

The Separation and Synthesis of the Self in *The Scarlet Letter*

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The self is the conscious synthesis of infinitude and finitude which relates itself to itself, whose task is to become itself, a task which can be performed only by means of a relationship to God.

Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*

Christ is the inner man who is reached by the path of self-knowledge. C. G. Jung, *Aion*

An attempt has been made by a few critics to seek a model for the structure of *The Scarlet Letter* in Greek tragedy or classical drama. Certainly we can discern in *The Scarlet Letter* the Aristotelian *schema* of dramatic movement—suffering (inner conflict), discovery (self-recognition), and peripety (transformation). It seems undeniable that there is a formal likeness between Greek tragedy and *The Scarlet Letter*; and that this analogy contributes a great deal to our clearer understanding of the structure of *The Scarlet Letter*. As far as I know, however, no one has ever suggested the similarity of its structure to sonata-form the essential feature of which is the division of a movement (occasionally with an introduction and a coda) into three parts—exposition, development, and recapitulation. This suggestion would gain validity if given due explanation: that is, “The Custom-House” sketch and “Conclusion” correspond to the introduction and coda respectively, and the three scaffold scenes correspond to the three parts of the sonata-

form. Besides, the analogy between *The Scarlet Letter* and a musical composition, which is not so far-fetched as it may at first appear, has one advantage over the above-mentioned analogy to Greek tragedy. There seems to be no literary technique that could rival Hawthorne's use of the letter A in *The Scarlet Letter* in its tenacity or repetitiveness; but there is one in techniques of musical composition, and that is a device called *metamorphosis of themes*, which is, according to a dictionary of music, the process by which a theme can be altered in character while retaining its essence.

We have no space to expatiate on the analogy here. We cannot, however, leave the letter A unexplicated; it is most necessary for the understanding of the work to make it clear what the letter A means and how it functions in the well-wrought texture of *The Scarlet Letter*.

As for the letter A, more than enough, it would seem, has been said and discussed. At the outset, however, let me enumerate the words which begin with A and have something more or less to do with the theme of the work: Arthur; Adultery; Angel; Adam; Art; America; Anguish; Affliction; Agony; Ambiguity; Ambivalence; *Amore*; Affection; Alienation; *Anima*; Allegory; Animal; *Ananke* (Moirá); Apostle; Almighty; Atonement; Ascension; *Agape*; *Agnus Dei*; Abnegation; Affirmation; Antinomy; Alpha; Attrition; Abyss; Arucanum; Amalgamation; *Aletheia* (truth); Absurdity; *Anagnorisis* (recognition); Amen. As we see, the all-embracing A appears to be able to stand for anything. Still it is justifiable to suppose that Hawthorne bestowed multiple meanings on the letter A quite deliberately, though not necessarily the ones I mentioned above.

Every book has its key terms. As far as *The Scarlet Letter* is con-

cerned, however, one gets an impression as if the very key terms were expurgated for some reason or other and only initial A's were retained. Here I must add one more word to the list of A words. The word *Anthropos* is the one, because *Anthropos* is the only word that could be reckoned as a common denominator of the above-mentioned A words. The proper study of Mankind is Man. Even God is (was, if you like) anthropomorphic. It is not too much to say that *The Scarlet Letter* is a study of human existence in fictional form in which no fundamental issues of human experience are left untouched.

Regarded in this light, the protagonist of *The Scarlet Letter*, if there is one, is Arthur Dimmesdale; not simply because his name begins with A, but because he is the *Anthropos* that is to be defined as a synthesis of contradictory forces. He wavers, he hesitates; in a word, he is all-too-human. It is impossible, however, to say that *The Scarlet Letter* is the story of Arthur Dimmesdale. Jac Tharpe points out that "The story was neither Hester's nor Dimmesdale's, but the story of both."¹ Perhaps the term protagonist is misleading. What I have to insist on is that it is necessary to put Dimmesdale in the central position if we are to reach the innermost meanings of *The Scarlet Letter*.

As has often been noted, Hawthorne's characterization is somewhere between realistic and allegorical; *The Scarlet Letter* is by no means exceptional in this respect. As long as we focus our attention on its surface structure, we take it for granted that the major characters of *The Scarlet Letter* are realistic ones. If we look into its deep structure, however, it becomes clear that they are something more than that. It seems to me that a kind of psychoanalytical categorization of the major characters is needed in order to explicate the enigma of *The Scarlet*

Letter. My basic assumption concerning this American classic is that it is a symbolic description of what Jung would call "the process of individuation" or "self-realization." No doubt the essential, though ulterior, action of *The Scarlet Letter* is Dimmesdale's quest for the authentic self. Therefore, since self-realization means the integration of psychic structures, I conceive of the main characters as externalization of the unconscious contents.

On this assumption I should like to test the following hypothesis: *Hester Prynne and Roger Chillingworth are realistically-rendered projected images of Arthur Dimmesdale's dismembered self*; though this may hardly be called allegorical. In Chapter 17, Hester, who set out with Pearl to meet Dimmesdale on his way home, recognizes him in the "primeval forest" and calls his name. But Dimmesdale is not certain whether the figure in "the heavy foliage" is "a woman or a shadow." Then the author comments that "his pathway through life was haunted thus, by a spectre that had stolen out from among his thoughts." It is well-known that the forest often symbolizes the unconscious realm of human psyche in myths, fairytales, and dreams. Needless to say, it holds true of Hawthorne's forest; "The Young Goodman Brown" provides a fair example. It seems that we are well justified in discussing Hawthorne's works to employ the notions of depth psychology.

From the metapsychological formulation stated above (in italics) we can derive at least two sets of equations.

Dimmesdale=ego		Dimmesdale=ego
Hester=id		Hester=anima
Chillingworth=superego		Chillingworth=shadow

Whether we prefer Freudian or Jungian interpretation, it remains true that Hawthorne is an expositor of the unconscious stratum of human psyche in spite of his lack of familiarity with conceptions of modern psychology, which were not put forward until long after his death.

It would be convenient here to give a detailed comment on the relation between Hester and Chillingworth. It is evident that their character forms a striking contrast to each other. Hester is "of an impulsive and passionate nature." On the other hand, Chillingworth is "a man of thought." While the author impresses the reader with Hester's outstanding physical beauty, Chillingworth is introduced to the stage as a deformed figure "with the left shoulder a trifle higher than the right." Hester suffers alienation from society as a result of her sinful deed; whereas Chillingworth is a "reputed" physician. Dimmesdale is a love-object for Hester, but a target of vengeance for Chillingworth. Where Hester is "scarlet", Chillingworth is "dark." If Hester is a "flower," Chillingworth is a "root." The author's naming of them is still more revealing: Hester reminds the reader of Hestia the Greek goddess of hearth which is associative of love and fire; as to Chillingworth, then, there is no need of explanation.

We cannot emphasize too much the sharp contrast between the two characters. It seems precarious, however, to explain away the contrast between them simply as a technique of *chiaroscuro*. To be sure Hester and Chillingworth set off each other with their extreme dissimilarity. Yet it should not be overlooked that despite their incompatibility there is a strange inseparableness in the relation between them. Their relationship would be described as that of the obverse and reverse of the same coin; however inimical they are to each other, they were former-

ly husband and wife. Then, is it too rash a hypothesis to suggest that the relation between them is collateral to that of paired opposites such as love / hate, light / dark, beauty / ugliness, individual / society, freedom / necessity, infinitude / finitude, and so on? Irreconcilable but inseparable, they constitute a *thesis-antithesis complex* which is rooted in the very condition of human existence and demands a certain solution. It would hardly be denied that the opposition between Hester and Chillingworth represents a conflict between two opposing value systems which is more politico-aesthetico-psycho-socio-religious than merely interpersonal.

It seems to me that of all the oppositions the most appropriate to describe the relation of Hester and Chillingworth is the opposition of *Eros* and *Thanatos*. It would be too much to affirm that Hester and Chillingworth embody the perpetual strife between *Eros* and *Thanatos*: yet it is nearly true.² Hester's strength, self-reliance, lawlessness, and nobility seem to derive from her quintessence as the advocate of love and life; and Chillingworth, who is strongly associated with the devil, functions as antagonist toward Hester and the natural values she represents.

So far our attention has been riveted upon Hester and Chillingworth and their antithetical relationship. To make my meaning clearer, however, I must say a few more words in regard to them. One is tempted to say as regards Hester and Chillingworth that the former is good except for one *faux pas* and the latter is evil from head to toe. But the truth is that each of them has a positive and a negative aspect. Since this can be made explicit only when we direct our attention to their respective relationship with Arthur Dimmesdale, we must summon our

effeminate hero to our literary court of justice in the following section.

It is certain that Dimmesdale oscillates between two opposing forces—*Eros* and *Thanatos*, which are embodied in Hester and Chillingworth respectively. As I mentioned earlier, however, Hester and Chillingworth, while retaining their realistic characters, are projections of the minister's psyche. Therefore, we can reduce their antagonism likewise to Dimmesdale's inner conflict. Then, it is worth noting that Dimmesdale shares the same attributes with both Hester and Chillingworth. Dimmesdale is Hester's secret lover; that is to say, he is her partner in "sin of passion." And, Chillingworth is convinced of the minister's "strong animal nature" despite his meek facade. It is clear that Dimmesdale and Hester share the passionate and impulsive nature. What he shares with Chillingworth, as might be expected, is the exact opposite of what he shares with Hester. In Chapter 9, the author mentions "the learning and intelligence of which he [Chillingworth] possessed more than a common measure." In the same chapter is mentioned Dimmesdale's "scholar-like renown in Oxford," as if to emphasize their common feature. Thus, it is evident that Dimmesdale possesses both of the two antipodal characteristics in himself; to put it another way, the minister's psyche is split into two seemingly irreconcilable halves. Dimmesdale is a dim dale between two mountains one of which is scarlet and the other black. One can say that Dimmesdale's suffering is due to the agonizing suspension between the irreconcilable opposites, namely *Eros* and *Thanatos*.

The primary well-spring of Dimmesdale's anguish is his inner dichotomy between *Eros* and *Thanatos*. Dimmesdale the passionate lover is an ally of *Eros*; and the minister who punishes himself with "a bloody

scourge" takes sides with *Thanatos*. Dimmesdale's self, however, is divided furthermore between what he appears and what he really is as a consequence of his concealment of sin. In other words, there is an unbridgeable gulf between his *ego* and his *persona*, which augments his anguish. Thus, the minister's self is doubly divided. (See Figure below.)

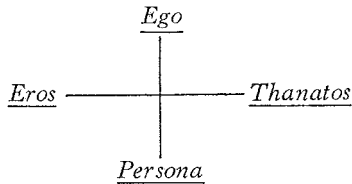


Figure 1

In this point Dimmesdale is quite similar to Mr. Hooper in "The Minister's Black Veil." Mr. Hooper's black veil which consists of "two folds of crape" seems to denote his dissociation from society and from his own self. Otherwise, we cannot explain why it consists of "two folds of crape". Dimmesdale is also dissociated from society and from himself because of his *ego/persona* discrepancy and his ambivalence within himself. However, unlike Mr. Hooper who never reveals his face behind the black veil, Dimmesdale eventually takes off his mask and accomplishes the integration of the self. But it goes without saying that he must undergo a great deal of excruciation before the final resolution.

Hawthorne assigns a positive role to suffering as a propaedeutic to the attainment of authentic existence.

The only truth, that continued to give Mr. Dimmesdale a real existence on this earth, was the anguish in his inmost soul, and

the undissembled expression of it in his aspect. Had he once power to smile, and wear a face of gayety, there would have been no such man!³

Per aspera ad astra is a universal motif; but it seems necessary to make clear the meaning of the "anguish" here. In the foregoing paragraph the cause of Dimmesdale's suffering was made explicit—namely, the separated state of his self. Then it follows that Dimmesdale must reconstruct the configuration of his own self in order to relieve himself of the agony. No doubt suffering alone provides an impetus toward self-transfiguration. This, I suppose, is the reason that Hawthorne emphasizes the significance of suffering.

We must say, however, that suffering is essential but not enough for the consummation of his self-transfiguration. Besides suffering, self-knowledge is indispensable for Dimmesdale to reach any metamorphosis. Sure enough Dimmesdale is acutely aware of the discrepancy between his outer and inner self. Yet he is unaware of the opposition of *Eros* and *Thanatos* in his inmost soul. As I intimated before, it is the *Eros* / *Thanatos* opposition that has brought about the *ego* / *persona* discrepancy. Therefore, in order to solve the latter problem Dimmesdale must first gain knowledge of the former one—that knowledge is equal to self-knowledge since the *Eros* / *Thanatos* opposition, as I mentioned before, is his inner conflict.

At first Dimmesdale is ignorant of the fact that Chillingworth is Hester's missing husband. Taking advantage of his ignorance, Chillingworth, who has become Dimmesdale's physician, even comes to live under the same roof with Dimmesdale. The clergyman becomes more and more emasculate under the evil influence of Chillingworth—"the

leech" who sucks up his lifeblood. Dimmesdale feels "some evil influence watching over him," but he cannot know whence it comes. Hester who knows the true identity of Chillingworth tries to persuade him to stop his revenge and say "Your clutch is on his life, and you cause him to die daily a living death." We can see that here *Thanatos* gains the hegemony over Dimmesdale's psyche. In Chapter 17, however, Hester discloses at last the identity of the old physician to Dimmesdale, who on hearing the terrible truth is transformed by a black frown across his face and exclaims: "That old man's revenge has been blacker than my sin. He has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart." This passage is usually interpreted as indicating the unpardonable sin of Chillingworth. Certainly, Chillingworth is an observer without sympathy, therefore a tormentor; yet there is no denying that Dimmesdale remains conscious of his depravity *grâce à* Chillingworth. Dimmesdale's sudden aversion to Chillingworth is solely toward the negative aspect of the old physician—a truth-seeker with glacial intellect and no warm blood.

Dimmesdale thus comes to know the true color of Chillingworth; but his job is only half-done. Next he must experience the no less devastating effect of *Eros*. After the disclosure of Chillingworth's identity, Hester encourages (or tempts) Dimmesdale to leave the town and venture forth either into the "boundless forest" or across the sea to Europe, where he can hide himself from "the gaze of Roger Chillingworth." "Give up this name of Arthur Dimmesdale," says Hester, "and make thyself another, and a high one, such as thou canst wear without fear or shame." After some hesitation Dimmesdale consents to her plan of escape, though it means renewal of his former sin. The following pas-

sage—"Thus, we seem to see that, as regarded Hester Prynne, the whole seven years of outlaw and ignominy had been little other than a preparation for this very hour."—shows clearly Hester's quintessence as the incarnate *Eros*. We can see that here *Eros* gains the hegemony over Dimmesdale's psyche.

Thus, Hester inspires vigor into the minister's soul; and here for the first time the reader witnesses Dimmesdale bouncing in high spirits. Perhaps in Chapter 18 *Eros* is viewed, if anything, in a favorable light, what with Hester's beauty and her spontaneity. It is worth recalling, however, that Dimmesdale's existence is sustained by "the anguish in his inmost soul." He is nothing if not bleeding! There is no doubt that Dimmesdale in the clutches of *Eros* is going the way of damnation. Dimmesdale is at first unaware of this crisis; but he experiences the devastating influence of *Eros* over him on his way home from the forest. In Chapter 20 he acts as if his immoral wishes hitherto suppressed were liberated all of a sudden. For instance, he has an impulse to tempt a young maiden who is apparently in love with him—an impulse to "drop into her tender bosom a germ of evil that would be sure to blossom darkly soon, and bear black fruit betimes." The minister, who went near being actuated by the strange impulse, mutters to himself: "What is it that haunts and tempts me thus?" The answer to this question, as we might guess, is *Eros* within himself.

In the foregoing, we have seen Dimmesdale undergo two kinds of transformation: first, his "dark transfiguration" wrought by his knowing Chillingworth's identity; second, the emergence of his hitherto unknown character—scarlet transfiguration, if such an expression could be allowed. From this we can conclude that Dimmesdale has gained full

knowledge of his "profounder self" in which has been fought the battle between *Eros* and *Thanatos*. Later on, in his study, Dimmesdale looks at things around him, musing upon his own transformation:

He knew that it was himself, the thin and white-cheeked minister, who had done and suffered these things, and written thus far into the Election Sermon! But he seemed to stand apart, and eye this former self with scornful, pitying, but half-envious curiosity. That self was gone! Another man had returned out of the forest; a wiser one; with a knowledge of hidden mysteries which the simplicity of the former never could have reached. A bitter kind of knowledge that!⁴

This passage indicates that Dimmesdale's final transfiguration is neither "dark" nor "scarlet."

It may be said that Dimmesdale bears a resemblance to young Goodman Brown who returns likewise from the forest of knowledge. (All knowledge is ultimately nothing other than self-knowledge.) However, in contradistinction to Goodman Brown whose "dying hour was gloom," Dimmesdale dies a triumphant death—death as culmination of life. We must consider next why there arises such a difference between Dimmesdale and Brown in spite of the fact that they both acquire the deepest knowledge about themselves. What Brown lacks, I suppose, is an acceptance of the negative aspect of his personality, without which the synthesis of the self is impossible. Mere knowledge is not sufficient to bring about a miracle. Then, what makes Dimmesdale accept the negative aspect of his self? In other words, what makes it possible—the annulment of opposites in a higher synthesis? In the following we shall investigate the process of the synthesis of Dimmesdale's self.

The process of Dimmesdale's self-realization is described symbolically in the three scaffold scenes. In the first scaffold scene, only Hester and her illegitimate child Pearl are on the platform of the pillory; Dimmesdale and Chillingworth are located somewhere else. In the second one, Hester, Pearl, and Dimmesdale stand together on the platform of the pillory with Chillingworth "at no great distance from the scaffold."

And there stood the minister, with his hand over his heart; and Hester Prynne, with the embroidered letter glimmering on her bosom; and little Pearl, herself a symbol, and the connecting link between those two.⁵

What we have to note in this scene is that among the three A's on the scaffold Dimmesdale's A is not yet revealed, and instead of it there appears "a great red letter in the sky," which seems to foreshadow the appearance of the letter A on Dimmesdale's bosom and his death (or rather, ascension). The three A's become united only in the third scaffold scene, where the dialectical movement through opposites reaches its end.

As we have already seen, Dimmesdale is no longer unaware of his doubly divided self. So he may well try to undo the Gordian knot. To do so, however, he must accomplish two things at once, i. e., the resolution of the *ego/persona* discrepancy and of the *Eros/Thanatos* opposition. It seems easy for him to resolve the *ego/persona* discrepancy since he needs only to confess his sin to annihilate the discrepancy. But the confession cannot precede the deliverance from the influence of *Eros* and *Thanatos*, because as I mentioned earlier, the *ego/persona* discrepancy is the outcome of the *Eros/Thanatos* opposition within Dimmesdale's psyche. As to the annulment of the opposites the matter becomes much more complicated; and it is exactly a matter of life and

death. Because *Eros* and *Thanatos* are integral parts of Dimmesdale's psyche and each of them has a positive and a negative aspect, Dimmesdale must come to terms with them and reject them simultaneously. Hegel's *Aufheben*—a simultaneous preserving, cancelling, and lifting up—may aptly describe the antinomial attitude he must take toward *Eros* and *Thanatos*. The third scaffold scene is a symbolic description of this complex procedure.

In the final scaffold scene the four major characters stand together on the platform of the pillory:

They [townspeople] beheld the minister, leaning on Hester's shoulder and supported by her arm around him, approach the scaffold, and ascend its steps; while still the little hand of the sin-born child was clasped in his. Old Roger Chillingworth followed, as one intimately connected with the drama of guilt and sorrow in which they had all been actors, and well entitled, therefore, to be present at its closing scene.⁶

The difference between the second and the third scaffold scene is evident, but I would like to visualize the third scaffold scene so as to make manifest Hawthorne's *graphic design*.

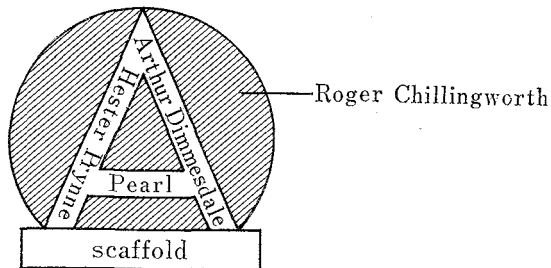


Figure 2

Hester, Pearl, and Dimmesdale thus form the figure A on the scaffold; and Chillingworth could be regarded as the dark background for the figure A to stand out. The formation of this human A on the scaffold signifies *par excellence* the triad harmony of *Eros*, *Thanatos*, and *Anthropos*. Prior to this scene, however, Dimmesdale rejects both Hester and Chillingworth. In Chapter 22, Dimmesdale seems "remote from her own sphere, and utterly beyond her reach." And then in Chapter 23 he declares to Chillingworth: "With God's help, I shall escape thee now!" It seems that the triad harmony of *Eros*, *Thanatos*, and *Anthropos*, which is tantamount to the synthesis of the self, is achieved according to the law of the negation of negation. The resultant affirmation, which is envisaged in the formation of the letter A on the scaffold, is expressed also in Dimmesdale's last word:

God knows; and He is merciful! He hath proved his mercy, most of all, in my afflictions. By giving me this burning torture to bear upon my breast! By sending yonder dark and terrible old man, to keep the torture always at redheat! By bringing me hither, to die this death of triumphant ignominy before the people! Had either of these agonies been wanting, I had been lost for ever! Praised be his name! His will be done! Farewell!⁷

Dimmesdale's death itself could be regarded as signifying the same *coincidentia oppositorum*—unity of *Eros* and *Thanatos*, yes and no, heaven and hell, etc. Dimmesdale's death is the consummation of his life; so he dies almost willingly. There is no life without death, and *vice versa*; that which is not living never can die. As Nietzsche put it, "the man consummating his life dies his death triumphantly." Dim-

mesdale accepts both life and death as God's will; so his death is part of his life, and his life is part of his death. In Dimmesdale's death it is *Thanatos* who ceases to be—"Old Roger Chillingworth knelt down beside him, with a blank, dull countenance, out of which the life seemed to have departed." Dimmesdale, on the other hand, goes on living in Pearl. *Absorpta est mors in victoria*. The union of life and death is a sheer paradox. But, as Jung put it, "Paradox is a characteristic of all transcendental situations because it alone gives adequate expression to their indescribable nature."

We all *know* (I do not say *believe*) that Christ Jesus *Agnus Dei* is the Mediator between man and God, the living and the dead, heaven and hell, the past and the future, etc. Then, it is perhaps permissible to superimpose the image of Christ on Dimmesdale. As to the resemblance between them, we have evidence in plenty. Dimmesdale's "red stigma" is an analogue of Christ's holy stigma. Dimmesdale's suffering on the scaffold (an elevated place) resembles the Crucifixion of Christ. Dimmesdale suffers between Hester and Chillingworth; Christ is crucified between two criminals. There are a number of similarities between them. What we must underscore, however, is that Dimmesdale redeems Hester, Pearl, and even Chillingworth by carrying the cross on his back. Dimmesdale's death liberates Hester and Chillingworth from their allotted roles; that is to say, they cease to function as *Eros* and *Thanatos*. In the final chapter the A on Hester's bosom no longer stands for adulteress. As for Chillingworth, he bequeaths a large amount of property to Pearl—*Thanatos* would not do that. Pearl also casts aside her chaotic character: "she would grow up amid joy and sorrow, nor for ever do battle with the world but be a woman in it." She ceases to be "a messenger

of anguish"—and later she leaves for Europe not to repeat history but to renew it. Thus, Dimmesdale saves them by the act of self-sacrifice, which is at the same time his own salvation.

As can be seen from the foregoing paragraph, it is more than permissible to superimpose the Christ image on Dimmesdale. However, we cannot neglect the strange fact that it is possible to see the image of Christ in Pearl as well as in Dimmesdale. So far we have been least concerned with Pearl; but as a matter of fact Pearl constitutes the core of *The Scarlet Letter*. In the following we shall be concerned with the meaning and function of "the elf-child" Pearl.

It is evident that we can see the Christ image in Pearl and that the author intends us to do so. In Chapter 2, Hester "with the infant at her bosom" is "an object to remind him [a Papist] of the image of Divine Maternity." In Chapter 8, the author says "Even thus early had the child saved her [Hester] from Satan's snare." In Chapter 10, Chillingworth reports that he saw Pearl "bespatter the Governer himself with water." That is to say, Pearl baptizes Governer Bellingham whose head with "an elaborate ruff beneath his gray beard" looks like "that of John the Baptist in a charger." Pearl is entitled to baptize John the Baptist!

There seems little doubt that we can superimpose the Christ image on both Dimmesdale and Pearl. It is worth mentioning, however, Pearl is endowed with the Christ image from the inception of the story, whereas Dimmesdale becomes Christlike only in the third scaffold scene. As I mentioned before, the three A's become united and form a larger A in the third scaffold scene; and then Dimmesdale becomes Christlike. Then, is it that Christly nature was transferred from Pearl to Dimmesdale?

Or, is Christliness an epidemic disease? My supposition is that Pearl is also an integral part of Dimmesdale's self in the same way as Hester and Chillingworth are projected images of his self. It can be said that Pearl represents the Christ within Dimmesdale's psyche—the inner Christ. By assimilating Pearl to Dimmesdale's self we can get a complete picture of his psychic structures.

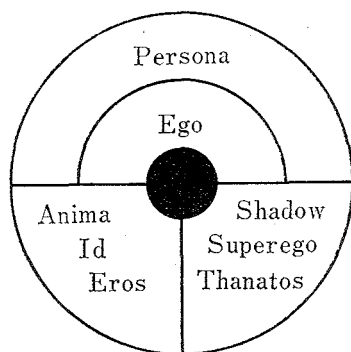


Figure 3

Figure 3 shows the cross section of the sphere which represents Dimmesdale's dismembered self; and the core of the sphere represents Pearl. The reason why I put her at the core of Dimmesdale's being is that Pearl is the unifier of his dismembered self and that she is the most fathomless character.⁸ Her character is a complexity of complexities—"Her nature appeared to possess depth, too, as well as variety." Pearl is the pearl of great price which is hidden in the depth of the human psyche. To paraphrase Dryden: He who would search for Pearl must dive below. As for the "variety" of Pearl's character, we can see that it coincides with our postulation that the letter A is laden with multiple meanings, because Pearl is "the scarlet letter endowed with life."

That Dimmesdale's self has as its core the inner Christ Pearl is the third factor of his hard-earned salvation, the psychological equivalent of which is the self-realization. *The Scarlet Letter* seems to assert that besides suffering (*Agon*) and self-knowledge (*Anagnorisis*), a helping hand of *Agnus Dei* (the Second Adam) is requisite for man's salvation.

The strong resemblance between Figure 2 and 3 may permit us to conclude that the letter A glowing against its dark ground is a graphic definition of man (*Anthropos*).

The letter A appears to put emphasis on the tragedy and suffering in human existence; but it is an unpardonable sin to ignore Dimmesdale's last word the gist of which may be summed up in the following dictum: God makes all things work together for good *etiam peccata*. [Roman 8 : 28 with addition of a phrase by St. Augustine] To be sure, *The Scarlet Letter* is written in a tragic A minor key; but its climax is marked with the mystic harmony of *Eros*, *Thanatos*, and *Anthropos* which was brought about by a moral and a spiritual triumph of man.

NOTES

- 1 Jac Tharpe, *Nathaniel Hawthorne: Identity and Knowledge* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1967), p. 107.
- 2 At this point some objections will surely be raised against the formulation —Hester=*Eros* / Chillingworth=*Thanatos*. But we are sometimes forced to oversimplify in the interest of brevity and clarity. Besides, the above formulation will make manifest the ironical tint with which Hawthorne depicts the Puritan society in New England in the mid-seventeenth century, where Hester (the incarnate *Eros*) is branded as an adulteress and Chillingworth (the incarnate *Thanatos*), on the other hand, is received with respect among Puritans as a skilled physician.
- 3 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* ("The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne"; Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, c1962),

p. 146.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 223.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 154.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 253.

7 *Ibid.*, pp. 256-257.

8 It is generally accepted that Pearl owes something to Hawthorne's daughter Una. Then, it is perhaps worth noting that Una is a derivation of the Latin word for "one" and that its Irish version Óonagh means "lamb".

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