

A Ideological Manipulation Strategies of Religion and Emotional Deception: A Study of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*

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ABSTRACT

One of the foundational cornerstones upon which works of literature are built is Religion. It is a motivational ideology that inspires authors to write fiction. Ideological literary works are not mere aesthetic attempts that reflect the unlimited potential ability of literature to present the unthinkable: they are serious works that reflect the very social turmoil that the author has been experiencing in his society. *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne perfectly represents this type of genre. He successfully shows the way Religion was ideological manipulated by the authorities in that Puritan society. This paper highlights the different ideological strategies influential individuals employ to change people's convictions. After a short perusal of the different stages, the theory of ideology has undergone, it presents the most significant ideological factors in the novel depending on various thinkers, mainly Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, and Slavoj Zizek. It also shows the domination of ideology over the life of people: it may be observed in their clothes, customs, cultural attitude, and means of communication. Depending on certain theorists, this research finally proves that it is beyond the possibility of anyone to break the chains of ideology and live in a Real world. The illusion of ideology sneaks into every single detail of people's lives, as represented in Hawthorne's novel

INTRODUCTION

In literature, ideological factors function in the outer layers of the text or beyond the grasp of the reader's consciousness, unless the author is either too naïve to reveal his socio-cultural messages or too crafty that he manipulates the reader's comprehension. In other words, the ideology of the text needs to be hidden to function appropriately, unless the author is too confident to fear misinterpretation.

The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne undergoes the second type of ideological manipulation. The author deliberately overshadows the text with dark puritan domination over all social and political structures. This type of deliberate exposition of ideological factors hovering above the novel's events tends to crash the ideology at work with his harsh critique. Hawthorne successfully obliges the reader to experience a sense of disgust, not only his contemporary readers who might take the events and reaction of the character for-granted, or part of the strata of the age, but also today's model readers who can read the text with its historical and cultural contexts, or a new historical reading of the text.

The problem with authorities is that they always tend to rationalize their position and mistakes. They always seek to stand on a stable ground that subjects can never criticize. Religion proved to be the most dependable island in the chaos of crushing ideologies throughout history. It has the power to convince the masses to accept what is labeled religious or to threaten any opposition that does not hold a friendly relationship with it. This leads to the manipulation of Religion and justification of chaos.

In this respect, the ideological strategy of the novel is unique and multi-layered in a sense that functions in all the structures of the society. It tends to control all the aspects of the life of the characters, in a sense that ideological manipulation is undiagnosable by the characters. In other words, no character ever can look beyond the dominant ideology of puritanism and question its decisions, not even Hester the victim herself. She seeks to justify her actions only within the ideological framework of puritanism as if the only context available is that of puritanism. This naturalness of the dominant ideology results from a long process of subjectivization of the masses in a time that was fertile for the growth of such conservative ideologies.

It is important to note that judging such historical contexts from a contemporary perspective is an invalid historical endeavor. As critics, we are chained to certain for-granted ideologies that denounce and show disgust to that type of fundamentalism in the novel's society. To prevent such historical error, this study displays the nature and types of ideology to find out the essence of the dominant ideology in the novel and its way of functioning, without any judgment of its goodness or badness. This methodology questions the validity of our analytical studies because we unconsciously tend to measure historical events within our standards. To rephrase, we propose our ideology as the universal one, upon which others must be measured.

This paper seeks to investigate the authorities' strategies at manipulating Religion to justify their decisions and crimes. Because there are different strategies of such manipulation, it needs further discovery, depending on several specialized theorists.

Next, a perusal of the development of the theory of ideology and its manifestation is presented better to understand the novel's position in History.

Ideology: A State of Unsystematic Evolution

It is unwise to deny the evolutionary state of the theory of ideology and how it transforms according to the contextual forces of each historical stage. However, one should not expect a systematic evolution in the Darwinian sense because the Foucauldian historical development and the acute ruptures of its continuous movement deprive it of any teleological expectations.

Ideology was first proposed by the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy to refer to the science of ideas (Rehman 15). Nevertheless, Marx succeeded in presenting an alternative ideological definition of ideology. His definition was ideological since he required a theoretical weapon to attack the prevailing capitalism. In other words, his hermeneutical transformation of the term 'ideology' came as a reaction to the socio-political obligations of his time. It is important to note that the appearance of any theory undergoes the effect of the historical context in which it was proposed. In this respect, Marx and Engels suggest in *The German Ideology* that ideologists "inevitably put the thing upside-down and regard their ideology both as the creative force and as the aim of all social relations, whereas it is only an expression and symptom of these relations (420). This description represents the contemporary understanding of ideology, upon which succeeding thinkers founded their ideas and theories.

Lenin's debut on the intellectual stage came after many insignificant scholarly endeavors by minor thinkers. He felt that Marxism is being drowned in the crowd of other appealing ideologies, like Catholicism, for example. He understood well the global intellectual context of his time when there was a transition from metaphysics to materialism. He recognized that rationality is a fertile ground to found his new theories. In this respect, he proposed his idea of 'scientific ideology'. This claim came as a reaction to the public questioning of the stance of Marxism and its difference with other delusional ideologies. This Leninian strategy sought to move

Marxism from the field of beliefs to that of logic and objectivity, or 'objective truth' (Lenin vol. 14, 136).

Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), a pivotal Marxist thinker, enforced an unexpected rupture in the theoretical development of Marxism and its comprehension of ideology. After the Stalinist crisis, he recognized the potential ability of Marxism to slip back "into an ideology in the worst sense of the word... a dogmatic system of eternal and absolute truths" (Rehman 119-120). This nature of regression complicated the issues further when contemporary Marxists assumed that the proletariat conquest of state power is the only way to win the support of the masses and the majority of the population. In this perspective, *The German Ideology* proposed that the dominant ideas and public consent in every epoch were those of the ruling class (59), leaving a fundamental gap in the theory. Gramsci presented a remedy to this theoretical problem by using the concept of hegemony for the first time: "There can and there must be a "political hegemony" even before assuming government power, and in order to exercise political leadership or hegemony one must not count solely on the power and material force that is given by government" (157). Hegemony, then, is the way authorities dominate the society and control the masses through manufacturing consent employing, say, culture, Religion, politics, faith, and ethics. These means are sought to dominate the 'civil society', whereas taking control of the 'political society' comes through force.

Louis Althusser (1918-1990) proposed a serious shift in the understanding of ideology. In this sense, he is the father of contemporary Marxist ideologists, leaving a great impact on succeeding theorists, mainly Fredric Jameson, Terry Eagleton, and Judith Butler. Decker confidently claims that he "is the primary figure responsible for the renaissance in the study of ideology" (63). The radical break of Althusser with early Marxist theories appears at his untraditional encounter with the nature of ideology. To Althusser, "there are two fundamentally distinct forms of discourse at work in capitalist societies. Science, which provides real knowledge of those societies, and ideology which does not" (Ferretter 76). He seeks to detach ideology from its traditional outfit as scientific or objective. As an alternative, "ideology is indeed a system of representations... it is above all a set of structures that they impose on the vast majority of men, not via their consciousness" (Althusser, *For Marx* 233). He describes ideology, then, as "a matter of *lived* relations between men and their world (Ibid). To Althusser, ideology creates the very world we live in, ranging from the clothes we wear, the food we eat, and the books we study. This Althusserian description indirectly accuses all the intellectual endeavors as subjective, since they are mere productions of ideologies. He radicalizes further his stance by rejecting any existence beyond the grasp of ideology: "Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence: (*ISA* 294) because it is difficult to escape the domination of 'ideological state apparatuses', as familial, educational, religious, political, and cultural institutions, through which the state imposes its ideology. In other words, we all are subjects of different ideologies unconsciously, or even out of necessity, since there are no alternatives in the

ideological society that we live in. According to Althusser, ideology is the motto of all social structures, without which they remain malfunctioned, or fail to be identified as real institutions.

Terry Eagleton, though being a successor of Althusser theoretically, defied the latter's entire rejection of logic. He believes that people are rational enough to diagnose the functioning of an ideology. In other words, ideology does not lie only in the social unconscious of the subjects, as Althusser proposed, but it must function through the logic of people consciously. Subjects must be well aware of it. Here, Eagleton proposed certain features of a successful ideology that deal with the consciousness of people mostly through language: "Ideology is a function of the relation of an utterance to its social context" (*An Introduction* 10).

Eagleton believes that ideologies are "unifying, action-oriented, rationalizing, legitimating, universalizing, and naturalizing" (Ibid 45). He believes that a successful ideology is capable enough to unify its subjects. It seeks to homogenize certain groups of people, binding them to certain slogans and beliefs. It also has the power to transform abstract theories into actions on the real ground, presenting itself as functional and necessary. Rationalization is also another fundamental feature of a successful ideology. Some tendencies, like anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, are condemned when they are detached from any ideology. Murder is condemned by all men, yet when they are rationalized ideologically, they become a necessity and humanistic. In other words, ideologies always tend to rationalize their harmful beliefs and actions. Legitimation is also another pivotal factor of ideology. Eagleton believes that "Legitimation refers to the process by which a ruling power comes to secure from its subjects an at least tacit consent to its authority" (*An Introduction* 54). To rephrase, authorities tend to legitimize through various logical means the crimes they commit. For example, holocaust and other horrific crimes, as Zizek believes, require a poet to present certain justification for the ugliness committed: "Plato's reputation suffers from his claim that poets should be thrown out of the city - but it now appears rather a sensible advice... here ethnic cleansing was prepared for by the poet's dangerous dreams" (*End Times* 95). Universalizing is another essential process, by which an ideology presents its ideas as appropriate for all times and places. It never sets a starting point for its birth, rather its values fit all humanity throughout history: "An ideology is reluctant to believe that it was even born, since to do so is to acknowledge that it can die" (Eagleton, *An Introduction* 58). In other words, a successful ideology is dehistoricizing. The last feature of ideology is naturalization. Its process should be self-evident to elude the grasp of questioning. It should be fused with truth and social reality to be accepted as a necessity for the survival of humanity. Ideology "freezes history into a 'second nature', presenting it as spontaneous, inevitably and so unalterable. It is essentially a reification of social life" (Ibid 59).

Slavoj Zizek has trodden on a different path. He denounced the Althusserian structuralist reading of ideology. Because of his dependence on the Lacanian psychoanalytical reading of Marxism, he proposed rather a different

post-structural understanding of the theory. Because the psychological stance of Man is not stable, he believes that ideology may take different forms, refusing to undergo one confining theoretical framework. He believes that the first way to diagnose an ideology at work is when it is in conflict with another existing one. Ideologies are constantly in conflict until one prevails. In other words, different ideologies cannot coexist peacefully: "My point is that the way to recognize ideology at work is always through a denunciation of another ideology". He adds: "There is never pure, naïve ideology. Ideology is always a gesture of denouncing another position as being naïve ideology" (*Interrogating* 44). To borrow Eagleton here, one ideology seeks to show the poverty of other ideologies and how they lack the six necessary features to function properly.

According to Zizek, ideology springs from fantasy. The theoretical root of fantasy is found in the ideas of Freud. To Freud, fantasy is not separated or opposed to reality, rather it is the only way through which we can perceive reality. It is the setting of desire that is created by the subject's imagination (Thurshwell 23-4). Developed by Lacan, because fantasy cannot be satisfied and fulfilled (Homer 86-7) it obliges ideology to evolve constantly since the latter is constructed upon fantasy.

Zizek gains further theoretical independence when he described the pre-birth stage of ideology. In the first stage, ideological elements are freely floating, unbound to any official ideology. These elements are already existing in the minds of people, like the hatred of Jews or Muslims. Then ideology quilts the free-floating elements and fix them under one unifying structure (Zizek, *Sublime* 59).

Another genuine theoretical addition to the concept of ideology is Zizek's theory of 'ideological cynicism', making it more realistic. He believes that in many cases, people do not believe in the ideology they claim to do so. This is apparent in totalitarian governments when "the prevailing ideology is that of cynicism; people no longer believe in ideological truth; they do not take ideological propositions seriously" (*Sublime* 30). In other words, subjects are well aware that the instructions are ideological and false, yet they are doing it.

Zizekian descriptions of ideology are multi-dimensional. He does not prescribe the structuralist propositions that must fit all conditions. There are many other forms of ideological manipulation, some of which will be investigated further in the coming sections.

Ideological Manipulation of Religion in *The Scarlet Letter*

The puritan society in the historical context of the novel was intelligent enough to depend on Religion to survive ideologically because nobody was powerful enough to face the forceful waves of Religion. It was and in some societies still is the unifying structure that functions as an identity provider to subjects, "because religion is for all kinds of reasons an extremely effective form of ideological control". Eagleton adds: "Religion, moreover, is capable of operating at every social level... It provides an excellent social cement encompassing pious peasant, enlightened middle-class liberal and

theological intellectual in a single organization” (*Literary Theory* 20). Religion, at least in the historical context of the novel, is a social necessity without which subjects would lose the ability to find meaning in life. In other words, blaming the characters of the novel for failing at overcoming the grip of Religion is an inaccurate historical endeavor since there was no alternative as powerful and socially necessary as Religion.

Marx and Engels provide a better understanding of the place of Religion in that society. Religion represented the source of all humanities that are necessary for the organization of society. Using Religion, people step further to theorize in politics, law, and sociology. “Gradually, every dominant relationship was declared to be a religious relationship and transformed into a cult, a cult of law, a cult of the state” (Marx and Engels 35). Religion is an ideology that represents the ultimate savior for the people of the time. This is clearly announced at the beginning of the novel as if designating the formal ideology of the characters, yet the cynical attitude of the author cannot be neglected. “The founders of a new colony, whatever Utopia of human virtue and happiness they might originally project” the narrator in *The Scarlet Letter* comments “have invariably recognized it among their earliest practical necessities to allot a portion of the virgin soil as a cemetery, and another portion as the site of a prison” (43). Hawthorne intentionally employs the words ‘virgin soil’ to imply that the very foundations of the society and government are built upon religious signifiers. Althusser is also present in this quotation. To him, all institutions contribute to the empowering of state ideology, which is called ‘ideological state apparatuses’ (ISA). Because subjects require such institutions, like prisons and cemeteries, they are already subjects of a specific ideology because they have to yield to the ideological factors of these institutions to benefit from them (Althusser, *ISA* 299).

In totalitarian governments, like the one in the novel, in which political opposition has no place, ideology functions at its most extreme stance, beyond the Althusserian structure. In such a state, ‘trans-ideology’ is a natural condition. According to Žižek, “the most ‘totalitarian’ ideology edifice inevitably reveals that not everything in it is ‘ideology’... in every ideological edifice, there is a kind of ‘trans-ideological’ kernel” (*Plague* 28). This trans-ideological condition is a necessary factor to keep the dominant ideology functional. In the first place, the state proposes its ideology as natural and rational. Christianity in the novel takes the place of universal ideology. Once its instructions and signifiers are violated, those in power present themselves as merciful and lovers of their subjects. They do not punish the violators according to the officially designated rules. For example, when Hester the adulterous is displayed on the stage in public, one of the crowds said: “The magistrates are God-fearing gentlemen, but merciful overmuch... they should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne’s forehead” (47). He was not content with the letter on her chest. Another man also tells her husband, whom he did not recognize that “they have not been bold to put in force the extremity of our righteous law against her. The penalty thereof is death”. The man adds: “But in their great mercy and tenderness of heart, they have

doomed Mistress Prynne to stand only a space of three hours on the platform of the pillory... to wear a mark of shame upon her bosom” (57). The citizens are subjectivized to the extent that they are ardent practitioners of the state ideology, then accuse their leaders of betraying the very ideology they had proposed. This trans-ideology provides some flexibility to the leaders to emancipate their actions from the chains of designated laws, though opposing their ideological signifiers, as is the case with the woman who starts to shout from among the crowd: “This woman has brought shame upon us all, and ought to die. Is there not law for it? Truly there is, both in the Scripture and the statue-book” (47).

The interchangeability of trans-ideology and ideology is crucial for any social subject because ideology, the result of fantasy, provides meaning to life and reality. In other words, “fantasy bestows reality with a fictional coherence and consistency that appears to fulfill the lack that constitutes social reality (Cottrel 80). Ideology, in the traditional religious discourse, represents the spirit of the society that activates its subjects and drives them to a pre-designated destination. The letter ‘A’ that was imprinted on the gown of Hester is an ideological signifier that haunts her and represents the only reality she lives by: “She turned her eyes downward at the scarlet letter, and even touched it with her finger” the narrator comments” to assure herself that the infant and the shame were real. Yes! – these were her realities – all else had vanished (54).

Žižek provides another interpretation of the trauma with which Hester is in conflict. He believes that some events from history continue “to haunt us as a spectral entity that cannot be fully ‘accounted for’, integrated into our social reality”. He adds that some events are “too ‘traumatic to be integrated into historical memory” (*Fragile* 69-70). What Hester did was outside the ideological frame of that society, in a way that failed to find a proper place and justification within that social structure. The event remained a trauma that haunted Hester for the rest of her life, unable to be quilted with the dominant ideology. She lost her place in the Lacanian symbolic order.

As mentioned earlier, ideology constructs the reality people perceive and the existence they live by. According to the six features of ideology proposed by Eagleton (mentioned in the previous section) the citizens’ of that puritan society were subjectivized completely by the prevailing ideology. This led Hester to argue, using the same ideological stance and justify her action and the child she carries as inevitably Christian. A man from among the crowd shouts: “Speak, Woman!. Speak, and give your child a father!”. Hester, exploiting the Christian teachings that control the minds of people, says: “I will not speak!. and my child must seek a heavenly Father; she shall never know an earthly one!” (62). She borrows the same biblical story of baby Christ and puts herself in the place of Mary. She seeks to relate her situation with that of Christ. Naturalization here is at work, a process that displays an event as natural, “spontaneous, inevitable and so unalterable” (Eagleton, *An Introduction* 59). This strategy is adopted by Hester to relocate herself again within the social structure of that community, presenting herself as an ardent believer in Christianity, more Christian than the people that are mocking her.

One of the means by which ideology is highlighted is clothes and costumes. It is unofficially acknowledged that wearing certain types of outfits provides a place in the symbolic order or ideological structure. However, this part of ideology belongs to cynicism. All subjects are well aware that they are mere outfits and carry no Lacanian Real meaning, yet all subjects must deal with these costumes as if they have a real impact on life. Hawthorne writes: "Deep ruffs, painfully wrought bands and gorgeously embroidered gloves were all deemed necessary to the official state of men assuming the reins of power" (74). The tone of the writer is satirical, announcing that these superficialities are mere arbitrary social contracts that contain no real meaning beyond the ideological structure of that society. Not only in action but also in their beliefs, the fellow citizens are convinced of infertility and arbitrariness of the ideology they claim to adopt: "Individuals in private life, meanwhile, had quite forgotten Hester Prynne – for her frailty; nay, more, they had one sin" the narrator comments "but of her many good deeds since" (145). According to Žižek, these officials who create and produce ideological signifiers, called the big Other in Žižekese, do not have a real impact beyond the symbolic order they have created. They are dead, but the problem is that they do not recognize themselves to be dead: "What Žižek means by this is that we all engage in a minimum of idealization, disavowing the brute fact of the Real in favour of another Symbolic world behind it" (Myers 50). Žižek defines this disavowal in terms of 'as if'. The masses act as if the officials have real power. They act as if they have real divine and earthly power. They act as if their costumes give them real authority, as if not parading naked in the streets.

This strategy of 'as if' is necessary for subjects to find their place in the symbolic order, or ideological structure of that puritan society. They cannot assert their refusal of the big Other. This approval of the big Other's instructions safeguards their social place. This condition is termed as the 'symbolic efficiency'. It "refers to the way in which for a fact to become true it is not enough for us just to know it, we need to know that the fact is also known by the big Other too" (Myers 50). The subjects of that puritan society need to make their officials acknowledge that they also approve of their ideology, though cynical. In other words, to belong to the greater socio-ideological identity, they have to make their officials aware that they embrace their ideological signifiers, even though they privately disavow the official ideology. This struggle is clear in the scene when a woman glanced at Hester from afar and said:

a young maiden glancing at the scarlet letter, shyly and aside... such loss of faith is ever one of the saddest results of sin. Be it accepted as a proof that all was not corrupt in this poor victim of her own frailty, and man's hard law, that Hester Prynne. Yet struggled to believe that no fellow-mortal was guilty like herself. (78)

The subjects are obliged to approve the punishment only so that the big Other confers an identity upon them. The big Other, or the officials, in this case, are authorized to structure the ideological and symbolic reality that the subjects live in. Thus, they have to maintain the social and ideological

signifiers to safeguard their social status. Otherwise, this status "can appear in an entirely different light the moment the modality of his/her relationship to the big Other changes" (Žižek, *Ticklish* 330).

One of the most functional and prevailing ideological signifiers in societies is hostility towards other minorities. Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia are obvious examples of this ideological enmity. Hester, in the case of the novel, as the doer of a rare taboo, has transformed herself to the circle of minorities in that puritan society. The hatred of the society towards these people must ideologically be justified, especially when they present themselves as a humanitarian. Here, the idea of the 'theft of enjoyment' starts to function. It is motivated by Freudian fantasy, as explained earlier. Because "fantasies cannot coexist peacefully" (Žižek, *Looking* 168), they need to overcome others. This is the condition in which they start to imagine the worst possible scenarios about others, as the seducers of their girls, abusers of social opportunities, and thieves of job vacancies. Fantasy produces the enmity that has no real ground in reality: "it provides a 'scheme' according to which certain positive objects in reality can function as objects of desire, filling in the empty places opened up by formal symbolic structure" (Žižek, *Parallax* 40). Fantasy, in this respect, is an alternative to the lack that one suffers from. The problem is further complicated because fantasy can never be satisfied (Homer 86-7) leading to endless recreation of false scenarios about the other minorities. Therefore, "fantasy bestows reality with a fictional coherence and consistency that appears to fulfill the lack that constitutes social reality" (Cottrel 80). Fantasy, then, is the motivating power of ideology creation to fill the gap from which a subject suffers. In the novel, other women looked at Hester as the 'theft of enjoyment', consuming the positions they really deserve:

It is probable that there was an idea of penance in this mode of occupation, and that she offered up a real sacrifice of enjoyment in devoting so many hours to such rude handiwork, she had in her nature a rich, voluptuous, Oriental characteristic – a taste for the gorgeously beautiful, which, save in the exquisite production of her needle found nothing else in all the possibilities of her life to exercise itself upon. Women derive pleasure... from the delicate toil of the needle. (75)

This profession is most desired, yet perfected by few. She occupies a position that the other women desire as if she has robbed them of what they deserve. This fantasy motives ideological hostility towards her.

In this pertains, one of the most damaging fantasies is that of the neighbor. We are the ultimate site of our neighbor's fantasy. The wall that separates us from our neighbors motivates their fantasy, in which we are the lone characters of that imagined scenario. The hostility of the neighbor was first theorized by Sigmund Freud in 'Civilization and its Discontents' (1930). His main presupposition is the triviality of the Christian injunction to "Love thy neighbour as thyself". He believes that

Men are not gentle creatures who want us to be loved, and who at the most, can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among

whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. (302)

Continuing his career, Žižek encircles the concept of neighbor with structural classification he proposes that there are three types of neighbor: the imaginary neighbor, the symbolic neighbor, and the Other qua Real. The first and the second types are the normal people we see in society. As for the third one, to which Hester belongs is “the impossible Thing, the “inhuman partner”, the other with whom no symmetrical dialogue, mediated by the Symbolic Order, is possible” (*Neighbor* 143). In other words, Hester, a representative of the third type of neighbor, resists ideological symbolization. She resides beyond the grasp of ideology and its signifiers. She does not undergo the social structure that is already designated by the dominant ideology. Because of this socio-cultural detachment, she faces violence from her neighbors in the town: “This is because the encounter with the threatening Neighbour is the encounter with elementary psychological ground of violence” (Sharpe and Boucher 195). Hester’s suffering, in this regard, is obvious:

Dames of elevated rank, likewise, whose doors she entered in the way of her occupation, were accustomed to distil drops of bitterness into her heart... by a coarser expression, that fell upon the sufferer’s defenceless breast like a rough blow upon an uncerated wound. (76)

Thus, this enmity remains functioning as long as the prevailing ideology justifies the false production of fantasy.

The fantasy of the neighbor excludes the other, as explained above. More radically, the ideology that is built upon this excluding ideology designates a title and position to subjects before they are even born. Because Hester has broken the framework of the dominant ideology, this insurgence remains to haunt her offspring. Pearl, before she is even born, is ascribed to a position outside the culture of the society. In other words, she is predetermined by the ideological signifiers to be a social outcast. The author also helps the reader to feel the ideological agony that Hester is experiencing: “Day after day, she looked fearfully into the child’s expanding nature” the narrator comments “ever dreading to detect some dark and wild peculiarity, that should correspond with the guiltiness to which she owed her being” (80). The problem is that the ideological sin is so deeply absorbed by all the subjects that even Hester yields to its instructions, sensing the great insurgence she has done socially and religiously. This idea is beautifully expressed by the author, adopting all the ideological indicators and its structure: “Pearl was born outcast of the infantile world. An imp of evil, emblem and product of sin, she had no right among christened infants” (83).

CONCLUSIONS

Any authority needs to justify its presence on the top of the power hierarchy by depending on ideological manipulation. Religion dominated the hearts and minds of people in the historical context of the events of the novel. Religion was too powerful to be opposed because of the historical context of the novel’s events. Such an ideological manipulation of Religion is even more apparent in totalitarian governments than in the novel.

The problems become further complicated because the authorities in the novel tend to naturalize their ideology: the subjects are never allowed to feel that they are under a manipulative ideology; otherwise, they will end up like Hester. Because they represent Religion, they believe that they are qualified to even more than the Religion itself to issue new rules beyond those of the Religion. This is the nature of those systems claiming to be the guardians of Religion. They present themselves as interpreters of religious texts and have the qualification to modify specific issues according to their understanding. This is obvious when they designate the proper punishment for Hester, not depending on religious instructions, but according to their whims and ideas.

Ideology, though deceitful, becomes the reality of people, even more, recognizable than truth itself. People tend to deal more realistically with it because it is the organizing factor of their life and ideas. Even Hester loses the sense of her surroundings to focus and feel only the letter on her chest, the mark forced upon her by ideological instructions. It has become the only true thing in her life.

Ideology can sneak into every detail of life and become the driving force of all our actions. It can oblige people to follow its rules and orders. The people in the novel are trapped not only in ideas but also in their outfits because by wearing certain clothes, they prove that they are more qualified to take power than others.

Moreover, people follow ideological instructions only to seek approval from their authorities. In other words, they have created an imaginary power for those in charge to acquire some identity and recognition by them. All the followers of ideologies adopt this ‘symbolic efficiency.’ This is obvious in the interaction of people with the orders issued from authorities towards Hester. They become even more faithful to the details of that ideology than those in power.

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