and other authorities, including Reverend Wilson and Reverend Dimmesdale, to decide on the

custody of the woman's child. With an authoritative manner therefore, Governor Bellingham addresses the protagonist: "Hester Prynne", said he, fixing his naturally stern regard on the wearer of the scarlet letter, "there hath been much question concerning thee" (Hawthorne 161). Here, Hester is framed as an object of institutional discourse. Bellingham continues his rhetoric shifting from the "thee" (Hester, singular, intimate) to "we" (the governors, the collective, and the authoritative) to highlight, once again, that the protagonist is severed from the the "we" and becomes a case study in moral contagion. When we focus on the interrogative tone of the Governor, we can detect the distinctive line that separates the position of he who interrogates and that of who is under interrogation, "the wearer of the scarlet letter". By highlighting her label as a sinner, Governor Bellingham's focus is geared towards Hester's identity. It shows how it is no longer that of a community member, a woman, and most importantly, a mother. Hester's existence is thus redefined and reduced to one that has "stumbled and fallen", which subsequently puts her in a position, "pitfalls of this world", where her own choices are a subject of an imposed restrictive moral standard.

With regard to this, Hester reflects the image of the "subject to someone by control and dependence" (Foucault, *Subject and Power* 332). As illustrated, the most intimate aspect of her existence is being encroached by an exterior power, and power here is taken in the sense of "the ability to make things happen that would not have happened otherwise" (Deutsch, *Politics and Government* 24). Governor Bellingham and the others set the limits to what she can rightfully have, the custody of her own child, and they are trying to prevent her from having it, thereby turning Hester's motherhood into a tool to control her. The question asked by the Governor "what canst thou do for the child?" and Hester's answer "I can teach my little Pearl what I have learned from this!" while "laying her finger on the red token" (Hawthorne 162) shows how the "law of truth"

is imposed on her and how she is eventually forced to relinquish her and recognizes the truth of sin in her.

Through this pervasive and constraining force, Hawthorne exemplifies how truth, especially in such a religiously governed society, is imposed not only through visible punishment but through an ongoing process of judgement and regulation, even blackmailing, of individual lives. Having the ability to evaluate and decide who is “fit” to fulfil the role of a mother, motherhood in this sense becomes to be essentially framed more as a privilege rather than a right that is rightfully hers. Preventing her from being what otherwise might be her right to be, a mother, and excluding her from the discussion, taking that the Governor declares that the matter has “been weightily discussed” between them people “of authority and influence”, reveals the “dissymmetrical” character of right with regard to Hester as their subject (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality V.3* 135).

This dissymmetry, disequilibrium, and difference in position has been symbolically illustrated at the beginning of the novel. Their mere presence on the balcony in the meeting-house, gazing down upon the proceedings gives Hester’s punishment “an earnest and effectual meaning” (Hawthorne 85). According to Hawthorne, since “political power” is essentially “within the grasp of a successful priest” (Hawthorne 353), this conflation of the religious, the political, the legislative, and the judicial power in these figures makes Hawthorne’s early New England a place where “the monolith rules and sentences” (Korobkin 193). This monopolization of the right to punish is bestowed upon them because they are a reflection of a “super terram” figure (Weber, *Political Writings* 311) that is entitled to assert its authority with a “juridico-discursive” power. One that is “repressive, punitive, prohibitive”, and most importantly “uniform” (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, V.1* 82). In John Milton’s words, the magistrates are “God’s co-workers” who “reflect His will and truth” (qtd.in Witte 591). In this sense,

Hester is squarely confined to a system that essentially limits and shapes her choices and actions into more desired ones. However, it remains to be explained. as a subject, she is not merely a passive recipient of an external power. Rather, she becomes an active participant in the social procedure of truth, which brings us to her being a subject of/in its manifestation.

What is important to consider here is that this prohibitive character of power is far from being its essential ingredient. Rather, it is only its limits. In this sense, the relation between Hester and the Magistrates is not antithetical because there are “perpetual spirals of power”, producing true discourses (Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, V.I 45). Therefore, rather than allowing her to blend into anonymity, the community emphasizes her individuality as a sinner, her punishment is brought to its most extreme dramatisation. She is sentenced “to stand [...] a space of three hours on the platform of the pillory, and then and thereafter, for the remainder of her natural life to wear a mark of shame” (Hawthorne 93). The result is that this woman is to be defined as one who has not ethically conformed to the society in which she lives, who has gone beyond the boundaries imposed by the Divine, falling within, according to the Bible, the domain of evil. Hester’s position coincides with what Foucault calls the “operator of alethurgy”. Specifically because Hester becomes the subject that contrasts “truth” from “error” and reminds people of the opposing force these two concepts represent (*On the Government* 81).

Through her very existence and experiences on the scaffold and post scaffold, the sinner underscores the contrast between what is religious and lawful and what is not. Highlighting the complex interplay between power, truth, and the individual, Hester demonstrates how transgressors within the colony can simultaneously be both subjugated as well as an active dynamo in the social construction of truth through what Foucault

conceptualises as “truth act” (81). In the same manner, Smith argues that public punishments, besides their immediate purpose of balancing the scales of justice, also balance “the metaphysical imperative of good and evil ” (38). With this in mind, the “acte de vérité” in its essence encapsulates the role that Hester plays in the process of the manifestation of truth. As a consequence, Hester’s body is put on the scaffold to admit exhibit “truth” or “alethurgy” of her sin (*On the Government* 81).

It must be highlighted however that this revelation has no interest in the verbal confession of her sin. In essence, the word “spectacle of guilt” (Hawthorne 84) is self-explanatory; it is not meant for telling the truth but rather a performance of the truth (Foucault, *On the Government* 102). This is exemplified by what Hawthorne writes in chapter two: “[t]here can be no outrage,[...]whatever be the delinquencies of the individual- no outrage more flagrant than to forbid the culprit to hide his face for shame; as it was the essence of this punishment to do” (Hawthorne 83). This quote makes sense when coupled with Foucault’s contention. It is about showing shame not concealing it.

Once revealed to the crowd, Hawthorne notes that Hester initially tries to use her child to shield the scarlet letter then immediately realises the futility of the impulse because “one token of her shame would but poorly serve to hide another” (79). She realises that her exhibition is not for her “to proclaim her innocence but [rather] to acknowledge her crime” (Foucault, *Discipline* 65). To tell, and here we refer to the confession concerning the child’s father, is of less importance in such theatrical exposition. In fact, the scaffold is a question of manifesting one’s general state as sinner and taking on the status of penitent. Drawing on Foucault’s insights, this unveiling of the self becomes a profound acknowledgement of one’s faults, recognition of temptations, identification of forbidden desires, and the subsequent disclosure of these aspects in

relation to truth, thus assuming a public stance of self-incrimination (*Technologies of the Self* 40).

To further illustrate this point, let's consider the scenes when Hester is asked to speak out the name of the co-sinner. It is evident that the demands lack genuine intensity, which further reveals how both the authority and the spectators are more interested in the visual dramatisation of sin rather than its verbalisation. It is true that the young Reverend, when asked to exhort Hester to confess, being the father of her child, urges the mother to speak with a rather "tremulously sweet, rich, deep, and broken" voice (Hawthorne 100). Sounded more like a plea and a subtle acknowledgement of guilt, his demands can be seen more as a hint for her to remain silent about his identity. Obviously, the minister does not want to be exposed as a fraud. Consequently, the protagonist stays firm in her silence declaring with a firm "Never!" even when she is addressed "coldly and sternly" and "more harshly than before" to speak the name of the co-sinner (101).

Another scene that reflects the apparent preoccupation of the Puritan authorities of truth as a spectacle for public consumption rather than an internal and spiritual realisation could be seen in Reverend Wilson's speech. Hawthorne explains that the clergyman's sermon, although it touches "a discourse on sin, in all its branches", is nonetheless overfixed with its visual representation because there is a "continual reference to the ignominious letter" (102). Hawthorne further emphasises this by saying that the clergyman "forcibly dwell upon this symbol, for the hour or more during which his periods were rolling over the people's heads" to the extent that the letter itself transcends into a supernatural thing. In the mind of the listeners, instead of an embroidered letter, they see a "scarlet hue from the flames of the infernal pit" (102).

There are several aspects that should be considered from this scene specifically, and the first one of which is how this rhetoric is a calculated performance with an effect

that transcends its immediate context of crime and punishment especially once interpreted through the symbolic interactionist perspective of what Erving Goffman terms the “dramaturgical approach” in his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (240). In its essence, Goffman’s perspective allows us to perceive the clergyman speech under the light of a “performance” that is constructed to provide the spectators with “impressions” that are consonant with the desired goals of the speaker, that of Mr Wilson (Goffman 17).

Given that the sermon is a “scripted” performance that serves as an incendiary device, impressions like “the flames of the infernal pit” in reference to the scarlet letter “assumed new terrors in their [spectators] imagination” as it is declared by Hawthorne (102). Once again , the aforesaid coincides with what Victor Turner calls a “forest of symbols”, which essentially refers to a layered symbolic landscape that eventually guides the audience’s fear through complex religious meanings in relation to damnation (qtd. in Smith 37). The desired aim is shaping public perception and instilling and solidifying their collective commitment to the moral order.

Let us consider Foucault’s definition of a “regime of truth” in relation to religion, Christianity more specifically. He explains that what is considered truth within religious contexts usually, on the one hand, refers to a doctrine that constantly relies on a continual reference to a sacred text, simply because it provides a specific and usually unchanging foundation for what is believed to be true. On the other hand, truth is also one that is upheld and preserved, giving its doctrine as well as authority’s continuity (*On the Government* 83). According to John Darley, once the binding moral foundations, Authority, Loyalty, and Purity, are associated with greater political and religious conservatism, punishment triggers a “moral outrage”, a strong, and automatic, feeling of anger accompanied by a desire for corrective action (3). Now, by casting light on the

scarlet letter as something that represents hell to an audience that is inherently rooted in the cultivation of moral rectitude, the spectators are thus drawn into a collective moral frenzy. This state became an expression of faith and a demonstration of allegiance to the doctrine.

This is apparent in the scenes of the spectacle as Hawthorne shows the discontent of the spectators. The fact that “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” (106), does not overshadow that Hester’s waywardness “has endangered [her] own soul as well as the well-being of the community” (Murphy 373). For women, Hester’s shame is not only hers as one of the “goodwives” declares that “[t]his woman has brought shame upon us all, and ought to die” (Hawthorne 78). Likewise, for men, the penalty, supposedly, is “death” (83), as one of them explains to Chillingworth. Nonetheless, what must “be embodied and made manifest in this contrivance of wood and iron” (Hawthorne 83), according to the spectators, is not delivered. The spectators are thus dissatisfied with the inscribed punishment as they see a lack of delivering justice. This dissatisfaction puts both men and women into a “motivational and cognitive state” with an “increased tendency to engage in certain goal-related actions” and in this context, revenge (Haidt 54). The author makes this representation possible through the following excerpt from the novel that depicts the moral indignation towards Hester:

“Goodwives,” said a hard-featured dame of fifty, “I’ll tell ye a piece of my mind. It would be greatly for the public behoof if we women, being of mature age and church-members in good repute, should have the handling of such malefactresses as this Hester Prynne. What think ye, gossips? If the hussy stood up for judgment before us five, that are now here in a knot

together, would she come off with such a sentence as the worshipful magistrates have awarded? Marry, I know not.” (Hawthorne 76-77)

It is established that truth is not only derived from sacred texts but also perpetuated through their continuous reference and application, especially in punishment. Punishing Hester is therefore a way in which the puritan society could further reinforce the morality of society. Given this context, the puzzlement of the spectators when they ask “[i]s there not law for it?” in relation to Hester’s punishment (Hawthorne 44) becomes comprehensible. In fact, this question is asked rhetorically, shedding light on the expectation that the scaffold’s visible truth will be complemented by lawful punishment, death.

Immediately providing an answer to her question, “[t]ruly there is, both in the scripture and the statute-book” (44), the woman reinforces the idea that law and religion are aligned. The provided answer also emphasises the fact that since the truth is to be manifested on the scaffold, the spectators expect the law to be applied when exercising the power to punish the sinner, especially after hearing the sermon. Besides, based on the remarks made by “iron-visaged dames” and their narrow interpretation of the Bible, the mentioning of “the scripture” illustrates its function as an authoritative agent or what Foucault calls a “truth-telling” mechanism that provides a guideline for saintly behaviour and attitude as well as their sanctions.

The fact that Hester has not been ‘harshly’ punished reflects an attempt to question the scriptures’ underlying premises because as the ministers of God, to succeed in this task is “to earn God’s favor; to fail was to incur God’s wrath” (Milton qtd.in Witte 591). By breaching both civil and religious laws, by not meeting the expectations connected to her gender in the patriarchal Puritan society on the one hand, and by breaking the 7th commandment as a church member on the other, the onlookers consider

Hester's action as an offence not only against their social decorum, but, more gravely, against God Himself.

According to the spectators, the gravity of her sin is known, therefore it should not be leniently addressed because the Bible naturalises the law and legitimises punishment. In the episodes dedicated to her public shaming, there is this preoccupation among the spectators with the idea of Hester not being punished properly. The sentiments of frustration stem from the Puritan worldview that her "sin is in the very nature of it, a Departure from God: and therefore it is a departure from that Felicity and Fruition which is most of all to be desired" (Eusden 10). In marked contrast, there is an evident inadequacy from the magistrates' response. Given that the scaffold is the physical site of alethurgy, punishment should be inflicted 'properly' to add a layer of security to the colony's discursive coherence as it would imprint the moral values in the consciousness of the subjects.

In *On the Government*, Foucault suggests that truth manifestation involves a triad of roles: first we have the "operator of alethurgy" through which, "spectator of alethurgy" for which, and finally the "object of alethurgy" regarding which the truth is manifested (83). Hester assumes the role of the "operator" through both her punishment and the embodiment of sin. The "spectators", positioned as observers of this truth expect truth to be ritualised as the "object" of the truth is made concrete and therefore, must be punished according to law and religion. In light of this, the "spectators" expect the "operator" to stand with the "object" not merely as a penitent but as one who manifests not only "here I am, me who obeys", but more importantly, "this is *what I am* [the errer of truth], me who obeys" and I must be punished accordingly (82; emphasis is *mine*).

However, and contrary to the aforementioned, punishment in Hester's case itself becomes a challenge to the discursive coherence of the colony according to the

spectators. “Why, gossips,” declare the goodwives, “what is it but to laugh in the faces of our godly magistrates, and make a pride out of what they, worthy gentlemen, meant for a punishment?” (Hawthorne 81). The passage highlights how the ‘lenient’ punishment gives Hester the courage to “fantastically” embroider what has been meant to be the emblem of shame, which is “greatly beyond what was allowed by the sumptuary regulations of the colony” (80). This reflects a failure once related to Foucault’s assertion. Since discursive truth determines the “obligations of individuals with regard to procedures of manifestation of truth” (*On The Government* 93), and given that the public spectacle is intended to manifest the truth of sin, failing to punish transgressions effectively compromises both the predictability of individual behaviour and the enforcement of laws.

Indeed, the aforementioned suggestion is mirrored once again by the dames when they say, “but did ever a woman, before this brazen hussy, contrive such a way of showing it?” (Hawthorne 81). To “fantastically” display sin, supposedly a wrong-done, is a “laugh” at an infallible truth-teller and a smear on “the sacredness of Divine institutions” as Hawthorne puts reflecting the community’s discontent (96). Perceived as such, this inability to produce a punishment that satisfies the masses’ desires explains the ongoing censure Hester receives, even after her public penance because they believe that “[t]his woman [...] ought to die”. As for the magistrates, the women rant, “let [them], who have made it of no effect, thank themselves if their own wives and daughters go astray!” (Hawthorne 78).

1.2. “To Spare the Rod is to Spoil the Child”: the Catechistic Veridiction in *The Way of All Flesh*

Jude Nixon, in his introduction to *Victorian Religious Discourse: New Directions in Criticism*, highlights that religion was one of the central pillars in the formation of

England's nineteenth century identity. Much like the belief system found in Hawthorne's novel, religion was also at the heart of the Victorian discourse not only as a belief system that runs in the family but rather as a cursor that shaped almost every aspect of social, cultural, and political life through what we can term as catechistic alethurgy. The latter term shall be used hereafter in reference mainly to the ritualistic performance of religious truth. Given that religion answered every question asked, it came to be considered as the inescapable endpoint that every cultural road led to (Nixon 1). Kitson Clark also asserts in *The Making of Victorian England* that no other period in history, except for the twelfth and seventeenth centuries, had religion exerted such an immense influence on the life of the individuals or religious men such a significant power over people (42-43). It is imperative to recognize that such an influence was not only sustained by faith. Rather, institutionalized truth-acts (catechism, Sunday schools, and in the case of Ernest, the rod) played fundamental roles in the process.

With that being said, similarly to any other narrative that engages with nineteenth-century England, and akin in its themes to the preceding novel, *The Way of All Flesh* by Samuel Butler also casts a stark shadow of "moral absolutism, puritanical asceticism, devotion to principles, conviction of righteousness, and emphasis on obedience" (Wisenthal 17) over the microcosm of the Pontifex household. This is exactly what we identify as catechistic alethurgy in action. Reflecting the image of the era's typical middle-class Victorian family, the domestic life within the confines of Battersby Rectory is tightly regulated by a regime of ritualized moral enforcement that, as Howard Maynadie comments, is to say the least "sordid and depressing" (304).

In such regard, this sordidness, similar to Hester's predicament, arises from a suffocating climate highlighted by what Foucault would call a microphysics of domestic power. Here, and similar to Hester's case, a regime of truth thrives in religious fear,

mainly the fear of divine judgement and not “giving up all for Christ’s sake” (Butler 338). Consequently, in the matter of domestic life at the Rectory, religion becomes a means wielded by parents, mainly the fathers, to maintain their authority and reduce their children to a pack of obedient individuals. Nonetheless, what needs our attention here is that the manufacturing of docile children is achieved through religious catechism that transforms into what we could term as pastoral violence.

Depicting the relationship between “parents and children under the shadow of the Church of England” (Rosenman 77), Butler’s novel could be seen as a socio-document that depicts the excessively repressive nature of religious beliefs and the attitudes they engender domestically. This dominance of religious discourse is mostly revealed to the reader through the character of Theobald, the father, and his relationship with the protagonist, Ernest, especially during his early years. It is worth noting however that *The Way of All Flesh* does not deal exclusively with the main character and his father. Instead, a considerable portion of the first chapters of the novel is dedicated mainly to recounting the story of his parental progenitor, which serves the reader with a genealogy of the family. Starting from the Old John Pontifex, the novel traces four generations and, for the most part, is concerned with the relationships of fathers and their sons.

Through these generational ties and stories, Butler, in his signature satirical tone, reveals how all those misguided children eventually become misleading parents. Given that the abused child becomes the abusive patriarch, we can argue therefore that what we call catechistic alethurgy reproduces itself intergenerationally generating what Foucault calls in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* as “the perpetual spirals of power” (45). This is essentially attributed to the fact that the parents in the novel continually prioritise dogmatic adherence to the Christian faith over the natural development of the child, thereby turning religion into an overbearing presence rather than an enlightening guide.

A cycle that, as we shall elaborate on in more detail in the last chapter, is put to an end by Ernest.

Reflecting the supposition that kinship relations are usually organised according to “mechanisms of constraint” (Duschinsky and Rocha 4), Mr Overton, from the threshold of the novel, explains in his narrative voice that “[i]t must be remembered that at the beginning of the nineteenth century the relations between parents and children were still far from satisfactory” (Butler 25). He then adds highlighting the household as a catechistic theatre since “at that time, it was universally admitted that to spare the rod was to spoil the child, and St. Paul had placed disobedience to parents in very ugly company” (26).

Subtly unveiling to the reader the systematic use of religion in the family matters and how moral order is scaffolded on ritualized violence, Overton goes further to relate the unsatisfactory nature of the connection between parents and their offspring to the use/abuse of the Pauline doctrine as a constraining means by parents. This becomes evident in the way it is specifically, and purposefully, utilised by the patriarchs, Old John, George, and Theobald, to further assert their parental/marital dominance.

This dominance is interestingly achieved through demarcating, or what we could term in other words doctrinal partitioning in relation to the child’s conduct. What we have then are two categories: a child who is hailed as appropriate and obedient, and another who is “placed in very ugly company”, or disobedient. Reflecting the same logic of the indivisibility of religion and law found in the previous novel, a rigid system of how to deal with children is therefore born and nurtured, for generations, through this relentless preaching of binary oppositions: obedience and disobedience in relation to moral triumph and moral failing, virtue and vice. “Of course”, Butler sardonically remarks, “if young people allow their conduct to be in any way influenced by regard to

the wills of living persons, they are doing very wrong and must expect to be sufferers in the end” (29). Hence, allowing the fathers to decide what is virtuous and moral and impose the notion on their offspring, not through brute force alone but also by internalising it as a political economy of truth, enables them to mould their children into a specific shape, with the intent of making them politically weak.

To illustrate the aforesaid, consider the case of Old Mr. Pontifex and his selective and strategic use of religious doctrines, particularly St. Paul’s teachings on obedience. It is mentioned that “[i]f his children did anything which Mr. Pontifex disliked, they were clearly disobedient to their father. In this case there was obviously only one course for a sensible man to take”, that is the rod (Butler 26). What this quote entails is the idea that the Pauline doctrine functions as a hermeneutic weapon simply because it is selectively wielded by Old John to legitimise his hegemony. This brings us to another key element in the quote: the definition of obedience. The latter, as it is explicitly mentioned in the quote, is undeniably framed in absolutely subjective terms. However, because of its reiteration it is rhetorically elevated to an objective moral absolute. As such, the idea of obedience is consequently used to endorse the father’s authority. This simply means that when Old John equates what he likes and what he does not with St. Paul’s dichotomy of obedience and disobedience respectively. Worded differently, he conflates his subjective desires, obedience to his will, with an absolute and objective phenomenon (truth).

By making them synonymous, Mr. Pontifex, in this sense, becomes able to construct a specific epistemic sphere/system within the family that has its own logic and, most importantly, legitimation. In Foucault’s words, Old John is able to transform obedience into an object, into a truth to establish a discourse backed with an “ensemble of rules according to which the true [obedience] and the false [disobedience] are separated” (Foucault, *Truth and Power* 132). Of course, this separation between the true

and the false is done while he centralises himself as the ultimate authority and the arbiter of that “truth”. Akin to the Magistrates in *The Scarlet Letter*, such a situation brought the inevitable result of Mr. Pontifex exerting a power that is akin in its effect to “the power of ‘seizure’” (Bell 61). This is simply because he is distinctly individuated in the family as the head of the Leviathan; he is the sovereign exception that no other family members are (Taylor 204).

Reflecting the Victorian religious discourse and how it is inseparably linked with ideas of masculinity (Nixon 3), the aforementioned concept of individualization becomes especially relevant here as it explains how patriarchal authority operates and is considered within the family. Essentially, this individualization grants the patriarch this sovereign-like authority that enables him to compel his children to “acquire habits of obedience which they would not venture to break through” (Butler 26). Equally important, this authority is not exclusively found in the son-father axis. Rather, the man’s superiority/authority also makes the wife as de-individuated as the child. This supposition finds its fullest expression in Theobald’s attitude towards his wife, Christina. Right after their marriage, ironically “less than two hours ago promised”, Theobald claims this superior position asserting that “he was master now” after Christina refuses to order dinner on their wedding night. Lost in his thought, the husband reasons, irritatedly, “clearly, it was Christina’s duty to order it, and his own to eat it and pay for it” (Butler 55).

Illustrating an image that is deeply entrenched in gender roles, Theobald’s internal monologue underscores how authority is inherently tied to his gender and his financial role. Being in this position results in his wife being prescribed to subordinate one, of subservience. What comes next is for Christina “to honour and obey him” because “obedience to God lay in obedience to himself” (56). This incident, once again, mirrors

the manipulation of religious teachings to achieve obedience. The comment of having “chapters and verses for everything they had either done or left undone” (Butler 246), shows the biblical arsenal used by Theobald. Accordingly, and similarly to the way the rod is used, Theobald is again able to weaponize texts from the apostle Paul through selective literalism. Christina’s disruption of this constructed balance results in Theobald turning his own interpretation of the Biblical texts into what is convenient for him, his superior position. In addition, he pressures Christina to vocalize/show her position as the subjugated. Accordingly, Overton highlights that “the end of the honeymoon saw Mrs. Theobald the most devotedly obsequious wife in all England” (Butler 57). What we are left with is therefore a micro-sovereignty with a system that operates through catechistic conscription. Put in simpler words, there is a coercive/compulsory enlistment of both the mother and the child into their own oppression resulting in a closed hermeneutic circle where Paul’s epistle legitimizes the patriarch’s hegemony. The fact that Christina becomes too obedient to conspire against her own son, Ernest, something that we will discuss in detail in the last chapter, illustrates the regime’s efficacy.

Since religious texts become a vital mechanism for reality control, Mr. Pontifex’s authority, and by extension Theobald’s, must be understood as a construct embedded within broader discursive frameworks. According to Foucault’s perception, this relationship of obedience to the patriarch’s will is a consequence to what he calls “discursive regularities” (*The Archeology of Knowledge* 191), which basically dictate who has the right to speak (fathers), in what voice (divinely sanctioned), and with what authority (unquestioned obedience). These regularities therefore, shaped by cultural, the aforementioned ideas of masculinity, and religious forces, Apostle Paul, allow the male as both husband and father to assume the singular voice of moral authority within the family.

Similar to the system of Governor Bellingham and Wilson in the colony, Theobald also becomes the moral arbiter of the Buttersby Rectory. We have seen that the townspeople lack the ability of any decision-making when it comes to Hester's punishment. The only thing the community could do is to be indignant and show their allegiance to the "covenant to assist the sovereign" (Hobbes 190). This is also found in the Pontifex household given the fact that Theobald achieves this hyper-individuation through the fervent allegiance of Christina. In light of this, we can say that the "maximum individuation" both the governor and the patriarch enjoy is ironically built upon a performative allegiance making them "the person who exercises power" in such a system (Foucault, *Psychiatric power* 80): one with spectacle and the other one with the rod.

In light of this unwavering devotion to the religious doctrine, and in reference to the previous passage of Mr Pontifex's preferences, what he deems right or wrong, become codified as truths and thus sustain their position as dominant in the family for generations. As the father's preferences are elevated to moral absolutes, and since "punishing the morally culpable is intrinsically good" (Moore 29), the fathers are consequently fraught with the potential for intense, to use Michelle Brown's words, "ethical generosity" whenever they act (80). From a Foucauldian perspective we can argue that the patriarchs at Buttersby reach what is termed by Foucault in *Society Must Be Defended* as "the insurrection of subjugated knowledges" (10) in reverse. Put in simple words, the dominant and subjective interpretation of St. Paul's teaching negates any alternative reading of the Apostle through what we can call hermeneutics hegemony.

Given that "the desires of those with more power are likely to prevail over the desires of those who have less" (Hindess 26) what results is essentially a sacralization of the fathers' preferences. Consequently, the children's natural inclinations are effectively suppressed and their individuality is eventually subsumed. Butler argues that "in those

days people believed with a simple downrightness [...] It had never so much as crossed [their] mind to doubt the literal accuracy of any syllable in the Bible” (51). This makes the book not only a tool to legitimise the father’s position but also a biopolitical instrument that actively produces and sustains the psychological conditions necessary for its perpetuation. In the Foucauldian sense, the Bible functions as a truth dispositif because its power is of truth, it is organized in such a way that it is the truth itself that constrains and not the fathers per se (*On the Government* 99).

The aforesaid is brought to life in the novel through the character of Theobald, once a child and now Ernest’s father. Overton talks extensively about the way(s) Theobald becomes a product of his father’s, George, oppressive legacy and how he, Theobald, unwittingly perpetuates the cycle of authoritarian/religious control to eventually become the same judgemental image of the man he once despised. Overton contests that George’s parental authority

[W]as too profound and too much without break for him (Theobald) to become fully alive to it, and come to an understanding with himself. Opposition had never got him anything he wanted yet, nor indeed had yielding, for the matter of that, unless he happened to want exactly what his father wanted for him. If he had ever entertained thoughts of resistance, he had none now, and the power to oppose was so completely lost for want of exercise that hardly did the wish remain; there was nothing left save dull acquiescence as of an ass crouched between two burdens. (33-34)

What we see here in the quote is how Theobald, as a son, is positioned in a marginalised position in relation to his father. Theobald is compelled to internalise this system that propagates obedience and the sanctity of parental authority as immutable truths. Because

George eliminates any other cognitive alternatives, Theobald, as the abused, carries the abuse, through internalization, as natural order. In fact, the quote underscores the cost of this dynamic as Butler speaks of it in terms of “the power of will-dangling and will-shaking” that eventually crushes Theobald’s individual desires. Theobald is in this sense a subject of religious discourse. By eventually subordinating to the just and the true, the true becomes conformity, and in itself becomes his reality. In so doing, Theobald grants to the truth the right to say: you have to “accept me because I am the truth” and “the ‘you have to’ internal to the truth, immanent to the manifestation of the truth” (Foucault, *On the Government* 97). It should be emphasized however that this force later becomes both “liable to abuse” and is “continually made so great an engine of torture” by Theobald himself (Butler 29).

As the evidence indicates, this striking outcome we perceive in Theobald is the byproduct of a series of enforced enactment of specific truths. That is to say, as a child, he has been required, “under certain conditions and with certain effects”, to participate in an alethurgy where sons are forced to “carry out” certain truth acts (Foucault, *On the Government* 92) that essentially helps the parents “check the first signs of self-will” in order to break then while the “children are too young to offer serious resistance” (Butler 26). Traumatic as it is, this abusive cycle mirrors the Pontifex intergenerational subject formation and its capillary interventions, the devices on which it relies, and eventually its endless reproduction mechanisms of law, taboo, and censorship (Foucault, *History of Sexuality V.1* 84). With George and Old Pontifex we have the rod as truth on the one hand. On the other, this hermeneutic hegemony reaches its peak, as well its breaking point, with our protagonist as Theobald considers scriptures as rod.

Butler henceforth continues to sketch this harrowing image of lost childhoods. Essentially, Ernest, Theobald’s son, and especially his early years are often discussed in

the novel in relation to religious catechism. Because he has become a wretched father that has been forced into this role, which is an uncongenial one for him, Theobald's pious system encloses Ernest in a bubble where religion reigns supreme. As a result, catechism holds our protagonist in a kind of cognitive captivity. To reinforce this argument, let's see how Theobald's inadequacy as a father in the following: "[b]efore Ernest could well crawl he was taught to kneel; before he could well speak he was taught to lisp the Lord's prayer, and the general confession" (Butler 82). This quote shows how religious indoctrination is put first in relation to developmental readiness. Moreover, it perfectly illustrates what Foucault terms in *Discipline and Punish* as "disciplinary signal system" (166) in the sense that what we see with Theobald is a pre-programmation so Ernest would respond to ritualised cues. Obedience is therefore signaled through a hijacking of both the son's body and the mind: kneeling is preferred over crawling, lisping the Lord's name and confession over language acquisition. It is safe then to suggest here that we are dealing with a kind of catechistic predation where Ernest becomes a prey to "prearranged codes" that Theobald inherited from George. As a result, Ernest begins to obey whatever he is ordered to do; his obedience must be "prompt and blind" and any sign of indocility would be a crime (Foucault, *Discipline* 166).

Weaving together elements of religious teachings, Ernest's father's stringent disciplinary measures mirrors Foucault's "instrumental coding of the body" (*Discipline* 153) as it also touches on his education and much of the books he reads. Butler mentions that "[b]efore he [Ernest] was three years old he could read and, after a fashion, write. Before he was four he was learning Latin, and could do the rule of three sums" (82-83). Butler then goes on to question all of the aforementioned, "How was it possible that these things could be taught too early?" (82). This rhetorical question perfectly exposes how Theobald's system is essentially perverse as he violently inverts his son's natural growth

into a blank space to plant his inherited religious dogma. Accordingly, and for the sake of our analysis, the answer to this question could be worded as follows: this intense and premature indoctrination shows how religion becomes an all-consuming discourse imposed on the protagonist as “truth acts” from this early age. Ernest finds himself in a dense web of religious practices and convictions, which manifest themselves prescriptively in his consciousness. That is to say, by compelling Ernest to engage in acts such as kneeling, praying, and confessing, Theobald tries to draw a certain correlation between two major obligations: “to believe on the one hand”, and “to explore the secrets of [Ernest’s] heart on the other” (Foucault, *On the Government* 341-342).

Significantly, given that power works most effectively when on the mind when it targets the body, the “truth acts” are applied to the physical being. Critically, the emphasis on the physical rituals of kneeling, sitting through sermons, espoused by the verbal act of reciting “family prayers being repeated night and morning, week by week, month by month, and year by year” (Butler 92), eventually create a habitual compliance and a sense of duty and submission to a being other than one’s true self. Because disciplining the body becomes the getaway to reach Ernest’s soul, once his body goes through the aforementioned, the child’s soul is easily colonized. The soul, then, is not a preexisting entity but rather a construct that “is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those punished” (Foucault, *Discipline* 29). Fundamentally, the way children behave are interpreted and construed as either obedient or disobedient. By making the child’s behaviours and his internal aspects aligned, his subjective aspect is thus deconstructed.

The narrator explains that children are nurtured with a premature awareness of sin and moral deficiency. Fed the idea that “wickedness at birth was but very imperfectly wiped out at baptism, and that the mere fact of being young at all has something with it

that savours more or less distinctly the nature of sin” (Butler 34), children, as a result, before having a developed sense of self and understanding of morality, have a distorted idea of self-will. For them, it becomes “one of the devil’s favorite devices for luring people to their destruction” (Butler 36) which results in the child creating a kind of panoptic conscience. Given that natural impulses trigger self accusation, Ernest is compelled to habitually engage in a ritual of self-examination and admission of guilt, turning himself into an apparatus to reproduce Thebald’s doctrines.

Once this idea is cast through a Foucauldian lens, it becomes evident that Theobald’s insistence on what we could call “canonical bits of knowledge” about religion from an early age are meant to be used as a basis for constructing a gap that is beyond Ernest’s ability to bridge (*History of Sexuality V.1* 30). Put simply, and similarly to the protagonist of *The Scarlet Letter*, there is an exercise of power over the child’s own consciousness; this power shapes and creates him with the intent of making him aligned with the rules of decorum within the household and eventually society as large. Since Foucault argues that the institution of the family regularly call on discourses from society at large (Duschinsky and Rocha 7), these religious teachings allow Theobald “to link an intensification of the intervention of power to a multiplication of [religious] discourse” (*History of Sexuality V.1* 30).

Just like the children of the colony, the question at the end of the mentioned passage further illustrates how no age is considered “too early” to obstruct, distort, and restrict individuality. By superimposing ideological contents and limitations, similarly to Hester, religious instruction is not a path to moral guidance but a means of subjecting Ernest to the rigidity of Victorian societal expectations, reinforcing Foucault’s view of religion as a tool of power that frames what is accepted as “truth”; one that propagates

punishment as “morally accepted and technically useful” (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* V.1 21).

In the matter Butler notes that whenever Ernest’s “attention flagged or his memory failed him”, he is reminded that he is “an ill weed which would grow apace, unless it were plucked out immediately” (82). Butler then highlights that Ernest is convinced that “the only way to pluck it out was to whip him, or shut him up in a cupboard, or dock him of some of the small pleasures of childhood” (Butler 82). The aforesaid shows the interrelation between religion and punishment indoctrinated into Ernest from an early age. By whipping his son for not reciting prayers properly, Theobald is establishing procedures to control and his procedures serve the purpose of mitigating perceived threats that could harm that discourse (Foucault, *Order of Discourse* 210).

This intergenerational transmission of the “Religious Moral and Social Duties” (Butler 19) from Old John to George to Theobald ultimately results in an agonising childhood for Ernest. From this perspective, the father(s) becomes a constituted agent whose worldview is merely an extension of the broader social expectations. Given that the institution of the family is an integral one regarding what should be promoted as “truth” and what should be suppressed as a perceived “error”, Theobald, just like his father and grandfather, aims at reducing Ernest’s individuality. Simply because for him life is a clearly delineated either-or proposition: either one follows religious values, or one follows oneself and the latter is often espoused with the notion of self-will and Theobald “possesses a simple, gloomy philosophy on child-raising” (Butler 82). Butler explains that “[t]he first signs of self-will must be carefully looked for, and plucked up by the roots at once before they had time to grow. Theobald picked up this numb serpent of a metaphor and cherished it in his bosom” (82). Through this adopted philosophy, the text demonstrates how Theobald, rather than promoting his son’s personality growth,

instead uses his paternal power to move Ernest closer to an “unobtrusive life of self-denial and devotion to God’s glory” (Butler 52).

Under such circumstances, the Pauline doctrine becomes a powerful governing force within the family for generations. To achieve the desired result, it is used by all the parents as both an “objectivising” and a “subjectivising” device. Consequently, and according to Foucault’s suggestions, the making of the domicile subject is achieved through what he calls “dividing practices”. According to Foucault’s historical analysis in *The Subject and Power*, dividing practices are a key tactic used by the bourgeoisie to fragment and subdue social movements challenging their power. In the same manner, this division takes place in the family both between the child and the others like siblings and peers as well as internally within the child (326), and the latter is dependent on the former.

In order to grasp this concept fully, let’s consider how the author of *The Way of All Flesh* makes this representation through the way fathers raise their children. Butler highlights this by writing: “to parents who wish to lead a quiet life I would say: Tell your children that they are very naughty-much naughtier than most children. Point to the young people of some acquaintances as models of perfection and impress your own children with a deep sense of their own inferiority” (Butler 27). The first obvious thing about this quote is its imperative tone. Each order (tell, point to, impress) showcases the fundamental mechanisms underlying the whole child-rearing system in the Pontifex family which, as has been highlighted so far, build on doctrinal absolutism. In addition to this, we can easily detect that physical scolding (the rod) is not enough as it is accompanied by a comparative degradation. To be compared in terms of naughtiness creates an artificial hierarchy. As it is a system that primarily finds its foundation on manipulation, self-esteem is essentially distorted by instilling a sense of inferiority in the

child. This process finds its basis in the way the fathers undermine their children by comparing them unfavourably to their peers or even to the other obedient siblings.

It is necessary to keep in mind that the line that separates the naughty from the supposedly non-naughty child is in part defined by the fathers. “You carry so many more guns than they do that they cannot fight you”, Butler continues, “This is called moral influence, and it will enable you to bounce them as much as you please” (27). Revealing an asymmetrical warfare, Butler exposes how parenting in the novel is not based on ‘discipline’ but more on occupation. In this war, children are systematically disarmed because the parents’ will is easily imposed on their children by deciding their behaviours, way of being, acting, and speaking through arbitrary violence; “bounce them as much as you please”. All of this is achieved through leveraging a distorted interpretation of the Pauline doctrine that separates him from his fellow beings by dividing individuals according to their conformity and deviance from their ‘true’ identity. Through this, subjectivising experiences and individuations are divided into ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’, what Foucault calls dividing practices through which people are separated on the basis of conformity or deviance from the norm. Thus struggles are not only against certain ways of individuations but also against separating individuals from individuals.

By labelling them as “naughty” in reference to someone else who is “perfect”, the child gradually starts perceiving certain aspects about himself, including his impulses, actions, independent thoughts and desires, as something that is opposite to those of, to use Foucault’s words, the “good boys” (*Subject and Power* 326). Consequently, the child finds himself constrained and confined within a predetermined framework. Shaped by the weighty parental as well as social expectations, the child’s potential is therefore limited as he is confined in an inflexible mould that eventually restricts their ability to

think critically, express themselves freely, and explore the full range of human experience.

This outer differentiation, of one from the other, cultivates an inevitable deep internalised conflict within the child, and this becomes evident through Ernest's character, as he constantly perceives himself as an individual who possesses a deep-seated belief in "his own depravity" (Butler 122). Undoubtedly, such a belief is the consequent result of the naughty/perfect dichotomy imposed upon him by his parents. This inner conflict materialises itself when Ernest, willingly, draws the line between two Ernests: the "Ernest that dwelt within him" and the "Ernest of which he was conscious" (122). Reflecting a distorted self-perception, this distinction between the two is a reflection of his natural inclinations and the imposed asceticism. Usually, the child equates the former with adjectives such as "dumb" and this reduced state of consciousness, if not indispensable, is at any rate favourable to conformity as it becomes self-cancelling and self-defeating.

Although Ernest tries to keep his action aligned as much as possible with the teachings of his father, oftentimes he finds himself facing his father as accused. Although trying to be immune to all the whipping and the way he is treated by his father, there are moments when Ernest, being alone and overwhelmed by his feelings, starts to have an internal conflict. This inner conflict becomes central to Ernest's character arc. Raised to believe that "the more he disliked a thing the greater the presumption that it was right," he struggles between the "outer" self moulded by his father and authority figures and his authentic "inner" self, the "dumb Ernest". By splitting the child both within and without into two labels, mainly the acceptable and the unacceptable, the division becomes instrumental in providing the family with its primary mechanism for "exercising its internal power or managing its economy" (326).

Foucault suggests these practices within the family contribute to an “economy” of power, where the moral governance of children enables the family to maintain control and order. This economy is visible in how Butler describes the power dynamic between parents and children. By positioning themselves as moral authorities who “carry so many more guns” than their children, parents establish an asymmetrical relationship that is both emotionally manipulative and physically incapacitating for the child and indeed, “never was there a little mortal more ready to accept without cavill whatever he was told by those who were in authority over him” (Butler 122).

Additionally, the mentioning of “the rod” holds a significant role as it elucidates that the disciplining of the disobedient child is only achieved via physical punishment. Since “discipline” refers to the conduct imposed on a limited group of individuals in a contained space (Lawlor and Nale 486), the rod, then, in this context has an important role in the father-son axis. It becomes the particular instrument and means employed on the children by the fathers to produce the desired result. From a Foucauldian perspective, the “rod” becomes the “practical rationality” used that is fundamentally “governed by a conscious goal”, that is maintaining moral order within the confines of the family (*Space, Knowledge, and Power* 364).

Similar to the way the spectacle of shame in *The Scarlet Letter* is conceptualised, the use of the rod, both as a literal and figurative tool, also becomes endorsed by a collective moral and societal force. Both of them become institutionalised concepts that are deeply ingrained within a cultural framework. Hawthorne for instance illustrates how public shaming becomes a communal event, “a blessing on the righteous colony of Massachusetts, where [truth] is dragged out into the sunshine!” (82). Likewise, the function of the rod becomes more than just a disciplinary tool. It embodies a broader moral consensus about the child’s behaviour and the sanctity of parental authority.

Overton, in showing how the rod's practicality is not questioned but rather hailed by its effectiveness in producing compliance, mentions that Mr. Pontifex "thrashed his boys two or three times a week and some weeks a good deal oftener, but in those days fathers were always thrashing their boys" (Butler 26). Evidently, the quote shows the comparatively exceptional acceptance and naturalness of "thrashing" one's child. Mirroring the same image we have seen in Hester's spectacle, the appeal to communal norms reframes violence as a "blessing" and thus a reasonable exercise of authority. Complementing the aforementioned discussions, Foucault highlights how truth operates as more than a simple statement of fact, in this context "thou shalt not commit adultery" and "to spare the rod is to spoil the child". Rather, it necessitates a commitment and fidelity that manifests in external practices, the spectacle and thrashing one's child, in order to reinforce its authority and ultimately suppress dissent. Foucault writes in *On the Government*:

There is what could be called the regime of truth that revolves around acts of faith, that is to say, acts of truth that constitute acceptance-commitment, adherence-fidelity with regard to certain contents that have to be considered true, acceptance commitment that does not consist merely in affirming the truth of these things in and for itself, but must also give some external guarantees, proofs, authentications in accordance with the number of rules of conduct or ritual obligations. (102)

By the same logic we find in Hawthorne's narrative, the fathers in Butler's believe in what Fritz Heider refers to as the "ought forces" of their moral community (Darley 2). Similar to the spectacle, not "to spare the rod" becomes a manifestation of a commitment that further insulates the act as well as the actor from critique. This is voice in the way Old John rationalises the act by saying, "it is easy to have juster views when everyone

else has them” (Butler 26). What is important to consider is how, through this scene, the act of “thrashing” becomes intricately blended into the very fabric of society and merges as a symbolic incarnation of justice itself, serving as a testament to the shared values and the unending pursuit of equilibrium. In other words, the “truth” operates as a force that compels acceptance through its intrinsic alignment with reality and logic. As a result, the way both the spectacle and the rod are perceived by their respective cultures eventually enables them to have a dual function as their use becomes both “ethically normative” as well “ethically applied” (Banks 25) which in a way grants “to the truth the right to say: you must accept me because I am the truth” (Foucault, *On the Government* 95)

In another passage, Overton shows how the patriarch strips the act from its negative connotation by highlighting that “moral guilt or blamelessness [...] has nothing to do with the result”. Here, he is referring to the psychological impact of these practices on the child’s psyche. He continues by saying that moral guilt rather hinges on “whether a sufficient number of reasonable people placed as the actor was placed would have done as the actor has done” (Butler 26). This attitude highlights how the act is far from incidental but rather conventional and rooted in what society considers as moral. Besides, Butler continues by saying that “fortunately or unfortunately results have nothing whatever to do with the moral guilt or blamelessness of him who brings them about; they depend solely upon the thing done, whatever it may happen to be” (26). Once more, this particular quote shows a moral myopia as morality here is completely divorced from the outcomes punishment brings on the child. Put simply, obedience becomes the metric of morality and as long as this desired end is achieved, the means is henceforth justified. As for the child, his suffering is rendered inconsequential, as internalising obedience is deemed a necessary sacrifice that serves the fathers.

Despite its repressiveness, religion is depicted as an important component in shaping the Victorian middle-class identity (Reader 172). Given that the family represented “a noble social institution, upon whose continuance depended all that was fine and stable in British civilisation” (Beales 343), questioning the religious beliefs that constituted it was consequently seen a threat to this stability. As family is essentially situated within the web of other institutions including “the school, workshop, street, quarter, parish, church, police, and so on” (Foucault, *Abnormal* 58), the Victorians were convinced that the stability of society was dependent on the stability of the family and therefore, it was so highly valued and protected (Tosh 78-80).

1.3. “Chappel is a discipline”: a Practice of EveryDay Life in Indignation

As *Indignation* hurtles towards its tragic ending, and after a plethora of misfortunate events, Marcus chillingly admits that “[t]hat Ziegler was a mistake, I was certain—the final mistake. Not malevolent Flusser, the college misanthrope, but kindly Ziegler—he was the destiny that now hung over me” (Roth 199-200).

If this confession suggests something that would be the following: Marcus’s troubles with Winsburg’s authority has nothing to do with Flusser Bert, his first roommate with whom he has had a dispute and eventually ended up moving into Neil Hall. The quote insinuates that Marcus’s ultimate downfall is actually the result of his entanglement with another student called Marty Ziegler. Who, then, is this Ziegler and why is he considered by the protagonist as the fatal blow that leads him to be “[t]hrown out, drafted, sent to Korea, and killed” (Roth 88) ?

In the previous chapter, we have discussed how Dean Caudwell summons Marcus to his office and how the latter finds his life logged in i a pad in front of the former. After he has been called in, Marcus reveals to Sonny Cottler that the meeting results in some disagreements, an “altercation” with Dean Caudwell. It has been highlighted in the

previous chapter that the meeting is essentially about problems concerning Marcus's accommodations. Nonetheless, things escalate to a "dispute over chapel attendance between the Dean and [Marcus]" (Roth 119) that eventually reveals the workings of the religious power governing the institutions of Winesburg College. What is of interest here is that when Cottler hears about the chapel, flabbergasted, he disapprovingly tells Marcus: "Oh, that was a big mistake you made, bringing up chapel with Caudwell" (122), reflecting the importance of the assignment to the Dean. Cottler then tells Marcus that Dean Hawes D. Caudwell is regarded by everyone as "the idol of this place" and "the greatest exponent on the planet of 'the Winesburg tradition'" (122).

Equating him with such titles, Dean Caudwell's authority is thus elevated to a nearly sacrosanct level. In addition, what Cottler's discourse highlights is the fact that there is a "ruthless insistence" upon obedience to the conventional pattern of conduct within the institution. In other words, Cottler cautions Marcus that complaining to Dean Caudwell on the validity of chapel attendance is but a clear "variation from the prescribed conduct", one that the Dean finds "annoying and irritating and results in savage retaliation" (Stearns 219). Conduct here is understood as the interplay of leading, being led, and self-leading (Foucault, *Security* 193). Such a situation has brought inevitable tension between the two as Marcus is not only resisting obedience to the religious requirement, which brings with it an assertion of his autonomy as an atheist, but also rejects the external influence by refusing to be shaped or governed by the expectations imposed upon him by the college. Something that the Dean does not approve of as he considered him as someone who has strayed away from the "true" and become estranged, and therefore, in need of a conversion experience.

The aforesaid is indeed depicted and evidenced by the Dean's response to Marcus's innocuous answer "I get along just fine" to the question about how he lives

without any religious or spiritual guidance. Marcus explains that once he utters those words, tension escalates, “I had begun to rile him up, I could see, and in just the ways that could do me no good” (Roth 94). Therefore, the backlash that Cottler warns Marcus about shifts the Dean’s position/duties within the college from just an administrative figure to a quasi-religious gatekeeper of the college’s values. As far as chapel is concerned, his duties are ostensibly tied to moral and institutional rectitude, making his protective actions not merely administrative but also sacramental.

In addition, the manner in which Cottler warns Marcus about “meet[ing] this guy head-on about upholding the Winesburg tradition” and how “he’ll make [Marcus] into mush” (122) echoes the same fate we see with the cases of Hester and Ernest and how their “head-on head” confrontation with their rigid systems/figures results in their eventual punishment. Accordingly, what we have in all three cases are supposed dissenters whose actions threaten religious ideological structures. It goes without saying then that the Dean is also an enforcer of a regime. The same way Governor Bellingham and the Pontifex patriarch(s), the Dean holds the same positional authority and he exercises it over a group of people “with respect to certain spheres of conduct”. Moreover, as everyone at Winesburg equates the Dean with titles such as “idol” and “greatest exponent”, in this manner the students could be seen as “constituencies” who “acknowledge the need for such positions to coordinate conduct in social life” (Connolly 111). Consequently, the Winesburgian tradition both spatial and temporal epitomized by its mandatory chapel attendance and “the imposing Christian fraternity houses with their fieldstone façades and castlelike doors” (Roth 21), become a mirror to the Puritan ideals in *The Scarlet Letter* and the Victorian religious catechism in *The Way of All Flesh*, is designed to instill a sense of duty and submission into its students.

However, before we go deeper into this comparison, it is first important to highlight the regime found in Dean's "planet". So far, we have established that a regime usually reflects a reality in reference to a certain power of separation between truth and error. When Hester and Ernest are positioned as adversaries within their respective systems, what is defined as "truth" is a well structured homogenous identity that identifies them as rule-breakers in reference to their actions that are also interpreted as rule-breaking. From a Durkheimian perspective, what/who rules over the colony and the family is characterised by a "hyper centralised" or "unilateral" authority. Put simply, it is an absolute power and its "constitution [...] necessarily has the effect of raising the one who wields it above the rest of humanity, making him superhuman". What Durkheim is highlighting in his line of argument is that "wherever the government takes this form, the one who controls it appears to people as a divinity" (*Two Laws* 305). Hence, what enables us to develop new ways of understanding, engaging with, and investigating their transgressions and their punishment is the religious adherence that is prevalent in both settings. Simply put, religion is what specifies the constraints and modalities required of both subject and object to enter the positivity of reality and engage in a set of possible relations. According to Durkheim's stance, truth-conditions become extremely stable and secure, simply because they are situated in a highly specific and idiosyncratic matrix of religious circumstances.

In both *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Way of All Flesh*, the most obvious truth, and accordingly the most essential, emerges from religious texts. As highlighted previously, religious texts like the Ten Commandments and Pauline doctrine become the ultimate source of truth used by both the governor and the patriarch because of two fundamental factors. On the one hand, the texts are related to a transcendental, and infallible force, which grants the truth an unquestionable position. On the other hand, those who believe

in those texts see any defiance as an insult to the integrity of the community. McBride notes that this usually provokes both moralistic anger and the urge to punish the offender which in itself is an indicator of “the authority and legitimacy, hence stability, of a regime” (148).

This brings us to a conundrum because Winesburg is a secularized institution. Nonetheless, it is mentioned that chapel service is still held, and more importantly, its attendance is a mandatory task, and Marcus is being questioned because he refuses to attend. What we have then is a paradoxical image: a secularised institution that supposedly relies on secularized underpinning mandating preaching the word of God as a prerequisite for the graduation of its students. This reliance on “one of the last vestiges of the early days” (Roth 79), demonstrates how the institution has not fully disentangled itself from its religious heritage and reconciled with its secular aspirations. This suggests that its secular identity is, in part, performative since it continues to rely on the moral framework provided by Christianity.

This co-existence of these two apparently antagonistic concepts creates a confusing and ambiguous environment for Marcus. It becomes more confusing when he who does not “tolerate organized religion [...] or the clergy or even believe in the divinity” (Roth 104), finds himself being subjugated to them. In fact, apart from getting away from his father’s “unreasonable strictures”, transferring from Robert Treat to Winesburg is fueled by his aspiration to be free from the “kosher” shackles. Given that Marcus has no prior idea of “the beliefs with which youngsters were indoctrinated as a matter of course” (80). Marcus’s indignation becomes perceptible in the following passage that is worth quoting at length:

I objected strongly to everything about attending chapel, beginning with the venue. I didn’t think it fair to have to sit in a Christian church and

listen for forty-five or fifty minutes to Dr. Donehower or anyone else preach to me against my will in order for me to qualify for graduation from a secular institution. I objected not because I was an observant Jew but because I was an ardent atheist. Consequently, at the end of my first month at Winesburg, after having listened to a second sermon from Dr. Donehower even more cocksure about “Christ’s example” than the first, I went directly from the church back up to the campus and headed for the library’s reference section to sift through the college catalogues collected there, to look for another college to transfer to, one where I could continue to be free of my father’s surveillance but where I would not be forced to compromise my conscience by listening to biblical hogwash that I could not bear being subjected to. (Roth 80)

What stands out significantly in the preceding quote is two aspects that need further analysis. The First of which is that Marcus, once compared to the other two characters, becomes the most outspoken about rejecting the ideological impositions, authoritarian rules, and institutional control. His response to Dean Caudwell marks a noteworthy departure from the attitude of the other two characters. While Marcus critiques the overreach of the religious authority and considers them unfair and unjust to his intellectual independence, Hester and Ernest’s responses to their imposed systems tilt more toward submission and internalized guilt while still having an appeal to Scriptures.

For instance, Hester “never battled with the public, but submitted *uncomplainingly* to its worst usage; she *made no claim upon it*, in requital for what she suffered” (Hawthorne 236; emphasis is mine). In addition, despite the possibility of having Dimmesdale be equally penalised, Hester decides to entirely remain silent and shoulder the burden alone. “It is too deeply branded” she declares, “Ye cannot take it off.

And would that I might endure his agony as well as mine!” (101). Unlike Marcus who is unbound by religious frameworks, Hester’s acceptance of her status as a sinner reflects a worldview that this status is inescapable and it would help her attain penance. Sinner as she might be, she still believes in a “Heavenly Father” whose divine judgment is absolute.

Similarly, and up until his prison days, Ernest’s unworldliness reasserts itself whenever he contemplates the otherworldly power epitomized by St. Paul. In one particular episode at Cambridge, after a sermon by the preacher Rev. Gideon Hawke about “give[ing] up ALL for Christ’s sake”, Ernest promises himself to give up even minor indulgences like tobacco. Reasoning that St. Paul would have forbidden it had it been available during his time, Ernest becomes “ready to accept without cavill whatever he was told by those who were in authority over him” (Butler 123). Similarly to Hester, Ernest’s willingness to submit underscores a worldview where religious authority becomes trusted and revered to the extent of guiding one’s behavior through unquestioned adherence.

Given the striking similarities between Hester and Ernest, it is quite impossible to neglect the idea that Marcus’s declared and “ardent” atheism and objection to religious requirements is voiced because he is aware that religious authority at Winesburg is not something that is supposedly sacred or more or less does him any good. His objection, by contrast, reflects an epistemic attitude that privileges one’s intellectual freedom and critical inquiry. This counter-conduct to religious authority, as Foucault understands it, surfaces because there is a conflation of power and truth. Given that he sees biblical teaching as “hogwash” and a hindrance to his intellectual freedom, his rejection of the dogmatic teachings of the Bible is rooted in the application of a criterion of available justification, I will accept them only when they are rationally defensible. Unlike Hester and Ernest who find purpose in the religious authorities, Marcus’s “critique finds its

anchoring point in the problem of certainty in the face of authority” (Foucault, *Question of Critique* 39), that is the truth and its effects of power, and power about its discourse on truth. McBride surmises this idea in the following quote:

One common aspect of all religious orders is that they offer an understanding of suffering as redemption. As soon as states punish in their own name, not that of God, then they have taken on a task of great magnitude. Political orders that administer suffering in the form of punishment must also promise redemption from this pain through the realisation of a greater ideal. (11)

It is important to clarify that whenever we are talking about punishment within Marcus’s setting, the concept is not to be defined in its traditional retributive sense. Rather, it is referenced in terms of its regulatory meaning/function. For the purpose of this analysis, And we will henceforth be using it in the latter sense. With that being said, and contrary to what is mentioned in McBride’s quote, from Marcus’s perspective, Winesburg’s religious rituals do not offer redemption. In fact, it only invalidates the system and undermines its legitimacy.

Unlike Hester and Ernest who are depicted since the beginning of their narratives as no longer an autonomous “I” but rather as subjects to a power that entails domination, and domination here refers to “the conditions under which the subordinated have relatively little room for manoeuvre” (Hindess 97), Marcus’s disdain for and objection to the chapel requirement stems from his quest for independence. As it is crystallized in the quote, he sees no “redemption” at the cost of his autonomy, which has always been considered by him a fundamental right. As soon as his “rights are being impinged on” (Roth 100), Marcus “strongly” objects to that. To have this independence curbed by

religious imposition, as an atheist, in an ostensibly secular space, becomes unfathomable for him.

“ I don’t see where the college has the right to force me to listen to a clergyman of whatever faith even once, or to listen to a Christian hymn invoking Chritian deity [...] given that I am an atheist” (100). Marcus’s declaration addresses a question of legitimacy. The two other characters cannot question the legitimacy of the Bible because it dominates their milieus. In addition, it operates on “a consensus model” of society that believes it acts “rightly”, and the wrongdoer acts “wrongly” (Bean 17). In Marcus’s case however, the co-existence of the religious and secular creates an ideological paradox at the heart of the college pedagogical requirements. Marcus believes “he [Dean] was wrong and I was right” (Roth 114), highlighting that his overt insistence on religiosity allegedly undermines the college’s credibility and undercuts his/its authority. Unlike the two other narratives, at least from Marcus’s prism, this use of religion does not make sense as religious traditions conflate the concept of Winesburg supposed secularism.

Given what has been mentioned, one cannot immediately equate the religious truth to reality simply because, if we are to equate truth to religion, we have fragmented truths at Winesburg. In the words of Dean himself, “Everyone has a right to openly practice his own faith, and that holds true at Winesburg as it does everywhere else in this country” (Roth 92). Given that every student has his own faith, the singular unifying religious truth found in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Way of All Flesh* becomes so pluralistic and heterogenous (Christian, Jewish, Non-sectarian) in *Indignation*, the question here becomes a question concerning legitimacy more than it is a question of ‘religious’ truth. This is simply because the college creates a competing matrix of “truths”, none of which, logically speaking, can lay absolute claim to reality. What, then, makes the chapel attendance legitimate?

What can be deduced from Marcus's perspective is that, in order for the involvement of the Dean, and by extension the college's religious requirements, in his life to be legitimate, they must have "the *right* to do so". Moreover, their exercise of power "has to be recognized" or else its "legitimacy can be ascribed to incompetence" and "an excess of power" (Lorusso 1012). As far as Marcus's way of seeing things is concerned, unless the "Might" we see in the other two novels transforms into a "Right", to quote Rousseau, this legitimacy is indeed defected and "the dean is sticking his nose into my business in a way that I'm convinced he has no right to do" (Roth 114).

However, an intriguing aspect that demands our attention, and from which an answer to this conundrum can be derived, is that these sentiments of unfairness that Marcus is highlighting is by any means only felt by him. Once the "altercation" between the two reaches its peak, Dean Caudwell completely dismisses Marcus's objections as the one that are illegitimate. "In all my experience at Winesburg" Dean Caudwell says addressing Marcus, "I have never come across a student yet who objected to either of those requirements as infringements on his rights or comparable to his being condemned to laboring in the salt mines" (Roth 107).

What can be accumulated from this passage is that for Dean Caudwell the lack of prior objections puts Marcus in a rivalry position with a whole system, despite its heterogeneous nature, is still undeniably marked by a "homogenization of human activities" (Foucault, *History of Sexuality V.1* 90). In a Weberian fashion, the equating of conformity with consensus by the Dean insinuates that the illegitimacy stems not from the religious requirements but rather from Marcus's objection to it. Put simply, a legitimate order as understood by Max Weber entails "the prestige of being considered binding" (qtd.in Hermann 10). As the majority are silent about the requirement, or lack motivation to challenge it as it is the case, it ipso facto means a tacit consent. Therefore

the rule is considered valid. Moreover, the hyperbolic/satirical statement made by Caudwell at the end of his statement paints the requirements as mere reflection of a normal situation, a reality that no one has a problem with, consequently further trivialises Marcus's stance. "You display a fondness for dramatic exaggeration. It doesn't serve you well and is a characteristic you might want to reflect upon" as the Dean puts it while smiling "generously" (Roth 96).

Once deconstructed, Caudwell's views could be aligned with Carl Schmitt's conceptualization of the Friend-enemy dichotomy. In Schmittian understanding, to be the first one to openly object to the requirements, Marcus is singled out as the "disturber of peace" (*Concept* xxii) of the microstate of Winesburg. Here, the state is also defined in Schmittian terms as "a specific entity of people" (*Concept* 19). As a result, Marcus is branded as a "negatively valued person" (*Concept* xxii).

Despite being "a conventionally brought-up boy" (Roth 57), Marcus's divergence incurs antagonism not only to the Dean but to the system as a whole. As a result, he relegates himself to a status of existential otherness within Winesburg as not only "my enemy" (Dean's alone), but also "our enemy" (the state as a whole), since, as Raymond Aron suggests, "the details of what must be done and what must be thought are imposed by the collective conscience" (16). Accordingly, the dynamics between authority, punishment, and legitimacy are presented by Caudwell as the result of a "relationship rather than a unidirectional expression of force" (McBride 149) as Marcus paints it.

To make this idea clear, let us draw a comparison to the two other novels. We have shown previously that in Hawthorne's Puritan world, there is this deep and stringent intertwining of the individual faith with the collective purpose. Taking that the puritans are convinced that the church is their "route to salvation", the main reason they voluntarily take part in the religious ritual is to further those ends. Consequently, "the

welfare of the community [becomes] the magistrate's legitimate province" (Murphy 383). Intriguingly, the collective homogeneous response, though important, is still complementary to punishment's legitimacy and not a point of its departure.

It is the same with Butler's depiction of family. You thrash your children because it is mentioned in Paul's teaching, which consequently makes it legitimate. This reveals the populace's monolithic and indivisible expression of unity with the sovereign and hence the unity of the people with themselves. To put it succinctly, the question of legitimacy is never contested in the first place because there is a correspondence between the truth and its exercise through power. In addition to that, there is what Durkheim calls "social solidarity" that "mechanically" propels the advancement of both as an extension of the moral framework (*Division* 24).

Reflecting upon this standpoint, unlike Governor Bellingham and the Pontifex patriarch(s), Dean Caudwell is not equating the right to be involved in Marcus's life with a transcendent being in reference to a divine book. Dean is not seeking the "condition of possibility [...] in the primary existence of a central point". Rather, "it is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power" (Foucault, *History of Sexuality V.I* 93). In other words, the sovereign power that we have seen in the previous works that bases its judgements in its deistic view of the world "has been pushed aside" in *Indignation* (Schmitt, *Political Theology* 48). Instead of using the conception of the transcendence vis-à-vis the world, the Dean as we have mentioned earlier compares and contrasts Marcus vis-à-vis the other students, admittedly a man-made construction. When he highlights "the habitual obedience" to the requirements by "the bulk of the community" (Austin, 301), the Dean illustrates the utility of the perception and preference of Winesburg community/state. Consequently, he

illustrates how this friend-enemy distinction becomes the political, quasi-transcendental presupposition of the sovereign authority (Schmitt, *Concept of the Political* 26).

Given that “punishment can enforce the law” like we have seen with Hester and Ernest, but can also “undermine it”, the way Marcus’s objections demonstrate, McBride’s attestation that “what transforms punishment into an injustice is perception” becomes valid (McBride 148). Winesburg is actually aware of the fact that legitimacy depends on a preliminary form of appropriateness. According to Anna Maria Lorusso’s contention in her essay “Between Truth, Legitimacy, and Legality”, the students at Winesburg must follow the institution’s rules to make the exercise of power adequate. This in itself implies the preliminary assumption that there are and must be rules, and that social life is indeed based on certain ideological order. (Lorusso 1012).

Invoking once again McBride’s assertion that legitimacy is contingent upon relationships between the authorities and those who are subject to it, the Dean/college must present their authority in a balanced way. In other words, its presence needs to be perceptible and at the same time not overbearing and without an overinsistence upon itself (McBride 149). The aforesaid gives an excellent delineation of the college’s subtle way of cultivating its religious authority. This finds a striking application during Marcus’s meeting with the Dean.

Depicted in the novel as more of an investigation, before the Dean probes into the religious aspects of Marcus’s life, he reaches nearly all aspects of his life within and outside campus. This being the case, Dean asks about: accommodation, his studies, social life, fraternity pledging, and even dating life. “He motioned for me to take a seat in the chair across from his, and while returning to his side of the desk, he said amiably, “I wanted you to come in so we could meet and find out if I can be of any help to you in adjusting to Winesburg” (Roth 83). Despite the exhaustive probing into Marcus’s

personal affairs, the quote shows that the Dean does not wield power in the traditional sense of the word. Instead, his way of dealing with Marcus is geared towards directing and helping him. In other words, he is trying to know Marcus, his needs, temptations, habits, traits, to customise a solution according to Marcus's needs, making Dean "fundamentally a beneficent power [...] its only *raison d'être* is doing good" (Foucault, *Security* 115).

When Dean Caudwell asks, "Tell me in your own words, what seems to be the trouble?" it becomes evident that he is looking for individualized knowledge to help him individually. Dean's "power of care. It looks after the flock, it looks after the individuals of the flock, it sees to it that the sheep do not suffer, it goes in search of those that have strayed off course, and it treats those that are injured" (Foucault, *Security* 127).

Knowing that the college's "law must appear to be a necessity of things" and his "power must act while concealing itself beneath the gentle force of nature" (Foucault, *Discipline* 106), even though the Dean's frustration with Marcus stems not from the latter's objection to "a simple undergraduate requirement" (Roth 107), but essentially because that requirement is religious in its nature, he cloaks his rage under the statement of "What worries me is your outspoken rejection of long-standing Winesburg tradition" (Roth 107). While this may be true, this neutrality drops however in another passage to reveal an insistence on religious conformity. After Marcus tells him that "But I'm not living there, sir, because I don't have religious beliefs—if that is what you are suggesting in a roundabout way", the Dean curiously and immediately follows by, "Why is it, then?", showing an implicit discomfort with Marcus's non-adherence to Winesburg religious authority. Hence, his bureaucratic power acts as a response to and transformation of the 'Might makes Right' concept of power. He institutes a form of power that generalizes obedience and actualizes it on each individual within its economy. Given that this

“pastoral power is an individualizing power” (Foucault, *Society Territory, Population* 128), once Marcus actually defies the chapel requirement by hiring a proxy, he is dealt with accordingly. In other words, the Dean, just like Bellingham and the father in the other two novels, “the objective of the pastorate is men’s conduct” (195).

Consequently, what the Dean as well as the college do aligns with what Edward Said observes in *The World, the Text and the Critic* and how power necessitates grounding itself on neutralized discourse as well as “natural” foundations. Said attests that, usually, the exercise of control over people is not always done openly. Instead, it often, and systematically, clothes itself in “the language of truth, discipline, rationality, utilitarian value, and knowledge” to create an appearance of neutrality and inevitability (216).

From the perspective of McBride, Dean as “the modern sovereign must have a human face but must also be more than human to serve as the boundary of political order [...] must be simultaneously human but perfect; worldly yet superhuman” (61). At Winesburg henceforth, religious authority manifests itself through the institutional framing of chapel attendance as a benign “graduation requirement,” rather than as a coercive act of religious conformity. The strategic selection of the chapel’s location, not in “the college’s public halls but in a Methodist church *the most imposing church in town*” (Roth 80; emphasis is mine), as well as the fact that “the religious content of the sermons had been diluted into—or camouflaged as—a talk on a high moral topic, and the speakers were not always clergymen” (Roth 79), further distances the religious from the said secular college nonetheless part of it. This, even under protest, legitimizes the college’s authority by reinforcing the notion that its requirements are both rational and inevitable.

Accordingly, “the strict requirement that a student attend chapel, between eleven and noon on Wednesdays, forty times before he or she graduated” (Roth 79) mirrors the same rigid systems found in *The Way of All Flesh* and public shaming in *The Scarlet Letter*. Just as Ernest is conditioned through daily prayers and Hester is forced to wear the scarlet letter as a visible mark of sin, Marcus is obliged to sit in the chapel to listen to sermons about “How to Take Stock of Ourselves in the Light of Biblical Teachings” (Roth 79).

Moreover, and it has been shown in the first chapter, campus life at Winesburg and its spatial organization also shows the First is “laicization” of disciplinary techniques that shows “how to govern different groups, [...] how to govern one’s own body, how to govern one’s own mind” (Foucault, *What is Critique* 27). The way dormitory spaces are regulated, by assigning roommates based on their religious backgrounds, serves as a visible way of how religion is reincarnated in a secularised manner. Accordingly, the prominence of such fraternities create an environment where normalization becomes the primary instrument of control. These practices, ostensibly neutral, subtly integrate students into the institution’s religious ideological machinery, signaling the pervasive authority of Christian moral and social values. In the matter, de Certeau asserts in *The Practice of Everyday Life*:

The credibility of a discourse is what first makes believers act in accord with it. It produces practitioners. To make people believe is to make them act. But by a curious circularity, the ability to make people act—to write and to machine bodies—is precisely what makes people believe. Because the law is already applied with and on bodies, “incarnated” in physical practices, it can accredit itself and make people believe that it speaks in the name of the “real” (148).

The interplay of belief and practice becomes a mechanism for shaping students' actions and perceptions, ensuring external behaviors align with the institution's broader framework. The architectural dominance of these fraternity houses further reflects de Certeau's "writing on bodies," a metaphor for how spatial arrangements compel compliance through both physical presence and symbolic meaning.

The routine interactions within these spaces, from mandatory participation in its dinners and lunches to the quiet acceptance of its spatial hierarchies discipline the students' bodies into submission while simultaneously reinforcing the institution's legitimacy. By creating practitioners, students who internalize its framework like Sonny Cottler and Martyr Ziegler, the college ensures that belief in its authority is not only maintained but perpetuated through daily practice. Despite the fact that it is a performative compliance, it still reinforces the traditions.

Let us draw the parallels between two scenes where Cottler is convincing Marcus to just be part of the requirements. The same way Cottler normalises the fraternity system and actually tries to convince Marcus to join one, he once again convinces Marcus not to complain about chapel with Dean Caudwell. He tells him "who goes to chapel? You pay somebody to go for you and you never have to go anywhere near chapel" (Roth 122). Reflecting their first encounter when Marcus refuses to join the Jewish fraternity, Marcus tells Cottler " 'No,' [...] 'I don't believe in fraternities'" to which Cottler replies: " 'Believe in them? What is there to believe in or not believe in?'" (Roth 39). What the quote suggests here is the performative compliance of Cottler and apparently the other students that is based on both obeying and dismissing the tasks simultaneously. They join fraternities even if they do not believe in their core, they go to church even if by a proxy. This conscious awareness of the ways the workings of the Winesburg community/requirements makes students subjects in the sense, just like Hester, "to

someone else by control and dependence”, but also “tied to [their] own identity by a conscience or self knowledge” and Foucault says that both “suggest a form of power that subjugates and makes subject to” (*Subject and Power* 331). In other words, despite reducing the requirements into a superficial act by the students, their conduct is moulded through a dual mechanism, the spatial and the temporal disciplining of their bodies. By doing so, their involvement in those requirements guarantees a totalization of human subjects, which eventually, and unavoidably, sustain and reinforce those acts in a circular dynamic through a “self-controlled” body.

Conclusion

As a complementary chapter to the first one, the current one has detailed how punishment is more than just a reactive measure taken against the three protagonists across the three novels. In further comparison of the three novels, it becomes evident that punishment as an act is a dynamic ritual of power through which sovereignty, truths, and authority are reinforced, constructed, and legitimized respectively. Additionally, the provided evidence, for instance, has shown a fundamental point of contention concerning the whole stage that Hester has to endure operates as a public alethurgy where the divine law is reaffirmed through the infamous emblem of shame. It has been demonstrated that the spectacle, despite the Puritan discourse about achieving ‘moral justice’, is more about sustaining the rigid and theocratic regime in the colony. This pattern is furthermore highlighted in Ernest’s case and the Pontifex’s religious indoctrination. Similar to the spectacle, the catechism Butler’s protagonist receives also shows how it is specifically done to reinforce and reproduce the patriarchal order within the Pontifex household rather than just the ‘moral’ preparation of Ernest for life. In the final narrative at hand, while the idea of being under the religious thumb is undoubtedly present, Marcus’s case illustrates the complexity and nuances of Foucault’s understanding of politics of truth in

modern and secular settings. In fact, the novel lays bare a system that is analogous to Schmitt's notion of the secularization of theology. While we see religious systems dominating the two previous settings, Winesburg College's religious system is subtle as it is strategically linked to administrative/bureaucratic necessity. Regardless of the novel's supposed secular setting, religion in Roth's narrative is still propagated ubiquitously, often blending into the students' everyday life.

When the novels are put together and studied in a chronological order, what becomes obvious to us is how the function of punishment has shifted from divine retribution to reach institutional regulation while keeping its core unchanged. In other words, what we have in three novels is simply a liturgy of power illustrated in a performance that links Hester, Ernest, and Marcus to a system of religious hegemony. Each novel has presented us with a ritual that not only corrects but serves a hegemonic end epitomized in religious order. Whether it is the scaffold, the rod, or the Dean's office, each represents an altar and each declares the specific religious authority that administers each hegemony. Similar to the conclusion we have drawn in the first chapter of how the body remains the anchoring point of the power to punish, this second chapter has also revealed a continuity. Despite the fact that there is a shift from sovereign violence to disciplinary mechanisms, the latter is still steeped in the modalities of a regime that conditions one to naturalize, normalize, and legitimise violence. This violence, as we have illustrated, is applied to the subjects both physically and emotionally. While overt, visible religious authority is less visible in Marcus's college environment in comparison to the earlier settings of Puritan Boston or Victorian England, its influence remains embedded in the college's discourse which propagates moral discipline and conformity. In fact, religious morality is subtly embedded in the university's disciplinary systems in the form of academic requirements and the management of students' lives. Although it

may seem lenient, it still prioritizes religious conformity, obedience, and religious-institutional discipline as a “natural and legitimate” power (Foucault, *Discipline* 301).

As a conclusion, what this shift, this chapter, and specifically the last novel has revealed is that there is no such a thing as the decline of religious power/hegemony. Instead, what we have illustrated through the cases of the three protagonists is actually a mutation of that power/hegemony. In other words, and to use Schmitt’s words, what we have in the last novel is a “secularized theology” of the first one where the Winesburg system that is still erected on the same premise of the existence of an omnipotent being and an unchanged systematic structure imbued via a hierarchy that values the obedience of subjects. What makes the model of power illustrated in Roth’s narrative so interesting is the relocation of what is propagated in Hawthorne’s, as well as Butler’s, as the divine right to power. In Marcus’s case, the agent who holds this power, the Dean and the administration, still applies it through a ritual; the examination. It is safe then to conclude that the scaffold, the rod, and the office represent altars where each protagonist is baptized back to order, an order that is defined and redefined by those at the highest places of the hierarchy.

Chapter Three:

“Arise, Ye Who Refuse to be Bondslaves!”: The Aesthetics of Defiance in *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Way of All Flesh*, and *Indignation*

*“Where there is power, there is resistance and yet, or rather
consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority
in relation to power”*

____ *Michel Foucault, History of Sexuality Volume 1*

Introduction

When Foucault introduces his groundbreaking concept of power in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1*, he immediately sheds the light on a very important idea: “Where there is power, there is resistance” (95). This well-known statement made by him highlights two essential and often interrelated ideas. First and most important is the inseparability of the two concepts which essentially reflects the supposition of a relational existence between power and resistance. To him, the (ab)use of power consequentially leads to sparking the subjects’ natural tendency to resist. Given that power fuels resistance, resistance as a concept eventually cannot be understood as an independent entity that exists in a position of exteriority to power. Rather, it exists as a part of its internal dynamics. Thus, by definition resistance could be, according to Foucault’s discourse in his thesis in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1*, “spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent” (95).

Based on his further suggestion that states: “there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary” (95), Foucault refuses the idea that there is a central or a unified source of resistance. Accordingly, we can argue that while the word resistance in the English language might immediately signal words like protest and revolution, in this project endeavour, the word is taken in its French Foucauldian context simply because “*résistance*” carries more than just the mentioned connotation. In this context, the word essentially denotes a stubbornness or simply a strength of will as it is “distributed in irregular fashion” (96) across the entire power network.

Accordingly, Given that power within the three narratives exists in a relation, resistance must also be located within those very same fields of power relations as resistance also stems from the shared critique of society, discourse, and the formation of the individual subject. Fundamentally, as Foucault points, “the points, knots, or focuses of resistance are spread over time and space at varying densities, [...] mobilizing groups or individuals in a definitive way, inflaming certain points of the body, certain moments in life, certain types of behavior” (Foucault, *History of Sexuality V.1* 96). This shows how the historically constructed power relations, combined with discourses on truth, work not only to normalize and constrain human thought and behavior but also produce points of resistance through the “odd term” within those same relations (96). This means that resistance, as it is illustrated in the three novels and shall be analysed thoroughly in what follows, becomes something that disrupts or challenges the smooth operation of power.

According to this understanding of resistance, what we argue in this final chapter is that despite the highly controlled milieus depicted in the three narratives, the protagonists often find ways to carve out spaces within which they can assume their emancipation. Emancipation here, it must be understood, is not a total negation of power

and its restricting force or a total absence of constraints. Rather, it is an “antidiscipline”, as de Certeau calls it in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, that brings to light how those who are already caught in the nets of “discipline” engage in dispersed, tactical acts as a form of a covert resistance (xiv-xv). This idea is extremely relevant to analyzing resistance in *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Way of All Flesh*, and *Indignation* as the protagonists’ resistance is not always expressed through grand acts of rupture but often, in small and subtle ways.

Given that “no immensity is greater than details” (Foucault, *Discipline* 140), the focus therefore is going to be put on the minute particles of the power relations at the heart of the protagonists’ everyday life. Suggesting an analysis at the level of micro-interaction rather than power’s monolithic force, the protagonists’ subtlety and stubbornness creates moments of Otherness, as they are “accused either of doing ‘what nobody does’, or of not doing ‘what everybody does’” (Mill 71). Nonetheless, their stigmatization simultaneously allows the self, that is constituted by a power, to autonomously constitute its “own mode of laying out [its] existence” (Mill 70). This leads us to the final resolution of this thesis that suggests the hegemonic diagram of power in the three novels is not a fixed identity that defines the main characters. Instead, Hester, Ernest, and Marcus are in a constant state of becoming, negotiating, and reshaping their relationship to power.

In the realization of such a conclusion, we shall first highlight how oppression and social domination are not solely imposed unidirectionally through the characters of the Magistrates, the father, and the Dean. Using the framework of Foucault, Gramsci, and others, the first section explores exclusionary practices as undertaken by the oppressed, mainly the community, the mother, and the students. For the second part, we

shall illustrate how Hester, Ernest, and Marcus, while being enclosed in their Otherness, find their emancipation.

1. Hegemony of the Oppressed and the Othering of the “Dangerous Individual” in the Three Novels

So far, we have established that one central condition that the three characters mutually experience, despite their different settings, cultures, and systems, is that of being Othered. With a capitalized “O” to denote its theoretical significance, the term, in its broadest sense³, is often defined in relation to a binary opposition with one side being often privileged and the other generally marginalised.

In reference to the works at hand, given that there is this inclusion/exclusion, inside/outside opposition, the Other here is mainly a referent to the character who is perceived as inherently different and, more importantly, culturally rejected as s/he acts in manner that is neither belonging to nor compatible with the normative order of the milieu. Given that the setting of the novels are divided into mutually exclusive opposites with one being ordered, rational, and good, and the Other, also in reference to their discourse, embodies the chaotic, the irrational, and the demonized. Hence, the characters’ narratives represent a dynamic of exclusion that engenders marginality, sorts into categories, and creates associations. This again seems most articulate in the novels at hand as we have the Damned among the Elect, the prodigal son within the “spiritually minded” family, and the “ardent atheist” amidst a community of pseudo-religious conformists. This quality of strangeness, or rather recognised subversiveness is a reflection of the set limits for the discourses’ accepted sense of one’s identity.

John Stuart Mill’s observation in his book *On Liberty*, offers insight into this process. He attests that this Other is often referred to by the term “the devil” whose

³Both Spivak’s postcolonial theories of “othering” and “worlding” and Lacan’s psychoanalytic concept of the “big Other” employ binary oppositions to structure their analyses.

“individual spontaneity is hardly recognised by the common modes of thinking, as having any intrinsic worth, or deserving any regard on its own account” (59). Essentially, this spontaneity is rejected, Mill argues, because it forms no relation to the ideal(s) that the majority is committed to. Accordingly, this individual is seen as a troublesome and rebellious obstruction (59). In *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Way of All Flesh*, and *Indignation*, the Other becomes simply the representation of the character(s) who disrupts conformity and fails to produce docility. Put at its simplest, the othered character represents the Outside of the established order and what is deemed Other/Outside tends to frighten the majority. As a result, their presence in the ‘inside’ usually provokes exclusionary responses.

Following Mill’s conceptual framework, Foucault also argues in *The Order of Discourse* that, given that discourse is a site of power, it is therefore “controlled, selected, organised and redistributed” through the mechanisms of exclusion (210). In other words, exclusionary procedures become indispensable and inevitable simply because they “ward off” perceived dangers in order to “gain mastery over its chance events” (210). Consequently, this points to the broader implication that such a perception is an active process of differentiation that often projects negative connotations onto this Other because the characters identified as such are not compared in terms of commonalities but rather through stark and often extreme opposition.

Given that their punishment “refers [their] individual actions to a whole that is at once a field of comparison, a space of differentiation and the principle of a rule to be followed” (Foucault, *Discipline* 182), Hester’s, Ernest’s, and Marcus’s trials is what draws the line between them and the ‘average’ conformists. Unlike the latter, they are to be silenced, hated, subordinated, and perceived through a hegemonic lens that both defines and restricts their being. Therefore, and in the context of the three narratives, as

transgressing figures, they embody this binary in the sense that they are a projection of an image that the majority in their respective systems are simply not.

Let us consider, for instance, the following observation in Hawthorne's novel concerning its protagonist. "Every gesture, every word, and even the silence of those with whom she came in contact, implied, and often expressed, that she was banished, and *as much alone as if she inhabited another sphere*" (123-124, emphasis added). If anything is revealed in this quote it would be the idea that there is an orchestrated absence of human recognition. Looking at the quote, we can easily see that the protagonist is dealing with a conscious, extreme, and total case of Othering where even silence becomes a communicative approach to paint her as a "dangerous individual". Indeed, her case is one of an exclusion that is not only expressed through what is said and done, but also through micro-practices of everyday life where every "gesture", "word", and even "silence" speaks of a withdrawal of some sort. Moreover, "the other sphere" that she is claimed to be inhabiting also reveals that the banishment transcends its spatial framework as it becomes more of an ontological separation between her and the community. Revealing a systematic denial of ordinary human reciprocity, the quote, it must be highlighted, also resonates with the situations of both Ernest and Marcus since these two also are equated with adjectives like "naught" and "odd" respectively.

This pervasive relegation of these characters is not only characterised by an overt hostility that pushes them, physically and ontologically, to "another sphere". Rather, it is a profound erasure of the individual's voice, agency, and space within the whole. Another example from Butler's narrative shows how Ernest's deep-seated belief makes him believe in "his own depravity" (Butler 122) and how "the unbroken silences" of the roommates of Roth's protagonist make him believe that they "disapproved of [him] for some reason—because [he] was a Jew" (Roth 73), all attribute to their exclusion. An

exclusion that is more than just a form of physical banishment as it is an emotional exile. Therefore, the exclusion that we have here with protagonists is not necessarily physical and spatial, but they definitely experience a profound sense of existential loneliness.

This process of Othering, it must be highlighted, is not a fixed state but rather a recursive cycle that eventually sustains the dominance of the majority while simultaneously developing a cartography of what Foucault calls “the external frontier of the abnormal” (*Discipline* 183). In discussing what he calls “the domain of the abnormality” (*Abnormal* 55), Foucault situates the concept in relation to three main figures; each symbolises a deformity denoting behavioural deviance, and indicating a moral transgression. Accordingly, we have “the human monster”, “the individual to be corrected”; and finally, “the onanist” (xvii). Importantly, he attests that such figures are not discrete figures. Instead, their profiles frequently overlap and superimpose on each other (60-61).

Hence, akin to the notion of “truth”, abnormality, and ipso facto exclusion, operates within a “modifiable, and institutionally constraining system” (*Order of Discourse* 54). Therefore, the concept of othering in the novels is tied to how one discrete milieu (the colony/ the family/ the college) defines itself by a binary, distinguishing between what is normalized and adhered to and what is stigmatized and proscribed. Therefore, the three characters will be designated from now on as an instantiation of the “dangerous individual” (*About the Concept* 189).

Given that this “dangerousness”, as Foucault asserts, is predicated more at the level of the subject’s perceived “potentialities” and not only actual “acts”, these characters refer not exclusively to “someone who had actually violated a law, but as someone whose potential behavior had to be subject to control and correction” (*Abnormal* xxiii). One must suppose therefore that this correction is not merely for the sake of Hester,

Ernest, or Marcus, but is meant to function as an example for the body politic because they break or threaten to break with a nature that needs to be harmonized once again.

The word “nature” in our analysis does not reflect the word’s neutral descriptor but the constructed regime of truth regime. Following Foucault’s suggestion in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1*, the word must be understood as a normative concept as he establishes a link between nature and law while designating acts “contrary to nature” as “abominable” and an extreme form of acts “against the law” (38). Given what has been stated, inclusion is thus defined by means of conformity to this law, norm, and nature. Foucault further explains in *Abnormal* that given the fact that nature is defined by “the exacting and coercive role it can play” in the setting in which it is applied, it consequently “lays claim to power” (50). In addition, given that “power is not a commodity, not an institution, and not a structure” (Foucault, *History of Sexuality V.1* 193), focusing mainly on the technologies of power in relation to the figures of the sovereign (the magistrates, the father, and the Dean) and their authoritative role in maintaining order is both myopic and oversimplified.

Given that the governed embraces with a blind and uncritical enthusiasm this nature, domination therefore stems not from a solely top-down paradigm but also rests on the collusion of the dominated. In other words, the “natural” acquires authority and meaning only through “the institutional licensing of some persons as authorized to offer authoritative knowledge claims and the concomitant exclusion of others” (Fraser 20). Here lies the crux of our analysis: conformity sustains power, and deviation necessitates exclusion, a principle central to the experiences of the protagonists.

This shows how oppression is not a one-way imposition by a dominant class. Instead, oppression is largely invisible because it is encoded within institutions and discourses that appear as instruments of knowledge and not as sites of power.

Accordingly, this nature is constructed in the constant transition between the actions of the governors and those of the governed. Foucault says that in Greek the exercise of power is called “hegemony,” is just the fact of being in the position of leading others, of conducting them, and of conducting, as it were, their conduct—I will say: it is likely that hegemony cannot be exercised without something like an alethurgy” (*On The Government* 7).

According to Antonio Gramsci, hegemony as a concept is essentially defined as the exercise of *direzione*, which translates to leadership. He continues by saying that this leadership, both intellectual and moral, once exercised by a group of people, a particular structure of knowledge and a particular system of values become to be accepted as “general and universally applicable conceptions of the world”, and thus become intrinsic to the notion of hegemony (Fontana 140). In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci describes two ways for a group of people to have domination: by physical force, “command”, and through consensual submission of the very people who are dominated, and this latter is what he variously calls “leadership” or hegemony (Litowitz 518).

Essentially what is described here is a condition where there is a supremacy of a notion and this supremacy is not only achieved by force but rather through a consensual submission of the subaltern. In the novels, we have the spectators and their “scaffold service”, Ernest’s mother and her “confidential talks” with him, and the students of the Winesburg college who, while perhaps not fully embracing the routinized rituals and social expectations, still comply to avoid trouble and maintain their social standing. “A little detachment goes a long way at Winesburg. Keep your mouth shut, your ass covered, smile—and then do whatever you like” (Roth 122). When Cottler gives advice to Marcus, he has knowledge about the atmosphere, but he chooses conformity over potential repercussions. His advice shows how compliance perpetuates the repressor.

Invoking Stevens Lukes suggestion, “the powerful secure [systems through] the compliance of those they dominate” (85), the mother, and the students are illustrated as subordinates and often oppressed, still they actively contribute through their collusion with their oppressor. This is most noticeable in the novels through their “racism against the abnormal, against individuals who, as carriers of a condition, a stigmata, or any defect whatsoever” (Foucault, *Abnormal* 316). Drawing on what has been mentioned so far, therefore, in what follows we will offer an analysis of a more interactionist understanding of social domination in the three selected works, focusing mainly on the community, the mother, and the students.

1.1. “They Were Stern Enough to Look Upon [Hester’s] Death”: The Spectators as Co-Conspirator in Moral Violence

Measured by the aforementioned terms, when Hawthorne writes that the “[m]other and daughter stood together in the same circle of seclusion from human society” in *The Scarlet Letter* (138), he offers a striking illustration of this exclusionary dynamic. What he captures essentially is a picture of the way the inhabitants of the colony, the children in this particular scene, perceive Hester and Pearl as both a moral and existential threat. This scene implies certain procedures that serve to keep Hester within the acceptable boundaries of action and conduct while simultaneously situating her outside the colony’s social and physical confines.

In fact, this judgemental gaze brackets the two in a frame in which only the “shadowy reflection of the evil that had existed in [them]” (Hawthorne 138) is perceived. One only needs to look at the way they are perceived to reflect on how discourse limits possibilities of meaning. For instance, the gaze here, and we have already established its importance in the first chapter, acts as a form of discursive tool because it limits and imposes the frame in which the discernment of the two is contained, barring any

alternative interpretations beside the mentioned one. Both the mother and the daughter are Damned and they are locked in such a negative framework that the community refuses to transcend. Adultery is considered taboo and a sin and Pearl is putatively the daughter of the devil and the child of the forest. By stigmatising them, the community tries to enforce a discrete and coherent spiritual identity outside of the Damned frame and the pagan wilderness.

In defining stigma, Erving Goffman suggests that, from the time of the Greeks to its modern usage, the term usually refers to the situation where there is a physical manifestation of something unusual about the status of the signifier (*Stigma* 1). Goffman highlights that though it is a social construction, stigma is often still used synonymously in reference to an individual who is “tainted”, “discounted” and “discredited” because of the discrepancy between societal expectations (virtual social identity) and actual individual attributes (4). It is therefore significant in this context to mention that, given that the letter is to “humiliate” Hester’s character and “damage” her status, it becomes “no longer something to be redressed” but “to be emphasised” (Foucault, *Punitive Society* 7).

The fascinating thing which needs to be highlighted however is that when the mother persists, consciously, in emphasising her daughter by dressing her in vivid red to the point of making her “the scarlet letter endowed with life” (Hawthorne 149), Hester paradoxically makes the line between them (outsiders) and the others (insiders) further cemented. Accordingly, the community’s revulsion is unexpectedly further magnified. This is simply because she denies the community the satisfaction of total control over her and her daughter. From the community’s perspective, she is the Other which consequently makes her the “[un]privileged” who certainly does not possess the “exclusive right of the [acting] subject” (Foucault, *Order of Discourse* 52). The letter is

the “burden for her to take up and bear with her” (Hawthorne 116) within the boundaries she must be boxed.

According to Foucault’s ideas in *The Punitive Society*, Hester’s case becomes a representative of the primary forms of the punitive tactics. Foucault delineates four tactics: to exclude, to mark, to organise a redemption/impose compensation, and to confine. Firstly, to exclude is defined in Foucault’s terms as the act “to drive or force out” an individual as a form of prohibition of membership within the community (6). Secondly, the marking of Hester involves an imposition of a virtual reduction on the body that “must not fall into forgetfulness, that must remain fixed in a sort of monument [...] something involving shame and infamy” (7-8). Here we are referring to the letter. Thirdly and crucially the most important for the coming analysis is the compensation for one’s crime. This tactic involves two essential elements: one designated as victim, the community, and the other as offender, Hester, with the latter paying a ransom as a form of compensation for the moral injury to the former.

Looking at this supposition closely, especially in reference to the public ostracisation of Hester, one could analyse Hester’s position vis-à-vis her community through the prism of Nietzsche’s ideas of compensation in *On the Genealogy of Morals*. In the second essay of the book entitled “‘Guilt,’ ‘Bad Conscience,’ and the Like”, Nietzsche, similarly to Foucault, tightly binds power, morality, and epistemology and puts so much emphasis on a social/moral balance that must be upheld. Nietzsche argues accordingly that the concept of guilt (*Schuld*) derives etymologically from the concept of debt (*Schulden*) (62-63). By equating guilt to debt, he essentially implies the idea that moral balance operates on the same principles a contractual obligation between a creditor and debtor does (63). Accordingly, Hester’s case could be looked at as follows: by committing the sin of adultery, Hawthorne’s protagonist stands accused of causing harm

to the whole community as she breaches a contract. As she fails to fulfill her obligation, following the commandments, she is thus a debtor who owes her community, as creditors, a payment. This paying back is the compensation that ensures the balance once again.

Based on this economic metaphor, the community's punishment of Hester is revealed to be more of a psychological need than a mere re-aligning of the criminal, and we have discussed this idea at length previously. Applying Nietzsche's premise, the community as creditors finds pleasure in exercising the power of censure over the creditor, Hester. We have established that the puritan community has a shared framework of meaning and morality and they operate rigidly within it. Hester on the other hand has violated those frameworks which makes her actions not merely a sin but more of a breach of contract. Consequently, she provokes an outraged response from them. Her crime is a moral outrage that has shocked the "healthy conscience" of the inhabitants of the colony. Therefore she is hated and "this hatred towards the criminal," as Garofalo observes, "always brings with it a desire that [s]he should suffer" (qtd. in Oppenheimer 37). This hatred can be understood in economic terms: She is perceived by her community as a paradoxical being for she has vowed to obey the laws and then breaks her oath which is seen as an attempt to nullify the contract. As a result, every simple person in the crowd becomes a creditor demanding payment through suffering.

In our detailed discussion in the first chapter of this thesis, we have discussed the way Hester's punishment is seen as retributive under the framework of the "injured sovereign". The Magistrates achieve the *lex talionis* axiom by injuring the dignity of Hester the same she has done to them. What becomes particularly significant is how the community is not satisfied with Hester's 'lenient' punishment. We have highlighted the dissatisfaction and also the hunger of the community to inflict more pain as they feel, as creditors, that they are not sufficiently compensated. What is of interest for us in bringing

the retributive element once again from this Nietzschean perspective is because it brings us to a proper understanding of the deep seated hatred towards her by her fellow puritans. What shall shed light on is the psychological economy that drives the community to continue degrading Hester throughout the novel.

As depicted throughout the novel, given that within the colony, one is either moral or immoral and this is based on one's attributes that are either rooted in virtue and piety, this binary system leads to a habit of measurement. Essentially, we have a virtue marketplace so to speak where the inhabitants measure themselves up against each other. The Magistrates for instance are often referred to by the community as the "God-fearing", the "godly Master", the "Reverend" in reference to their religious position in the hierarchy of moral credit. The community here is somehow putting itself in a lower position to the aforementioned figures. This does not necessarily mean that they are immoral, but rather, those on top of the religious hierarchy are more moral than them, which seems conducive to the social hierarchy of the novel. Nonetheless, what we see during the spectacle, on their account, the community turns Hester into its negative reference point as she is positioned as "low", "common", and "bad" (Nietzsche 37).

Representing a sort of moral arbitrage, the hierarchy becomes morally sanctioned. Given that they are unable to reach the magistrates' position, they simply "seek its opposite only so as to affirm itself more gratefully and triumphantly" (37). In more simpler words, Hester's guilt is incessantly compared to the inhabitants' "good repute" which ensures the inhabitants that at least they rank above Hester. Hating the protagonist therefore becomes a communal investment strategy where the more degraded she is, the more moral prosperity they attain. This comparison does not only isolate Hester but also contrast a negative image in relation to its positive and thus reinforces the binary opposition between her and them.

The picture of “the enemy” is thus created. In this sense, Hester is reduced to “the woman of the scarlet letter; and of a truth, moreover, there is the likeness of that scarlet letter running along by her side!” (Hawthorne 149). Here, we see how the mother and the daughter are already referred to in relation to the mark of shame. However, what follows this quote shows the enthusiastic desire to literally defile the two. “Come, therefore, and let us fling mud at them!” (Hawthorne 149). This scene illustrates the dehumanisation of the mother and the daughter as they become the object of ridicule, the symbolic dirt in the moral order. This invitation illustrates how Hester’s punishment becomes more of a visceral one. The mud becomes the means to manifest the community’s moral superiority. As the woman of “ressentiment”, Hester is only conceived precisely as “the evil enemy”, “The Evil One” (Nietzsche 39).

What we have therefore is a demarcation between those who fulfill their obligations and Hester who fails to conform, the morally superior (insiders) and those who are morally inferior (outsiders). As a result, the inhabitants do not perceive themselves as equally valuable. Rather, some are seen as more worthy of respect and the ‘Other’ deserving of punishment to compensate for their debt. The mudflinging stands as an example of Nietzschean insight concerning compensation through pleasure. In the matter, Nietzsche writes:

Let us be clear as to the logic of this form of compensation: it is strange enough. An equivalence is provided by the creditor’s receiving, in place of a literal compensation for an injury [...] a recompense in the form of a kind of pleasure—the pleasure of being allowed to vent his power freely upon one who is powerless, the voluptuous pleasure “*de faire le mal pour le plaisir de le faire,*” the enjoyment of violation. This enjoyment will be the greater the lower the creditor stands in the social order, and can easily

appear to him as a most delicious morsel, indeed as a foretaste of higher rank. In “punishing” the debtor, the creditor participates in a *right of the masters*: at last he, too, may experience for once the exalted sensation of being allowed to despise and mistreat someone as “beneath him” (65).

The literature above reveals an important perspective on Hester’s punishment. What Nietzsche’s perspective sheds light on is the sadistic economics that has led the inhabitants to collectively abhor Hester. Based on the quote, what is to be sought from the compensation is not correction or deterrence. Instead, from the community’s perspective, what they seek is the creditors’ gratification, theirs, through doing evil for the pleasure of doing it. Based on this perspective, the spectators aim at an inversion of power in the sense that they, “the disappointed creditor” (Nietzsche 71), who are originally low in the social hierarchy, can ascend the moral hierarchy through this systematic cruelty. By mistreating her, the same “no” highlighted in the second chapter that the Bible says to things, “slave morality” also “from the outset says *No* to what is ‘outside,’ what is ‘different,’ what is ‘not itself’” (Nietzsche 36). Consequently, the community’s “no” translated to this hatred is what gives the illusion of elevation and possessing this “master’s” right to dominate others. Hence, power within the colony becomes no longer substantially identified with an individual who possesses or exercises it by right or by position. Instead, “it becomes a machinery that no one [exclusively] owns”, certainly the magistrates and the community do not occupy the same position, nonetheless, each position permits “an effect of supremacy to be produced” (*Power/Knowledge* 156).

This idea of collective sadism is most salient in the different, often bloodthirsty comments from the spectators. Their indignation is best delivered through the “boldness and rotundity of speech” (Hawthorne 76) of the women in the crowd who are rather

unsatisfied. They demand that they “should have put the brand of hot iron on Hester Prynne’s forehead” (77), “What do we talk of marks and brands, whether on the bodice of her gown or the flesh of her forehead?” Hester “ought to die” (78). These demands from the spectators surely expose the void and the disconnectedness between the Christian values and their sadistic desires. We have mentioned that the comments and the gases reflect the offending collective sentiments as Hester has acted with no regard to all of and her harsh punishment is “a response to feelings of indignation, horror, and the desire for vengeance-feelings which would be aroused under specific conditions of social organisation” (Spitzer 615) however, the escalation from branding to death exposes an appetite for violence. A violence that, based on what has been mentioned, has no limits.

The spectacle therefore allows the creditor to feel superior, even if only momentarily, and it grants them a semblance of the privileges enjoyed by the socially dominant classes, akin to the “master morality”. Reflecting a morality of resentment, the community’s pleasure in punishing Hester can be seen as an example of how the suppressed feelings of inferiority and powerlessness is turned into a desire for vengeance and domination. The spectacle therefore becomes a means that transforms the oppressed into an oppressor. Subsequently, this transformation brings to light the insidious way through which hegemonic control manifests itself in communities. Based on Mead’s insight, the indignation that members of society feel towards the criminal amounts to a cultural sublimation of the instincts and the hostilities that the individual has tamed in the interest of social cooperation with others (Garland *Punishment* 64). According to him, the stronger these sentiments, the more extreme the violence is manifested through the infliction of pain against those who go against the grain.

Rather than challenging the magistrates, the spectators use these periodic opportunities to deny Hester the exercise of certain political privileges and access to civil rights which have previously been ascribed to her. In accordance with Foucault's axiom, exclusion is ipso facto an erasure of citizenship status as the offender is put outside the law in such a way that any one could harm her even if they are not actually "designated as executioner" (*Punitive* 9-10). However, it must be highlighted, though they collectively punish, individually, they are still maintaining plausible deniability.

In summation, the totality of evidence points at the idea that the treatment Hester receives from the community reveals the insidious ways through which hegemonic systems work and maintain their power. By transforming the oppressed into agents of their own oppression, the provided target, the scapegoat, becomes an anchor of the masses' accumulated frustrations and suppressed desires. Also, we have reached the conclusion that suggests that this whole ritual of degradation serves absolutely no justice at all. Rather, the goal from the beginning has been social control. The tragedy of the novel, however, lies not in Hester's gruesome punishment; instead, it lies in the fact that the community consent, through the participation in Hester's suffering, to their own subjugation to the authority they might otherwise resist.

1.2. "The Son Himself Was Naught": Maternal Complicity in Victorian Othering

Looking at Butler's narrative, we are presented with a reverse predicament compared to that of Hester. In the case of the latter, we see the protagonist being trapped in a rigidly framed perception because of what she exhibits. Her visible sin, the daughter and the scarlet letter, is what defines her and what essentially forecloses any alternative interpretations in the mind of those around her. Ernest's parents on the other hand are more concerned about what is hidden and not perceivable. They "doubt whether [Ernest

has] a moral and spiritual nature at all” (Butler 158). This doubt is fueled by the idea of the absence of what both consider as the signs of piety. As established earlier in this project, we know that Theobald and Christina, “being a clergyman and a clergyman’s wife” (Butler 246), raise their children with a hollow and shallow dedication to St. Paul’s doctrines. Given their social and religious status, they shallowly believe that Buttersby’s framework should be constructed around visible performances of faith rather than just genuine spiritual acts.

In the novel, there are several scenes that encapsulate this idea. However, there is a specific scene where Christina’s performative logic comes into full display to the reader. Given that “self-denying” and “spiritually minded[ness]” become the two pillars that define her system, Christina in one of her internal monologues makes a judgemental statement about her deceased father-in-law. The statement reads as follows: “Dr. Jones was certainly worldly—very worldly; so, she regretted to feel, had been her father-in-law”. Christina goes further to think that “though in a less degree; spiritual, at heart, doubtless, and becoming more and more spiritual continually as he grew older, still he was tainted with the world, till a very few hours, probably, before his death” (85). There are several aspects in this quote to be studied and the most obvious of which is the fact that her statement is not only judgemental but it is also filled with an implicit feeling of disgust.

This quote is vital in understanding Christina’s performative morality as it reveals the policing of one’s own emotional responses. In the quote, Christina acknowledges that she “regretted to feel” that one of her family, the supposedly “spiritually minded”, is tainted with the world. This confession by Christina reveals two major things about her moral logic. According to her, the mere fact of recognising and perceiving worldliness in another person could be in itself contagious to her being. She fears, as the perceiver of

such a thing, that by doing so, she is running the risk of tainting her own constructed purity. Consequently, we see Christina struggling to balance between her familial loyalty and her devotion to moral purity. Had it been anyone else, as we shall see with the case of the servant girl Ellen, Christina would have simply cut ties to avoid contamination. However, in this case it is her deceased father-in-law and she is aware that she must revere him. And here lies the problem because her whole constructed, and shallow, moral system demands her to draw the line between the tainted and the pure. Torn apart, Christina eventually chooses to use the feelings of regret as a foundation to build off her sense of superiority.

When Christina immediately, and triumphantly, self affirms by stating that “ she and Theobald had given up all for Christ’s sake. *They* were not worldly” (Butler 85), she essentially boldens the separating line between herself and her father-in-law. Her statement excludes her and her husband from the group that Dr. Jones once belonged to. Nonetheless, her position of superiority is immediately put in a secondary position. “At least Theobald was not. She had been, but she was sure she had grown in grace since she left off eating things strangled and blood [...]” (Butler 85). According to Christina, her unworldliness and spiritual-mindedness manifests itself most clearly in these perceivable and tangible rituals of abstention. It goes without saying therefore that she uses these visible markers of righteousness to establish dominion over her son. It is true that she is aware of her passiveness in relation to Theobald, but when she declares that “her boy should never touch a strangled fowl nor a black pudding—that, at any rate, she could see to” (Butler 85), Christina becomes an active enforcer of a hegemony. She aspires to control, to surveil, and to monitor Ernest “at any rate”. Christina in this sense becomes a mirroring of the community in Hester’s case. Both discover that their subordinate

position can be turned into a position of power once there is another positioned beneath them in the hierarchy of morals.

Considered as the focal point of Hawthorne's novel, the unflagging judgement and the unrelenting and insidious everyday punishment of Hester from her community reflects the unwavering adherence to this Calvinist's views about the importance of outward markers of sainthood as well as the absolute intolerance of any human failing. In fact, Hester has been branded to serve this exact end, to mark those outside of grace as Damned and those within as Elect. Her exhibition becomes a tangible presence of the community's obsession of outward display of piety, even when they are not pious.

An idea from Foucault's *The Subject and Power* can be directly related to the contention above. We have mentioned earlier that Foucault understands power as something that operates by turning individuals into subjects. This is particularly evident in the way religious power manifests itself in the novel as the word of God has this "objectivizing" force that categorises New England's inhabitants through "dividing practices" (788), just the same way the child is labelled either "naughty" or not in reference to his siblings. On the one hand therefore, we have the public spectacle where Hester becomes the bearer of a visible marker that draws a division between the sinner from the non-sinner. Hester is thus "objectified" as she becomes the subject of "universal observation" (Hawthorne 89). The letter "A" on her bosom becomes her "doom to wear", the symbol of otherness that must be avoided, thereby making Hester "the most sombre hue, with only that one ornament" (Hawthorne 122).

On the other hand, there is this contrasting image of something hidden and suppressed. Those who "shrink from displaying themselves black and filthy in the view of men", those who "go about among their fellow-creatures, looking pure as new-fallen snow; while their hearts are all speckled and spotted with iniquity of which they cannot

rid themselves” (Hawthorne 194-195). What is important in this quote is the division within those who outwardly seem “sage”. Foucault suggests that this internal division is the result of an internalisation of religious teaching (Foucault, *Subject and Power* 788). Hence, the Bible in both cases, through its “subjectivising” force, makes the community and the mother mere constituted agents that are shaped by its teachings.

Morality is therefore assigned a role of pathologization. Ernest’s behaviour is therefore pathologised by his parents as he fails to perform. Duncan Crow captures this idea of how spirituality becomes externalised in *The Victorian Woman*. He explains that when it comes to religion, conduct took precedence over belief for many Victorians. This is simply because religion had become more about social behaviour than authentic spirituality (56). This finds its manifestation in the novel in the character of Alethea, Theobald’s sister. Alethea “in religion” describes Butler, “was, [...] a freethinker as anyone could be whose mind seldom turned upon the subject” (Butler 126). Nonetheless, Aunt Alethea maintains her Sunday service attendance and at the same time disliking “equally those who aired either religion or irreligion” (126). This performative religiosity highlights how participation in rituals indicates the proper faith. Supposedly, church attendance is a spiritual act. Nonetheless, in this case, it is but a public demonstration that Alethea uses to navigate her way through the society she lives in and to position herself as respectably conventional as possible.

Crow explains in the matter that “to ignore the ritual was to court disaster” (56), Alethea knows that one’s value is essentially dependent on the question of “whether or not one went to church on Sunday” (Crow 56). Regardless of one’s inner conviction, not showing up to church service becomes synonymous with moral deficiency. To socially belong, one must attend. Theobald is aware of such a fact as he is described in the novel as a “human Sunday”. Embodying the day’s performative sanctimony, Theobald’s

attendance, just like his sister's, is not birthed from his "vicarious goodness" (Butler 102). Butler explains that since "he is paid for this business of leading a stricter life than other people" (102), Theobald's obsession with Sunday services comes from an economic contract. Not only does he stay aligned with the social and the religious boundaries when he attends, he is also benefiting from the act itself. We can argue then that Christina's constructed morality is but a reflection of the milieu she belongs to.

Looking at the aforementioned points from a Nietzschean perspective, we can argue that the identity that Christina establishes about herself does not necessarily reflect her intrinsic spiritual essence. It is rather a fiction that everybody takes a part in. In his claim in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche suggests that "there is no 'being' behind *doing*, effecting, becoming; 'the doer' is merely a fiction added to the deed—the deed is everything" (45, emphasis added). Essentially, what Nietzsche establishes here is the idea that when someone does an action, that action does not necessarily mirror the pre-existing self. Undoubtedly, the action itself is real, nevertheless, the identity of the one doing it is merely an abstraction, an illusion, and a retrospective narrative created to create coherence and justify and make the action whole. In short, one's self becomes but a fiction written backward from observed deeds.

In an application of this mechanism, the "unworldly" and "spiritually-minded" mold that Christina squeezes herself into is but a mere fiction that she herself constructs. This fiction is essentially built on the basis of her transformation from the worldly to the spiritual; a transformation that we know could not be shallower and the rituals of abstention are seen as evidence of that. In addition, when she claims that she once was not "unworldly" but now she "has grown in grace" after adopting those actions, she essentially highlights how the change is not an internal one. Rather, for Christina the *act* of abstaining *is* in itself the growth in grace. The emphasis on what her boy "should never

touch” further reinforces this focus on observable actions as the defining characteristic of oneself. It must be highlighted that this fiction is what maintains her position in the hierarchy. Despite the subordinated position she occupies, for Christina, every act of abstention stands as a proof of her spiritual legitimacy. This fiction therefore works as a mask to her actual powerlessness within the family structure and the same could be applied to the community in Hester’s case. The spectators, similar to Christina, only feel that they belong to the Elect when they participate to shame the Damned. They desperately need this fiction, and the continuous performance of the spectacle against the persecuted outsider.

This compensation for the lack of authority is shown through the oppression of Ernest by his mother’s dominion. Given that Ernest is unable, or unwilling, to exhibit what Christina expects him to, signs of self-denial, cast him in the minds of his mother and Theobald as someone who is spiritually deficient. However, the case that allows Christina to actually enact the authority that is essentially denied to her in the presence of her husband is the incident with the servant girl, Ellen. The latter and Ernest are known to be close despite their social status which makes Christina even more frenetic over the fact of Ellen’s pregnancy. The girl consequently is seen by the mother as a threat to the sanctity of her house. Christina’s proud commitment to keep worldliness “out of [her] house which purity had more especially and particularly singled out for its abiding city” (Butler 151) reveals how this fiction is very important to her. Reflecting once more the “slave morality”, the mother “needs a hostile external world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all-its action is fundamentally a reaction” (Nietzsche 37). In simpler words, Ellen comes to play an important role in Christina’s fiction. The girl is now the perfect enemy that Christina needs so she can act. Unlike Dr. Jones, or her own son, Ellen is an outsider that Christina has no blood tie to.

Consequently, the “hostile” nature of Ellen allows Christina’s actions legitimacy without the feeling of “regret”. In addition, the very existence of the servant girl becomes also the pretext to oppress Ernest. Ultimately, we can say that without the existence of this external threat, Christina’s constructed fiction would collapse.

After Christina discovers that the girl is with a child outside of wedlock, Christina’s reactive morality is forced into crisis. Christina, perplexed, goes on reflecting by assuming that the mere fact that Ellen has “lived under the same roof as Theobald and herself—the purity of whose married life should have preserved all unmarried people who came near them from any taint of mischief” (Butler 151). Here, we see that Christina is haunted by the same fear that she has felt when talking about her father-in-law’s worldliness. She fears that being under the same roof with Ellen is in itself contaminated to everyone else. What she also fears is the fact that her own purifying efforts are not sufficient. The speed, and violence, of Ellen’s expulsion from Buttersby stands as a proof of Christina’s anxieties. Butler writes that Christina “packs her off on the instant” as “the fear of contamination which Ellen’s continued presence even for a week would occasion” (151).

A closer look at the texts mentioned here reveals two distinct modes on Christina’s perception of contamination. Interestingly, and as someone who is obsessed with drawing the line between binaries, she demarcates a distinction between two kinds of contaminations: one of purity and one of impurity. Her discourse divides the two while boldly highlighting that the former marks itself off by a relation of difference and opposition to the latter. Accordingly, on the one hand, she identifies a form of contamination in relation to her and her husband Theobald. Christina convinces herself that this kind of contamination is benign and should be actively reinforced and

perpetuated given that the mere fact that people, particularly unmarried, live under their spiritual abode should have been contaminated by their unworldliness.

Conversely, Christina identifies another kind of contamination, a malign one that she believes must be suppressed, and most importantly, excluded from her house. She links and localises this one to Ellen's body. In a dramatic contrast to the lexicon used to describe hers and Theobald's, Christina uses words such as "ailment", "taint of mischief", and "impurity" to talk about the situation brought about by Ellen. These terms pathologize Ellen, and most importantly, naturalizes Christina's action of excluding the girl. Thereby, the servant girl is cast in the shadow of otherness. Consequently, Ellen, as the Other, is located within a language of a pathology and her body becomes a site of subversive multiplicity. Ellen therefore must be excluded, the house quarantined, and Ernest's, since he sympathises with the girl, surveillance must be increased. Ernest is therefore "examined, re-examined, cross-examined, sent to the retirement of his own bedroom and cross-examined again" (Butler 169). In such a manner, Ernest fundamentally reflects the image of "the individual to be corrected" (Foucault, *Abnormal* 57) because his conduct is "counter-nature", a picture that is very different from what has hitherto constituted Christina's system.

If we look at this instance symbolically, Christina's exclusion of the servant girl and her rituals of dietary abstention become parallels given that both acts are aimed at preserving an illusion of untainted purity in her household. The same way she sacrifices worldly pleasures to constitute an identity, Christina's "scapegoating, othering, excluding" of Ellen for the preservation of social appearances is done "in the name of order and security" (Carvalho and Chamberlen 217).

Moreover, Christina's exaggerated fear of moral corruption gives an excellent delineation of Victorian prudery. In essence, her moral panic and eventual exclusionary

practices illustrate what Foucault considers as an “eagerness to constitute [sex] as the secret” and the very mention of it became “the unremitting fear” (*History of Sexuality* V.I 79). Christina’s reaction reveals that what she wants to remain unspeakable in her household is materialized into reality by Ellen’s pregnancy and she abhors this idea. Her reaction brings to life the observation of the radical Victorian writer Edward Carpenter when he observes that “the denial of the human body and its needs, huddling concealment of the body in clothes, the ‘impure hush’ in matters of sex [...] were carried to an extremity of folly” (qtd.in Rowbotham 244). This extremity is literally and perfectly embodied by Christina and her immediate expulsion of the girl from the house in an attempt to restore what has been violated.

Nonetheless, what motivates Christina to keep Ellen’s sexual relationship out of wedlock a secret is not only because of the act’s illicit nature. What worries Christina most is the suspicion of Ernest having something to do with Ellen’s pregnancy, especially after he financially helps her by giving her his watch and money once expelled from Buttersby. “The horrid thought!”, Christina frenzily exclaims, “as to who was the partner of Ellen’s guilt? Was it, could it be, her own son, her darling Ernest?” (Butler 151). The anxiety lies here, Christina cannot even fathom the idea of her son being a part of such a thing and the more she thinks about it, the more she is pushed towards an investigative suspicion. Likewise, the girl’s soul is cast in the light of contagion. Moreover, her body, the same way seen with Hester’s, becomes a vessel of impurity that needs to be purged and those who are suspectedly infected need to be examined. Here, she introduces what is termed by Butler as the mother’s “confidence tricks”.

We have established so far that religion, as a truth system, is imposed onto the children by not only the father. Christina is also complicit in the propagation of religious teaching as Butler depicts her as a character who is not only a subject to her husband, but

also as regent and a delegated enforcer of his doctrine. This becomes obvious when she tells Ernest “Let *us* be self-denying, pure, upright, truthful in word and deed” (Butler 160, emphasis added). Here we see her deploying the first-person to cloak her actual motive. Her invitation “Let *us*” proposes a sense of unity, a mutual pact where both of them are positioned at the same level. By concealing the maternal command, her complicity in creating an environment where her child is conditioned to internalise these social and moral codes as absolute and inviolable is also concealed. Such rhetorical softness makes her authority more insidious and more effective as she indoctrinates by inviting and coerces through showing concern.

One of Christina’s insidious techniques to exercise power over Ernest is their “sofa conversations”. Given that these conversations are often embellished by an overflowing emotion of maternal solicitude, it prevents Ernest from detecting his mother’s systematic manipulation. “My darling”, Christina laments during one of their conversations, “it would be as much our pleasure as our duty to watch over the development of your moral and spiritual nature, but alas! you will not let us see” (Butler 158). Christina lures Ernest to believe that Theobald and herself are but a united front to help and guide him. She is aware that Theobald is harsh on his son and she is trying to convince Ernest, through her language of care, that his father wants the best for him the same way she does. However, these conversations often end by betrayal as Christina weaponises her son’s confidence promised in her “let us”. Thus, every confession Ernest utters becomes an accusation and every vulnerability shared with his mother into proof of guilt exposing her invitation, “let us”, as a trap to ensure that Ernest is on track, whenever there is “a feeble show of resistance [...] the thumbscrews were instantly applied” (Butler 169).

It is worth mentioning that these conversations happen quite often in the novel. This repetition exemplifies how the mother's hegemonic power operates insidiously and without suspicion from Ernest. Christina, being a woman, she is among those who are supposedly oppressed by men. However, she becomes one of Ernest's effective oppressors simply because her subordination makes her authority less threatening and hard to suspect. For Ernest, she is a potential ally. For Christina, betraying her own son proves her own value in the hierarchy of power. She becomes "the watchful eyes of Theobald" (Butler 102) where every report she trades increases her status in the system. As such, Christina turns Ernest into a commodity that is sold to purchase her own security; and this is an ultimate example of hegemonic complicity.

Hence, it is hard to ignore the similarities between Christina and the spectators, between the sofa talks and the scaffold. What we have in the two novels is two theatres in which two subordinate classes betray one of their own. The parallels between Christina and the spectators are hard to ignore as both illustrate how hegemonic systems, powerful as it may seem, depend on the oppressed to enforce its structure. What is different is how things operate. On the one hand we find a system that operates through private confessions and psychological manipulation while on the other hand, we find a whole public spectacle with physical marking. The end is identical nonetheless; the oppressed proves their worth by oppressing those beneath them to create the fiction of authority that compensates for their systematic powerlessness.

1.3. Beyond the Dean's Office: The politics of Compliance in Winesburg

A closer look at Sonny Cottler's advice to Marcus, "smile—and then do whatever you like, don't take everything so seriously, and you might find this is not the worst place in the world to spend the best years of your life" (Roth 122), encapsulates the mechanism through which the social system at Winesburg is maintained. The advice makes the very

important point that there is an ethos of conformity disguised as a pragmatic strategy of survival adopted by the students. As a student and as a Jew in a predominantly Christian college, Cottler is positioned at the level of the dominated. Still, he implies in his advice to Marcus that by feigning compliance, one can maintain a semblance of agency.

In the previous chapter, we have seen how Dean Caudwell justifies to Marcus how his summon is simply because of his noticeable distinctness. Highlighting the latter, the Dean tells Marcus: “It doesn't look to me like you get along just fine[...] with the people you room with. It seems that as soon as there's a difference of opinion between you and a roommate, you pick up and leave” (Roth 94). Marcus is definitely different from the others and it is noticeable in his declaration that there is “no way of reaching a compromise” (88) when it comes to his desires and liberties. This signals him as the Other. The racism Marcus faces is based on a detection of one within a group who may be “the carriers of a danger to it” (Foucault, *Abnormal* 316).

Marcus's danger is taken in relation to the pervasive compliance of the students within the institution. When Marcus Messner declares that his life is “sustained by what is real and not by what is imaginary” (Roth 93) once he is compelled to adhere to the religious requirements of the educational institution he belongs to, his outward oppositional discourse makes him “someone who wages war on society” (Foucault, *Punitive* 33). In his attempt to claim his agency, by changing rooms multiple times, refusing to join fraternities, objecting to answer Dean's questions, he has essentially “distinguished [himself] by [his] disruption of the rhythms of the collective life” within college (Smart 21). The idiosyncrasy from the part of Marcus puts him in direct confrontation with the ‘normal’ and ultimately within “the domain of the abnormal”; a suggestion that the Dean articulates in the course of his engagement with Marcus.

Far from being self-sufficient, we have established before that the Dean's engagement and authority stems from the compliance of the other students. Using this view as a point for departure, the power to rule and adjudicate rules is measured by something rather than itself. In other words, the power of the sovereign is fundamentally dependent on a bottom-up rationalisation which is the consent of the individuals over whom the power is exercised. As it has been argued, and in a Hobbesian fashion, this consent could be either expressed or tacit in reference to a kind of "laying down" of the students rights (80). In this respect, it is of some interest to consider a definition of both the word tacit and expressed to clear any perplexity. In defining the terms, Ian Thomson and Susan Joyce argue in their paper "The Social License to Operate" that acceptance generally indicates tacit consent and a disposition to tolerate and approval indicates an active and expressed agreement (35).

Evidenced by Cottler's advice, it is true that the college provides routinized rituals but still, the students are the ones who ultimately keep such a dynamic at work. Their tolerance essentially exemplifies a tacit consent. To advise Marcus to not take things personally and just hide behind a verisimilitude becomes an active engagement and an expressed agreement even if it is flawed. "Tolerance seems to be something of a problem for [Marcus]" (Roth 95). He is unable to reconcile with the demand to fundamentally contradict his authentic self. Similarly to Hester and Ernest, this highlights an "undesired differentness" from what not only college, but also its students have anticipated. Given that they "do not depart negatively from the particular expectations", as Goffman declares, "I shall call the normals" (*Stigma* 5). Or in a more Foucauldian sense, docile bodies "that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (*Discipline* 136).

Looking at this case from Lukes's perspective of power, Sonny Cottler and the other students represent power in its hegemonic "third dimension". According to Lukes in his *Power: A Radical View*, this dimension is highlighted by the power "to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things" (11). Here, prohibition becomes the most obvious and familiar procedure of exclusion (Foucault, *Order of Discourse* 52). As Marcus highlights that the students accept societal norms and conditions, and here the reference is to religious requirements that are essentially against their objective interests. Students as active actors, with a passive performance, take part in Dean's assumption that there is a unitary interest. Cottler as well fails to consider its multiplicity. His consistent defence in making the case of having a façade reflects how the existence of power as the imposition of internal constraints. As subject to it, he is led to acquire beliefs and form desires that result in their consenting or adapting to being dominated. This is "natural" and "normal". Consider the following conversation between Cottler and Marcus about chapel attendance and the hired a proxy. Marcus surprised at the way the requirement is handled by the other students, he, baffled, tells Cottler:

"Is that what *you* do?" He laughed softly. "What else *would I* do? I went one time. I went in my freshman year. It was when they had a rabbi. They have a Catholic priest once each semester, and they have a rabbi over from Cleveland once a year. Otherwise it's Dr. Donehower and other great Ohio thinkers. The rabbi's passionate devotion to the concept of kindness was enough to cure me of chapel for good" (Roth 120)

What is of interest in this quote is Sonny Cottler's resigned perspective on chapel attendance. In this quote, we see a willing subject securing consent and a compliance to

domination. Cottler's emphasis on his rhetorical question "What else *would I* do?" hints at an image of somehow limited choices and the inevitability of the system. Similarly to Marcus, he sees the absurdity of chapel service and he dismisses its content. Despite the sarcastic comments he makes about both the preacher and the rabbi, unlike Marcus however, he does not really contest it or faces Dean against its necessity. Rather, he finds a "cure" for it as he calls it, and this cure is to coexist with it, reflecting an implicit acceptance of its presence.

Marcus's defiance however shows that there are options, but Cottler is somehow blocking that, misleading him, thereby distorting his judgment. While Cottler is advertising nature in its previously defined sense, Marcus is convinced by "my nature", which is simply "an array of given preferences as revealed by my choices, and my 'judgment' is whatever I choose: judgments are revealed by preferences and preferences by behaviour in situations of choice" (Lukes 114). Sonny, along with Ziegler, the proxy, model and advise conformity through their practices which eventually leads to a maintenance of "habitus" that generates non-reflexive practices which reproduce rather than challenge. Simply, it engenders a "false consciousness" among the dominated that appeal to the workings mechanisms of the college. This "false consciousness", according to James Scott (Lukes 126), operates to conceal or misrepresent aspects of social relations within Winesburg, and if apprehended directly, something that Marcus is aware of but the others seem to be myopic to, would be damaging to the institution's interests.

Marcus is struggling to find his flooring within an oppressive system, and his voiced contestation is met by a warning from an oppressed one. Cottler tries to shape the perception of the chapel in Marcus's head as a minor inconvenience to be tolerated. "It's a business, Marcus. You make a simple business arrangement" (Roth 121), this quote once again shows how Cottler regards Marcus's resistance as unnecessary and most

importantly, impractical. By shaping Marcus's perception of chapel as a minor inconvenience to be tolerated rather than resisted, Sonny Cottler exemplifies the way power operates to prevent grievances, occupying an ambiguous position that suggests a blend of both what Scott calls "the thick" and "thin version" of the "false consciousness". In the matter he writes:

The thick version claims that a dominant ideology works its magic by persuading subordinate groups to believe actively in the values that explain and justify their own subordination [...] The thin theory of false consciousness, on the other hand, maintains only that the dominant ideology achieves compliance by convincing subordinate groups that the social order in which they live is natural and inevitable. The thick theory claims consent; the thin theory settles for resignation. (qtd.in Lukes 126)

It is important to remember that Cottler, whenever there is an encounter between him and the protagonist, has been either advising Marcus to accept the status quo as inevitable. We have highlighted his invitation to join the fraternity and his casual talking about the advantages and the disadvantages, as a Jew, Marcus would face. We have highlighted how he is aware of its systematic segregation, still, he takes it upon himself to come to Marcus and try to convince him to join.

For instance, consider Sonny Cottler's visit to Marcus's room in an attempt to convince him to join the Jewish fraternity. His response to Marcus when the latter refuses to join reveals how these fraternities are hierarchically structured. With a warning tone, Cotler tells Marcus, "If you don't get into our fraternity, the only other house that'll have a Jew is the nonsectarian house, and they don't have much going for them in the way of facilities or a social calendar" (Roth 39). The casual talk about the privileges that one fraternity has and the other is denied, and how Marcus's life would be affected if he did

not join their fraternity, sheds the lights on how the system of segregation is essentially known and internalised by the students.

Obviously, Cottler is aware that these fraternities are founded on such systematic segregation and he does not perceive it as something inherently negative. Instead, he perceives it as a natural order of things that one simply adheres to. Essentially, Cottler is not merely informing Marcus; he is warning him of the consequences as joining a less privileged fraternity, that is predominantly black, and how it would not benefit him. This reveals that inclusion/exclusion of a certain student to/from a certain space is essentially rooted in prejudice and discrimination. Accordingly, Cottler's reply exemplifies how this system is perceived as the norm. The interaction between the two illustrate how the students are not only aware of the fraternities discriminatory practices but also shows their acceptance, making Cottler an active participant in reinforcing these practices. Additionally, his tactic of intimidating Marcus by highlighting the latter's limited choices as a Jew suggests how the individual's value and social stance is fundamentally contingent upon the religion/race one belongs to. Once again, highlighting a system that benefits dominant groups over the marginalised ones, who occupy the lower parts of Winesburg social strata.

The mere invitation of Marcus is thus considered an active participation in reinforcing what is considered as normal, and therefore the operation of power. Quoting Gilles Deleuze, the brief encounter between Cottler and Marcus showcases how "power passes through the hands of the mastered no less than through the hands of the masters" (71). As the normalisation of institutionalised segregation is embedded in the everyday functioning of the campus, a further control over space is reinforced and consequently, a hierarchy that "individualises bodies by a location [...] distributes them and circulates them in a network of relations" (Foucault, *Discipline* 146) is maintained.

Indeed, Cottler's reply reveals an intersection of class, religion, space, and privilege within this system. A privilege that is given according to the space occupied, to the religion one believes in, something that Marcus wants to repudiate in the first place. Looking at the encounter between the two from this Deleuzian perspective, one can assert that the dichotomy of oppressor/oppressed cannot simply be applied to refer to authority/students as power within campus is not exclusively held by those who set the rules in the first place. In more condensed words, power within campus is ubiquitous, pervasive, and exists between the crevices of its different layers. That being said, it is safe to say that power within Winesburg is practised rather than possessed since it flows from both sides; from those dominating the scene (Christian) as well as those subordinates (non-Christian). Ultimately, every student takes an active part in perpetuating the power structure.

The most obvious, and accordingly the most essential trait in Cottler's discourses with Marcus is his "resignation" and "consent" reflecting once again the tacit and the expressed involvement in perpetuating power within the college. His somehow ambiguous position brings to light the complexity of a "false consciousness". Cottler, as a representation of the oppressed, and here it must be highlighted that Marcus receives invitation only from the oppressed, that is non-Christian members, illustrate how these students who seem to be simply "getting along" with the requirements can play a crucial role in maintaining the status quo. By recognizing this ambiguity, the impossibility "to determine empirically whether the consensus is genuine or instead has been enforced through nondecision-making" (Bachrach and Baratz 49), we gain a deeper understanding of how social control operates not just through overt force but also through subtle forms of influence and internalized pressure.

Marcus highlights after agreeing to hire a proxy: “I didn’t like Cottler and didn’t trust him, and the moment I stepped into the car to take him up on his offer[...] I knew I was making yet another mistake. He was glib, he was cocky, he considered himself superior not just to Caudwell but probably to me as well” (Roth 198). Marcus’s distrust of his fellow Jew/student illustrates his discontent with the peer-driven enforcement of the religious status quo within Winesburg. In addition, such a facilitation of proxies as a practical “business” instead of finding a solution shows the ability of an oppressed to manipulate the system. Yet, instead of taking the path of resistance, Cottler and the other students reinforce its basis at the same time. Cottler’s illustrated superiority complex further illustrates his position of an informal power, one that is similar to the community’s and the mother’s in the previous two novels, shaping Marcus’s actions and decisions through a mix of persuasion and subtle intimidation.

Reflecting an image of the “status quo defenders” who are a minority within the population in question (Bachrach and Baratz 44). Following Bachrach and Baratz theory, power in this context doesn’t need to manifest as overt suppression from figures like Dean Caudwell. Instead, the social environment, as shaped by students like Cottler, favors behaviors and decisions that align with the institution’s values while sidelining dissenters like Marcus. For example, Cottler’s casual manipulation of the system to offer proxies aligns with the unspoken rules of survival at Winesburg: compliance, subtle conformity, and avoidance of direct conflict with the Dean. This bias structures student interactions in a way that discourages radical opposition and ensures that only “comparatively innocuous” to what the College dictates are permissible (7).

When Marcus asks Cottler who can go as a proxy, the latter answers: ““Anyone. Anyone who’s done his forty chapels. It’s work. You work waiting tables at the taproom of the inn, someone else works proxying at the Methodist church. I’ll find you somebody

if you want me to” (Roth 121). What can we spot here is how Cottler devotes his energy to reinforce the institutional practices. The fact that everyone can do such a work shows that Marcus’s indignation is shared by the others but the way it is dealt with is completely different. This shows a general approach that essentially “limits the scope” for students like Marcus who becomes effectively silenced.

Issues that challenge the established order, objection to the mandatory chapel attendance, the arbitrary rules, or the stifling social atmosphere, are effectively removed from public discussion. These issues become a taboo, not because they are explicitly banned, but because the students’ pressure to conform discourages anyone from raising them. Likely aware of all of this as he is equipped with an omnipresent gaze, the Dean also tells Marcus “You’re living [...] with twelve hundred others, and what there is for you to master here at Winesburg, aside from mastering your studies, is to learn how to get along with people and how to extend tolerance to people who are not carbon copies of yourself” (Roth 96). Understood like this, we can argue that Cottler, and the students, essentially practice a “power over” that denotes basically *A* (Cottler) exercises power over *B* (Marcus) when *A* affects *B* in a manner contrary to *B*’s interests (Lukes 28). This indirect exercise of power keeps Marcus from advancing his interests which results, as we have mentioned, in his final expulsion, an expulsion that he does not blame the Dean of, rather, he highlights that “had he been able to stomach chapel and keep his mouth shut, [just like Cottler tells him] would have received his undergraduate degree from Winesburg College—more than likely as class valedictorian—” (Roth 231).

2. The “Art of Not Being Governed So Much”: The Exercise of Self on Self as a counter-Conduct

While Foucault often employs “domination” and “subjection” in a somewhat interchangeable manner, a closer look at what has been stated so far, particularly in

relation to the cases of the protagonists, reveals a distinction that is crucial to better understand the struggles of Hester, Ernest, and Marcus. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault writes that “many disciplinary methods had long been in existence- in monasteries, armies, workshops. But in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the disciplines became general formulas of domination” (137). Here for example, the quote illustrates how a specific technique of control (shame and surveillance, catechism and indoctrination, and the spatio-temporal control), once related to a specific institution (the theocratic colony, the family, the college), essentially transforms into a pervasive mechanism for a social regulation of the individual. Hence, domination is effectively used to describe a system of subjection.

Nonetheless, and it has been shown so far, domination has been established as the overarching system of power relation. Subjection on the other hand refers to the process by which the three characters are brought under its sway. In other words, it is the inscription of power onto both the body and the mind of the protagonists that really constitute their subjection. In other words, it is through their participation in those institutions, they become subject to constraints. Hester in an instance mentioned earlier when she has been asked to give her child over to the authorities, points to the “badge of shame” and calls it a lesson. Reflecting how domination transforms into self-discipline, she declares “this badge hath taught me—it daily teaches me—it is teaching me at this moment—lessons whereof my child may be the wiser and better, albeit they can profit nothing to myself” (Hawthorne 162). Her reflection on the badge shows, though it implies a quiet and subtle resistance as she “profit[s] nothing to [hers]self”, an absorption of the sin into her own self in the sense that she, as the reflection of the scarlet letter, exemplifies a cautionary exemplar for the other inhabitants. This, again, seems to be unavoidably perpetuating an impersonal form of power and domination.

With respect to such depiction, we have Ernest too in Butler's novel. Before Ernest's imprisonment, what is noticeable in the course of his narrative is essentially the suppression of pleasures and desires. As it has been shown so far, Ernest has been conditioned by both his dominant (for)fathers and manipulative mother. He therefore reaches a point of distrusting what he enjoys and consciously frames it as a temptation to be avoided. Overton highlights this when he explains that

With what [Ernest] did not like, however, it was different; the *more he disliked a thing the greater the presumption that it was right*. It never occurred to him that the presumption was in favour of the rightness of what was most pleasant, and that the onus of proving that it was not right lay with those who disputed its being so. (Butler 122; emphasis is mine).

What is shown here is an "investment of power in the [mind]" (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 56) because it mirrors the same dichotomy that Old John Pontifex draws on obedience/disobedience in relation to right/wrong. Once again, what we see with Ernest is a construction of a binary as he relates discomfort with righteousness. At this point, and as Overton observes, it seems as if Ernest reaches a point where he does not need external moral enforcement given that he wholeheartedly behaves and thinks in strict adherence with internal moral compass dictates. As such, Ernest becomes complicit in his own subjugation. Looking back to the reason why he has been thrown into prison, ironically, we find that this blind adherence to this belief in the righteousness of discomfort.

So far, we have been comparing and contrasting the three characters, however Marcus often stands out in reference to the other two in the sense that his focus through the entirety of his narrative is to remain true to himself. In other words, Marcus's character, despite his father and all "the Flussers and the Cottlers and the Caudwells"

(Roth 199), reflects a desire for a higher and truer life. In fact, his pilgrimage to Winesburg represents his yearning for a life that is not highlighted by his father's "double-locked [...] front and back doors" (Roth 8). Marcus's quest could be equated with what Charles Taylor calls the "ethic of the self-fulfillment" or simply an "ethic of authenticity".

In defining the concept in his book with the same title, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Taylor attests that this concept, in its essence, draws upon earlier conception of individualism, and at the same time significantly departs from it. Explaining its meaning, Taylor refers to Descartes and Locke's ideas of the disengaged rationality and political individualism respectively, but he dwells more on the idea that self-authenticity transcends these earlier formulations as it introduces a crucial element, which is the imperative of one to be true to oneself (25-26).

Moreover, Taylor goes on to highlight the very important point concerning the notion of authenticity. He frames it in terms of a "displacement of the moral accent" that is often tied to religious and philosophical traditions. In view of this, he claims that the classical idea of the "inner voice", being in relation whether to divine aspirations or reasons, that helps guide the individual's decisions on "the right thing to do" is often used as a means to an end. The end here is for one to act rightly/morally. With the concept of authenticity however, Taylor suggests that there is a relocation of this focus in the sense that being in touch with one's inner self is elevated to a purpose in itself. Consequently, the "inner voice" is no longer just a means to an end but transforms into a cornerstone for personal fulfillment, "it comes to be something we have to attain to be true and full human beings" (26). Put at its simplest, authenticity is not merely instrumental but rather intrinsic because instead of focusing on the goal of acting right, the experience of being in sync with the inner self becomes in itself a goal.

In order to make this clear, let us analyze one scene from the novel from the concept's lens. We have established that Marcus is an atheist and the Bible for him is but a "hogwash that [he] could not bear being subjected to" (Roth 81). In voicing his objections to the Dean, Marcus quotes Bertnard Russell's famous essay "Why I Am Not a Christian". He explains to the Dean:

This essay and others like it contain Russell's argument not only against the Christian conception of God but against the conceptions of God held by all the great religions of the world, every one of which Russell finds both untrue and harmful [...] The whole conception of God, he concludes, is a conception unworthy of free men. These are the thoughts of a Nobel Prize winner renowned for his contributions to philosophy and for his mastery of logic and the theory of knowledge, and I find myself in total agreement with them. Having studied them and having thought them through, I intend to live in accordance with them, as I'm sure you would have to admit, sir, I have every right to do. (Roth 101-102)

This quote powerfully reflects not only Marcus's ardent atheism but also its rationalisation and assertion of rights. It declares his full commitment to living life based on an "ethics of authenticity". His argument for that stance he defends is essentially an amalgamation of both reason and right, reflecting tools of earlier individualism, but ultimately prioritises the aforementioned shift of not only *acting* rightly to *being* true to his own self.

Quoting Russell, Marcus emphasizes his "logic [...] of knowledge", which could be taken as an assertion of a right to form his own conclusion about truth rather than just have it from an external authority. Prioritizing his individual will over Winesburgian obligations illustrate an emphasis on one's right to freedom of thought. In addition, his

defence transcends the simple assertion of rights to reach a “total agreement” to live in “accordance” with those conclusions. Here, the concept of authenticity becomes apparent and comes into play. Marcus is debating the Dean that his objection to all the requirements that go against Marcus’s will is not merely a matter of thinking differently, in the Cartesian sense, or having the right to do so, in the Lockean sense; rather, it is about being true to one’s own deeply held convictions. Simply, he is not only adopting the teaching of Russell because his thoughts are “of a Nobel Prize winner” (Roth 103), but because they reflect his core identity as an atheist.

Therefore, the real struggle that the characters face is not one against the force of domination. Instead, it is against the process of subjection that seeks to control their being. As discussed in the previous chapter(s), we have highlighted the primacy of power relations as well as the effect of the discursive procedures of “truth” and how they constitute different practices that create different subjects and different objects. What we are left with, since there are no eternal subjects, or eternal objects, is the practice of turning the individuals into subjects through framing their identities, shaping their behaviours, and limiting their desires. This process of subjectification, with its inherent creation of Otherness, is precisely what the main characters resist.

While Hester and Ernest, in the most part of their narratives, could not explicitly object that they “do not need the sermons of professional moralists” (Roth 100) to tell them how they should act like Marcus could, still that does not mean there is a lack of objection from their part. Given the highlighted definition of resistance in previous sections, when they resist, they are not merely rebelling against specific rules or authorities to nullify them simply because we have shown that power is not a complete determination or a zero sum conception. As power can only be exercised “over free subjects and only insofar as they are free” (Foucault, *Subject and Power* 221), the

resistance is therefore against the very process by which they are being formed into compliant subjects.

Consequently, it is not only Marcus, given that he is going all force against external constraints, who is resisting. Hester and Ernest too are rejecting the dominant discourse. In their subtle way, especially Hester, they repudiate the imposition of the pre-defined, stigmatized, and exclusionary identity that is bestowed upon them from their respective milieus. At its core, what we will see is a quest not for a total breaking out from constraints. Instead, their pursuit is, given that is situated in context, within limitations and determinations, a struggle to retain their autonomy. “Autonomy” here is understood the same way Amy Allen understands it, that is in this sense of engaging in practices of self-transformation through reflecting critically upon the power-knowledge relations that have constituted their subjectivity (44). In what follows, resistance of the is investigated in its specificity without the renunciation of its connections, intersections, and points of convergence and divergence of its context.

2.1. “The World’s Law Was No Law for Her Mind”: Problematizing Power and Pursuing Authenticity in *The Scarlet Letter*

In chapter XI entitled “The Interior of a Heart”, Hawthorne’s reader gets a glimpse at the interior of Reverend Dimmesdale. Unlike his co-sinner, Hester, who is tormented publicly, what is depicted in this chapter is an internal and self-imposed torment. Unable to confess his involvement in Heter’s sin, the minister becomes a mere “lost and desperate man” (Hawthorne 326). We have established that power is something exercised through networks and that individuals become more than simply its point of anchorage as they become in a position to both submit as well as exercise this exact power (Foucault, *Society Must be Defended* 29). Notably, Hawthorne’s depiction of the minister’s torment falls under the umbrella of internalisation of the power structures

within the colony. The chapter is a reflection of the self-imposed demands by the minister to outwardly present himself, as we illustrated earlier, as “pure as new-fallen snow”. The chapter shows how domination extends beyond its formal institutions and legal systems to encompass the complex web of subjection that shapes the everyday lives within the community.

The fear of shame that encompasses public exposure reflects the power relations that compel individuals to conform to a prescribed moral standard. The truth about their inner guilt is therefore suppressed simply because it is perceived as threatening to their place within the external social order. Revealing it would render them Damned along with Hester. Dimmesdale is aware of this and thus compelled to suppress his sinful self to maintain the appearance of purity, even as he suffers internally from it. The fear of losing social standing and being rendered incapable of “achieving good” demonstrates how power operates within the framework of truth, using both visible (laws and norms) and invisible mechanisms of control (internalization).

Hence, what we see in his character is a fear of exposure that is further heightened by his religious status. Hawthorne notes that “he stands at the head of the social system, and therefore he is all the more trammelled by its regulations, its principles, and even its prejudices” (Hawthorne 279). Dimmesdale is known as a preacher of morality belonging “to the high mountain peaks of faith and sanctity”, however, his hidden sin, “the burden, whatever it might be, of crime or anguish, beneath which it was his doom to totter”, positions him in a vulnerable place as “it kept him down on a level with the lowest; him, the man of ethereal attributes, whose voice the angels might else have listened to and answered!” (Hawthorne 209). What is depicted here is a conflict between the role and the self. In essence, Dimmesdale is morally trapped and his character reveals an exemplar of a fractured subject.

Erika Kreger comments on this in her essay “Depravity Dressed up in a Fascinating Garb” by mentioning that the Minister becomes “a man, rendered morbidly self-contemplative by long, intense, and secret pain” (136). He is essentially caught between the moral demands of his religious status and his own unconfessed guilt. This results in his inability to reconcile his sin and public image. According to Madsen’s observation, since “subversives are always defeated by the overwhelming forces of orthodoxy” (510), Dimmesdale is crushed under this force, and he is unable to break free simply because he reflects the image of a subject who is merely an “epiphenomenal effect of discourse and/or power relations” (Allen 46).

The textual evidence for this suggestion is readily apparent as it lies in the fact that, despite his constant internal self-observation, physical self-flagellation, and nocturnal vigils, the minister, in several occasions, still wishes to stand apart from “the world of perverted spirits” (Hawthorne 330). What we see here is a contradicting image of both a desire for separation from the polluted and at the same time Dimmesdale’s capacity for critical reflection as he is aware that he is “a pollution and a lie” (Hawthorne 211).

Drawing on Foucault’s ideas, being able to detach himself from himself, establish it as an object, and reflect on it as a problem (Allen 49), could be considered a form of freeing oneself. Through those moments where we see the minister problematizing his own being, he recognizes that this position of silence and hypocrisy is essentially the source of his torment. This problematization, according to Foucault’s aforesaid suggestion presupposes a certain dissatisfaction, which is essentially where one can begin reworking their subjectivity and create new ways of being. Nonetheless, Dimmesdale fails tragically in achieving the latter.

Dimmesdale is self-aware of two equally important things: first, “the minister well knew—subtle, but remorseful hypocrite that he was!” (Hawthorne 212) and that the only way to achieve an authentic self is dependent on “speak[ing] out to his own pulpit at the full length of his voice, and tell the people what he was” (211). But, and this brings us to the second important thing, Dimmesdale is aware that “the light in which his vague confession would be viewed” (212). This awareness of the community’s reaction demonstrates a perceptive understanding of the discourse, power, and meaning. However, this understanding, instead of leading him to critique it, and critique here is understood as “the art of voluntary insubordination, that of reflected intractability” that insure his “desubjugation” as a subject within the Puritan’s “politics of truth” (Foucault, *What is Critique?* 32), it reinforces his self-imprisonment.

A crucial aspect to consider here is that the Minister’s fear of public shaming is what essentially leads him to rather “s[tand] on the verge of lunacy, if he had not already stepped across it” (244) and not publicly smear his reputation. This attitude remains with the minister until his death’s scene. On the scaffold, when Hester asks him if they shall meet again in the afterlife, his answer reveals yet another evidence of this self-imprisonment as it extends to reach even his conception of the afterlife. He therefore declares ““Hush, Hester—hush! [...] The law we broke!—the sin here awfully revealed!—let these alone be in thy thoughts!”” (Hawthorne 380). What is highlighted in this quote is a consciousness that is overwhelmed by the grip of both “law” and “sin”. In addition, his request to only focus on these two things reflects not only a deep-seated fear but also a quest to have Hester internalizing the same forces that hold him prisoner.

Hester’s request and his repetition of “I fear! I fear!” in his reply shows how we are dealing with two different subjects. On the one hand, one reflecting a self internally constituted by power relations since Dimmesdale is, as Habermas puts it in *The*

Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, a “mechanically punched out” copy of that same orthodoxy (293). On the other, a self, though visibly constrained, is capable of autonomy. The latter, though exiled into a land “too sterile for cultivation” (Hawthorne 119), enjoys more “freedom of speculation” (241) than the former does, simply because Hester is able to organically cultivate her autonomy and rework her stigmatised self.

Unlike Hester, what Dimmesdale fails to do is not point at things and declare them not right as they are because he has done when he starts problematizing. Rather, it is “pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices that we accept rest” (Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture* 155) that he fails to do. Both Hester and Dimesdale’s lives are caught up in various tensions, multidirectional relations of both power and resistance. It is true that the way both think, feel, and act become both empowered and disempowered in specific respects, however, it is obvious that the Minister’s life is sponsored more by the fear of the puritan practices than his will to act in a way that “might bring a moment’s peace in it” (215).

In essence, his case highlights the distinction that Foucault highlights between simply problematizing oneself and achieving genuine autonomy. Foucault attests that the former is the step in which “one can no longer think things as one formerly thought of them” (155). Foucault goes further to highlight that after taking this step, “transformation becomes both very difficult, and quite possible” (155). Put differently, since transformation presupposes a dismantling of ingrained assumptions, it becomes challenging to undertake. However, this does not mean change is impossible. Given the fact that problematization opens new ways of thinking as well as acting, there is potentiality for transformation.

Dimmesdale's transformation fails because he experiences the "difficult" aspect of the process. However, one factor that makes him fail to grasp the "possible" aspect is him not allowing himself "a free atmosphere, one constantly agitated by a permanent criticism" (Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture* 155). In other words, most of the critique is inwardly-directed but rarely outwardly-directed. Looking at it from what Theodor Adorno suggests we find that the minister's anticipation on how his confession would be received bars him and trapped him within an internalized gaze of pre-established categories, that is of sinners, Damned, holy man, hypocrite...etc. According to Adorno, the very operation of judgment serves to separate the critic, Dimmesdale, from the social world, the puritan community, this move is what constitutes what he calls a "withdrawal from praxis" (23). However, his answer to Hester after she asks him if he has found peace yet encapsulates this. "Were I an atheist" he answers, "I might have found peace, long here now. [...] Hester, I am most miserable!" "The people reverence thee," said Hester. [...] "Doth this bring thee no comfort?" "More misery, Hester!—Only the more misery!" (Hawthorne 238). This quote encapsulates how the minister is denying himself what sustains the momentum of transformation as he solely shows an awareness of the discourse but an unwillingness to challenge it. In Foucault's words, he remains glued to the "contemporary limits of the necessary, that is, towards what is not or is no longer indispensable for the constitution of ourselves as autonomous subjects" (*Reader* 43).

Though Dimmesdale reaches a kind of "sovereignty" in the Adornian sense of a "claim to a more profound knowledge of the object", sin; nonetheless, it is trammelled by fear and thus "succumb[ing] to the thinglike form of the object when cultural criticism appeals to a collection of ideas on display" (Adorno 23). His acknowledgment that the reverence of the people brings him "more misery" underscores how his autonomy is

twinned with an obsession with societal expectations of him. The “moment of peace” he yearns to have, as understood by Foucault, is not only a moment of relief from his anguish, or step outside the imposed identity, it is rather the ability to fully rework the constraints that bind. In other words, it is the critique in the sense of opening up the space “permanent creation of ourselves in our autonomy” (Allen 50). This is what he lacks, but Hester possesses.

What remains to highlight as distinguishable about Hester’s critique, is the different form she undertakes. For Hester, and unlike the minister, it is not only a matter of the act of questioning, but crucially the instance and the mode of the critical enterprise of the process of questioning. In other words, it is not only about posing the problem in reference to sin. Rather, it is the enactment of a certain mode of engaging with the questioning, which will prove central to her way of undertaking critique itself. To contextualise, Hester’s critical lens is not bracketed around the object of sin and its symbols, the latter and the child. Instead, she expands it to encompass the whole system within the colony. “Was existence worth accepting even to the happiest among them?” Hester retrospects, “as concerned her own individual existence, she had long ago decided in the negative, and dismissed the point as settled” (243). These observations mark a crucial shift in Hester’s suffering as they show a radical interrogation of the very foundation of the shared beliefs. Her ability to transcend personal grievance to problematize the values that govern the colony encapsulates an ability not only to identify problems but to question the conditions that have led to that very problem. Here is where a deeper connection to Foucault can be made. Let us consider the following quote from *What is Critique?*:

If governmentality is indeed this movement through which individuals are subjugated in the reality of a social practice through mechanisms of power

that adhere to a truth, well then! I will say that critique is the movement by which the subject *gives himself the right to question truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth*. (28; emphasis is mine)

This quote captures the essence of Hester's approach. The act of questioning in Hester's case is encapsulated in her "tendency to speculation" about "the same dark question often rose into her mind" (243), embodies a critical movement. Unlike the minister, Hester illustrates a specific attitude which is both "partner and adversary to the arts of governing" (Foucault, *What is Critique?* 28). She is within, as subject with what has been highlighted earlier, "a voluntary insubordination".

For instance, her decision to dress her daughter in livid red like the token of shame, is an "act of defiance", "a challenge", a "way of limiting these arts of governing and sizing them up". Her resistance is not symbolic like most critics assume, but embodied and performative as she transforms the limits imposed on her, the letter and the daughter, by finding a way to escape their stigma. Taken to be the visible reality of her sin, both the letter and the daughter are "given to a gaze or by means of a gaze" which becomes to be identified by a sensation (Lawlor 534). Hate. By transforming the symbol of shame to one of defiance, she finds a way to escape from that gaze and its intended effects. In any case, Hester does not escape sin, as Dimmesdale tries to, but displaces it while creating new meanings with a basic distrust, and by "the same token" (Foucault, *What is Critique?* 28-29).

In addition, her awareness that "as a first step, the whole system of society is to be torn down, and built up anew" (Hawthorne 243) illustrates not a utopian dream but a deep understanding of the system. Linking it to what Foucault characterizes as "the art of not being governed quite so much" (29), she has no interest in the complete, as Adorno

suggests in reference to abstract critique, withdrawal from praxis. Her interest is focused on subtly resisting the whole system of belief by creating alternative meanings and practices that are uniquely hers.

2.2. “I, Ernest, Am the God Who Made You”: Care of the Self, and the Critique of Religious Discourse in *The Way of All Flesh*

Butler, and throughout the first part of his novel, boxes his protagonist in the image of the puppet who is easily manipulated by his religious environment. Within the confines of Buttersby, Ernest always occupies the lower status. As a male, he is conditioned by his mother’s surveillance; as a son, he is subordinated to his father’s authority; and even with his siblings, he is confined under the label of the “naughty” one. He is essentially depicted as lacking when it comes to autonomy. He is more of a puppet moulded by the others’ will and expectations. Indeed, Ernest internalizes the Christian doctrine as he operates within a framework of effective affirmation of its norms that resistance becomes unthinkable. Butler highlights this when he writes that his protagonist never wanders near the things that may risk the “violations of those older, better-established canons whose authority is unquestionable” (Butler 259). His lack of critical reflection leads him to take a positive part in the smooth performance of the Christian system. We can agree that, to a degree, Ernest becomes complicit in his own subjection. However, unlike his mother’s complicity that is based on the aspiration of compensating her own powerlessness, Ernest’s complicity exists because of an epistemic innocence, or what Everton highlights as naivety. We have seen examples of this naivety with both Miss Maitland and Pryer’s College of Spiritual Pathology.

This epistemic naivety starts to fade the moment he meets Mr. Shaw. During his days at Ashpit Place and his preparation of his ordination, Ernest has the chance to meet people other than his family members. Described as an “avowed freethinker” (Butler 232), Mr. Shaw represents everything that Ernest’s previous social circle, as well as

himself, is not. It is important to mention that Mr. Shaw is a working-class tradesman who has no formal education nor relation to the clergy. Nonetheless, what is intriguing about the man is that he possesses a certain intellectual authority that Ernest has never found in another. Moreover, his religious knowledge, unlike those Ernest knows, comes not from the old canons; rather, from practical observations and independent reflections. For Ernest, this represents a rupture. Shaw embodies a fresh perspective that Ernest has been unaware of simply because it has been systematically excluded from his upbringing. It is deemed by the institutional authority as disqualified. This meeting eventually would become the decisive marker of Ernest's methodological transformation in relation to religious authority.

Though Overton highlights that the protagonist's "first thing that made him begin to rise against his father in a rebellion which he recognised as righteous" has occurred earlier in the novel when his father commands him to discontinue both carpentering and organ-building. Ernest admits that "he dared not openly avow it" (Butler 146). However, prior to this meeting, as a part of the clergy, Pontifex family, and his education, Ernest still participates obediently in the system. Questioning is not an option that he has the privilege of having. As previously highlighted, this leads him to worsen his own status as a subject. Mr. Shaw in this sense introduces what Foucault terms a critique. *What is Critique?* for Foucault is a process that is usually highlighted by an ongoing exploration and series of approximations that are, once again, contingent upon the object(s) of the critique. One thing that stands out in his essay is that the concept itself, in relation to an object, is highlighted by a shift from the basic evaluation of binary oppositions, such as good versus bad or belief versus disbelief, to a more in depth evaluation, interrogation, and examination of the power-knowledge structures that constitute those very positions.

Hence, the encounter with Mr Shaw marks the shifting point from acts of affirmation to that of problematization of the Christian doctrines as Ernest comes to the realisation that religious truth is not (re)produced through institutional practices. Ernest has made up his mind to become a clergyman and thus “come to the conclusion that [he] must now take a more serious view of [his] position” (Butler 163) to better understand his faith. His intellectual preparation during his days at Ashpit Place is to say the least circular. Ernest engages himself in a process of a scholarly research, which focuses exclusively on topics like “the study of the New Testament”, “the Epistles of St Paul”, “the Thirty-nine Articles, and Pearson on the Creed”, “More’s ‘Mystery of Godliness’”, and “Taylor’s ‘Holy Living and Dying’” (Butler 163). Notice how the aforementioned list is a curated one. The titles are undeniably in favor of the Christian faith and lend full support to it. Henceforth, if there is anything to learn from them, it would be a further dive into the already deeply rooted dominant discourse that Ernest grows up into. This epistemic enclosure results in a reinforcement of religious doctrine. Ernest is therefore not researching, he is consuming a pre-digested version of religion. This is not accidental given the fact that Ernest’s personality, unlike Mr. Shaw’s, rests to a great extent on the plausibility of religious values. To intellectually study religion, Ernest is in a need of dismantling his own identity.

Ernest’s immunity to criticism and it is manufactured is precisely illustrated during his attendance of a sermon by Reverend “Gideon Hawke, the well-known London Evangelical preacher” (Butler 163). During the sermon, Hawke repeatedly dismisses those who go separate ways. He rhetorically questions: “Did you ever meet one of them, or do you find any of their books securing the respectful attention of those competent to judge concerning them? I think not” (Butler 165). This statement reveals how religious authority delegitimizes those who question the “certainties of the Resurrection of Jesus

Christ” (165). Hawke makes it clear that the arguments of those who do not believe are not only wrong, but they are beneath consideration by “those competent to judge”. Competence here is exclusive to those who are committed to the orthodox conclusions. Hawke’s argument is not based on the counter-argument method of critiquing. Rather, he erases the very possibility of existence of the first argument itself. Therefore, it is dismissed and does not deserve engaging in it. By painting as so, Hawke illustrates what terms as the production of “naïve knowledges” (*Society Must Be Defended* 7) where any alternative perspective is not refuted through reason and “critique” but by labelling as disqualified, unsophisticated, and unworthy of one’s attention (7).

From the above mentioned, we can argue that Mr. Shaw symbolises what Foucault calls “subjugated knowledges” (*Society Must Be Defended* 7). According to Foucault, because the above institutional monopoly, there exists “a whole series of knowledge that have been disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naïve knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition” (7). As a marginalized figure who has “examined very little [...] except the bottoms of old kettles and saucepans” (Butler 233), Mr. Shaw’s opinions are systematically ignored and thus fundamentally incompatible.

During the meeting, Shaw proudly declares that he knows a little more than what the “Oxford and Cambridge gentlemen” who think they “have examined everything” (Butler 233). He goes further to challenge Ernest by telling him: “but if you will answer me a few questions, I will tell you whether or not you have examined much more than I have” (233). What we see here is a performance of radical epistemological inversion. Mr. Shaw does not highlight a superior position to knowledge to defend his argument, he simply proposes a test through a dialogue. Unlike Hawke, Mr. Shaw tries to show Ernest

that real understanding of a subject comes not from institutional qualification but from rigorous observing and questioning.

It is worth reminding that the whole meeting with Mr. Shaw is Ernest's attempt to convert him. Ernest has the idea that he, since he has been surrounded mainly by religious people since his infancy, knows his religion better than any other. As the representation of a doxa, Ernest's confidence is born out of his internalization of a system that propagates that knowledge of religious texts guarantees truth. However, Ernest's intellectual poverty is exposed by Mr. Shaw's resistance. Once he sees that Mr. Shaw is not convinced, Ernest uses Archbishop Whateley's *Historic Doubts*. This book, explains Butler, "satirizes the arguments of those who have attacked the Christian miracles" (Butler 233). Unknowingly, Ernest's attempt to sound more convincing demonstrates precisely what Mr. Shaw wants to expose. Unlike Ernest, Shaw does not operate on the level of theology. Instead, he is based on sociological and materialistic knowledge. As a reaction to Ernest's attempt, Mr. Shaw explains to Ernest: "I think that he who was so willing and able to prove that what was was not, would be equally able and willing to make a case for thinking that what was not was, if it suited his purpose" (Butler 233). This quote encapsulates Shaw's perspective on established authorities and how they are a fraud. He explains to Ernest that his (Ernest's) religion is one that prioritises efficacy over epistemic validity. In other words, the question religion asks is whether this specific argument helps me win converts and thus maintain power rather than the question, that Shaw sees as important, is this argument actually true. The end is not to align with the factual reality but rather to create a self-sustaining performative reality.

In addition, he reasons that religious truths are an outcome of an institutional machinery sustained by those whom they accuse of "get[ting] their living by writing in a certain way" (Butler 233). Shaw proposes that the maintenance of the system is tied to

those whose material life is tied to its perpetuation, something that we have already highlighted with Ernest's father and how Theobald is a Sunday person only because he is paid to be one. Shaw then continues his explanation by drawing an analogy. "You should not call them dishonest for this any more than a judge should call a barrister dishonest for earning his living by defending one in whose innocence he does not seriously believe; but you should hear the barrister on the other side before you decide upon the case" (Butler 233). The argument made here reframes religion and those who defend it as a part of an economic enterprise where the end is always how to maintain the institution's authority rather than seeking epistemic clarity. Mr. Shaw's final command to hear "the other side" is an invitation to Ernest to engage with counter-arguments rather than just confining oneself to the preexisting ones.

It would have been easy for someone who has spent his entire life entangled with biblical teaching to answer a question concerning "the story of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as told in St John's gospel". However, Ernest fails and he is forced to see his own incompetence. This failure, it must be highlighted, is not born out of ignorance but from a fundamental intellectual deficiency. This failure draws the distinction between to know *that* (propositional knowledge) and to know *how* (critical knowledge); Ernest possesses the former and lacks the latter. Mr. Shaw tells Ernest: "you know nothing of our side of the question, and I have just shown you that you do not know much more of your own" (Butler 234). Intellectually, Ernest is outmaneuvered by the same person whom he believes lacks biblical knowledge. "Retreated abashed", Ernest sees with his own eyes, and for the first time, his inability to see through things. Ernest can recite but cannot defend "his belief in the stories concerning the Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ, and hence his faith in all the other Christian miracles" (Butler 250). A foundational crack starts to form in the architecture of his own identity.

Destabilized, Ernest therefore occupies himself “trying to find out not that [religious truths] were all accurate, but whether they were all accurate or not” (Butler 199). This quote is very important as it shows the start of an epistemological shift in Ernest’s life. The quote shows that he is not blindly accepting knowledge, instead he is adapting a new method based on “critique” in the sense that Ernest is giving himself “the right to question truth on its effect of power and question power on its discourses of truth” (Foucault, *What is Critique?* 32). For the first time, Ernest moves some distance away from the religious model of explanation that is generally adopted by his milieu; a model that explains while conveying the commitments of only those who share them. Rather, he is disentangling himself from the power-truth-subject bundle. From Foucauldian point of view, this is “the core of critique” because Ernest is in the process of learning “how not to be governed like *that*”, to unquestionably accepting religious truth, “*by that*”, his father’s religious authority, “in the name of *those principles*”, biblical doctrines and religious miracles, “by means of such procedures”, his father’s indoctrination, his mother’s surveillance, and most importantly, the suppression of oneself (*What is Critique?* emphasis added 27).

It is important to highlight that Ernest does not simply replace the bundle (power-truth-subject) with another one. Instead, Ernest adopts the methodology of “one who *wished neither to believe nor disbelieve*, but cared only about finding out whether he *ought to believe or no*” (Butler emphasis added 208). This statement is essentially a declaration of repudiating the epistemic passivity he has been locked in his entire life and adopting an epistemic agency as a new way of emancipating himself. The power-truth-subject relationship, in effect, is fundamentally altered. This tendency ignites in him more once he is in prison.

Having time to spare, Ernest starts a journey to deconstruct the biblical concepts of resurrection. This time, he occupies himself not with their spiritual meanings but their historical plausibility and logical coherence. In doing so, Ernest engages himself in a genealogical project of “digging out the sand” beneath the foundation of a knowledge system that aims at imposing its own truth on its subjects. It is safe to read this as Ernest’s “insurrection against the centralizing power-effect that is bound up with the institutionalization and working of any scientific discourse organized in a society” (Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* 9). Up to this time, the Christian doctrines are but a discourse that people are assigned to speak without any question. Ernest after his encounter with Mr. Shaw starts his journey of setting himself free, to desubjugate by opposing “the coercion of the unitary, formal, and [religious] discourse” (Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* 10).

Ernest realizes that he adopts without revision the religious concepts and that by doing so he accepts terms of discourse loaded in favor of the established practices. In this regard, he begins to subject every religious concept to a measure of rational observation. He starts to enhance his understanding of the sorts of considerations to invoke in deciding whether to believe or not believe, to whether endorse or repudiate a certain discourse. This critical scrutiny of the contours of the religious values helps him to stand against the large enterprise of religious discourse. In addition, his declaration that “he did not care which result he should arrive at, but he was resolved that he would reach one or the other” (Butler 237) shows a determination and a sign of developing a critical attitude not just toward theological doctrine but toward the societal structures that enforce conformity. Eventually, he comes to the conclusion that the question raised by Mr. Shaw is connected to larger questions mainly about the performative dimension of religion and its liability. Ernest is therefore transformed from a subject of discourse

to a subject who questions discourse and rejects it as being “Monstrous, odious falsehood!”.

Ernest’s journey to autonomy is indeed slow and it cannot be seen as a single moment of disbelief. Rather, it is a process that is structured and painful at the same time because it is both intellectual and psychological. What starts as an epistemic crisis turns into a genealogical inquiry which allows Butler's protagonist to reach his own conclusion “Lord, he exclaimed inwardly, “I don’t believe one word of it” (Butler 253). Reaching this point, Ernest starts what Foucault would term “care of the self” (*souci de soi*), a relational and reflective process in which the individual engages oneself for the purpose of refining one’s subjectivity. In the first lecture of *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault identifies three components of this care. Firstly, he says that it reflects a general attitude with respect to oneself, to others, and to the world. Then, it could be a form of attention turned towards oneself, and finally, a series of practices or techniques of the self. (10-11).

Conclusion

In this final chapter, we have investigated the different concepts that play a fundamental role in building the narrative arcs of *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Way of All Flesh*, and *Indignation*. Continuing our discussion of the three main characters and their struggles in the field of power, we have tried to shed light on uncharted territories in order to provide a fresher perspective on power versus resistance.

Accordingly, and as shown in the above analysis, Hawthorne, Butler, and Roth paint an image of Othering through the complicity of the oppressed. In what we call the hegemony of the oppressed, we have suggested that the systems of power in the three novels sustain themselves not only because there is a centralized coercive power that aims at safeguarding its discourse. Rather, and the evidence suggests that it is the

oppressed themselves who further perpetuate the system and therefore pushing Hester, Ernest, and Marcus towards the Other's exclusionary territory.

Hawthorne for instance spends a considerable portion of his work highlighting how Hester's punishment does not stop after the public spectacle finishes. Throughout the whole novel, he essentially illustrates a prolongation of the spectacle led by the spectators. Butler as well links Ernest's misfortune not only to the patriarch's "heavy hands" but also to his mother's insidious techniques. On multiple occasions, and we have highlighted some, Christina becomes the eye once the father's sight is blurred. This pact between the supposedly positioned in a subordinate position (Christina) to a superior figure (Theobald) shutters Ernest psychologically, which eventually further his subjugation. Finally, Roth, and through the character of Cottler, present the Winesburg College as a machinery that effectively functions on the basis of complicity. Beyond the Dean's office, everyone becomes responsible, through complicity and passive consent, in perpetuating the system. This complicity is encapsulated in the students' false consciousness. In each novel, we are led to the same conclusion, hegemonic practices sustain themselves through a recruitment of the oppressed.

Being within an oppressive environment does not necessarily mean that there is no resistance. Since resistance is inextricably linked and contingent to the type of the exercised power, each character embodies a distinct mode to attain autonomy. We have highlighted how Hester and Ernest come to possess a capacity to critically reflect on the power-knowledge relations to eventually engage in self-transformation practices. It must be highlighted however that our discussion about autonomy and emancipation in the cases above does not necessarily equate to totally escaping the system.

Interestingly, we have seen that Hester remains in the colony, marked as the adulterer. Hester's definition of resistance tilts more towards living a life while "not being

governed quite so much”. Through her minute rejections, Hester displaces significance and alters symbols; something that helps her in expanding her critique of the foundations of Puritanism. Here, her resistance lies in perceiving the system as a constructed one, and thus a reworkable one.

Similarly, Ernest also remains embedded with Victorian institutions. His journey to emancipate himself is depicted as gradual and flawed; however, his awakening comes at last to fraction him from his passive self. His encounter with Mr. Shaw highlights the beginning of his epistemic transformation as Ernest realized that he has been fed curated lies to reinforce orthodoxy instead of pursuing truth. His eventual genealogical engagement with religious truth through the eye of someone who wishes neither to believe or disbelief encapsulates what Foucault calls “the care of self”. In Ernest’s case, this practice marks the beginning of a refinement of one’s subjectivity and thus an exercise of agency.

In a stark contrast to the other two characters, we have shown in the three chapters how Marcus adopts a more confrontational approach in demanding a preservation of his autonomy, personal space, and right to exist as he wishes to. Incidences have been highlighted in this chapter and in the previous ones about Marcus’s vocal refusal to be subjected to people as well as concepts. Unlike Hester and Ernest, Marcus refuses the performative at Winesburg and he advocates for living according to one’s convictions. This mode of autonomy, as we have highlighted, is grounded on Taylor’s “ethics of autonomy”. However, Marcus’s expulsion and eventual tragic death in the Korean War suggests that sometimes, direct confrontation and overt resistance makes the subject vulnerable in the face the system opposed, which brings us to the final conclusion of our chapter.

Critically, the arguments mentioned have led us to conclude that none of the aforementioned forms of resistance has actually ruptured the systems they oppose. The Puritans continue their persecution, Christina remains in the novel as Theobald's agent, and Cottler's and the other students continue fueling the machinery of conformity at Winesburg. While Marcus is depicted as someone who has possessed the ability to confront and defend his stance, Hester and Ernest's quest to agency can be summarised as a shift from an unconscious complicity, as they both internalise power, into a more conscious negotiation. Their emancipation is achieved once they start their agency within a newfound awareness within the framework of their respective systems.

General Conclusion

This thesis has pursued a genealogical investigation of religious hegemony. In its chapters, and through the cases of Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*, Ernest Pontifex in *The Way of All Flesh*, and Marcus Messner in *Indignation*, I have highlighted how the three narratives dramatize not only the long metamorphosis of the modes of punishment but also their entanglement with religious/quasi-religious authority. Starting from the Puritan public spectacle, through the Victorian carceral and domestic catechism, to the Winesburgian bureaucratic office, I did not merely compare and contrast the three trials of the three protagonists but also constructed a critical trilogy that followed the stages of a metamorphosis of a machinery of power. Simultaneously, this thesis has consistently argued that, despite the increasing subtlety of such power, spaces of resistance persisted where the recalcitrant self could still be carved out, albeit at tremendous cost.

Grounded on a Foucauldian theoretical framework and reinforced by other interdisciplinary perspectives (Schmitt, Nietzsche, Gramsci and others), the synthesis reveals that the mechanisms of religious hegemony have not completely diminished. In fact, they have been mutated and relocated to adapt into the secular setting. In studying the three novels, it was revealed that they became more subtle, more insidious, and more deeply embedded into the very fabric of the individual's everyday life. This prolongation

of the scaffold, as the spectacle we witnessed in Hester's case also existed in Marcus's, exemplifies its internalization, decentralisation, and secularization. Power transformed from a brutal and spectacular exhibition of the body into a more silent, efficient, and pervasive economy of disciplinary and biopolitical management to perfect domination.

The starting point of the long narrative of metamorphosis and relocations began with the first episode of Hawthorne's novel and its "Market Place" where power was exhibited spectacularly. Considered as the sovereign pole of this genealogy, Hester's fundamental role in this study laid on how the body, and by extension its emblem of shame, became the anchoring point for the inscription of religious authority. While the traditional reading focused on the spectacle as an act of chastisement persisted throughout this thesis, our contribution lies in framing the spectacle mostly as a site of a complex web of political rituals. Accordingly, in our analysis, the pillory of the scaffold and the revealing of the scarlet letter and its wearer still satisfies the urge of moral purification, yet they both also becomes a site of alethurgy where the truth about sin is manifested to eventually reconstruct and fortify the religious power in the colony. Pinned under the spectators' "unrelenting eyes", the condemned body becomes an object of fascinated horror as well as a lexicon of both crime and punishment. Here, the pages conducted on Hester's case argued that the spectacle is productive as much as it is retributive. Interestingly, for the regime, the scaffold becomes a pedagogical tool that is meant for both the culprit and the spectators. Yet even here, the gaze of the latter turns Hester into an abject figure that represents their repressed desires and fears.

The second stage of our genealogy revolved around Samuel Butler's protagonist and the constraint world of the Victorians. Unlike Hester's, punishment in this novel retreated from the public square to a more private space, mainly homes, schools, and prisons. With such a dramatic spatial shift, the soul replaced the body as the target of the

act. One might have assumed that the end of the spectacle meant the end of the brute force; however, this soul-targeting punishment focused meticulously on habits, desires, and the psyche still attempted to annihilate the individual. Our analysis of Ernest's case revealed that the exercises of reformatory discipline, domestically or while in prison, are mainly systematic attempts to crush his will to eventually produce a docile body. Similar to Hester, surveillance played an important role in the process of manufacturing subjectivity. However, rather than being the condemned subject, Ernest becomes the "pathologized subject".

Our final, and perhaps the most revealing stage of our journey arrived in the uninterrupted play of calculated gazes in the world of Philip Roth's *Indignation*. The regime found in the Winesburg College is ostensibly benign as the spectacle has been wholly sublimated into a pedagogical institution. Marcus was not confronted with obviously religious spectators. Rather, his panoptic stage was private, almost intimate, where the religious trapping found in Hester's and Ernest's case have perfected their underlying logic to operate smoothly in the secular setting. Basing our argument on Schmitt's concept of the secularization of theological concepts, Marcus's case reveals how the scaffold is replaced by offices and the "unrelenting eyes" become the never-ending documentation of the populations. Accordingly, the analysis has shown how Marcus's body is not tortured or branded but rather biopolitically managed resulting in his life being derailed by the force of a secularized religious institution. The devastating ending of Roth's protagonist, Marcus' expulsion and eventual death in the Korean War, reveals the fact that despite the secularization of punishment, its ultimate capacity to push away and destroy religious nonconformists remains terrifyingly potent.

Across these three narratives, our study has consistently insisted on moving beyond the critique of power as a purely repressive force upon a pre-existing autonomous

individual. Rather, every instance of power mentioned is mentioned in relation to the category it eventually produces: the sinner, the prodigal son, and the agitator of norms. With the sinner, the spectacle becomes a ritual to produce truth. Within the Pontifex's household, using the rod on the prodigal son sustains the fathers' words as law. Prodigality consequently justifies the use of the distorted religious interpretations and eventually reproduces the patriarchal power within the family. Finally, the office of the Dean in *Indignation* becomes a secular site for interviews, examinations, and interrogations. Hence, across these trials and cases, this study has revealed that the power to punish is a performance that does not aim at only correcting but as an act that renews the structures of power and its legitimacy.

In the pages of this thesis, another pivotal contribution in our analysis lies in the exploration of the characters' resistance. Foucault's claim "where there is power there is resistance" finds fertile soil in the characters' struggles. Our thesis has treated resistance not as a romanticised, grandiose, and total break from the oppressive religious systems. Instead, resistance has been analysed as a distributed phenomenon that is tightly interwoven into the fabric of power relations. By introducing the concept of the hegemony of the oppressed, I have expanded the understanding of how power is upheld not only by the magistrates, the patriarch, and the fathers but also by the community, Christina Pontifex, and the conformist students at Winesburg. This complicity, be it active or passive, has revealed how the mechanisms of power maintain its tight grip on its subjects while keeping its origin obscure and sourceless.

Despite the suffocating grip, the three protagonists could enact distinct, era-specific of course, modes of becoming. In the final chapter I have detailed how Hester is "able" to forge a sphere for her own within the community that rejects her. Hawthorne's protagonist's ontological stubbornness alters the perceptions around her and her emblem

of shame. Her refusal to be fully defined by the collective consciousness of the people around her has allowed her to achieve a form of autonomy. This latter is thus not achieved by escaping the system that punished her but by outliving the punishment's original intent. In other words, her endurance of censor exhausts the punitive gaze fixed upon her and her daughter.

For Ernest, his journey to emancipating himself takes an intellectual path. His resistance begins in confused suffering but culminates in a conscious project of self-liberation. What highlighted Ernest's journey is his engagement with a genealogical critique of the religious/familial authority that have colonized his entire life up until the moment he meets Mr. Shaw. Butler's protagonist's emancipation is more epistemological as Ernest starts to question, to think independently to eventually refine his own subjectivity. What we have with Ernest is essentially a reclamation of one's own mind and desires from the religious authorities.

Roth's protagonist encapsulates the most direct and ultimately tragic mode of resistance as his is a vocal and uncompromising confrontation with the authority. His straight forward refusal of the performative rituals of the College represents the demand for the right to define the parameters of one's own existence. Unlike the other two characters, Marcus's resistance is not at all patient or subtle. Rather it is declarative and absolute. His self-assertion rejects the logic of normalization which in turn makes him a direct target for the administrative surveillance. This refusal to be governed by external impositions leads Marcus directly to his tragic ending. This tragic end brutally illustrates how despite the fact that power to punish became less overtly brutal, its capacity to eliminate the Other remains undiminished and fatal.

Synthesized together, the overarching conclusion that I have reached from studying the three narratives illuminates the way punishment is enacted reflects the

power's drive to economize its violence through administrative means rather than a public spectacle. Simultaneously, the study has highlighted how selfhood insists stubbornly on its own irreducible existence. Every character, each in their own distinct way, tries to turn the gaze upon the system that punished them in order to scrutinize it and ultimately forge a space of one's own within it. The conclusion offered here also provides a commentary on the modern condition itself. The scaffold may have been abolished, but power that carries it remains deeply enmeshed in systems of normalization, perpetual assessment, and bureaucratic control. The anxieties Marcus Messner goes through in the pages of *Indignation* makes one think about the often invisible hand of the secular sovereigns and their contemporary alters of power. As the struggle has shifted to the mind, the soul, and the psyche against the subtle and pervasive normality rather than the violence against the body of the condemned by the body of the sovereign, the final question remains not whether we live under such systems of control but whether we can recognize them clearly enough to start reclaiming ourselves.

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الملخص

هذه الأطروحة تتقصى، من خلال مقارنة جينialogية مقارنة، مسألة الدين و هيمنته على الأفراد في ثلاثة أعمال أدبية من حقب تاريخية مختلفة. فرغم التفاوت الزمني بين كل من "الحرف القرمزي" للكاتب ناثانيال هاوثرن، و "هذا مأل كل جسد" لصموئيل بتلر، و رواية "سخط" لفيليب روث فإن السلطة الدينية تبقى الأمر النهائي في مختلف جوانب حياة الشخصيات الرئيسية. تتمحور دراسة الأعمال السابق ذكرها حول مقارنة النظم الاجتماعية للكشف عن إستمرارية جينialogية للحكم الديني. بعبارة أخرى، و بعد دراسة آليات العقاب و المراقبة و تشكيل ذات كل من هستير برين، و أرنست بونتيكس، و ماركوس ماسنر، يتبين لنا إمتداد للدين وخطاباته كنموذج للسلطة في الحوكمة الحديثة. بناءً على المسار الممتد من الرواية الأولى، يتضح لنا أن الدين يدمج نفسه و يتغلغل بشكل براغماتي في المؤسسات البيروقراطية و الممارسات التربوية وتقنيات التنظيم الذاتي الحديث. الهيمنة الدينية إذن لا تختفي في السياقات العلمانية بل تتكرر في ثوب آخر فحسب. كجزء من هذه الأطروحة، نسلط أيضاً الضوء على المفاوضات التي تخوضها الشخصيات الرئيسية لمقاومة الهيمنة السابق ذكرها. في رحلة رفض الامتثال للقوى الدينية تتيقن الشخصيات أن السعي نحو الاستقلالية لا تعني بالمرّة الخروج عن إطار السلطة القائمة بل على العكس تماماً، التحرر الذاتي يأتي داخل أطر السلطة و ليس خارجها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الهيمنة الدينية، الحوكمة، الانضباط، تشكيل الذات، التحرر الذاتي، المقاومة، العلمنة