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Hawthorne's reception of Byron

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Abstract Among the many references to Byron in the *Twice-Told Tales* and *Mosses from an Old Manse*, the most elaborate and entertaining are found in "P.'s Correspondence," first published in the *Democratic Review*, April 1845. References to Byron in "The Seven Vagabonds" (1833), "Passages from a Relinquished Work" (1834), "Sketches from Memory" (1835), "A Virtuoso Collection" (1842), "The Procession of Life" (1843), "Earth's Holocaust" (1844), contribute further to the critique of Byron and provide a matrix for analyzing the Byronic elements in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and more especially in *The Marble Faun* (1860). This essay draws from the novels and tales, as well as the letters, in constructing a coherent account of Hawthorne's reception of Byron. Key elements in his reception were Byron's struggle against his Calvinist background; his violation of moral standards; his representations of forbidden love and the noble outlaw with a guilty past; his exile in Italy and his conjuring of Italian intrigue. These are also key elements in Hawthorne's own tales and novels, especially those written during Hawthorne's stay in Rome and Florence from 1857 to 1859.

Keywords Byron · Hawthorne · Italy · Calvinism

Never was Childe Harold's sentiment adopted in a spirit more unlike his own.
Passages from a Relinquished Work (1834)

Among the many references to Byron in the *Twice-Told Tales* and *Mosses from an Old Manse*, the most elaborate and entertaining are found in "P.'s Correspondence," first published in the *Democratic Review*, April 1845. P. describes meeting the old and fat Lord Byron who was been reconciled with Lady Byron and reformed by her ladyship's moral influence. As crucial as it is to Hawthorne's reception of Byron, this satire has not previously received adequate critical attention as an appraisal of Byron's characters and works. The references to Byron in "The Seven Vagabonds" (1833), "Passages from a Relinquished Work" (1834),

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"Sketches from Memory" (1835), "A Virtuoso Collection" (1842), "The Procession of Life" (1843), "Earth's Holocaust" (1844), contribute further to the critique of Byron and provide a matrix for analyzing the Byronic elements in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and *The Marble Faun* (1860), as well as in the tales of obsession and guilt. The three comparative studies on Byron and Hawthorne published during the 1970s focused on attributes of the Byronic Hero (Fogle 1971, pp. 181–197; Harris 1977, pp. 305–317; Cavanaugh 1978). The aim of this essay will be to draw from the novels and tales, as well as the letters, a more comprehensive account of Hawthorne's reception of Byron.

Key elements in Hawthorne's reception were Byron's struggle against his Calvinist background (Meyering 1986); his violation of moral standards; his representations of forbidden love and the noble outlaw with a guilty past (Thorslev 1962, pp. 65–83); his exile in Italy and, as in *Marino Faliero*, *The Two Foscari*, *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, his conjuring of Italian intrigue (Quennell 1941, 1974; Saglia 2003, pp. 275–295; Schoina 2001, pp. 69–91; Ogden 2000, pp. 114–137; Dawson 1990, pp. 117–127). These are also key elements in Hawthorne's own tales and novels, substituting, of course, for Byron's titles such works as "Rappacinni's Daughter" and *The Marble Faun*, the latter written during Hawthorne's stay in Rome and Florence from 1857 to 1859. Similarities, yes, but also vast differences: Byron's characters draw strength from an inviolable will, a refusal to bend to authority; Hawthorne's characters are more darkly and deeply tormented by their sins.

His dislike of religious pretensions, Byron explained, was the enduring consequence of "being early disgusted with a Calvinistic Scotch School where I was cudgelled to Church for the first 10 years of my life."[1] This was also the explanation he gave to Annabella Milbanke for his aversion: "I was bred in Scotland among Calvinists … which gave me a dislike to that persuasion."[2] Unlike either Hester Prynne, who wore her scarlet letter of adultery publicly, or Reverend Dimmesdale, who secretly exposed his self-lacerated scarlet letter in his nightly vigil, Byron flaunted his wickedness with paradoxical extremes of braggadocio and self-recrimination.

with demons, who impair
The strength of better thoughts, and seek their prey
In melancholy bosoms, such as were
Of moody texture from their earliest day,
And loved to dwell in darkness and dismay,
Deeming themselves predestined to a doom,
Which is not of the pangs that pass away;
Making the sun like blood and the earth a tomb,
The tomb a hell, and hell itself a murkier gloom. (*Childe Harold* 4: xxxiv)

Mario Praz described these extremes as the vaunting pride and dismal despair of Satan, rebelling against Heaven, condemning himself to Hell (Praz 1933, pp. 61–66). Even in rejecting Calvinism, Byron cannot escape his sense that he is condemned among the reprobate (Sloan 2002, pp. 36–38). But he also sees that misery and suffering is universal. Rome, "the Niobe of Nations," represents the plight of human history at large. Thus he declares that Rome is "my country, the city of the soul!" … the "Lone mother of dead empires!" (*Childe Harold* 4: lxxviii).

In 1833, 4 years before she met Hawthorne, Sophia Peabody revealed her familiarity with Byron's Rome. "Oh *why not live in Rome*," she wrote to her sister Elizabeth. "Pack

[1] Byron to William Gifford; 18 June 1813; *Byron's Letters & Journals*, 3:64.

[2] Byron to Anabella Milbanke; 26 September 1813; *Byron's Letters & Journals*, 3:119.

up—Betty—& let us be off—& live in Rome—the eternal—imperial 'Mother of dead empires'—the city of the soul" (Herbert 1993, p. 215). Late in 1837, the same year the collection of *Twice-Told Tales* was published, Sophia met her future husband. In 1839, they were engaged to be married. In 1842 an enlarged edition of *Twice-Told Tales* appeared, and Hawthorne and his bride moved into the Old Manse in Concord, Massachusetts. Nathaniel and Sophia began to keep a journal together as newlyweds at the Old Manse. Over the next decade, from 1842 to 1852, they filled two substantial notebooks.[3] During the next 3 years, 1842–1845, Hawthorne wrote and published some 20 tales and sketches at the Old Manse. In financial difficulties they moved back to Salem in 1846, and Hawthorne published *Mosses from an Old Manse*. As their fortunes began to flourish, they did indeed travel and live in that "Niobe of Nations."

Hawthorne's references to Byron are often little more than passing allusions to the more popular works. His explicit references reveal a cautious reserve. Thus in "The Seven Vagabonds" (1833), a character visiting a bookshop browses among shelves of "several ancient friends … novels of those happy days when my affections wavered between the Scottish Chiefs and Thomas Thumb." Apparently swayed by nostalgia, he purchases the *New England Primer*, "a bundle of superannuated gilt picture books" filled with fairy tales, and "an assortment of ballads and popular theatrical songs." To offset this large expenditure, he declines to succumb to other attractions, such as a *Life of Franklin*, or Webster's spelling book, or a volume of "Byron's minor poems."[4]

"Never was Childe Harold's sentiment adopted in a spirit more unlike his own," declared Hawthorne's narrator in "Passages from a Relinquished Work" (1834). Cited as an epigram to this essay, it may be extended justly to all of Hawthorne's echoings of Byron. The "Relinquished Work" was a planned series of short stories to be told by a wandering storyteller, whose stories are interwoven with his account of the events of his life and his travels. In an episode entitled "A Flight in the Fog," the familiar scene, obscured by the fog, appears distant and unreal, "more like memory than reality," as if contemplated "in my mind through the mist of time." The storyteller can thus bid farewell in a spirit of unencumbered detachment: "I waved my hand towards the dusky village, bade it a joyous farewell, and turned away, to follow any path but that which might lead me back." Reminded of Childe Harold's farewell at the outset of the Pilgrimage (Canto I: xiii and song), he is also fully aware that he is no Childe Harold.[5]

A repeated characteristic of these allusions from Byron is Hawthorne's distancing himself from the very lines that haunt his memory. Abjurations rather than conjurations, the allusions are about an absent Byron or a non-Byron. In "Sketches from Memory," (1835), he describes the Notch of the White Mountains as well as fellow passengers on the journey. Among them "a very fat lady," "a mineralogist, … bearing a heavy hammer, with which he did great damage to the precipices," and "a well-dressed young man, who carried an opera-glass." This last character is the poetic poseur, who seemed to be quoting, perhaps from *Childe Harold* (Canto 3: lxxii-c), "Byron's rhapsodies on mountain scenery." Having him peer at nature through an opera-glass, Hawthorne radically distinguishes the young man from any serious pretensions to the Byronic manner.[6]

[3] Hawthorne, *The American Notebooks*, Vol. 8 (1972) and *The French and Italian Notebooks,* Vol. 14 (1984a) pp. 905–906.

[4] Hawthorne, "The Seven Vagabonds" (1833), *Twice-Told Tales*, *Works* 9:353–354.

[5] Hawthorne, "Passages from a Relinquished Work" (1834), *Mosses from an Old Manse, Works* 10:410.

[6] Hawthorne, "Sketches from Memory" (1835), *Mosses from an Old Manse, Works* 10:423–424.

"A Virtuoso Collection" (1842) is Hawthorne's whimsical "catalogue," spoofing the amateur collector's mania and credulity. During his tour through this imaginary museum, he describes a collection of stuffed animals that includes "Byron's tame bear," and, in a display of historical artifacts, "the spinning-wheel of Sardanapalus." The Peabody Museum once issued a pamphlet declaring that their collection was in fact the source of Hawthorne's spoof. The pamphlet itself may still be an exhibition item.[7]

In "The Procession of Life" (1843), Hawthorne proposes a scheme for "a true classification of society," one which is not dictated by wealth or rank. He observes that the very nature of the diseases which afflict humanity provides one such universal ordering, for certain classes are identified by their afflictions: those who suffer the gout, those who are wracked by consumption. "The gifts of intellect" provide another ordering principle, "before which the conventional distinctions of society melt away."

> Were Byron now alive, and Burns, the first would come from his ancestral Abbey, flinging aside, although unwillingly, the inherited honors of a thousand years, to take the arm of the mighty peasant, who grew immortal while he stooped behind his plough. These are gone; but the hall, the farmer's fireside, the hut, perhaps the palace, the counting-room, the workshop, the village, the city, life's high places and low ones, may all produce their poets, whom a common temperament pervades like an electric sympathy. Peer or ploughman, we will muster them, pair by pair, and shoulder to shoulder.[8]

"The Earth's Holocaust" (1844) tells how a band of zealous reformers sought to purge all evil: "this wide world had become so overburthened with an accumulation of worn-out trumpery, that the inhabitants determined to rid themselves of it by a general bonfire." Multitudes gather to witness the conflagration. The attic of world history is to be cleaned out. As weapons and munitions of war are thrown upon the flames, trumpets blare and the leaders proclaim the advent of "universal and eternal peace." The primary source of fuel was the massive book-burning. The rationale for emptying out all libraries, public and private, was simply that books had become an impediment to progress: "the human race had now reached a stage of progress so far beyond what the wisest and wittiest men of former ages had ever dreamed of, that it would have been a manifest absurdity to allow the earth to be any longer encumbered with their poor achievements in the literary line." As cartloads of books were thrown into the flames, the narrator notices that the works of each author burned in a distinctive way:

> Voltaire … went off in a brilliant shower of sparkles, and little jets of flame … a collection of German stories emitted a scent of brimstone … the English standard authors … [exhibited] the properties of sound oak logs … Milton's works … sent up a powerful blaze, gradually reddening into a coal, which promised to endure longer than almost any other material of the pile …From Shakespeare there gushed a flame of such marvellous splendor that men shaded their eyes as against the sun's meridian glory; nor even when the works of his own elucidators were flung upon him did he cease to flash forth a dazzling radiance from beneath the ponderous heap.

[7] Hawthorne, "A Virtuoso Collection" (1842), *Mosses from an Old Manse*, *Works*, 10:482. See: Macgregor (1946, pp. 558–559).

[8] Hawthorne, "The Procession of Life" (1843), *Mosses from an Old Manse*, *Works* 10:210–211.

Continuing his account of the varied properties of authorial flames, Hawthorne declares that "Shelley's poetry emitted a purer light than almost any other productions of his day," in distinct contrast to "the fitful and lurid gleams, and gushes of black vapor, that flashed and eddied from the volumes of Lord Byron."[9]

The most sustained account of Byron is in "P's Correspondence" (1845). Here the central character is neither an absent Byron nor a non-Byron, but rather an anti-Byron, a Byron that never was. The story's narrator is a madman who has hallucinated his encounter with long-dead historical and literary figures whom he imagines to be still alive. His delusions feature the poets Burns, Shelley, and Keats, the actor Edmund Kean, the British politician George Canning, and even Napoleon Bonaparte. Most prominent is his account of meeting Byron in London in 1845. In presenting P's Correspondence, the editor explains that his "unfortunate friend" has experienced "long intervals of partially disordered reason," with the result that "past and present are jumbled together in his mind." Although P. never stirs from his "little whitewashed, iron-grated room," he imagines himself "a great traveller" who has met "in his wanderings a variety of personages who have long ceased to be visible to any eye save his own." This delusion, however, is not complete, but rather "a partly wilful and partly involuntary sport of the imagination." To his interviews "his disease has imparted such morbid energy that he beholds these spectral scenes and characters with no less distinctness than a play upon the stage, and with somewhat more of illusive credence." His letters, Hawthorne says, are sent from "his misty excursions beyond the limits of sanity."

That P.'s correspondence is also posted from indeterminate temporality is evident from date of his letter: "February 29, 1845." 1844 was a leap year, not 1845. He has managed to wander from his iron-barred room and "make the acquaintance of several distinguished characters." The first of these is Lord Byron. No matter that Byron died in Missolonghi in 1824, P. finds his lordship still alive, "looking much older than I had anticipated." P. judges that Byron looks "not older than a man on the verge of sixty," fairly hale for a man who, a month earlier on January 22, would have turned 57. His condition is thus as might be supposed, "considering his former irregularities of life and the various wear and tear of his constitution." P. is disconcerted with Byron's appearance only because, he says, "I had invested his earthly frame, in my imagination, with the poet's spiritual immortality." Sublime and grotesque modes of imagination are in conflict. The grotesque prevails and presents him with a paunchy, puffy specimen of mortal flesh:

> He wears a brown wig, very luxuriantly curled, and extending down over his forehead. The expression of his eyes is concealed by spectacles. His early tendency to obesity having increased, Lord Byron is now enormously fat,–so fat as to give the impression of a person quite overladen with his own flesh, and without sufficient vigor to diffuse his personal life through the great mass of corporeal substance which weighs upon him so cruelly. You gaze at the mortal heap; and, while it fills your eye with what purports to be Byron, you murmur within yourself, "For Heaven's sake, where is he?" Were I disposed to be caustic, I might consider this mass of earthly matter as the symbol, in a material shape, of his avenues of communication with the better life. But this would be too harsh; and, besides, Lord Byron's morals have been improving while his outward man has swollen to such unconscionable circumference. Would that he were leaner; for, though he did me the honor to present his hand,

[9] Hawthorne, "Earth's Holocaust" (1844), *Mosses from an Old Manse*, *Works* 10:396–397.

> yet it was so puffed out with alien substance that I could not feel as if I had touched the hand that wrote Childe Harold.[10]

Hawthorne thus uses P. to answer those moralists who regret that Byron's genius was corrupted by vice and that his poetic promise was undermined by the scandalous circumstances of his incestuous relationship with Augusta Leigh and his scandalous divorce. As P. observes, a domesticated and virtuous Byron is no Byron at all. Paradoxically, it is not the rebellious Byron, but the morally compliant Byron who becomes "the symbol, in a material shape, of those evil habits and carnal vices which unspiritualize man's nature and clog up his avenues of communication with the better life."

Hawthorne also uses P. to satirize the petty scavengering of critics and biographers. Considerably less athletic than he had been as a young man, the Byron of P.'s vision has developed the gout

> the gout for several years past had taken up its constant residence in his right foot, which accordingly was swathed in many rolls of flannel and deposited upon a cushion.

P. is certain about which foot had been attacked by gout. But in that certainty, another mystery is raised:

> The other foot was hidden in the drapery of his chair. Do you recollect whether Byron's right or left foot was the deformed one.[11]

P.'s question about Byron's lameness is a reminder of the role of the invalid storyteller in Hawthorne's fiction. Posed with such whimsical simplicity, the question lacks any apparent kinship to other literary invocations of left and right foot. In the march of metrics, there is a crucial difference whether one commences with a trochaic or an iambic foot. Dante refers to the left foot as the "pie firme" on which he stands as he strides forth with Virgil to explore the Underworld. Blake is equally certain into which foot Milton descended to take up his residence in Blake's body. P. asks the question that had often been, and continued to be, asked and debated. Dr. Charles Cameron reviews those who addressed the problem:

> Friends and enemies alike showed a curious division of opinion as to which foot was deformed … Moore, his friend and biographer; Galt, the companion of his travels and also his biographer; Lady Blessington and the Countess Albrizi, his intimate friends, never knew or could make up their minds which foot was lame. Gentleman Jackson, his boxing instructor, thought it was his left. His mother, who ought to have known, writing to Mrs. Leigh that she may obtain the advice of the great John Hunter, states definitely, "it is the right foot." Mrs. Leigh Hunt was of the opinion that the left foot was shrunken, but that it was not a club foot (Cameron 1924, pp. 281–285).

There are more sources: Sheldrake, a London instrument-maker, published an article, "Distortion of the Foot. Lord Byron's Case," in the *Lancet* (1827), accompanied by a woodcut of a sketch of a plaster cast which represented the right foot. When Thorwaldsen was at work on his statue of Byron, he asked the question of Hobhouse, who said that the lameness was in the right foot. Countess Guiccioli, however, said the left. P's question obviously probed an unresolved mystery of the moment.

[10] Hawthorne, "P's Correspondence" (1845), *Mosses from an Old Manse*, *Works* 10:363.

[11] Hawthorne, "P's Correspondence" (1845), *Mosses from an Old Manse*, *Works* 10:364.

Hawthorne's P. has conjured a phantom Byron who has become the opposite of his original self. He is now reconciled with Lady Byron: "They are said to be, if not a happy, at least a contented, or at all events a quiet couple, descending the slope of life with that tolerable degree of mutual support which will enable them to come easily and comfortably to the bottom." Under Lady Byron's influence, the poet has embraced the religion he once scorned. He "combines the most rigid tenets of Methodism with the ultra doctrines of the Puseyites; the former being perhaps due to the convictions wrought upon his mind by his noble consort, while the latter are the embroidery and picturesque illumination demanded by his imaginative character."[12] No longer denounced as devotee of the "foul fiend" and provocateur of the Satanic School, the redeemed Byron "is now all but canonized as a saint." As in religion so too in politics, Byron has become conservative, "denouncing and repudiating the mischievous and anarchical notions of his earlier day."[13]

Hawthorne's point, of course, is that the rebellious voice of his poetry is totally flattened by conformance. When P. attempts to give the "homage due to a mighty poet," he finds that his "allusions to passages in *Childe Harold*, and *Manfred*, and *Don Juan*," are met with aloof disdain. He discovers that Byron, having repudiated his former licentiousness, "is preparing a new edition of his complete works, carefully corrected, expurgated, and amended, in accordance with his present creed of taste, morals, politics, and religion." The "passages of highest inspiration" which P. cited "were among the condemned and rejected rubbish" which Byron now expurgates to be "cast into the gulf of oblivion."[14] When Byron read to him specimens of the revised poetry, P. silently conceded that it was a dull residue.

> Whatever is licentious, whatever disrespectful to the sacred mysteries of our faith, whatever morbidly melancholic or splenetically sportive, whatever assails settled constitutions of government or systems of society, whatever could wound the sensibility of any mortal, except a pagan, a republican, or a dissenter, has been unrelentingly blotted out, and its place supplied by unexceptionable verses in his lordship's later style. You may judge how much of the poem remains as hitherto published. The result is not so good as might be wished; in plain terms, it is a very sad affair indeed; for though the torches kindled in Tophet have been extinguished, they leave an abominably ill odor, and are succeeded by no glimpses of hallowed fire.[15]

Not unlike the strictures of Calvinism, the denunciation and presumed eradication of a rebellious nature are ineffectual. The white-washing of human behavior leaves repressed desires to seethe in secrecy, or to find a forbidden outlet, as in *The Scarlet Letter*, in guilty concealment. Hawthorne addresses the paradox of bowdlerizing. In spite of the presumed moral improvement, the results are inevitably worse. Worse still are the traces of what has been censored. The circumlocutions not only fail to cover up what was originally present, by their flat and uninspired language they call attention to what has been substituted. While permitted to blaze, "the torches kindled in Tophet"[16] shine with their "hallowed fire";

[12] Hawthorne, "P's Correspondence" (1845), *Mosses from an Old Manse*, *Works* 10:364.

[13] Hawthorne, "P's Correspondence" (1845), *Mosses from an Old Manse*, *Works* 10:364.

[14] Hawthorne, "P's Correspondence" (1845), *Mosses from an Old Manse*, *Works* 10:365.

[15] Hawthorne, "P's Correspondence" (1845), *Mosses from an Old Manse, Works* 10:366.

[16] Tophet is a location near Jerusalem where, according to the Bible, the Canaanites sacrificed children to the god Moloch by burning them alive; a synonym for Hell. Isaah, 30:33; Jeremiah 7:31–32, 19:11–14. Cf. Byron: *The Age of Bronze*, *Works* 5:558–559:

when doused, "they leave an abominably ill odor." As P. explains, the poet and the poetry are one: when the poet's fire is extinguished, he is coldly estranged from the fire of his poetry:

> To whisper you the truth, it appears to me that his passions having burned out, the extinction of their vivid and riotous flame has deprived Lord Byron of the illumination by which he not merely wrote, but was enabled to feel and comprehend what he had written. Positively he no longer understands his own poetry.[17]

The compulsion of eradicating a presumed flaw recurs in Byronic works as different as his spoof on Lady Byron in the character of Donna Inez and the theme of *The Deformed Transformed*. Hawthorne's "The Birth Mark" deals with the fatal results of attempting to expurgate the imagined fault.

The improbable saving grace for the flameless, self-bowdlerized Byron, P. speculates, is that Thorwaldsen's statue might at last be allowed to grace a niche in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey. "His bones, you know, when brought from Greece, were denied sepulture among those of his tuneful brethren there." P. has allowed the fact of Byron's death to intrude upon his delusionary interview with the poet:

> What a vile slip of the pen was that! How absurd in me to talk about burying the bones of Byron, who, I have just seen alive, and incased in a big, round bulk of flesh! But, to say the truth, a prodigiously fat man always impresses me as a kind of hobgoblin; in the very extravagance of his mortal system I find something akin to the immateriality of a ghost. And then that ridiculous old story darted into my mind, how that Byron died of fever at Missolonghi, above twenty years ago.[18]

But even in this double-take on his own imaginative construct, P. insists that there is an abiding intimacy between the shadows of reality and the shadows of the mind. Recognizing that "we dwell in a world of shadows," P. holds that it is "hardly worth the trouble to attempt a distinction between shadows in the mind and shadows out of it." "If there be any difference," he argues on the side of poets and dreamers, "the former are rather the more substantial." Madman P. expresses many compelling ideas, and he has an author's talent for conjuring effectively with his mental shadows. Hawthorne grants him this much in introducing P. as one who "had always a hankering after literary reputation," had missed "his object while seeking it by the light of reason," yet seemed to have found the power of imagination in his insanity.[19] P. must not, however, be taken as an authorial spokesperson, for Hawthorne knows very well the importance of maintaining vigilantly the "distinction between shadows in the mind and shadows out of it."

P.'s critique of the anti-Byron, the reprobate redeemed, also contributes to the present metacritique of the Byronic shadows in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and *The Marble Faun* (1860). For Hawthorne, as for Byron, there is a crucial difference between thought and action, between word and deed. Yet both create characters who confound the two, indeed

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Footnote 16 continued
The Faith's red 'Auto,' fed with human fuel,
While sate the catholic Moloch, calmly cruel,
Enjoying, with inexorable eye,
That fiery festival of Agony!

[17] Hawthorne, "P's Correspondence" (1845), *Mosses from an Old Manse*, *Works* 10:365.

[18] Hawthorne, "P's Correspondence" (1845), *Mosses from an Old Manse*, *Works* 10:366.

[19] Hawthorne, "P's Correspondence" (1845), *Mosses from an Old Manse*, *Works* 10:363.

both build their fictions upon the confounding. The shadow-play may be for imaginative delight, as Byron acknowledges in "The Dream":

> The mind can make
> Substance, and people planets of its own
> With beings brighter than have been, and give
> A breath to forms which can outlive all flesh. (lines 19–22)

Byron also relates in this poem that changes come "o'er the spirit of my dream," shadows darken, visions are blighted.[20] In *Childe Harold*, he observes that "feeble sufferers groan/ With brain-born dreams of Evil all their own" (Canto II, stanza vii).

Nowhere does Hawthorne delineate more explicitly the shadows of mind vs. the shadows of reality than in "Fancy's Show Box" (1837). Significantly, he addresses the problem of guilt, the supposed guilt for mental acts.

> What is Guilt? A stain upon the soul. And it is a point of vast interest, whether the soul may contract such stains, in all their depth and flagrancy, from deeds which may have been plotted and resolved upon, but which, physically, have never had existence. Must the fleshly hand, and visible frame of man, set its seal to the evil designs of the soul, in order to give them their entire validity against the sinner? Or, while none but crimes perpetrated are cognizable before an earthly tribunal, will guilty thoughts – of which guilty deeds are no more than shadows – will these draw down the full weight of a condemning sentence, in the supreme court of eternity? In the solitude of a midnight chamber, or in a desert, afar from men, or in a church, while the body is kneeling, the soul may pollute itself even with those crimes, which we are accustomed to deem altogether carnal.[21]

The proposition that the soul can "pollute itself" by thinking wicked thoughts has dangerous implications for the storyteller, who may think and write of many lurid deeds. Byron often insisted, although he was never quite believed, that he was not, as a person, to be confused with the characters he created. He told John Cam Hobhouse that in Canto IV of *Childe Harold* he reluctantly gave up his effort to distinguish author and character, and began narrating in a more direct autobiographical voice:

> With regard to the conduct of the last canto, there will be found less of the pilgrim than in any of the preceding, and that little slightly, if at all, separated from the author speaking in his own person. The fact is, that I had become weary of drawing a line which every one seemed determined not to perceive [...] it was in vain that I asserted, and imagined that I had drawn, a distinction between the author and the pilgrim; and the very anxiety to preserve this difference, and disappointment at finding it unavailing, so far crushed my efforts in the composition, that I determined to abandon it altogether - and have done so.[22]

Byron, of course, did more to encourage than to discourage the popular belief that his fictions were, at least in part, autobiography. Hawthorne, as James Mancall has argued, embedded more autobiographic detail in his fiction than most readers have recognized (Mancall 2002). Does an author bear full culpability for words as if they were actions?

[20] See also *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto IV, stanzas v–vii.

[21] Hawthorne, "Fancy's Show Box", *Twice-Told Tales*, *Works* 9: 220.

[22] Byron to John Cam Hobhouse, 2 January 1818; cited as introduction to *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto IV, *Works* 2:323.

"If this be true," Hawthorne writes, "it is a fearful truth." Milton's Satan declares that "The mind is its own place, and in it self/Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n" (*Paradise Lost*, Canto I). This is the source, perhaps a dubious one, cited by Byron's Manfred in liberating thought from the moral adjudication:

> The Mind which is immortal makes itself
> Requital for its good or evil thoughts, -
> Is its own origin of ill and end -
> And its own place and time[23]

Hawthorne, albeit with far different motives, is equally concerned with freeing the imagination from the fetters of moral indictment and guilt.

> A scheme of guilt, till it be put in execution, greatly resembles a train of incidents in a projected tale. The latter, in order to produce a sense of reality in the reader's mind, must be conceived with such proportionate strength by the author as to seem, in the glow of fancy, more like truth, past, present, or to come, than purely fiction. The prospective sinner, on the other hand, weaves his plot of crime, but seldom or never feels a perfect certainty that it will be executed. There is a dreaminess diffused about his thoughts; in a dream, as it were, he strikes the death-blow into his victim's heart, and starts to find an indelible blood-stain on his hand. Thus a novel-writer, or a dramatist, in creating a villain of romance, and fitting him with evil deeds, and the villain of actual life, in projecting crimes that will be perpetrated, may almost meet each other, half-way between reality and fancy. It is not until the crime is accomplished, that guilt clenches its gripe upon the guilty heart and claims it for its own.[24]

The guilt looming over this half-way house cohabited by murderers, perverts, and storytellers may be held in abeyance by what is yet to be, but it may also have asserted its claim over what has gone before. In spite of his disclaimer, Hawthorne knows that there also crimes of thought, crimes of word.

"Guilt" in Byron's poetry frequently rhymes with "blood is spilt." But it is not murder that he finds most reprehensible, nor any sin named in the Ten Commandments. Worse than murder, more heinous because of its blithe duplicity, committed more often than adultery, is the sin of hypocrisy. All the more insidious, Byron asserted, were the unspoken calumnies of the hypocrite's silence:

> From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
> Have I not seen what human things could do?
> From the loud roar of foaming calumny
> To the small whisper of the as paltry few -
> And subtler venom of the reptile crew,
> The Janus glance of whose significant eye,
> Learning to lie with silence, would seem true -
> And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,
> Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.[25]

[23] Byron, *Manfred: A Dramatic Poem*, *Works* 4:135.

[24] Hawthorne, "Fancy's Show Box", *Twice-Told Tales*, *Works* 9:225–226.

[25] Byron, *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, stanza cxxxvi *Works* 2:429–430.

As practiced both individually and collectively, it is the sin that hides all other sins. Both the instigator and castigator of sin, hypocrisy fosters and feeds guilt, then condemns the guilty. The meanest sort of hypocrisy is that which persecutes others, the saddest is that which persecutes itself. Hawthorne gives us examples in Chillingsworth and Dimmesdale.

In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne exhibits his mastery in pitting what is told against what is untold. The characters in novel, and every reader, know the meaning of the "scarlet letter," but it remains an abbreviation for an unspoken transgression. Neither "adultery" nor "adulteress" are words that occur in the novel. Hester makes the most of the initial of her shame, transforming it into an ornate symbol of her courage. Dimmesdale, a master of pulpit rhetoric cannot speak the words of his guilt. Chillingsworth, the would-be accuser bent on revealing secrets, becomes ensnared as a speechless voyeur. In Chapter IX, entitled "The Leech," the reader is prompted to remember that "Under the appellation of Roger Chillingworth [...] was hidden another name, which its former wearer had resolved should never more be spoken."[26] Concealing his identity as her husband, Chillingsworth becomes the "medical advisor" to the reverend Dimmesdale. In Chapter X, entitled "The Leech and his Patient," the reader is led to anticipate that the leech will attach himself to his host and suck sustenance from him. Chillingsworth finds no sustenance other than his own malice—which he sucks dry. No accusation, no charge of guilt is levied. The physician delves, pries, probes "like a treasure-seeker in a dark cavern," exposing secrets not by "an uttered sympathy," but by "silence, an inarticulate breath."[27] The "nameless horror" Dimmesdale feels for the physician remains as nameless as the word for which, presumably, the scarlet letter stands.[28]

Hawthorne drew his narratives of covert conspiracies and hidden truths from many New England sources, but he shared with Byron the exposition of the guilt-ridden character. Like Childe Harold, whom Byron called "The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind,"[29] the typical Byronic hero carries the burden of guilt for an unnamed crime, an unutterable stain. The crimes of Lara are "speechless all, deep, dark, and unexprest,/They bleed within that silent cell—his breast."[30] The Giaour, too, is introduced as an outcast darkened by an unspeakable deed:

> Dark and unearthly is the scowl
> That glares beneath his dusky cowl:
> The flash of that dilating eye
> Reveals too much of times gone by;
> Though varying, indistinct its hue,
> Oft with his glance the gazer rue,
> For in it lurks that nameless spell,
> Which speaks, itself unspeakable.[31]

Unlike Byron's, Hawthorne's guilt-burdened characters are not driven in exile to wander as melancholy outcasts or defiant outlaws, rather they remain within the margins of society as self-persecuting derelicts.

[26] Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Works* 1:118; for an exposition of the strategies of concealment in *The Scarlet Letter*, see: Reid (2004, pp. 69–131).

[27] Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Works* 1:124

[28] Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Works* 1:156

[29] Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto III, stanza iii, *Works* 2:217.

[30] Byron, *The Corsair*, Canto III, stanza xv, *Works* 3:288.

[31] Byron, *The Giaour: A Fragment of a Turkish Tale*. *Works* 5:125.

In "The Minister's Black Veil" (1836), Parson Hooper has donned a veil so mysteriously inexplicable to others that he is rendered frighteningly alien, yet nevertheless bestowed with a power in his very strangeness. The community pries relentlessly to discover the cause of his grief or shame. Similar is the fate of the title character in "Young Goodman Brown" (1835), who, ignoring the pleadings of Faith, his wife, sets off into the dark woods by night on an "evil purpose." Led by the devil he finds himself a witness to a satanic mass. Amidst the devil's congregation he recognizes all the neighbors of his own village, even Faith his wife. He hastens home unsure whether his dark vision was but a dream, but unable to rid himself of the conviction that he lives in a village of devil-worshippers and even shares his bed with one. As in the tale Parson Hooper, who wears a black veil because he sees all others similarly concealed, the tale of Goodman Brown exposes the dark consequences of love and community blighted by the conviction that, because of one's own susceptibility, everyone else must be an evil sinner.

Byron, too, scorned this misplaced moral judgment, which, instead of forgiving the sinner and condemning the sin, turns its self-righteous indignation upon the sinner.[32] The Byronic hero, marginalized from humanity, experiences an intrinsic otherness, feels driven by guilt, or by guilt-inspired insight. Rendered different from humanity at large, the character is compulsively driven and obsessed. In *The Corsair* Byron describes a guilt-driven Conrad:

> Yet was not Conrad thus by Nature sent
> To lead the guilty - Guilt's worse instrument -
> His soul was changed, before his deeds had driven
> Him forth to war with Man and forfeit Heaven.[33]

The motifs of obsession, alienation, and otherness are often repeated in *Childe Harold*:

> Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
> Have I not suffered things to be forgiven?
> Have I not had my brain seared, my heart riven,
> Hopes sapped, name blighted, Life's life lied away?
> And only not to desperation driven,
> Because not altogether of such clay
> As rots into the souls of those whom I survey.[34]

Hawthorne's characters share the Byronic attributes of obsession and guilt, but their defiance of society is typically transformed into a more private and personal struggle.

In "The Birth Mark" (1843), Aylmer, a man of science who had long dabbled with dubious alchemical and magical potions, underwent a conversion. Experiencing "a spiritual affinity, more attractive than any chemical one,"[35] he quits his laboratory and takes a beautiful wife, Georgianna. Soon, however, he becomes obsessed with the idea that the hand-shaped mark on her cheek is a defect in her otherwise perfect beauty. She accepts his proposal to use alchemical means to remove it. The persuasion he exerts, similar to Rappacini's influence over his daughter, operates by sympathy rather than overt mesmeric

[32] See Byron's satirical caricature of Reverend Rodomont Precisian, "Who did not hate so much the sin as sinner"; *Don Juan*, Canto 13, stanza lxxxvii: 4:399.

[33] Byron, *The Corsair*, Canto I, stanza xi, *Works* 3:236.

[34] Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Canto IV, stanza cxxxv, *Works* 2:429.

[35] Hawthorne, "The Birth-Mark," *Mosses from an Old Manse*, *Works*, 10:36.

power (Coale 1998, p. 36).[36] Assisted by the evil-looking Aminadab, a "shaggy" and "smoky" creature incrusted with an "indescribable earthiness," Aylmer prepares the potion that successfully removes the mark, but removes as well his wife's life pulse.

Another tale of obsession is "Rappacinni's Daughter" (1844). By innoculating his daughter with extracts from the poisonous plants in his horticultural realm, he has rendered her untouchable by any outsider. She is a flower exclusively for his own garden (Evans 1964, pp. 185–195). In *Don Juan* Lambro is similar protective of his daughter Haidee, whom he keeps isolated in his island hideaway.[37] Lambro and Rappacinni seem to be driven by repressed incestuous desire to keep all lovers away from their daughters; their possessive zeal ultimately leads to the death of their daughters. Unstated incest, of course, also informs Manfred's grief over his lost Astarte. A secret love exposed to the condemnation of community morality, as in *Scarlet Letter*, is given an incestuous substrata in "Alice Doane's Appeal" (Gross 1955, pp. 232–236; Becker 1986, pp. 1–11). Hawthorne follows Byron in emphasizing the psychology of guilt. The Giaour's torment over Leila, Conrad's over Medora, remain fairly simple expositions of guilt in comparison with Hawthorne's more probing insights in delineating the curse of *The House of Seven Gables*. In rejecting his wife and devoting his love to Myrrha, Sardanapalus feels no guilt for the adultery, nor does Manfred feels guilt in his love for Astarte. For both Manfred and Sardanapalus, it is the external world that is out of kilter in its intolerance of the lovers. Manfred and Sardanapalus defy that intolerance. Dimmesdale participates in it, succumbs to it.

The lore of the devil's cloven hoof infiltrated much of the gossip about Byron's club foot. In *The Deformed Transformed*, Byron examined the deviations from the ideal of human form, and the consequent persecutions and self-persecutions. The limping hero has an extensive presence in literature, often as causally linked external counterpart to an obsessive, compulsive aggression of impotence (Hays 1971, pp. 4–8). Hawthorne, too, experienced the alienating consequences of lameness as boy. Young Hawthorne, as a boy of 9 years, was struck on the leg during a game of bat and ball. He spent 2 months in convalescence, and for another year hobbled about on crutches, and even suffered a subsequent relapse (Mellow 1982, pp. 18–29; Miller 1991, pp. 43–47). Yet at the same time, part of his own cure seems to have depended on the healing power of "imaginary adventures." The transformation of invalid into a storyteller, a reagency of reading many books during convalescence, is rehearsed in "The Convalescent" chapter of Hawthrone's Brook Farm novel, *The Blithedale Romance* (1952). Bed-ridden from a virulent fever, Miles Coverdale consumes the works of Margaret Fuller, "Emerson's Essays, the Dial, Carlyle's works, George Sand's romances," and most significantly, "Fourier's works, also, in a series of horribly tedious volumes." Reading turns to telling as Coverdale attempts to explain Fourier's system to Hollingsworth.[38] Coverdale's "telling" is a reflexive act, an

[36] Byron expressed a skepticism "Whether there are such things as sympathies/Without our knowledge or our approbation," but he granted a willing "concatenation," that worked as well as "Magnetism, or Devilism," Byron: *Don Juan*, Canto VI, stanza xxxviii, vol. 4:25.

[37] When he referred to Lambro in *The Bride of Abydos*, Byron added a note: "Lambro Canzani, a Greek, famous for his efforts, in 1789–1790, for the independence of his country. Abandoned by the Russians, he became a pirate, and the Archipelago was the scene of his enterprises." The pirate Lambro in *Don Juan* Cantos 3 and 4 has a share in the same legacy as one of the "most celebrated of the Greek revolutionists." Byron: *The Bride of Abydos*, *Works*, 3:194 and note 36. As source for "Rappacini's Daughter" Hawthorne acknowledges M. de l'Aubépine's "Beatrice; ou la Belle Empoisonneuse," published in *La Revue Anti-Aristocratique*. Hawthorne: *Mosses from an Old Manse*, *Works* 10:92–93.

[38] Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*, *Works* 3:52–54.

occasion for Hawthorne as author to reenact his own Brook Farm experience in Coverdale's account of the similarities and differences between Fourier's social scheme and the Blithedale endeavor. As he explains in his Preface, the socialist community is in its very conception itself a Romance, and for the storyteller serves "merely to establish a theatre, a little removed from the highway of ordinary travel, where the creatures of his brain may play their phantasmagorical antics, without exposing them to too close a comparison with the actual events of real lives."[39]

Like Byron, Hawthorne repeatedly plants surrogate selves as storytellers in his fiction. Even in his early novel, *Fanshawe*, he attempted to transform the literary invalid into an intellectual hero. As already noted, Hawthorne recognized in storytelling a dangerous flirtation with guilty trespass. Validity is compromised. Storytelling is provocational. Coverdale's storytelling arouses counteraction in Hollingsworth's angry response. In presenting invalids as storytellers, Hawthorne thus complicates the validity of the invalid. Byron's lame foot and the limping hero of fiction are curiously recast when melded with Hawthorne's own invalid experience (Mancall 2002, pp. 29–30).

In "The Gentle Boy" (1832) Hawthorne introduces his tale of the quiet, passive, sensitive Ilbrahim, the gentle Quaker boy, with an account of the extreme persecution of the Quakers by the Puritans. Lacking any reserve of religious tolerance, the Puritans charged the Quakers as heretics guilty of propagating "mystic and pernicious principles."[40] With more charity than his Puritan brethren, Tobias Pearson finds Ilbrahim, a 6 year-old child, weeping at the shallow grave of his father and another Quaker martyr, who have just been executed. Tobias and his wife Dorothy have pity for the orphan and take him into their home, in spite of the hostility of their neighbors for bringing the Quaker child into their midst. Ilbrahim stubbornly holds to his father's faith,[41] but nevertheless quietly attends church with his new foster-parents. At church, however, the Puritan worship is disrupted by the appearance of a Quaker woman, who denounces the "holier than thou" Puritans for their vicious persecution of her people as heretics. She tells them that in their executions they harken to the whisperings of the limping fiend:

> the devil entereth into the council-chamber, like a lame man of low stature and gravely appareled, with a dark and twisted countenance, and a bright, downcast eye. And he standeth up among the rulers; yea, he goeth to and fro, whispering to each; and every man lends his ear, for his word is 'slay, slay!'[42]

The Quaker woman is recognized by the boy as his mother. In spite of her fiery tirade, she is allowed to leave unharmed. Before she returns to her hiding in the woods, she thanks the Pearsons for their charity to Ilbrahim and blesses them as parents to her child. Even after her banishment, the limping fiend continues to assert his presence, albeit with strange transformations. A boy about 2 years older than Ilbrahim falls from a tree close to the Pearsons's home. Because his own home is too far away for him to be transported, Dorothy Pearson cares for him in her home. Ilbrahim, too, assists with the convalescing invalid by telling him stories. Ilbrahim is revealed to be a gifted storyteller:

> reciting imaginary adventures, on the spur of the moment, and apparently in inexhaustible succession. His tales were of course monstrous, disjointed, and without

[39] Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*, *Works* 3:1.

[40] Hawthorne, "The Gentle Boy," *Twice-Told Tales*, *Works* 9:68.

[41] Hawthorne, "The Gentle Boy," *Twice-Told Tales*, *Works* 9:77.

[42] Hawthorne, "The Gentle Boy," *Twice-Told Tales*, *Works* 9:81–82.

> aim; but they were curious on account of a vein of human tenderness, which ran through them all.[43]

His kindness to the injured boy and the "tenderness" of his tales are not repaid with like kindness and tenderness, but rather with their very opposites. The perverse reciprocation takes place when Ilbrahim innocently approaches the now recuperating invalid whom he sees at play with a group of other Puritan boys:

> A hush came over their mirth, the moment they beheld him, and they stood whispering to each other while he drew nigh; but, all at once, the devil of their fathers entered into the unbreeched fanatics, and, sending up a fierce, shrill cry, they rushed upon the poor Quaker child. In an instant, he was the centre of a brood of baby-fiends, who lifted sticks against him, pelted him with stones, and displayed an instinct of destruction, far more loathsome than the blood-thirstiness of manhood. The invalid, in the meanwhile, stood apart from the tumult, crying out with a loud voice, "Fear not, Ilbrahim, come hither and take my hand"; and his unhappy friend endeavored to obey him. After watching the victim's struggling approach, with a calm smile and unabashed eye, the foul-hearted little villain lifted his staff, and struck Ilbrahim on the mouth, so forcibly that the blood issued in a stream. The poor child's arms had been raised to guard his head from the storm of blows; but now he dropped them at once. His persecutors beat him down, trampled upon him, dragged him by his long, fair locks.[44]

Ilbrahim is rescued by neighbors who bear the bruised and bleeding "little heretic" to the Pearson home. The bodily injuries were severe, but the "injury to his sensitive spirit was more serious, though not so visible." Through a long convalescence, his foster-mother nurses him back to health, although his gait remained slow and limping. There is no recovery, however, of his former gladness of spirit. His character took a dark, morose turn. In this tale, the figures of invalid and storyteller are exchanged and confounded. The limping storyteller is no devil, but there is a devil in the storytelling. As Michael Colacurcio has observed, provincial New England had "an entirely debased notion of the social … significance of story-telling" (Colacurcio 1995, p. 497). Books are looked upon with suspicion: at best as impediments to an active, productive life; at worst as the tools evil machinations (Cody 1980–81). In "The Earth's Holocaust," Hawthorne, described book-burning as liberating civilization from the bondage of dry pedantry and outmoded doctrines.

Byron, too, frequently scorned books, either as a poor substitute for experience, or as a pernicious means of lending authority to delusion and propaganda. The paradox, of course, is that such denunciations of the book, whether satirical or not, are proposed in the very act of writing a book. The storyteller is entrapped in his own words. In the "Epistle to Augusta," Byron recalls his boyhood experience in nature, "Ere my young mind was sacrificed to books."[45] The sinister author, as Byron describes him in *The Vision of Judgment*, is "'the Devil turned precisian'." Like the "dull books" with which surrounds himself, he is doomed to authorial replication and can only "scrawl some 'Life' or 'Vision'."[46]

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[43] Hawthorne, "The Gentle Boy," *Twice-Told Tales*, *Works* 9: 90–91.

[44] Hawthorne, "The Gentle Boy," *Twice-Told Tales*, *Works* 9: 92–93.

[45] Byron, "Epistle to Augusta," stanza vii, *Poems 1814–1816*, *Works* 4:59.

[46] Byron, *The Vision of Judgment*, stanza cv, *Works* 4:525. On "the Devil turned precisian'," cf. "Reverend Rodomont Precisian," in *Don Juan*, Canto 13, stanza lxxxvii: 4; see note 32 above.

In *The Marble Faun* (1860), Hawthorne again indulges that Byronic gambit of crafting an autobiographical persona. Like Byron, too, he recognizes the power of the unspoken and unexplained; occlusion and omission are a part of his narrative strategy. Hawthorne sustains autobiographical presence by the extensive use he makes of the personal notebooks of his stay in Italy. Aware of the precedent as literary guide-books for tourists established by Byron's *Childe Harolde* and Finden's *Illustrations to Byron*, Hawthorne enriches his narrative with description (Douglass 2011, pp. 98–126). His prose is an extended interchange of ekphrasis and counter-ekphrasis. In these Pygmalionic and Medusan moments: life becomes art becomes life becomes art. In *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, the statue of the Dying Gladiator is brought to life only to die once more in the moonlit Coliseum. Although the Dying Gladiator, "just sinking into his death swoon," is the first statue introduced in *The Marble Faun*, not it but the titular work of Praxiteles is the one to be animated, first into Donatello's person, then into Kenyon's two portrait busts of the transformed Donatello. The "Sylvan Dance" as sculptured bas-relief in Ch X exhibits the agility with which Hawthorne manages the interchange. Hawthorne has written both himself and his wife into the novel as Kenyon and Hilda, two Americans in Italy who are witness to the events in the love affair of Donatello and Miriam (Hall 2002, pp. 137–151; Elsden 2006, pp. 129–145). Like the narrators of *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan*, they are by no means passive witnesses but become fully implicated in the events they behold. As did Byron in *Manfred*, Hawthorne has made watching his narrative strategy and thematic leitmotif. Watching, looking, beholding weave together setting and action, but also direct the characters who watch each other.

Miriam is the focal point of the watching for Hilda and Kenyon, more especially for Donatello and Miriam's shadowy stalker, and even for Miriam herself, who like Manfred holds an introspective vigil. Then, in Chs XXXII through XXXV, Miriam herself becomes the shadowy stalker, following Donatello and Kenyon on their journey to Perugia. Miriam is dark and mysterious, her moods haunted by a guilty past. Referred to as an Angel and a Dove, Hilda is light and cheerful, sustained by her religious convictions. Kenyon is a worldly-wise and sardonically irreverent intellectual. *The Marble Faun* is thoroughly a *Künstlerroman*, concerned with Italian painting, sculpture, and the artistic heritage of Antiquity and of the Renaissance. Description of art and architecture cannot be set apart from narrative action, for characters, dialogue, and events arise out of and are defined by the painting, statues, towers, temples, grottoes, labyrinths, and ruins which are their setting. With the exception of Donatello, the Count of Monti Beni, Hawthorne's principal characters are artists: Kenyon as a sculptor, Hilda as a copyist, Miriam as a painter. The novel is also a psychological romance. In depicting the mental and emotional influences of sin and guilt, it moves further in the direction of Byronic narrative. Rather than succumbing to guilty self-recriminations, as did Dimmesdale in *The Scarlet Letter*, the Byronic characters find strength in adversity. Donatello is such a character: said to resemble the Faun of Praxiteles, he is introduced as childlike, faunlike, free-spirited, and irresponsible. Crafted as a *picaro*, in the same picaresque tradition as Byron's *Don Juan*, Donatello's character matures and strengthens only after he has committed a murderous crime, midway in the narrative (Stewart 1996, pp. 132–155). Miriam, too, is Byronic in that she carries with her a dark mysterious past. Among the artists gathered in Rome, she has escaped the prying suspicion of New England. Still in his ebullient innocence, Donatello is captivated by Miriam's veil of secrecy.

The first revelation of Miriam's dark secret comes in Ch VII when she reacts to the copy that Hilda has made of Guido's Beatrice Cenci. Granting Beatrice the grace of divine

forgiveness, Hilda describes her sorrow as sinless. Miriam insists that "Beatrice's own conscience does not acquit her of something evil, and never to be forgiven!" (I:87) Hilda is prompted to admit that she "had quite forgotten Beatrice's history," and she must agree that "it was a terrible guilt, an inexpiable crime." Responding to Hilda's severe pronouncement of guilt, Miriam suddenly comes to Beatrice's defense: "perhaps it was no sin at all, but the best virtue possible in the circumstance." Hilda is astonished to see Miriam's face has assumed the very character and expression of her portrait of Beatrice.

Just as the bond between Manfred and Astarte remains unspoken in Byron's play, so the relationship remains obliquely hinted between Mariam and the sinister man who has pursued her since their encounter in the catacombs. In Ch XI, the narrator reports, only the "fragmentary sentences" preserved of their interview. Ch XVII commences with reference to Byron's description of the Coliseum in Canto IV of *Childe Harold*, a "description better than reality" (212), compelling tourists to make their "visit by moonlight, exalting themselves with raptures that were Bryon's, not their own" (215).

The crux, the moment of Donatello's crime, comes in Ch XIX. Donatello is watching as a stalker approaches her through the shadows. Perceiving approval in Miriam's eyes as he holds the attacker over the precipice, he drops him down the chasm. His murderous act arouses Donatello to self-reappraisal. His crime is a burden, but a burden accompanied by new found strength. Miriam becomes his accomplice in accepting his crime.

But Donatello was not the only watcher, nor Miriam the only witness to the crime. Hilda, too, was watching. As witness to the crime, Hilda, almost to the same degree as Donatello and Miriam, experiences a darkening of the soul. With her New England religious upbringing, Hilda reacts to the crime with a sense of personal responsibility. Her difficulty is increased by her innocence and lack of experience, immediately apparent in her relationship with Miriam: "I love you still! you were to me as a younger sister; yes, dearer than sisters of the same blood" (Ch XXIII). In her anxiety, her relationship with Kenyon is also altered. From their very arrival in Rome, Kenyon has been attracted to Hilda. Once she unburdens her feelings by sharing them with Kenyon, they become mutually bound in complicity. Just as with Miriam and Donatello, the amalgam of love and complicity is a potentially poisonous mix. Hawthorne revisits here the tenets of guilt that he set forth in "Fancy's Show Box." Guilt, he argued, should not "stain the soul" if one has merely thought the crime, seen the crime, yet not committed the crime. The storyteller might remain sin-free for imagining a crime. There remains, however, the complicity in *not* telling the crime, not reporting it to the authorities.

Hawthorne narrates with convincing psychological acumen the consequences as Donatello and Miriam, Kenyon and Hilda deal with the aftermath. Even though the tragic action of Donatello and Miriam has dominated the stage, it is Hilda and Kenyon who ultimately command the reader's attention. Visiting Donatello in his family seat in Tuscany, Kenyon leaves behind the Byronesque "Niobe of Nations" (Ch XXIV, ii:1), but the Byronic attributes become even more pronounced in the guilt-tormented Donatello brooding like Manfred in his tower. Inspired by Sunshine, the Monte Beni wine, and telling legends of the family estate, might make any man a poet, as Kenyon affirms, "as well as Byron" (Ch XXVIII, ii:57).

Although Kenyon's anti-Catholic sentiments are often as barbed as any of Byron's irreligious jests, none of Byron's characters, not even the Abbot of St. Maurice, would indulge such sustained sermonizing as Kenyon in confirming the betrothal of Donatello and Miriam beneath "the statue of Pope Julius … stretching out the hand of benediction" (Ch XXXV, ii:160). In spite of Miriam's mysterious and beguiling character, of Donatello's radical psychological metamorphosis, even in their tragic fall they seem

confined to an otherworldly realm of tragic romance; whereas Hilda and Kenyon, by contrast, seem to step forward into the real world.

The real world, of course, has no more reality than Hawthorne's reaffirmation of the piety of Protestant New England. Italy for Hawthorne is a place of art and enchantment, mystery and intrigue, associated with Lucrezia Borgia, Machiavelli, the Medicis. Its religion flourished only with the superintendence of hypocrisy. With her defining epithets as Virgin, Angel, and Dove, Hilda shuns all hypocrisy and seems uncompromising in her moral judgment. Miriam herself devised the subterfuge of the "chance" encounter at the statue of Pope Julius that brings her together with Donatello. Kenyon can invent no such plot or plan to aid his courtship, rather Hilda herself must root out the cause of her despair, her inability to forgive her friend for the crime she had witnessed and thus finding herself entrapped, "almost the same as if she herself had participated in the guilt" (Ch XXXVI, ii:168). In yet another merging of life into art, Hilda's guilt by proxy is captured in a painting by Signore Panini that gave Hilda the same expression of Beatrice Cenci that she herself had captured in portrait (Ch XXXVI, ii:169–170). Hilda's quest for spiritual resolution leads her into a Catholic confessional booth. The ensuing confrontation between Hilda and her confessor provides occasion for a fervent defense of her Puritan faith, but it ends nevertheless with Hilda receiving the priest's blessing (Ch XXXIX, ii:209–213). Once relieved of her self-recriminations, Hilda is again open to feelings of love. Present in the church as concealed watcher and witness to the benediction, Kenyon commences a courtship, already long-delayed and still to be delayed even further.

The image of Beatrice Cenci is conjured once again when Hilda, fulfilling her almost forgotten promise, delivers Miriam's package to the Palazzo Cenci—and vanishes. Miriam and Donatello return to Rome, both seeming to warn Kenyon of calamity, as does the last flickering of the lamp at the Virgin's shrine that Hilda had faithfully tended. It is Kenyon's turn to feel the loss and alienation already experienced by the other characters. Not even Byron's in his grimmest sarcasm depicted a Rome as rotten and malevolent as the pervasive evil that Kenyon imagines swallowing up an innocent and unsuspecting Hilda. When Donatello and Miriam return their meetings are secret, fleeting, disguised. Miriam dark secret is revealed. Kenyon is assured that Hilda is safe. When she appears in the midst of the Carnival on a balcony above the Corso, it is as if, Hawthorne writes, "she had been snatched away to a land of picture; that she had been straying with Claude in the golden light which he used to shed over his landscapes" (XLIX, ii:338). Hawthorne, in concluding Ch. L, and yet again in the Conclusion appended to that Chapter, resolutely refuses to retrieve the several omissions of his narrative and belatedly expose what he had kept untold. The story of romance, he says in yet another ekphrastic gesture, is like that depicted on a tapestry: one should not "insist upon looking closely at the wrong side" (Ch L, ii:342).

When Nathaniel and Sophia Hawthorne realized her early longing to "live in Rome—the eternal—imperial 'Mother of dead empires'—the city of the soul," Byron still mediated their perceptions. Italy remained the site of *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, of *Marino Faliero* and *The Two Foscari*. The Italian motifs in *The Marble Faun*, much studied in previous criticism (Buonomo 1999, pp. 21–30; Huzzard 1958, pp. 119–124; Levin 1964, pp. 119–140; Levy 1970, pp. 139–156; Moss 1968, pp. 332–336; Wright 1961, pp. 141–149), might well be reexamined with comparison to Byron's imagery. In terms of the persistent pattern of Byronic elements that inform Hawthorne's reception, the emphasis should be on the psychological significance of that imagery: Donatello's wine at Monte Beni, the nymph of the fountain, the landscape, the chiaroscuro of light and dark. Moral trespass and guilt create a borderland in human experience. Hawthorne follows Byron in

conjuring characters who inhabit that borderland, but unlike Byron he emphasizes the effort, means, and urgency of passing through.

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