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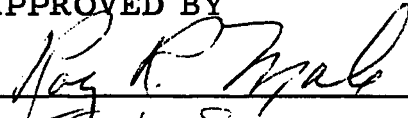

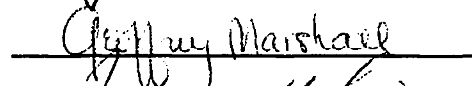

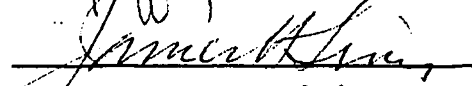

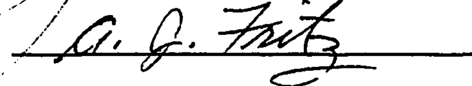

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

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DISSOLVING THE GROSS ACTUALITY OF FACT: HAWTHORNE'S ATTACK ON MATTER

INTRODUCTION

Throughout his literary works and notebooks, Nathaniel Hawthorne comments on the relationship between the material and the ideal. At times, he suggests that the spiritual or ideal is more meaningful than the real, that it is perhaps the more crucial part of man's total experience. He discovered, in fact, that the more involved he was in the actual world, the more difficult it was for him to function as an artist. In the preface to "Our Old Home," Hawthorne makes a typical statement that the "Present, the Immediate, the Actual, has proved too potent" for him. In view of such remarks, which include an assertion in a _Note-Book_ passage that reflection is indeed the reality, it is not surprising that many scholars have treated the subject of Hawthorne's attitude toward the material. A key passage for such investigation is found in the preface to _The Scarlet Letter_ where Hawthorne describes his most productive hours as an artist.

During the twilight time between night and morning, sleep and waking, or when the light glows from the fireplace and from the

moonbeams, objects seem to "lose their actual substance," says Hawthorne, and to be "invested with a quality of strangeness and remoteness," They become "spiritualized," figments of the mind and thus can be arranged and recombined in unusual ways. "Thus . . . the floor of our familiar room has become a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other" (V, 55).[1]

The problem which arises is whether Hawthorne via the neutral ground is somehow totally rejecting the material in favor of the ideal. Has he been suggesting, many have asked, that the ideal is, after all, the real? And, does this mean that the man who so prized balance in all things has lost his own? Richard Fogle sees the neutral ground as the world of imagination, where, most critics agree, Hawthorne truly lived and labored. In a succinct statement, Fogle distinguishes the imagination from the understanding:[2]

> Understanding is the faculty by which we perceive the world as Material -- utilitarian, abstractive, and divisive; understanding is indispensable but incomplete . . . Imagination, on the other hand, perceives the ideal, which is the innate reality and truth of things. Imagination endows the world with life and unity, and consequently with meaning.

The "innate reality" was what interested Hawthorne. But when he speaks of his special area of the imagination, the neutral ground, he does not mean "between the real and the unreal, but between external and

internal, between thing and idea, between meaningless fact and un-grounded meaning."[3] There is really a kind of imaginative fusion of the real and the ideal rather than a refusal to recognize the former.

The neutral ground is also the realm of the romance, which was for Hawthorne a kind of border fiction, a medium in which the writer could present truth "under circumstances, to a great extent," of his own "choosing or creation." Although he wanted to conform "not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience," he nevertheless believed the romance was subject to laws and should be faithful to "the truth of the human heart." Thus, he managed to achieve the coalition of outward and inward reality, history and dream.[4]

Not only is this neutral ground the area of the imagination and the area of romance, but it is also the realm of the symbol. Ernst Cassirer, in An Essay on Man, says that in the symbol there is "a clue to the nature of man," defined by Cassirer not as an animal rationale, but as an animal symbolicum, for it is this symbolic function which distinguishes man from the animals. Further, Cassirer says that without symbolism man's life would be confined to his biological needs and his practical interests, with no access to the ideal world, which is represented by religion, art, philosophy, and science.

Symbolism basically is a form of expression, approximate

at best, and perhaps arbitrary until it has obtained the force of a convention, for an unseen reality apprehended by the consciousness. The German word for symbol is sinnbild, sinn meaning sense or meaning, and bild meaning image. These two are combined in the word itself here, and in symbolism, which Jung thought of as the uniter of opposites or as metaphors for the eternal in the forms of the transient. For him, the symbol is a mediator between conscious and unconscious, the hidden and the manifest. It is not abstract or concrete, rational or irrational, real or unreal but belongs to an "intermediate realm of subtle reality," which it alone can adequately express.[5] Hawthorne's neutral ground can also be seen as his use of symbolism as an artistic device to present meaningful fact. Feidelson sums up Hawthorne's goal, which is evidenced in his own statements and in his work:

> The world that the writer seeks is generated by contemplation of the symbol, not by the external yoking-together of two realms which by definition are different in kind. This integral act of perception effectually 'opens' an imaginative reality.[6]

Hawthorne, thus, does not totally reject reality, but believes that more basic truths can be revealed by concentrating his imaginative faculties on man's inner or spiritual state. His concept of the neutral ground extends from aesthetic theory to philosophy of life. Hawthorne believed in the balanced life, one which recognized that

the universe was a spirit-matter continuum. Human beings should make every attempt to coordinate inner and outer experience, avoiding problems which might arise from going to extremes.

Hawthorne's aesthetic theory and philosophy of life were therefore both based on the "neutral ground" attitude. Much scholarly attention has been given to these matters, which have been quite thoroughly explored. This essay does not purport to add any new hypothesis concerning Hawthorne's world view. What follows, rather, is a detailed explication of how Hawthorne idealized the material world and projected or realized the ideal.

The first chapter explores Hawthorne's attitude toward matter and discusses the various facets which characterize that attitude. He believes that matter can be dealt with in many ways: destruction by fire, like the death of Ethan Brand; by decay, like the custom house materials in The Scarlet Letter; by mutilation and shattering, like Zenobia's drowned body or Peter Goldthwaite's house. In addition, matter may be purified, an end which Dimmesdale seeks; transcended by the artist who creates another world; transformed by the manner in which he creates that world; spiritualized, brought to life as the artist enlivens his characters; transformed, as the characters in a work change from one condition to another; and finally, idealized, changed into meaning or idea like the parchment papers in the Custom House become the novel, The Scarlet Letter, which represents the

effects of sin and guilt. Hawthrone's entire effort in connection with affecting the material in any way is directed toward the major objective of his artistic credo -- to dissolve the gross actuality of fact by emphasizing idea, and thereby to gain universal meaning, a significance that would outlive its own time.

This could also be gained by the use of artistic distance, a matter to which chapter II is devoted. All artists are involved with this problem of placing their work in such a way that just the right degree of distance is maintained so that the reader or viewer can appreciate the work. Hawthorne gained distance in several ways. Temporal distance is apparent and effective in those stories which comprise his Myth of New England, like the Legends of the Province House, Edward Randolph's Portrait," "Old Esther Dudley," and others; spatial distance is also used in many of the tales and novels, especially in such works as The Marble Faun, set in Italy, away from the commonplace American scene which lacked shadow and mystery. There is also psychic distance, which means essentially maintaining objectivity, or placing the experience portrayed out of gear with the practical everyday existences of those who will be reading about it, so that the moral or meaning of the work will emerge independent of topical or personal considerations. Distance can also be gained, as it is by Hawthorne, by the use of mythology, familiar enough to allow associations to be made but distant enough so that the work will be out of the

realm of everyday experience.

Distance may also be called perspective, in which case it is not only important for the artist to maintain, but also becomes a matter of personal and individual significance. In Hawthorne's work, we see numerous characters who have lost all sense of balance, who are extremists in one way or another. Their malady is one in which Hawthorne was quite interested -- an inability to maintain balance in life -- so much of his work explores the problems which lead these people to their current states and the problems which are a part of that condition. They are grotesques, unable to retain in their lives any semblance of order. Rather than living in a kind of neutral ground, the area which describes Hawthorne's artistic medium, they migrate to one or the other edge of various extremes. Before this occurs, however, they usually find themselves on some kind of threshold.

The threshold image, which constantly recurs in Hawthorne's work, is significant in many ways. One can think of it, as Hawthorne did, as the neutral ground between the actual and the imaginary, in which sense it becomes a metaphor for the realm of the romance, or the place where distance and perspective exist as opposed to the extremes, or as the symbolic method of writing, which partakes of both the real and the imaginary. It is important too in the sense that most of Hawthorne's characters step over some kind of boundary line, which

seems to represent some psychic or moral movement. In addition, it represents that area between sleep and waking, a time when the conscious and unconscious come together.

Furthermore, it is the necessary place to cross whenever one makes any kind of journey, and this ties the threshold image in with the next chapter which discusses symbolic journeys. Hawthorne uses the journey motif to present the "underside" of experience, to portray the experiences of the unconscious, to present the significance of the inner life. Whatever the consequences of such a trip, various characters find they must make it; more often than not, they are destroyed because of it. Hawthorne presents the journey theme in terms of a withdrawal-return motive, a descent into the unconscious, where one is faced with what Jung has called the Shadow, with the object always being to describe what goes on in that dark interior of man's existence, that "uncharted" territory.

Finally, continuing his task of dissolving the gross actuality of fact, Hawthorne uses symbolic settings, sometimes involving nature, and natural phenomena, and at other times concerned with symbolic interiors, like the house of the seven gables. Like others, for whom the landscape lies within, Hawthorne uses these settings to symbolize psychical states or moral problems.

It is essential, I think, to remember that Hawthorne was not attempting to present a world other than the material one in which he

lived simply because he wanted to escape from an intolerable reality. His artistic approach is based on what reality was to him. He always felt that the inner life was much more real than the outer one, that to describe what was going on within was to capture the essence of human existence. Also, if one could present these problems in such a way as to capture what was universal about them, to somehow relate experiences that would be common to all men at some time or other in their lives, not only would he be giving the reader something meaningful, something really significant, but he would also be establishing a place for himself in the history of literature as an artist who was able to create work that would endure because of its universality. Following is a more detailed discussion of Hawthorne's attempt to dissolve the gross actuality of fact in such a way that it would still be fact, but more important, meaningful fact.

FOOTNOTES

[1]George P. Lathrop, ed., The Complete Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne (13 vols.; Boston: Riverside Edition, 1883). All references to Hawthorne's works are from this edition.

[2]R.H. Fogle, "The Artist of the Beautiful," Hawthorne: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. A.N. Kaul (New York, 1966), 103.

[3]Hyatt H. Waggoner, "Art and Belief," Hawthorne Centenary Essays, ed. Roy Harvey Pearce (Columbus, Ohio, 1964), 193.

[4]Hyatt H. Waggoner, Hawthorne: A Critical Study (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1963), 48.

[5]Jolande Jacobi, Complex/Archetype/Symbol in the Psychology of C.G. Jung, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York, 1959), 98.

[6]Charles Feidelson, Jr., "The Nature of Symbolic Perception," A Scarlet Letter Handbook, ed. Seymour L. Gross (San Francisco, 1960), 110.

CHAPTER I

IDEA VERSUS MATTER

There are several ways of dealing with matter, all of which appear in Hawthorne's work. It may be destroyed by fire, decay, water, shattering, or mutilation; it may be purified; transformed; spiritualized; or idealized. The artist's approach is, of course, a linguistic one. Themselves symbols, words, used symbolically, have the power to annihilate or change matter in some way. In almost every instance, what happens to the material has a moral or ethical significance. For Hawthorne, this meaning is what makes the work of art important.

One of the most obvious examples of the destruction of matter is the huge bonfire kindled in "Earth's Holocaust." Hyatt Waggoner suggests that the source for this story might have been Carlyle's The French Revolution with its frequent fire imagery or Thoreau's mention of the Indian custom of burning all property every year in preparation for making a new start in life.[1] At any rate, Hawthorne says the world had become "overburdened with an accumulation of worn-out trumpery," so the "inhabitants determined to rid themselves of it by a general bonfire." They begin by throwing in such things as

marks which symbolize rank: stars, embroidered collars, earthly distinctions. These things are followed by liquor, tea, coffee, tobacco, bonnets, weapons, death instruments, statute books, books, church emblems, including the Bible, and even false teeth. The point, of course, is that all this matter will be destroyed, and that with it will go all the corruption which it symbolizes. Then a better world can be built. This plan will not work, though, says Hawthorne, because until the foul cavern of the human heart is cleansed, no reform can take place.

Another example of the destruction of matter by fire is Ethan Brand's suicide. Having searched the world over to find the unpardonable sin, Brand finally discovers it in his own heart. Like the dog in the story chasing its own tail, Brand has come full circle, and, unable to continue living with the terrible knowledge he has gained, casts himself head first into the lime kiln and is converted by the flames to lime. Intellect has taken precedence over heart, with the end result being the head-first plunge into the kiln, which is a heart image, and the revelation that Brand's heart had turned to marble. His quest led him back to the point of beginning -- looking too deeply into the human heart, his own and that of another human being, without sympathy and restraint. His last words are to reject Mother Earth, say farewell to the stars of heaven, and welcome the "deadly element of fire," which he calls his "familiar friend!" There is the suggestion, of course, that

Brand represents the Faustian artist who delves too deeply into the hearts of others, who seeks knowledge beyond what human beings have the right to know, and who now must consign himself to hell, having sold his soul for that knowledge.

Arthur Dimmesdale, after the meeting in the forest with Hester, where he learns that Chillingworth is Hester's husband, burns the sermon he has written for Election Day. The minister is now ready to admit his part in Hester's sin. Partly relieved of his great burden of guilt, Dimmesdale is inspired to write a new and rousing sermon for the occasion. The burning of the old sermon is symbolic of the change in Dimmesdale, attested to by Hester's words to Pearl on Election Day -- "a new man is beginning to rule over them" (V, 274).

Matter may also be destroyed by decay. This destruction is apparent in Hawthorne's sketch preceding <u>The Scarlet Letter</u>, where he seems to exult in the Custom House and its decay. Here, amid piles of molding papers and objects, he finds the inspiration for a novel in the papers of Mr. Surveyor Pue. Also, in <u>The House of the Seven Gables</u>, there is the decaying house, representing the Pyncheon background of corruption, of which Jaffrey Pyncheon is a part. On the day after his death, a house fly alights on Judge Pyncheon's nose, suggesting that the moral decay which has been going on for years within the Judge will now take place physically. What Hawthorne says about Roger Chillingworth after Dimmesdale's death may also be said concerning

Judge Pyncheon: ". . . that evil principle was left with no further material to support it" (V, 307).

Mutilation and shattering are still other ways of destroying matter. John Schroeder discusses Hawthorne's use of heart imagery, pointing out several mutilation images in The Blithedale Romance, all related to the heart, and ending with the wounding of Zenobia's heart by Hollingsworth's pole as they pull her body out of the river.[2] Coverdale remarks that Hollingsworth holds Priscilla's heart in his hand. But what if he "should crush the tender rosebud in his grasp." Later, regarding his Blithedale memories, Coverdale says there was no choice "but to bear the pang of whatever heartstrings were snapt asunder . . ." Speaking of the last encounter of Zenobia and Hollingsworth, Coverdale observes, "if their heart-strings were ever intertwined, the knot . . . was now violently broken" (V, 564). Zenobia does not blame Hollingsworth because she says she had nothing to offer him but "a miserable, bruised, and battered heart, spoilt long before he met me." Hollingsworth has used Zenobia and is responsible for her "bleeding heart." His mutilating her heart with his pole is an objectification of what has already happened. Hollingsworth must pay for his deeds, however, by concentrating his efforts on trying to reform one murderer, himself, rather than pursuing his plan for the reformation of criminals.

Peter Goldthwaite shatters the interior of his house in an attempt to discover hidden treasure. His goal is to build a splendid

new mansion over the cellar of the old house, but the treasure turns out to be a bunch of old rags. Perhaps Goldthwaite's ambition was noble in the sense that he was not satisfied with the old structure, as Thoreau was not satisfied with the structure of his life, and was willing to put forth much effort to correct the situation. But Thoreau took care while rebuilding to provide for the preservation of what was already there. Goldthwaite, in search of a gaudy, ridiculous dream, tears down the interior, leaving only the outside shell of the house intact, burning the materials as he worked to keep himself and his housekeeper alive. To say the least, his values were somewhat amiss.

The second method of dealing with matter found in Hawthorne's works is purification. Dimmesdale tries to purify himself by using the scourge, fasting, and keeping vigils at night looking at his own face in a mirror under a powerful light. Hawthorne says "he thus typified the constant introspection wherewith he tortured, but could not purify, himself" (V, 176). Dimmesdale's physical being, his matter, is associated with sin, and by flagellation and torture, he apparently hopes to achieve some kind of spiritual victory. This same principle is suggested in "The Shaker Bridal," where it is said that Mother Ann had to sear old Father Ephraim's heart with a red-hot iron to purify it from earthly passions.

Fire and purification are associated too in Hawthorne's statement in The Marble Faun concerning Rome, and in The House of the

Seven Gables regarding the Pyncheon house. "All towns should be made capable of purification by fire, or of decay, within each half century. Otherwise, they become the hereditary haunts of vermin and noisomeness, besides standing apart from the possibility of such improvements as are constantly introduced into the rest of man's contrivances and accommodations" (VI, 346-47). Holgrave says the Pyncheon house is not a particularly wholesome place and "ought to be purified with fire, -- purified till only its ashes remain" (III, 221)! This house is so full of corruption that in Holgrave's view only complete destruction can purge the world of its evil.

Whatever their subjects, all literary artists transcend matter in the sense that they rise above their own material existences in varying degrees to create another world. Talking about a doll in "Little Annie's Ramble," Hawthorne says "though made of wood, a doll is a visionary and ethereal personage, endowed by childish fancy with a peculiar life . . . an actor and a sufferer in a thousand shadowy scenes, the chief inhabitant of that wild world with which children ape the real one" (I, 147). On a much higher level, this is precisely what the artist does. By fancy or imagination he endows some personage with a peculiar life, makes him an actor and a sufferer in a thousand shadowy scenes, the chief inhabitant of some other world, but in Melville's words, "one to which we feel the tie." The sources for this inspiration to create another world vary. Hawthorne, with reference to finding

The Scarlet Letter material, says a better book than he would ever write lay hidden in this "dull and commonplace routine."

> It was a folly, with the materiality of this daily life pressing so intrusively upon me, to attempt to fling myself back into another age . . . The wiser effort would have been to diffuse thought and imagination through the opaque substance of to-day, and thus to make it a bright transparency; to spiritualize the burden that began to weigh so heavily; to seek, resolutely, the true and indestructible value that lay hidden in the petty and wearisome incidents, and ordinary characters, with which I was now conversant (V, 57).

Hawthorne could not write well while involved in the material world. He had to remove himself from pressing everyday affairs, so that his imagination could have full play before he could really transcend the material, his own matter, and establish the world of his art.

Transcending matter can also be seen in the author's creation of characters. Obviously, an artist cannot get out of himself entirely, but Hawthorne is quite successful in entering the inner lives of his characters and presenting things from their point of view. For example, an important part of The Scarlet Letter is Dimmesdale's attitude toward his sin. This is in keeping with the main focus of the novel which is to show the effects of guilt. That the sin has already taken place when the novel opens would support this reading. As A.N. Kaul suggests, Hawthorne presents the problem dramatically by entering Dimmesdale's inner life.[3]

While transcending the actual to establish an artistic world is

something all writers have in common, the manner in which they transform matter and their reasons for doing so are what make the work unique. Hawthorne transforms matter quite often by the use of light and shadow, a device consistently employed by painters. This is also a typically romantic approach, according to R. A. Foakes, who says that the romantics' most universal image is light, the symbol of spiritual illumination, of transcendental vision, and of the work of imagination or ideal to which the poet aspires.[4] In line with this is Coleridge's comment in Biographia Literaria that the accidents of light and shade which moonlight or sunset diffuse over a known and familiar landscape lend a sudden charm.

Hawthorne mentions the functional value of light, the way in which furniture and other objects in the moonlight are "spiritualized" so that "they seem to lose their actual substance and become things of intellect." He associates this light with the moment of creative inspiration. The moonbeams in combination with the firelight and the reflected images in the mirror transform the actual room in such a way that it is possible for him to interpret things as he wishes. Note in the following passage how the destruction of matter, the smoldering, half-extinguished anthracite, is what helps provide the light:

> Glancing at the looking-glass, we behold -- deep within its haunted verge -- the smoldering glow of the half-extinguished anthracite, the white moonbeams on the floor, and a repetition of all the gleam and shadow of the

> picture, with one remove further from the actual, and nearer to the imaginative. Then, at such an hour, and with this scene before him, if a man, sitting all alone, cannot dream strange things, and make them look like truth, he need never try to write romances (V, 56).

As a writer of romances, Hawthorne claims a certain latitude, again in terms of light and shadow. In the preface to The House of the Seven Gables, he says he may "manage his atmospherical medium, as to bring out or mellow the lights and deepen and enrich the shadows of the picture." The imaginative process is further associated with the use of light and shadow in "Roger Malvin's Burial" where Hawthorne says "imagination" may cast "certain circumstances judicially in the shade . . ." In "My Kinsman Major Molineux," there is "the moon, creating, like the imaginative power, a beautiful strangeness in familiar objects, [giving] something of romance to a scene that might not have possessed it in the light of day" (III, 630).

That Hawthorne is using light and shadow consciously is apparent not only from what we see in the works themselves but also from what various characters say. Miriam, in The Marble Faun, says artists make pretty pictures with their "artfully arranged lights and shadows." She is talking about painters, but the statement applies as well to literary artists. In "Main Street" the showman tells the viewer to move to a different bench where the proper light and shadow will transform the spectacle into quite another thing.

If this is a deliberate device, as it seems to be, it must have

an important symbolic function. Walter Blair suggests that Hawthorne may use light to modify actuality.[5] In this sense, it is important as a means of transforming matter in such a way that new meanings emerge. R.H. Fogle, in Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and The Dark, adds that by the use of shadows Hawthorne examines appearance-reality and that light and dark also have to do with ambiguity. Light is a way of seeing through opacities; dark represents the difficulty of seeing.

It has also been suggested that Hawthorne uses twilight as an analogue of the "neutral ground" to achieve imaginative effects.[6] Young Goodman Brown begins his journey into moral darkness at sunset. Those who seek the great carbuncle for various reasons, some more selfish than others, begin the quest at nightfall. Stories like "The Maypole of Merry Mount" and the "White Old Maid" depend heavily on twilight, shadow, and Gothic effects. In the evening twilight, the Man of Fancy in "A Select Party," pours evening sunshine over the castle in the air so that it looks like "a heap of sunset clouds to which the magic of light and shade had imparted the aspect of a fantastically constructed mansion." Further, when he lights his hall with meteors it is like "a powerful yet chastened imagination," hiding what is unworthy but giving effect to beautiful attributes.

For Hawthorne, as he states it in "The Hall of Fantasy," "the white sunshine of actual life is antagonistic to imagination, which requires access to a region of shadow to function creatively." This region

is provided in The House of the Seven Gables where the house itself, symbolic of the evil and long-lived corruption of the Pyncheon family is described as being dark inside. It represents the shadowy past of the Pyncheon line, a past which includes nearly all kinds of degeneracy and wrongdoing, not only to outsiders but also by one member of the family to another.

In re-entering the house, Judge Pyncheon moves back into the darkness of the past and symbolically into the blackness of his own heart. Hepzibah has allowed him to come in only because he has threatened to have Clifford committed to a mental institution unless Clifford gives him the information about the missing property. While Hepzibah goes to get Clifford, Judge Pyncheon sits in the ancestral chair where he dies from the mysterious ailment inherited from his forebears. When Hepzibah returns to seek Jaffrey's aid in searching for the missing Clifford, she can hardly distinguish his figure because the room is so dark. While the Judge is submerged in the darkness of the parlor, Clifford appears on the threshold, his face so pale that Hepzibah can "discern his features, as if a light fell on them alone." As light intensifies shadow, so Clifford seems more pale, more weak, superimposed against the background of all the darkness the Judge represents.

In chapter XVIII, entitled "Governor Pyncheon," Hawthorne, called by Benjamin DeCasseres the emperor of shadows who began his reign at the twilight hour and abdicated at the first cockcrow, manages

light like a stage director. As Judge Pyncheon sits in the room, darkness falls. The moonbeams eventually come into the room and "play over the Judge's figure." This light then crosses his face and shines on his watch. At midnight the departed Pyncheons come to life and head toward the picture, trying to discover some mystery. An elderly carpenter, obviously a Maule, stands in the corner laughing. We learn later that the deed to the missing western land is behind the portrait, and that deed is apparently what all the Pyncheons are looking for. Significantly, all of this happens at midnight, between day and night, at an hour when things become dim, nightmarish, at a time when Hawthorne finds it possible to "dream strange dreams" and make them seem real, a time when the light is dim and things take on a different aspect.

Yet, Hawthorne, who "drank from the beaker of inexhaustible shadows," seems disturbed because in The Scarlet Letter it was "impossible to relieve the shadows of the story with so much light as [he] would gladly have thrown in." It is a "hell-fired story." He suggests here that as artist he merely uncovered rather than created the tale. This seems to be a contradiction with his statement in the preface to The House of the Seven Gables that he manages his atmospherical medium, but perhaps Hawthorne is suggesting that there was something quite uncontrollable about the story of Hester and Dimmesdale.

At any rate, when Dimmesdale ascends the scaffold and stands

there at midnight with Pearl and Hester, we are struck by a light which gleams across the sky. It has the power, given it by Hawthorne himself, to transform material things:

> So powerful was its radiance, that it thoroughly illuminated the dense medium of cloud betwixt the sky and earth . . . It showed the familiar scene of the street, with the distinctness of midday, but also with the awfulness that is always imparted to familiar objects by an unaccustomed light. The wooden houses . . . doorsteps and thresholds . . . all were visible, *but with a singularity of aspect that seemed to give another moral interpretation to the things of this world than they had ever borne before* (V, 187). (italics mine)

The light which shines out of the sky not only exposes the three on the scaffold, joined by their guilt, but also shines on the whole community, suggesting that all of them are joined in the original sin. Dimmesdale and Hester see their own guilt, while some townspeople think the "A" in the sky is to honor the important man who died that night. Its meaning seems to depend upon the point of view of the observer in the novel, but one possibility is that the new moral interpretation Hawthorne is suggesting is that all are guilty of the original sin, that all men have at some time or other known the Black Man, and that the "A," which really stands for Adam, relates to the "A" in the New England Primer which is exemplified in the lines: "By Adams Fall/We Sinned All."

Interesting too in terms of light and shadow is the fact that Hester constantly dresses in gray, a color or non-color between black

and white, or between light and shadow. This garment has "the effect of making her fade personally out of sight and outline," but the letter manages to bring her "back from twilight indistinctness and reveal her under the novel aspect of its own illumination." The letter is the light which keeps Hester from becoming a shadow. Hawthorne, as artist, has decided that she should fade in favor of the letter which it is her purpose to embody. In the same way, the background of "The Gray Champion" is shadowed so that his image can be projected into the foreground.

Light and shadow are used to good purpose in "Young Goodman Brown" too. Brown, who begins his journey into the forest at deep dusk, is to be overwhelmed by the shadow of doubt. His faith is destroyed because he cannot accept the ambiguity of good and evil. For him, this is an either/or proposition, and it is impossible for him to accept the gray of human existence. By the use of light and shadow, Hawthorne manages to convey the effect of optical illusions. The devil's staff "seems" like a black snake; Brown "thinks" he hears the minister and Deacon Gookin, although the light is not broken by their shadows as they pass; and he does not know whether Faith resisted in obedience to his agonized plea. It is questionable whether any of these things actually happened, but for Brown the mere possibility is enough.

He finds himself in the midst of light and darkness and is unable to overcome the shock. Parallel to what is going on in Brown's mind

and indicative of his moral situation is the scene at the witches' meeting. "As the flames rise and fall, the faces of the worshipers of Evil are alternately seen in clear outline and in deep shadow, and all the details of the scene are at one moment revealed, the next obscured.[7] Brown has moments of lucidity, such as when he says that just because Goody Cloyse is going to hell that is no reason he should. But things build up, and the final blow is the suspicion that Faith is in the forest. From that point on, he is submerged in "deep shadow" and is never able to see the light again. Through the use of light and shadow, Hawthorne has described imaginatively the dark night of a human soul, the initiation into experience of a young man who cannot stand the shock of it.

Another young man, Robin Molineux, passes through an initiation experience which is illuminated by moonlight. At a time when things are dreamlike, Robin sees run out of town the kinsman for whom he sought and in whom he hopes to find his future. A good summary of what happens in the story is Fogle's statement that we see "Robin's crisis of past and present, of childhood and maturity in balance, as the pines and pillars alternate before his moonlit eyes. He is undergoing an experience at once rare and universal, that is illuminated by the special light of imagination and art."[8]

This last line may also be applied to Owen Warland in "The Artist of the Beautiful." He frequently works at night by the lamp, while Danforth, the worker in realities, works by the light of the blazing

forge. It is almost as if Hawthorne is suggesting that the light of imagination is artificial as opposed to the natural light provided by the blazing coal forge. Drowne, too, when he works on the figure for Hunnewell, a labor inspired by love, works primarily at night, the time when Hawthorne has his most creative moments.

Light and shadow, then, are used by the artist to transform matter. Like Phoebe in The House of the Seven Gables, who casts a kind of spell over her room, Hawthorne illuminates or shades his settings, action, and characters in such a way as to cause them to lose their actual appearance and take on new meaning. But the transformation of matter is not limited to his use of light and shadow. We also find that characters within the works are transformed outwardly, symbolic usually of an inner moral state.

It is suggested in "Egotism: or The Bosom Serpent" that the physical frame is the shadow of the moral system. F.O. Matthiessen, in American Renaissance, sees Hawthorne's comprehension of the dependence of body on mind as an inheritance from seventeenth-century tradition. The spirit within, or a man's moral condition, often affects his physical appearance. One of the best examples of this concept is Roger Chillingworth in The Scarlet Letter. As Hester remembers her husband, he had "a pale thin visage with eyes dim and bleared." Later, his complexion becomes "duskier." He becomes a shadow. There is also a red light coming out of his eyes "as if [his] soul were on fire."

Chillingworth has become a devil by taking the devil's office. He is morally black, which accounts for his physical darkness, and is being consumed by the fire of hatred which burns within him.

Hester, too, is transformed. The picture of beautiful womanhood at the beginning, with her long, flowing black hair, Hester because of the effect of the letter loses these feminine qualities. Hawthorne says "all the light and graceful foliage of her character" has been withered by the letter, and her outward appearance attests to this change. Constantly dressed in gray, her hair is bound up underneath a cap, the whole effect of her appearance being one of coldness, brought about by her turning from passion and feeling to thought. Her womanhood might be regained, says Hawthorne, "if there were only the magic touch to effect the transfiguration." As artist, Hawthorne himself could provide this touch, but chooses not to. Dimmesdale, as lover, is also capable of effecting the transfiguration but realizes that their relationship cannot exist in time, and that there is no way for them to escape the temporal.

Another quite obvious example of the effect of the inner being on the outer appearance is Roderick Elliston in "Egotism." The snake, of course, is symbolic of his own self interest, which is like a disease. Elliston's complexion is greenish, his voice hisses, and he walks in a curved line. Edward Randolph, too, in "Edward Randolph's Portrait," having been cursed by the people, is the victim of "the inward misery"

which "worked itself outward, and was visible on the wretched man's countenance, making it too horrible to be looked upon." His portrait in the Province House serves as a warning to all those who would go against the will of the people. The revelers at Merry Mount are part animal because they have failed to recognize that an important part of human existence is the recognition of the necessity for seasons. They live in a constant spring, ignorant of the winter of human life. This moral flaw is apparent in their physical appearances. There is a youth with antlers of a stag, another with the "grim visage of a wolf," another with the "trunk and limbs of a mortal man," but "beard and horns of a venerable he-goat." Still another is like a bear. Like the characters in Milton's Comus, baser impulses have taken over to such an extent that they influence the outward appearance.

Further exemplifying the effect of inner on outer is Donatello in The Marble Faun, described early in the work as innocent-looking. He is associated with the sylvan life, with closeness to nature, before the crime. Afterwards, what has happened is quite apparent in his face. There is a look of savagery, but along with it a hint of the moral growth which has taken place in Donatello because of his painful experience. His face is described in such a way as to suggest that it shows all he has gone through and is now suffering. The fact that Kenyon refuses to put the look in marble indicates that it is not yet complete; Kenyon does not want to put in any kind of permanent form the darkness

which Donatello is now involved in. It is good, says Kenyon, for you to pass through this stage, but fatal to remain in it.

Kenyon and Hilda, too, in The Marble Faun, are transformed. Through their association with Miriam's and Donatello's guilt, they are somewhat softened and humanized. Kenyon, Hawthorne's "marble man," is struck in the heart at the carnival, and is able to suggest to Hilda that perhaps the sin committed by their two friends is part of a process of development toward a higher state. Hilda rejects this idea, but she does come down from her tower, which suggests she will possibly lose some of her marble coldness and become a sympathetic human being.

In addition to being interested in the transformation of matter, Hawthorne is also concerned with spiritualizing matter, which is another basic goal of the romantic artist. Owen Warland, in "The Artist of the Beautiful," is imprisoned in a clock shop, symbolic of the materialistic world characterized by time and the machine. Despite the heavy weight of Peter Hovenden, who prefers the worker in iron, Warland manages to infuse a mechanical butterfly with spirit. As Rudolph Von Abele suggests,[9] Warland is attempting to identify craftsmanship with reproduction. His work of art is infused with spirit or soul, Warland's own soul, the soul of the artist of the beautiful. Although the baby, who has inherited Hovenden's materialistic density, crushes the butterfly, Warland does not despair. He seems to discover that the actual and

ideal cannot be brought together without fatal consequences. But, more than that, matter itself is renounced for what was achieved in the creation of the ideal. In other words, he is satisfied that the "reward of all high performance must be sought within itself, or sought in vain." His art is subjective, with its main purpose being the creator's own self realization. Warland is saying essentially that the pleasure for him was in the process of creation, not the product. He was able to spiritualize matter, and for him this was enough. One is reminded of Hawthorne's statement in the preface to Twice Told Tales: "He is therefore satisfied with what the Twice Told Tales have done for him, and feels it to be far better than fame" (I, 19).

In addition to representing the author's function, the spiritualizing of matter may be used to good symbolic effect by making structures or objects seem alive. The house of the seven gables "was itself like a great human heart, with a life of its own, and full of rich and sombre reminiscences." It can symbolize the evil of the Pyncheons since it represents not only the heart of the family, but also the corruption at the center of Jaffrey's being. It is both setting and symbol, with the deep projection of the second story which gave it a "meditative look," as if it "had secrets to keep, and an eventful history to moralize upon."

Like the house, so appropriate for what it represents, is Praxiteles' marble statue of the faun. It is spiritualized matter both

in the sense that the artist has caught the essence of sylvan life, the genial, happy characteristics of creatures who "dwell in woods and fields," and because it is so like Donatello, the living, human representative of that past era. Praxiteles was able to infuse into his work the human warmth which so constantly escaped Drowne as he labored over ships' figureheads and ornamental pump heads.

The difference lies in inspiration. Drowne is able to produce one really life-like work when the fire of inspiration is kindled in him, perhaps by love. The alchemy of art seems somehow to take place almost of its own accord, once set in motion by this inspiration. As Carl Jung remarks in Psychology and Alchemy, the alchemists spoke of a "penetrating Mercurius," a spirit that is hidden in matter. This spirit is released as Drowne's beautiful figure seems to emerge from the block of wood once the magic touch has set it free.

Jesse Bier[10] says the imagination is a process of spiritualization. By using it, the artist is able to breathe life into the material. That Hawthorne would agree with this is apparent from the following lines taken from "The Old Manse," as he was looking through some attic books. "I burrowed among these venerable books in search of any living thought which should burn like a coal of fire, or glow like an inextinguishable gem, beneath the dead trumpery that had long hidden it" (II, 29). On a superficial level, this mysterious process may be seen at work in "Feathertop: A Moralized Legend," where the witch puts together a

patchwork man with a pumpkin head, imbues him with life, and fools everybody in the town except a dog, a child, and a mirror. His breath of life is drawn in from a pipe with a red coal in it, which may suggest the fire of inspiration. Whenever it fades, the character, here Feather-top, begins to deteriorate.

Not lacking in such inspiration or enthusiasm is Aylmer, the scientist-artist figure in "The Birthmark." He too aims at the high ideal of perfecting or spiritualizing matter. His wife Georgiana is the subject for his experiment. Aylmer "handled physical details as if there were nothing beyond them; yet spiritualized them all, and redeemed himself from materialism by his strong and eager aspiration towards the infinite. In his grasp the veriest clod of earth assumed a soul" (II, 61). He is unwilling to accept that one flaw which makes Georgiana mortal, and is bent on perfecting her material being so that it will match her already pure spiritual part.

In addition to discussing how matter is spiritualized, Hawthorne also shows in his work characters who are materialized spirit. There is Gervayse Hastings, who feels unreal, has no human sympathy, is aware only of his own misfortunes. Through the years he has attended the Christmas banquet in a story of the same name, although it seems to the others gathered there that he has no real reason to be present. The banquet is given every year at the behest of a man whose will it is to perpetuate misery; only the most miserable are to be allowed to

attend. After many years, Hastings' reason for being present is revealed. Throughout his life, he has had a cold nature, and has now become a "cold abstraction." Others of this stamp are Westervelt in The Blithedale Romance, an altogether earthy person, "worldly, made for time and its gross objects, and incapable--except by a sort of dim reflection caught from other minds--of so much as one spiritual idea"; and Kenyon, Hawthorne's "man of marble," who, Miriam says, "turns feverish men into cool, quiet marble."

Kenyon had a problem which Hawthorne feared. He seemed unable to breathe life into his creations. Hilda says that since Kenyon is a sculptor he thinks nothing "can be finely wrought except it be cold and hard, like the marble in which [his] ideas take shape." Hilda, a mere copyist, is nevertheless able to catch the spirit of the work she is copying. Her life-giving, spirit-infusing hands are ironically sculptured in marble by Kenyon, who shows this handiwork to Miriam. Kenyon is aware of his shortcoming. He expresses to Hilda his discouragement in being unable to mold the spiritual part of his idea, and Hilda's sympathetic reply is that such a sense of disappointment is inevitable for those "who try to grapple with a great or beautiful idea."

Yet, Kenyon is able to create a life-like statue of Cleopatra, a work he explains by saying, "I kindled a great fire within my mind, and threw in the material,--as Aaron threw the gold of the Israelites into the furnace,--and in the midmost heat uprose Cleopatra, as you

see her" (VI, 153-54). Giving himself up to his material and allowing it to take its own shape seems to be a necessary step for the artist. Here we have the organic theory of art which posits that the form and shape of a work are innate; the artist simply frees them. This allowing the work to take shape under one's hand is again suggested in Kenyon's making a bust of Donatello. He seems to be getting nowhere until he gives himself up to his material. Only then is it that "the mystery, the miracle, of imbuing an inanimate substance with thought, feeling, and all the intangible attributes of the soul, appeared on the verge of being wrought."

The spiritualizing of matter then can be seen from the standpoint of the artist infusing his work with life, which results in successful art, or his being unable to do so, which means that his characters will be "cold abstractions." It can also apply in reverse to characters who exist only in a material way, those who seem to have no soul or spirit. Hawthorne always feared that he might be a cold abstraction as a person as well as in his artistic endeavors, and that he would thus be unable to bring his materials to life -- in short, that he would fail to spiritualize matter.

Finally, one may dispose of matter by idealizing the actual, which is probably the most important facet of Hawthorne's attack on the material. There are artist figures like Aylmer, Warland, Giovanni, perhaps, who wrongly attempt to idealize or, better, to perfect the

actual, in addition to numerous examples which confirm Hawthorne's own efforts as artist to do precisely that. There are also many characters who are important not in themselves but in terms of what they mean. Finally, it is quite apparent from what Hawthorne says directly and from what he has his characters say that there is danger in over-idealizing or over-intellectualizing. Such excess may result not only in the unpardonable sin of invading the human heart but also in the characters losing life and becoming cold abstractions.

One of the outstanding examples of the artist figure who is obsessed with his desire to idealize the actual is Aylmer in "The Birthmark." Hawthorne's judgment of this character is clear in a notebook entry, which refers to Aylmer: "A person to be in the possession of something as perfect as mortal man has a right to demand; he tries to make it better, and ruins it entirely" (IX, 106). Aylmer, a "type of the spiritual element," along with his helper, Aminadab, "man's physical nature," is in the habit of tampering with nature. In a laboratory lit by artificial lamps because Aylmer is afraid the sunshine will disturb his chemical processes, he pursues his strange endeavors. Among other things is a fluid which will wash away freckles. A notebook, "the history and emblem of his ardent, ambitious, imaginative, yet practical and laborious life," contains a record of his accomplishments. Surely one must admire Aylmer's noble goals, his "aspiration towards the infinite." Hawthorne certainly does not like the opposite -- those

riveted to earth by gross materialism; but Aylmer goes too far.

His otherwise perfectly beautiful wife, Georgiana, bears "the visible mark of earthly imperfection," a tiny red birthmark shaped like a hand, on her face. There is no taint on her spirit, reasons Aylmer, so why not perfect her body too? That one flaw torments him beyond endurance. In the blaze of the fire, he sees "the spectral hand that wrote mortality where he would fain have worshipped." Although there is nothing wrong in striving for the infinite, yet Hawthorne believes one cannot live successfully without realizing that men are limited to the finite. Aylmer, who wants to perfect Georgiana, to idealize the actual, cannot accept the fact that the birthmark "was the fatal flaw of humanity which Nature, in one shape or another, stamps ineffaceably on all her productions, either to imply that they are temporary and finite, or that their perfection must be wrought by toil and pain" (II, 50).

Georgiana, too, is glad Aylmer wants to get rid of the birthmark. She would not want him to tolerate it and be "guilty of treason to holy love by degrading its perfect idea to the level of the actual; and with her whole spirit she prayed that, for a single moment, she might satisfy his highest and deepest conception" (II, 65). Georgiana gets her wish at the very moment when the mark fades just before she dies, like the flower which at her touch turned black as though it had been burned. She herself is the victim of the "too powerful stimulus"

to which Aylmer attributes the death of the flower. The natural cannot live in this laboratory because, ironically, Aylmer, who rejects nature altogether, has a flaw of his own -- that of being unable to see the flaw which is part of all humanity. As Aminadab, "the earthly mass," laughs, Aylmer says:

> Matter and spirit--earth and heaven--have both done their part in this! Laugh, thing of the senses! You have earned the right to laugh (II, 68).

Aylmer, in attempting to make a living thing perfect, has succeeded only in killing it.

Giovanni, in "Rappaccini's Daughter," does the same thing. Hoping the antidote given him by Baglioni will counteract the poison in Beatrice's system, and also remove it from his own, Giovanni urges her to drink the liquid which kills her. Giovanni's refusal to accept Beatrice as she is prompts her to say that although her body is poison her spirit is "God's creature." Hawthorne suggests through Beatrice that Giovanni's is the greatest flaw, that he has more poison within him than Beatrice, because, like Aylmer, he cannot see the tragic flaw in humanity. He, too, confuses the finite and infinite, the temporal and eternal.

A final example of those within Hawthorne's works who try to idealize the actual are the characters in <u>The Blithedale Romance.</u> They establish what they hope will be an ideal, utopian community because, as Fogle suggests, "they seek to reunite the spirit and the body, which have long been separated by the distortions of civilization."[11]

But the whole scheme is characterized by artificiality. Zenobia's exotic, hot-house flower, so out of place in these surroundings is symbolic of this artificiality, as is her death, suicide by drowning. Their attempts to remove themselves from the actual world, to establish an ideal one, fail because essentially all that changes is the setting. They bring with them to the rural, pastoral surroundings, the idyllic setting, all the basic human problems in which they are involved. Thus, in Blithedale, the "happy valley," we have all the petty jealousies, griping, arguments, love triangles, which are part of every world inhabited by human beings.

Although we have been commenting on characters within Hawthorne's stories who try to idealize the actual, this does not preclude the fact that those stories in which they appear are also representative of Hawthorne's doing the same thing. In other words, the tales in which these characters appear, are also Hawthorne's idealizing the actual, as artist. Following is a commentary on what Hawthorne seems to have in mind in connection with idealizing the actual and what he achieves by doing it.

In a recent book by Jonathan Baumbach, entitled The Landscape of Nightmare: Studies in the Contemporary American Novel, the point is made that the contemporary novel has blood ties with the romance in terms of its basic concerns. These are the concern with cosmic rather than societal matters; a view of the world which is hallucinatory rather

than objective; and moral alternatives which are metaphysical rather than practical. This statement is not particularly novel, since many others writing on the romance have said much the same thing, but Baumbach has managed to summarize rather neatly what they have all been saying. If the concerns of the romance then are cosmic, hallucinatory, and metaphysical, how does the artist manage to present them to the reader? In short, how does he communicate meanings which are beyond the ordinary means of communication? According to Jungian psychology, there are certain archetypes or symbols from the collective unconscious which are "true symbols" because they stem from the history of the universe and not from that of the individual. For this reason, "they must exceed the comprehension of the conscious mind, although they become perceptible in a 'garb' acquired by the assimilation of representational material and incontestably originating in the outside world."[12]

These meanings may be expressed or conveyed if you will only through the use of the symbol. An appropriate definition of the symbol, especially for Hawthorne's work, is found in Davidson's book, Hawthorne: The Last Phase. Davidson says the symbol is the fusing of image and moral, so that one becomes the visual representation of the other. A symbol then is fixing the moral idea in concrete terms. Davidson further states, rightly I think, that Hawthorne investigated human hearts and souls, but to do this he had to have a focus, a visual representation of the abstract moral he was seeking to demonstrate. So he

uses the letter "A," a faun with furry ears, a bloody footstep, or a magic elixir, all important for the ideas they represent.

As Austin Warren states, Hawthorne reduces material objects to the status of tokens which shadow forth to the senses the spiritual states of men.[13] He had a disdain for what could be observed primarily through the senses, and is rather interested in doing what Hoxie Fairchild describes as the characteristic romantic deed of softening the hard refractoriness of the known by investing it with the mystery and glamor of the unknown, enabling man to think of the primrose as something more.[14] But "Hawthorne does not flee the real for the ideal";[15] rather, he rids himself of accident and contradiction, universalizing even when using local materials. The emphasis in Hawthorne's work is on moral issues and not characters, or material objects. What he does to the material, how he idealizes it, is apparent from his description of how he came to write The Scarlet Letter.

While working in the Custom House, Hawthorne says that he ran across an ancient, yellow parchment package. Rich in association and possibility, this object strongly contrasts with the superficial lives of the Custom House employees, which provide little material which can be used to reveal the eternal truths of the human heart. Hawthorne remarks that he found much more of Mr. Pue's mental part here than was to be found under his old wig. In the package is a small roll of explanatory manuscript in addition to the scarlet letter itself. Speaking of the

old surveyor Pue, Hawthorne says, "with his own ghostly voice he had exhorted me . . . to bring his mouldy and moth-eaten lucubrations before the public" (V, 52).

If this was indeed Mr. Pue's wish, Hawthorne fulfilled it in The Scarlet Letter. He idealized the material which he said he found in the Custom House, and with the artist's inspired "tongue of flame," wove the details into a symbolic tapestry, with a pattern of meaning universally significant. The characters are important as embodiments of ideas, more specifically in terms of their association with the scarlet "A." That this scarlet "A" is the point of the work is apparent from the title. It would appear that Hawthorne was interested in the effect of the red "A" on all those who were involved with it.

Throughout the work, for example, Hester wears gray clothing. Amidst the black and white morality of her time, this puts Hester exactly nowhere. It also seems to make her nobody -- to rob her of her identity, to make "her fade personally out of sight and outline." Interestingly, it is the scarlet letter which consistently brings her back and reveals her "under the moral aspect of its own illumination." Hester exists to give embodiment to the symbol of the "A," because, other than the scarlet letter searing her breast, Hawthorne remarks that one wonders whether Hester Prynne is a "woman or a shadow."

What does this "A," which Feidelson calls "psychophysical" because it enters into and shapes the perceiving mind as well as the

objective scene, represent after all?[16] As one might expect, numerous suggestions have been made -- adultress, angel, art. Von Abele says perhaps it stands for Alpha, the first letter of the alphabet, hence standing at the beginning of all language, which is the medium of Hawthorne's specific art. Further, states Von Abele, it is the symbol of the Alpha of the book, the act of adultery which is Dimmesdale's fall from innocence as the birth of language is another kind of fall.[17]

This last point raises some interesting speculations. If we think of it in connection with the New England Primer which exemplifies "A" with the lines "By Adams Fall/We Sinned All," then we can see it as standing for Adam and associating the sin of Hester and Dimmesdale with the Original Sin.[18] As the first letter of the alphabet, the beginning of all language, the medium of all literary art, the "A" may be seen as symbolic of all symbols. It is associated with the tongue of flame, which may be considered as the artistically inspired word. The "A" then not only represents the sin of Hester and Arthur individually, but also the Original Sin, and therefore universal guilt, and further the artistic process which by the use of the word as symbol, is capable of communicating boundless meaning.

As mentioned above, the "A" is capable of hiding Hester as an individual. It also reveals things about others, attitudes or opinions in connection with their reactions to it. Governor Bellingham represents the Puritan view of the scarlet letter, a view which becomes

apparent when Hester visits his dwelling to guard her possession of Pearl. The mansion is described as "wooden," "moss-grown," "crumbling to decay, and melancholy at heart," but nevertheless somewhat cheerful and rather brilliant for a Puritan ruler. Images of heaviness and rigidity are used to describe the house. The door has an "iron hammer" and inside there are "ponderous chairs," pictures of stern, severe-looking old worthies with armor on, and, most important, the "suit of mail" with a "steel headpiece." As Hester and Pearl look into this reflecting suit, they see the scarlet letter "in exaggerated and gigantic proportions, so as to be greatly the most prominent feature of [Hester's] appearance. In truth she seemed absolutely hidden by it" (V, 132). All of this suggests how Governor Bellingham in his stern severity, as a representative of Puritanism, exaggerates the sin; he sees only the sin and not the human being.

Pearl, too, as "a microcosm of Hester's moral chaos," is the scarlet letter incarnate. She is arrayed in a "crimson velvet tunic, of a peculiar cut, abundantly embroidered with fantasies and flourishes of gold-thread." Obviously, she looks just like the letter which is sewn with gold thread on Hester's dress. The author says of her: "It [Pearl] was the scarlet letter in another form; the scarlet letter endowed with life" (V, 127)! Pearl herself is spiritualized matter. This is precisely what Hawthorne's story is -- the scarlet letter endowed with life -- matter transformed to idea.

Hawthorne says the moral of The Scarlet Letter is:

> Be true! Be true! Be true! Show freely to the world, if not your worst, yet some trait whereby the worst may be inferred (V, 307).

R.R. Male says the quest for truth is an effort to know Pearl. "As every reader of the book recognizes, she is the scarlet letter incarnate. But as the visible embodiment of truth about the particular sin, she becomes by extension the universal truth about the Original Sin."[19] Pearl then is a key figure in the work which is the result of the transformation of the scarlet "A," which Hawthorne found in the parchment papers, to an idea; through words, he has suggested the moral idea expressed similarly by Shakespeare -- "To thine own self be true . . ." We may further refer to Male's statement that if the characters are stripped of names and locations, what remains is the basic relation between man, woman, and Deity.

> The Scarlet Letter is seen not as romance but as myth--the story of man and woman in a fallen, that is, human, world. Like Rappaccini's garden, life in this 'Eden of the present world' is an adulteration of God's original creation.[20]

Not only has Hawthorne managed to idealize the actual, but he has also extended the meaning of the work to universal proportions. F.O. Matthiessen describes Hawthorne's accomplishment in comparing his work with Melville's Moby Dick. In this work Melville reconciles general with concrete, fuses idea with image; "whereas, even in The Scarlet Letter,

the abstract, the idea, is often of greater interest than its concrete expression."[21]

This latter statement is also true of The Marble Faun. Hawthorne describes in the work itself how he came by the idea for the story. It was "the contemplation of this imperfect portrait of Donatello that originally interested us in his history, and impelled us to elicit from Kenyon what he knew of his friend's adventures" (VI, 434). The "imperfect portrait" to which Hawthorne refers is one which shows Donatello in the midst of struggle between moral planes. Donatello, at the beginning of the novel, is associated with innocence, , the sylvan life of the past, but he is forced to cope with guilt after he has murdered the spectre who has been haunting Miriam. The whole novel is about the riddle of the soul's growth, and the in-between portrait suggests the theme. It captures both characteristics of the faun with whom Donatello is associated, "a natural and delightful link betwixt human and brute life, with something of a divine character intermingled." Donatello's encounter with Miriam, who may represent guilt and experience, marks this initiation into evil, but also his ascent to a higher state of being. And this idea is far more interesting than the Roman escapades which serve as a backdrop. Although the above suggests that Donatello's development is the main point of the novel, it should be observed that the other main characters, Miriam, Hilda, and Kenyon, also undergo transformations to a lesser degree. Most important, however, is the fact that this novel again

indicates how in Hawthorne's work, "the literal level of narration . . . mirrors only the external form of a profounder structure of imaginative truth."[22]

At times, however, Hawthorne had some difficulty idealizing the actual. In Blithedale "the clods of earth . . . were never etherealized into thought." He could not do it because he was so personally involved. Those who dwelt there could not accomplish it either. Their utopia (actually Brook Farm) succeeded only in seeming unreal and temporary to almost everybody. The work is filled with veil imagery, suggestive of hiding something either from others or from one's self, perhaps indicative of the basically escapist motives of those who came there. Zenobia, who is associated with warmth grown cold, ends by committing suicide in water which may be seen as a kind of veil. Her body when recovered is rigid, her fists clenched, and Coverdale comments that there was "some tint of the Arcadian affectation that had been visible enough in all our lives for a few months past." Westervelt is artificial, too, with his "metallic laugh," gold-banded teeth, and mask-like face. So is Priscilla, called when she was young a "ghost-child," who seems almost transparent. The work somewhat fits the idea which Hawthorne was trying to convey; it doesn't quite come off in its attempt to describe an experiment which itself didn't quite come off. According to Hyatt Waggoner, the "fires of faith, hope, and love burned brightly at first at Blithedale, but were soon extinguished by

the selfishness of men and women who could not afford to 'be true.'"[23]

Hawthorne was best when his work was placed in a kind of fairyland. His real world and the one which he presents most meaningfully is the one in his "mind's eye." Clifford, in The House of the Seven Gables, when he and Hepzibah are escaping on the train, describes a house with a corpse inside and tells the gentleman he is talking to that he has just such a house in his mind's eye. That is precisely where the house is for Hawthorne, and the novel is a good example of how he converts matter to idea.

Perhaps the house of the seven gables, like the house of Usher, may be thought of most meaningfully as an illusory dwelling, important for what it represents. It certainly represents the dark past of the Pyncheon family, but more significantly relates to Jaffrey Pyncheon himself. Jaffrey, who has been dehumanized by material interests, is likened to a stately palace, in which somewhere may lie "a corpse, half-decayed, and still decaying, and diffusing its death-scent all through the palace." The dead judge inside the house parallels the judge's dead inside -- his dead and decaying moral nature. Of course, Jaffrey is tied up with the past and all the corruption of the Pyncheon family up to the present. When he dies inside the house and the remaining Pyncheons leave it behind them, they are symbolically rejecting the past.

These material objects which represent ideas are found frequently in Hawthorne. In a Note-Book passage, speaking of a Gothic

cathedral, he says the cathedral "showed me how earthly I was, but yet whispered deeply of immortality." It contains within itself both the earthly and spiritual, like Lady Eleanore's mantle. This cloak, said to have magical properties, carries the dreaded smallpox, and thus represents her overweening pride, her "moral deformity." Only when the cloak is destroyed by fire is the plague finally ended. The lime-kiln in "Ethan Brand" also is an actual thing but stands for something else. With the smoke and flame coming from the door, it seems to resemble the "private entrance to the infernal regions." Not only does it represent hell, but it may also be seen as Brand's flaming heart, burning with guilt and remorse, which is finally consigned to the flames where it is converted to lime as if it were marble. The kiln also lights the setting, at times misleads and obscures clear moral vision as it is opened and closed, and draws attention to Brand's face. It is a light with a purpose, as well as a heart image.

The numerous heart images in Hawthorne's work attest to his interest in them. This interest is significant in connection with his basic themes, many of which suggest the great difficulty in purifying a guilty heart or hiding the phantoms of the impure heart from view,[24] and also with reference to his basic artistic stance. By this, I mean his interest in presenting the internal. External reality or matter is often rejected in favor of the internal or spiritual, the psychological or "underside" of experience. Hawthorne is more interested in looking

within than without.

Perhaps this is why in the four major novels unreality seems to pervade the lives of the characters, especially with reference to their relationships with the world outside their own troubled realms. The whole universe seems false to Dimmesdale because of his failure to be true to himself; he and Hester seem ghosts to each other. Grasping at "shadowy claims on the wilderness deed," the Pyncheons in The House of the Seven Gables are condemned to unreality and the past; the peeping Coverdale feels a deep sense of unreality in connection with his experiences at Blithedale, and the point is made constantly that it all seems rather artificial and unreal to everybody. Finally, in The Marble Faun, the "threefold antiquity" of Etruscan, Roman, and Christian, is so oppressive "that the present moment is pressed down or crowded out, and our individual affairs and interests are but half as real here [Rome] as elsewhere."

What is going on inside seems to inform and characterize the outside world. Richard Digby in "The Man of Adamant" has a heart which turns to stone because he has refused love, while Roderick Elliston is saved from his bosom serpent because he accepts love. Hilda's spiritual aloofness and inability to sympathize with any other human being is symbolized by her high tower dwelling place; Miriam's heart of darkness is associated with the dim and winding catacombs where the evil spectre is seen. The beautiful though ruined fountain

represents both the spiritual beauty but poisonous body of Beatrice Rappaccini. The whole garden surrounding her is symbolic of this mixture.

There is, however, the great danger that the idealistic seeker after truth may become a Faustian searcher. Hawthorne believed that violation of any human heart was an unpardonable sin, and he feared all his life that he was guilty of it. With Melville, he believed that the role of the imagination was to mediate between spirit and matter, but that the artist must be careful not to overstep boundaries. In addition to this, over-intellectualizing material would ruin it entirely; Hawthorne makes the statement that at times his characters became cold abstractions beneath his hand, that they lost all their human warmth. The artist must tread the line carefully between close observation, sympathy and objectivity.

We have seen that Hawthorne's attitude toward the material is both complex and varied. Remarking on the close connection between the death of Martha Hunt in Concord River and Zenobia's death by drowning in The Blithedale Romance, Wagenknecht states that Hawthorne transmutes the raw material of existence into art.[25] He changes this material by dissolving, subverting, decomposing, or analyzing the object, like the parchment papers found in the Custom House, so that he may unify, project, express, or create the subject -- adultery or the effects of sin in The Scarlet Letter.

In that work, as in others, Hawthorne sought to do what he described as his approach in The Marble Faun. He says he "designed the story [or stories] and the characters to bear, of course, a certain relation to human nature and human life, but still to be so artfully and airily removed from our mundane sphere, that some laws and proprieties of their own should be implicitly acknowledged" (VI, 522). As F.O. Matthiessen has said, if there is a loss of the material world in his works, nevertheless "abstractions can take on, not exactly flesh and blood, but enough intensity to make them imaginatively alive."[26] Art, like Catholicism, "supplies a multitude of external forms, in which the spiritual may be clothed and manifested" (VI, 392).

The idealizing of the actual is a crucial part of Hawthorne's artistic process. Although the various means of dealing with matter are significant too and shed light on his work, this particular approach is of most interest. A passage in "Our Old Home" perhaps best describes what Hawthorne was trying to do and why:

> Facts as we really find them . . . are covered with a stony excrescence of prose, resembling the crust on a beautiful sea shell, and they never show their most delicate and divinest colors until we shall have dissolved away their grosser actualities by steeping them long in a powerful menstruum of thought (VII, 165-66).

In summary, he is trying to dissolve the gross actuality of fact by emphasizing the idea rather than its material vehicle. This he accomplishes by the attack upon matter, the destruction or transformation of the

material, and the idealizing of what actually exists. The same effects can be achieved by the use of distance.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Waggoner, Hawthorne: A Critical Study, 19.

[2]John Schroeder, "That Inward Sphere: Notes on Hawthorne's Heart Imagery and Symbolism," PMLA, LXV (March, 1950), 106-19.

[3]A.N. Kaul, ed., Hawthorne: A Collection of Critical Essays, 1-10.

[4]R.A. Foakes, "Order Out of Chaos: The Task of the Romantic Poet," Romanticism: Points of View, eds., Robert F. Gleckner and Gerald E. Enscoe (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1962), 243.

[5]Walter Blair, "Color, Light, and Shadow in Hawthorne's Fiction," New England Quarterly, XV (March, 1942), 74-94.

[6]Terence Martin, "The Method of Hawthorne's Tales," Hawthorne Centenary Essays, 12-13.

[7]Richard H. Fogle, Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and The Dark (Norman, Oklahoma, 1952), 26.

[8]Ibid., 116.

[9]Rudolph Von Abele, The Death of the Artist: A Study of Hawthorne's Disintegration (The Hague, 1955), 39.

[10] Jesse Bier, "Hawthorne on the Romance: His Prefaces Related and Examined," Modern Philology, LIII (August, 1955), 19.

[11] Fogle, Hawthorne's Fiction, 172.

[12] Jacobi, Complex/Archetype/Symbol, 89.

[13] Austin Warren, Nathaniel Hawthorne: Representative Selections, With Introduction, Bibliography, and Notes (New York, 1934), lxiv.

[14] Hoxie Fairchild, The Romantic Quest (New York, 1931), 98.

[15] Edward Wagenknecht, Nathaniel Hawthorne: Man and Writer (New York, 1961), 63-64.

[16] Charles Feidelson, Jr., "Hawthorne as Symbolist," Hawthorne: A Collection of Critical Essays, 67.

[17] Von Abele, The Death of the Artist, 55.

[18] Roy R. Male, Jr., Hawthorne's Tragic Vision (New York, 1964).

[19] Ibid., 94.

[20] Ibid., 99.

[21] F.O. Matthiessen, American Renaissance: Art and Experience in the Age of Emerson and Whitman (New York, 1941), 250.

[22]William Bysshe Stein, Hawthorne's Faust: A Study of the Devil Archetype (Gainesville, Florida, 1953), 2.

[23]Waggoner, Hawthorne: A Critical Study, 203.

[24]Schroeder, "That Inward Sphere," 116.

[25]Wagenknecht, Nathaniel Hawthorne, 60.

[26]Matthiessen, American Renaissance, 245.

CHAPTER II

TEMPORAL, SPATIAL, PSYCHIC DISTANCE

> The hues of the opal, the light of the diamond
> are not to be seen if the eye is too near.
>
> Ralph Waldo Emerson

Various definitions of aesthetic distance similarly suggest that it is generally the effect produced when an emotion or experience is so objectified by the proper use of form that it is understood as being objectively realized and independent of the immediate personal experience of its maker.[1] This does not necessarily mean that the author is impersonal, or that he has a purely intellectual interest in the subject. Rather the work is filtered or cleared of its strictly practical, concrete appeal, so that the result is still a personal relationship between author and work, yet a distanced one. Thus, the work is put out of gear, so to speak, with the practical, actual self, so that the artist may present a view of things from the usually unnoticed side, the hidden or underside of experience, a view which may strike the reader as a kind of revelation.

While maintaining this personal but detached position, the

artist must avoid under-distancing or over-distancing. If he concentrates on satirizing current social institutions or dwells on topical subjects, the result may be too realistic, while putting the work too far in the past or future, or using ridiculously exotic settings, may result in artificiality or improbability. What is wanted actually is the utmost decrease of distance without its disappearance, a place midway between the two extremes. That such a balance is difficult to maintain is apparent from the fact that distance seems to be a problem inherent in all art. In connection with music, for example, successful distancing seems to be closely related to the preservation of various compositions; particular melodies remain in the mind while others disappear. Architecture not viewed from sufficient distance to encompass the whole design cannot be fully appreciated. Statues are most enjoyed when placed on pedestals, so that the viewer can observe them outside his own spatial plane. Plays, movies, and literature are censored by moralists who refuse to trust others to maintain distance.

This distance between the spectator or reader and a work of art is crucial then to an appreciation of it as art, because the reader, although he must be prepared for the appeal of the work in order to enjoy it, cannot too closely identify with it, lest he lose distance altogether. A man who has reason to suspect his wife might on the one hand be expected to deeply appreciate _Othello_, while on the other might find it impossible to enjoy the play because he can see in it only his own

personal situation. He, like the artist, must be both personal and detached at the same time. Without distance, neither art nor appreciation is possible.

The distance limit required is one beyond which and within which aesthetic appreciation becomes possible. For Hawthorne, perhaps this was the neutral ground between the real and the imaginary, where he sought to place his art -- outside the everyday world of materiality but not beyond the understanding or appreciation of his readers. Since his imagination was a moral one, and since he could respond fully only to moral values, it was necessary for him to be far away from his subjects so that he would not be distracted by other characteristics than those which especially interested him.

There are examples in his work of three kinds of distance: temporal, spatial, and psychic, or psychological. These, of course, are collectively employed as a means of presenting universal meaning, but are broken down here for the purpose of discussion.

With reference to temporal distance, T.S. Eliot, in "The Hawthorne Aspect," The Little Review, August 1918, said:

> In one thing alone Hawthorne is more solid than James: he had a very acute historical sense . . . Both men had that sense of the past which is peculiarly American, but in Hawthorne this sense exercised itself in a grip on the past itself; in James it is a sense of the sense.

Hawthorne was preoccupied with the origin of things, and seemed con-

stantly to see the present in terms of the past. For that matter, one might well agree with Waggoner's assertion that the past lived in Hawthorne, so any boundary would have been artificial.[2] Hawthorne was in the rather unique situation of living in an area where his ancestors had lived; Massachusetts was replete with memories of the past. Surrounded by tradition and reminded everywhere of his heritage and roots in this region, it is not surprising that Hawthorne had such a strong sense of the past and was so convinced that it lived on in a very meaningful way into the present.

Distancing in time is not employed by Hawthorne only because he is so involved in the past, however. It is an artistic device which he used for a specific purpose, that purpose being to present the universal rather than the particular. Fogle has neatly summed it up as follows:

> Hawthorne so employs the element of time as to warn us that he cannot guarantee the literal truth of his narrative and at the same time to suggest that the essential truth is the clearer; as facts shade off into the background, meaning is left in the foreground unshadowed and disencumbered. The years, he pretends, have winnowed his material, leaving only what is enduring. Tradition and superstition, while he disclaims belief in them, have a way of pointing to the truth.[3]

Thus, we have the group of stories which comprise what has been called the Myth of New England. In these tales, Hawthorne treats the past in one of two ways -- as past or as past influencing present. Whatever the approach, he combines some actual facts of early New

England history with supernatural elements. Many of these stories were gathered, so Hawthorne says, at the old Province House, which seems from his descriptions to have been converted into some kind of inn. He goes there to hear tales of the past, hoping to snatch "from oblivion some else unheard-of fact of history." This material appears under the title "Legends of the Province House," and includes such stories as "Howe's Masquerade"; "Edward Randolph's Portrait," which serves as a warning to any governor who disregards the will of the people; "Old Esther Dudley," guardian of the old, who joins past and present by telling the children stories of times gone by. Esther remains in the past until she is confronted by the new leader, whose presence is so repugnant to her that she dies. There is also in this group "The Gray Champion," who serves both as a reminder of the wrongs perpetrated upon the Americans by England, and as a legendary hero who appeared when most needed by his countrymen, conveniently disappearing when he has fulfilled his heroic purpose. In this way, "Hawthorne mythologizes actual history and makes mythic actions appear historical."[4]

But distancing in time is also apparent in the four major novels, primarily for thematic reasons. Hawthorne's avowed purpose in The House of the Seven Gables, the time span of which is approximately three centuries, is to show how the past influences the present, to bridge the gap between the haunted, gray New England past and his own broad daylight. In time, the story reaches backward from Hawthorne's own

time almost to the age of The Scarlet Letter, touching upon happenings that took place in or around 1670, 1707, 1820, and 1850. The events which took place in the past still strongly influence the remaining Pyncheons. Jaffrey, who represents the corrupt element of the family, exerts an evil influence over Hepzibah and Clifford, threatening their security until his death in the ancestral chair. The hypnotic powers of the Maules live on in Holgrave, whose refusal to use them on Phoebe marks a turning point for all those involved in the Pyncheon-Maule relationship. By using events of various times in the past, Hawthorne is able to make clear his basic point that wrong lives from one generation to another, and that the past greatly influences the present.

In The Scarlet Letter, which is concerned with Puritanism, we see the attitude toward Hester's sin reflected by those who gather to see her emerge from the prison. Only one young woman feels any sympathy for Hester. As the work progresses, we see attitudes changing with the passage of time so that by the end of the novel, few people remember what the "A" represents. All they know is that Hester is a capable and sympathetic person in time of sickness or trouble, so they interpret the "A" in terms of their own relationships with her.

Time is of further significance thematically in The Scarlet Letter because Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne cannot escape it. They suffer from the effects of a sin committed in the finite world, to which they are bound. Dimmesdale makes the comment that perhaps

they can be together in eternity but not in the time-burdened world in which the sin was committed. Pearl reminds them of this fact when she refuses to cross the stream to come to them until Hester picks up the scarlet letter which she has thrown away. If we remember the moral of the novel which is "Be True," and the fact that Dimmesdale has thus far been unable to live up to that high endeavor, it becomes apparent that he can redeem himself only by not running away. As R.R. Male has put it, Pearl "indicates to Hester and Arthur that truth cannot be perceived outside its temporal context."[5] The two lovers are associated with the original sin in that they find themselves in a fallen world, characterized by time. Eden cannot be found again outside of eternity.

This is the hard lesson that must be learned by the utopians at Blithedale, too. Although The Blithedale Romance is chronologically placed entirely within the nineteenth century, and is based on the actual Brook Farm, Hawthorne still gains temporal distance in the sense that this community is essentially trying to restore an Arcadian kind of existence. They set themselves apart from the world, hoping thereby to accomplish not only a comfortable livelihood for all, but also some kind of happy, communitarian fellowship. They fail essentially because they take with them to Blithedale all the built-in shortcomings of the fallen world from which they came. In the chapter entitled "The Masqueraders," we are made aware of the sad fact that they are all essentially posers, all, except Silas Foster, escapists. Again,

Hawthorne points out the impossibility of running away from time.

Nevertheless, Hawthorne himself says in "The Old Manse," that "in fairyland [perhaps his neutral ground] there is no measure of time!" Perhaps time can be eluded, but only in the world of art. Using Rome, the "city of all time," as setting, Hawthorne wrote The Marble Faun, a novel dealing with the transformation or transfiguration of four human beings, with especial emphasis on the development of soul in one, Donatello. Moral growth is associated both with time and with mystery. Italy provided both, says Gary Scrimgeour. It naturally had "the half mysterious but definitely real" atmosphere Hawthorne wanted. Furthermore, time in its three aspects of past, present, and eternal was "manifest and observable."[6] Donatello is associated with the past of Monte Beni, the sylvan, innocent life, the present of Miriam and her guilt, and the eternity represented by the growth of a human soul from innocence, through the fall, back to the divine, through repentence and self discipline. Where else could Hawthorne have written a book which, as Scrimgeour states, is a "meditation on the subject of time." "Rome is the past, experience, culture, and corruption, in contrast with America's present, ideals, morality, and innocence."[7]

By temporal distancing, Hawthorne is able to achieve a kind of panoramic view of the past which encompasses the Adamic past of all humanity, the New England past of his own society, and the European past of America.[8] Tied inextricably in with this kind of distance is

spatial distance, which is also significant in connection with The Marble Faun.

Northrop Frye, in Romanticism Reconsidered, says that Romanticism is the effect of profound change, "not primarily in belief, but in the spatial projection of reality. This in turn leads to a different localizing of the various levels of that reality."[9] Hawthorne, in connection with his choice of setting for The Marble Faun said Italy afforded "a sort of poetic or fairy precinct, where actualities would not be so terribly insisted upon as they are, and must needs be in America . . . . Romance and poetry, ivy, lichens, and wall-flowers, need ruin to make them grow"(VI, 15). In Rome, "the land of art," Hawthorne found a ready-made setting for his novel.

In an excellent article on The Marble Faun, Gary Scrimgeour says that in Italy Hawthorne could use art objects, which, because of their connections and connotations, already had an aura of both the actual and the romantic. They existed both in the actual world and in the fairyland of which Hawthorne spoke. It would have been more difficult to invest objects "that were stolidly actual" with these "connotations." The things he chose in Italy were "the most conventional," and the most widely discussed. Since the concepts of art and concepts of morality are closely wedded to each other, and the meanings rely on the art objects which are in Italy, Scrimgeour concludes that Hawthorne's choice of art objects, although banal from the viewpoint of

art, are exceptionally fit for communication with the reader.

Moreover, if we accept the conflict of Old and New Worlds as one of the themes of the work, it becomes apparent that the freedom of movement in Rome is what makes possible what goes on. It allows Donatello, a nobleman, to associate with a group of artists. Miriam can go to few places other than Rome where she can hide her past life. Kenyon remarks "the papal despotism allows us freer breath than our native air." This spatial distance is quite necessary for both the plot and the theme of The Marble Faun, "for one of the themes handled at length is a conflict which involves, on the one hand, America, Protestantism, youth, innocence, and pragmatism, and, on the other hand, Italy, Catholicism, age, sin, and aestheticism." Scrimgeour has thus answered the objections of James and Matthiessen concerning Hawthorne's choice of locale in The Marble Faun by stating that not only is the setting right but furthermore absolutely necessary to Hawthorne's romance. These "backdrops of scenery" are just the strength of the work. "Instead of laboriously creating his Faery Land, at last he found it waiting for him."[10]

Another of Hawthorne's works, this time a short story, "Rappiccini's Daughter," has an Italian setting. Rappaccini's garden, called the "Eden of the present world," is a spatially-distanced world within the tale itself. It is a kind of microcosm, ruled by the man who cares infinitely more for science than for mankind. Giovanni can safely

view it from his window, enjoying the unusual beauty of the flowers and Beatrice, but he is poisoned when he enters it. By likening it to Eden, Hawthorne is able to comment implicitly on the fallen state of things in the present world. Giovanni's attempt to purge Beatrice of the poison which permeates her is a kind of ironic reversal of the story of the fall of man. Here the man entices the woman to partake of the antidote which will remove what ties her to the earthly. Giovanni, like Aylmer, cannot accept the flaw. Beatrice accuses Giovanni of having more poison within than she because, although she is the center of a poisoned world, and is herself poisonous, Beatrice says she is spiritually God's creature.

Spatial distance is also maintained in The Blithedale Romance where Hawthorne says he wanted 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 actual events of real lives" (V, 21). By the use of distance, he hoped to avoid having the work taken as a direct parallel to events at Brook Farm. More significant, however, is the fact discussed above that Blithedale's distance is closely associated with the theme of the work.

Artistic distance may be gained too by the use of certain effects. Hawthorne employs light and shadow at various times to give things an extraordinary appearance. In "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" much is made of the moonlight. Robin has left home to seek his

kinsman, who he thinks will help him get started in the world. He is confused and bewildered by all the events which occur in the shadows and half-lights of the evening. The moonlight quite aptly symbolizes the dimness of his perceptions during this period while he is passing through a kind of initiation experience. Fogle comments:

> The moon . . . isolates and distances, it is the atmosphere, like the castle of a Gothic romance or Poe's 'Ligeia,' it is a luminous ambiguity; but in it is the verity of buried consciousness. It functions, too, . . . to alienate Robin as a necessary part of his transformation and development. In order that he may see clearly what and where he is, he must first be drawn apart from his surroundings.[11]

The light provided by the moon is like that which comes through the windows of "The Hall of Fantasy," the "light of heaven," which provides a visionary atmosphere.

Hawthorne expressed his own view toward the value of distance in "Sights From a Steeple," where he says "to discern the real intensity of the storm, we must fix upon some distant object, -- as yonder spire, -- and observe how the riotous gust fights with the descending snow throughout the intervening space" (I, 387). His "distant object" may be thought of as the moral meaning of a work of art. He keeps his eye fixed on that while he describes the intervening chaos. Hawthorne's goal to discover the universal beneath the particular is reached by his use of psychic distance, which means not being concretely involved. For example, one might enjoy a fog at sea if he experiences it vicariously,

and does not have to worry about a possible collision and loss of life. According to Matthiessen, "the ideal that Hawthorne wanted to project in art was 'the real'; not actuality transformed into an impossible perfection, but actuality disengaged from appearance." Hawthorne did not distort usable truth, but believed that art could raise the material to a level of contemplation, freed from accidents and irrelevancies. The Aristotelian doctrine of how art discovers the universal beneath the particular applies here:

> It passes beyond the bare reality given by nature, and expresses a purified form of reality disengaged from accident, and freed from conditions which thwart its development. The real and ideal from this point of view are not opposites, as they are sometimes conceived to be. The ideal is the real, but rid of contradictions, unfolding itself according to the laws of its own being, apart from alien influences and the disturbances of chance.[12]

Thus, as Scrimgeour asserts, Hawthorne's works all seem to struggle "out of the confines of the time in which they are happening into a plane where they are the re-enactment of an eternally recurring event."[13]

If we consider the Fall of Man that one recurring event, we can see that this is what Hawthorne is talking about in the four major novels, in addition to several short stories. As artist, he stands aside, like Holgrave in The House of the Seven Gables, taking pictures, or like Coverdale in The Blithedale Romance, ensconced in his "hermitage . . . in the vine-encircled heart of the tall pine!" viewing the characters who re-enact that crucial event in human history. In The Marble Faun,

which is concerned with the riddle of the soul's growth, we see Donatello as he becomes involved with the woman, Miriam, and thus with sin and guilt. Up to that point, he had lived for the present, but the crime connects him with the past, although it is also the means by which he is able to attain spiritual growth. Donatello "destroys the spectre's primeval gloom only at the price of his own Arcadia."[14]

The characters are associated with all of time, not only because there seems to be a kind of chain reaction involving the four of them with problems that have always confronted human beings, but also because of the background of Italy which is associated with all time. The various rambles which the characters take seem to be rather casual, but they end up on places which somehow seem to be exactly right. "Each ramble . . . places the events in their proper perspective as part of the marble of time, and makes us see them as universal and eternal . . ."[15] But Hawthorne presents the riddle of the soul's growth in a rather mysterious way. Things are not completely explained. Rather than apologizing for this, Hawthorne takes the position that one should not insist upon looking too closely at the wrong side of the tapestry. The artist has shown what he wishes, and life is too complex to explain everything anyway.

The Scarlet Letter too, which seems to take place apart from time, is a discourse on the everlasting problem of the effects of sin and guilt on men. As Feidelson has stated, the discoveries in the

Custom House signalize "not a retreat into the past but a penetration into persistent meaning."[16] Hawthorne here has achieved the utmost decrease of distance without its disappearance in that one is able to view what happens in this work as a problem with universal significance. It is possible to become personally involved, but the work is so distanced that there is little danger of identifying with it so completely that the reader becomes lost in a maze of personal problems.

Hawthorne has achieved Melville's high expectation of fiction as expressed in The Confidence Man. "It should present another world, and yet one to which we feel the tie." So it is in The Blithedale Romance, a world set aside, peopled with those who wish to perfect existence to some degree or at least to simplify it, but a world in which all the human failings which are part of the fallen state of things reappear to thwart the high aims of the experiment. For Hawthorne, the Brook Farm experience served both as daydream and fact, and thus offered an "available foothold between fiction and reality."

The House of the Seven Gables, too, with its inclusion of a large portion of the past, and its emphasis upon the strong bearing of the past on the present, suggests a reversion to the idea of the Original Sin. The Fall took place way back in time, but its influence lives on and of course will not die even as the evil which is part of the Pyncheon line may not completely disappear with the death of Jaffrey Pyncheon. Note how Holgrave's attitude toward the whole matter describes

Hawthorne's own as artist. Discussing Hepzibah and Clifford with Phoebe, Holgrave says he is rather indifferent toward them. Rather than wanting either to help or to hinder them, he merely wants "to look on, to analyze, to explain matters . . . and to comprehend the drama which, for almost two hundred years, has been dragging its slow length over the ground where you and I now tread." Further, he says "if permitted to witness the close, I doubt not to derive a moral satisfaction from it, go matters how they may." Phoebe objects to Holgrave's attitude because he talks as if "the old house were a theatre," and, she says

> You seem to look at Hepzibah's and Clifford's misfortunes, and those of generations before them, as a tragedy, such as I have seen acted in the hall of a country hotel, only the present one appears to be played exclusively for your amusement. I do not like this. The play costs the performers too much, and the audience is too cold-hearted (III, 259).

Perhaps this is true. Holgrave's camera seems to be almost symbolic of the way external reality is imprisoned in art, and of the way human beings can be exploited by the artist for purposes of artistic effect. But, as Bier states, although the artistic mind theoretically is drawn up from the actual or mundane toward the wholly imaginary, it stops halfway. In practical terms, the commonplace is set off at a psychological distance from the artist and the percipient.[17] It is part of Hawthorne's success as an artist that he is able to achieve this distance. The effect is that he presents primarily what is broadly representative, without becoming so personally involved that he loses

universality by concentrating on the particular. What happens is actually this -- Hawthorne gets universality of situation by distance and distance by universality of situation.

He therefore overcomes the problem, commented on so often by so many, of the absence of social dimension in America. Tocqueville's prediction, that because of this lack inspiration will be drawn from the more universal attributes of humanity and from man's relation to the cosmos rather than to the social hierarchy, comes true. According to Waggoner, the best of Hawthorne's tales exist in an area bounded by allegory and history, archetype and myth; the greater ones have both historicity and universality.[18] This is possible because, despite social dimension, "man remains, and the poet needs no more."[19] The artist's chief theme may be "man himself taken aloof from his country and his age and standing in the presence of Nature and of God, with his passions, his doubts, his rare prosperities and inconceivable wretchedness . . ."[20]

In "Our Old Home," Hawthorne says "sublime and beautiful facts are best understood when etherealized by distance." He was able to gain this distance when it was possible for him to have an eventless exterior life, so that he could concentrate fully on that inner life which was to him more real. Distance provides the perspective necessary so that some kind of pattern or design can emerge. Hawthorne achieved in his work something like his description in the French and Italian

Note-Books of the mountains in Geneva, which think they have nothing to do with each other, yet when viewed from a distance are portions of "one grand and beautiful idea." These mountains symbolize the truth which cannot be judged within man's partial scope of vision, says Hawthorne, "of the relations which we bear to our fellow creatures and human circumstances." Through the use of distance, he was able to show these relations, a subject of timeless rather than merely contemporary interest.

FOOTNOTES

[1]William F. Thrall and Addison Hibbard, _A Handbook to Literature_ (New York, 1962), 5.

[2]Waggoner, _Hawthorne_, 67.

[3]Fogle, _Hawthorne's Fiction_, 143.

[4]Daniel Hoffman, "Myth, Romance, and the Childhood of Man," _Hawthorne Centenary Essays_, 209.

[5]Male, _Hawthorne's Tragic Vision_, 95.

[6]Gary J. Scrimgeour, "_The Marble Faun_: Hawthorne's Faery Land," _American Literature_, XXXVI (November, 1964), 272.

[7]Hyatt H. Waggoner, "The Marble Faun," _Hawthorne: A Collection of Critical Essays_, 174.

[8]A.N. Kaul, _The American Vision: Actual and Ideal Society in Nineteenth Century Fiction_ (New Haven, 1963), 144.

[9]Northrop Frye, ed., _Romanticism Reconsidered: Selected Papers From the English Institute_ (New York, 1963), 5.

[10]Scrimgeour, "_The Marble Faun_: Hawthorne's Faery Land," 272-73.

[11]Fogle, Hawthorne's Fiction, 113.

[12]Matthiessen, American Renaissance, 264.

[13]Scrimgeour, "The Marble Faun: Hawthorne's Faery Land," 284-85.

[14]Ibid., 283.

[15]Ibid., 286.

[16]Feidelson, Jr., "The Nature of Symbolic Perception," 111.

[17]Bier, "Hawthorne on the Romance: His Prefaces Related and Examined," 20.

[18]Waggoner, Hawthorne, 125.

[19]Kaul, The American Vision, 62.

[20]Ibid.

CHAPTER III

DISTANCE THROUGH MYTH

In addition to the uses of distance previously mentioned is Hawthorne's interest in mythology, another means by which he can present universal truths. By calling to mind the various myths of the past which collectively represented the moral wisdom of generations, relating their meanings to problems of the artist and of the individual in the nineteenth century which interested him, and selecting problems which had universal application, Hawthorne managed to tie together past, present, and future. The moral and ethical problems which were crucial for the artist and the individual then are the ones which remain significant today.

There are many different concepts of myth. For our purposes, as Richard Chase has stated, myth may be thought of as "literature functioning in a special way, achieving special modes of expression,"[1] or, according to R.R. Male in an unpublished manuscript, as an "extended image or symbol which organizes and interprets the chaotic fragments of experience." It may tend toward falsehood in the sense that it is not verifiable by scientific or historical methods, but it is a

means by which enduring and essential truths may be expressed. Dealing with the complexities of the human condition other than by suggestion and symbolism would be very difficult if not impossible, and myth helps to make certain truths accessible as well as to record universal experience.

Lacking the wide range of experience from which Melville drew his materials, Hawthorne relied on his broad reading background, which included a variety of creative literature as well as much New England history. This background would provide him with two general directions concerning myth, one involving his own myth of New England, which includes some fairy tales, part fact and part legend, and the other his creative adaptations of the pagan myths. In the first, Hawthorne concentrates on "picturesque sketches of the times," admitting in connection with the tales for youngsters that he fills in the outline of history with imaginative details, a necessity if he is to "make a lively and entertaining narrative for children with such unmalleable material as is presented by the sombre, stern and rigid characteristics of the Puritans and their descendants" (IV, 430).

Legendary New England history appears in many of the stories including "The Gray Champion," "The Maypole of Merry Mount," "The Gentle Boy," Legends of the Province House, "Endicott and the Red Cross," "Young Goodman Brown," and others. More important, however, is the realm of pagan mythology, the area where Hawthorne found

his poetic or fairy precinct, the shadow, antiquity, mystery and picturesqueness required for the romance, but lacking in the contemporary American scene. The use of these materials enabled him to achieve insights unreachable in historical writing.

His beginnings in the use of myth are found in his childrens' books, A Wonder Book and Tanglewood Tales. A letter written to James T. Fields on May 23, 1851 regarding A Wonder Book clearly indicates that Hawthorne intended his myths to be adaptations rather than repetitions. Convinced that the stories would be popular with children, Hawthorne further meant them to be profitable, and so was determined to purge his classical myths retold of the old "heathen wickedness" and insert a "moral wherever practicable." In the preface to A Wonder Book he established what would be his permanent attitude toward the use of legend, fable or myth. "No epoch of time," he said, "can claim a copyright in these immortal fables. They seem never to have been made; and certainly, so long as man exists, they can never perish, but, by their indestructibility itself, they are legitimate subjects for every age to clothe with its own garniture of manners and sentiment, and to imbue with its own morality" (IV, 13). Further, in the introduction to Tanglewood Tales, Hawthorne asserts that "the inner life of the legends cannot be come at save by making them entirely one's own property." Whether used in the childrens' books or as a shaping influence in his other fiction, Hawthorne has injected his own ethical principles into the pagan myths.[2]

Four myths which repeatedly appear and which seem to tie in most closely with Hawthorne's use of distance to gain universality are the following: Narcissus, Faust, Pygmalion, and Adam and Eve. Taking some aspect of the original tale as a point of departure, Hawthorne indeed reclothes each one not only with the social and moral garments of the age but also with the cloak of universality, so that the truths which emerge are timeless, meaningful even to the present day.

Egotistical Narcissus, lovingly drinking in the image of his own face, provides Hawthorne with the mirror of introspection. Through this metaphor, he may present men confronted with that inner sphere, the deeper nature or unconscious being they so seldom observe. Since insight is part of moral responsibility, this experience, although tremendously frightening and perhaps demoralizing, should not be avoided, but rather actively sought for the moral growth which may ensue. Getting beneath this exterior also suggests artistic observation; thus the image is additionally useful for indicating one stage of the creative process.

Another stage of the artistic process is suggested by the Pygmalion Myth. In the Greek version, Pygmalion's love for Galatea is what moves the goddess Venus to bestow the gift of life upon the statue. Through love of his work, combined with artistic craft, the artist creates a living thing. Actually, in accordance with Hawthorne's belief in the organic theory, it is probably more correct to say that the artist

allows life to emerge or helps it emerge. At any rate, the idea contributed by the Pygmalion Myth is the enlivening of something. Since Hawthorne does not allow himself to be bound by any one use, however, the Pygmalion Myth is in some instances reversed; that is, some living thing dies. This might happen through fault in the individual concerned or through want of ability on the part of the artist.

The Adam and Eve Myth serves as a vehicle through which Hawthorne presents his "theology," a rather unusual one for the nineteenth century. To him, the Fall is falling in love; only through this kind of passionate commitment are human beings able to lead fruitful lives.[3] It involves sin and suffering, which he believed to be unremovable threads in any meaningful design in the tapestry of existence. This union of man and woman combines the qualities of head and heart, a necessary joining of opposites if anything is to be produced. If the opposites are seen as flesh and spirit, this myth may also serve as a metaphor for artistic creation whereby these two are fused in the work itself.

In his adaptation of the Faust Myth, Hawthorne shows how an unwitting pact with the devil may come about through allowing a vision of evil to engulf one's life, to the exclusion of recognizing the good. In addition, damnation may result from an uncontrolled search for knowledge beyond the bounds set for human minds. Finally, the artist may violate the boundaries by penetrative observation for its own sake.

Throughout the following discussion, whatever myth Hawthorne chooses to adapt, and however he manipulates it, it must be remembered that his goal is to present universally significant meaning, to emphasize the idea rather than its material vehicle, that material vehicle being the written page of the literary romance, and the myths used. In other words, he is not interested merely in showing how these myths can be applied to other situations with which he is particularly concerned, but rather always intent upon emphasizing some element of human experience which is not limited to any time or place. With this uppermost in mind, we may now concern ourselves with the myth of Narcissus.

This myth, of course, is usually associated with reflector images like mirrors, ponds, armor, eyes, and portraits, since Narcissus gazed into the pond and fell in love with his own image. But it is not necessarily always used by Hawthorne as a figure for self love, although this is implied at times. Narcissus' beautiful outward image, which he grew to love fruitlessly, was a false covering for a dwarfed and withered inner soul, destroyed because of his refusal of love. It was this inner being, the spirit or essence of a man's being which interested Hawthorne, and this is what most often appears in his mirrors. Man's moral condition as it is related to past, present, and future, was what Hawthorne tried to portray.

Since the chief purpose of literature, in his opinion, is to convey spiritual truth, "the true artist must look beneath the exterior.

It is his gift -- his proudest, but often a melancholy one -- to see the inmost soul, and, by a power indefinable even to himself, to make it glow or darken upon the canvas, in glances that express the thought and sentiment of years" (I, 202). Depending upon his originality, which Hawthorne describes as "an innate perception and reflection of truth," the artist "paints not merely a man's features, but his mind and heart."

In "The Haunted Mind," Hawthorne likens the imagination to a mirror, which Matthiessen says does not reflect nature but rather projects pictures from the haunted mind. The mirror of Hawthorne's imagination then is not mimetic, nor is it transparent, "yielding insights into the mind and heart of the poet himself," but is rather his means of joining past, present and future through his artistic imagination, using a symbol like the mirror to denote all three. As past, this imagery is connective, joins past with present by bringing up the memory of a by-gone day and, like "Edward Randolph's Portrait," oftentimes warns the present generation against making fatal mistakes. The present pictures are at times reflective, mirroring the immediate surroundings, although sometimes with distortion; and second, incisive, because they reflect what is underneath the exterior, usually the spiritual conditions of men. The future images are prophetic, hinting at events that are to come.

Joining past and present is the "large dim looking glass" said to contain all the shapes ever reflected there in all their different ages

and aspects in The House of the Seven Gables. Even there, the curse hangs heavy upon the Pyncheons, for the Maules are able to conjure up in it pictures of the Pyncheons re-enacting their most sinful and unhappy moments. As rumor had it, the ghosts of dead Pyncheons oftentimes came out of the dim mirror and mingled with the shadows of the house, the symbols of their moral degeneracy. In fact, on the night of Jaffrey's death, the Colonel came through the magic mirror, "a thing of no substance," only shadow really, committing his old crime, but now with the wave of an ineffectual hand. Ineffectual because apparently Jaffrey is the last Pyncheon to actively prolong the family's evil tradition. The mirror, which represents the past in the house, which represents the past in the world, is an image of Hawthorne's imagination then, set in the past, capable of commenting on the past, but also capable of extending the fingers of the past into the present where they may icily clutch the lives of the remaining Pyncheons. Thus, Hawthorne shows the strong hold of ancient and continued corruption, which is, as he states it, the moral of the novel.

Past and present are again shown to be inextricably interwoven in The Scarlet Letter. There is the suggestion that the stream into which little Pearl gazes knows some mournful, unintelligible secrets from the past which it will only divulge to those who have secrets of their own. Ironically, Pearl herself contains a deep mystery, which ties her and the stream together, for as it retains in its turbid depths a picture of

long ago when two lovers probably met in that forest surrounding its banks, so it now reflects Pearl, the result of their union, a combination of joy and sorrow, suffering and redemption.

Unlike Emerson, who believed the new American man was an "endless seeker with no past at his back," Hawthorne apparently felt the past was imbued in a man's very life blood, impossible to remove. But the mirror of the imagination also reflects present scenes, which offer meaningful commentary on those involved in them. Endicott's polished breastplate in "Endicott and the Red Cross," shows a scene which includes the meeting house with a wolf's head nailed to its porch, suggesting the antithesis between the Puritan town and the wilderness, the whipping post, pillory, stocks, punitive machines of the iron rulers, the Wanton Gospeller, woman with a cleft stick on her tongue, and the wearer of the scarlet letter, all representative of the narrowness of this way of life and the rigid control exercised over the inhabitants of the community. Significantly, the breastplate is the center of Endicott, symbolic of his stern rigidity, and also the center of the surrounding scene, governed by a central authority characterized by an inexorable, unreasonable hardness. Related to Endicott's armor is that of Governor Bellingham, the convex surface of which enlarges Hester Prynne's scarlet letter beyond all proportion, indicative of the Puritan attitude toward sin.

More interesting, though, than the mirror's connection of

past with present and its reflections of present scenes is the inner being or spirit which it uncovers. Hawthorne's interest in this inner man ties him both with the Puritans, whose emphasis on introspection is well known, attested to by their many diaries, and to the modern concern of psychology with the unconscious. It seems generally agreed that every person has two worlds in which he lives -- the inner subjective one and the outer world of interplay with other human beings. Hawthorne, who was convinced that the first was the more real, lived much in an inner world, seeking and finally succeeding in "opening an intercourse with the world," because he realized the dangers of excessive contemplation. His image for that inner realm is often the mirror.

In The House of the Seven Gables, he says that the "looking glass . . . is always a kind of window or doorway into the spiritual world." Clifford, looking into Maule's Well, sees alternately sunny and smiling figures and the dark face, the lovely shapes, says Hawthorne, symbolic of Clifford's native character, and the dreadful ones symbolic of his fate. Here the well shows not only the inner state of Clifford, but also suggests his connection with the dark past, and still later will seem to prophesy the future. Unlike Clifford, however, is Phoebe who does not even see her own reflection in the well, but is struck by the beauty of the colored pebbles. Her inability to see the darkness indicates that the past has not influenced her, that she has no tragic dimension. Perhaps she has averted this darkness because there is

an element of non-Pyncheon blood in her.

At any rate, her opposite is Miriam in The Marble Faun, who has sounded the depths and is able to capture in her self portrait the darkness which hangs over her life. She has done such a good job that Donatello remarks, "the resemblance is as little to be mistaken as if you had bent over the smooth surface of a fountain, and possessed the witchcraft to call forth the image that you made there" (VI, 66)! Yet, he wants to ignore this aspect of Miriam, preferring that her gracious smile shine forth from the portrait and enhance her heavenly beauty. That darkness which Donatello dislikes is eventually to pervade his entire being, changing his life to such a degree that it will take a completely different direction.

Giovanni Guasconti in "Rappaccini's Daughter" would also like to ignore the darkness which is part of his loved one. Beatrice's unearthly loveliness is symbolized by the purple shrub reflected in the waters of the ruined fountain. The marble fountain in the garden with its waters gushing upward suggests her pure soul with its redemptive qualities, the shattered base, her physical being, both of which are mingled in the shrub. To have Beatrice, Giovanni must take the combination. His own moral state is suggested when he admires himself in his mirror, which is parallel symbolically to the reflection of the shrub in the fountain. This act indicates Giovanni's lack of insight because, although he is looking into the mirror which for Hawthorne is

"the window of the spirit," he can go away pleased with the view, enraptured by self love. He has not seen what Beatrice later does -- that there is more poison in him than in her. Although she is physically poisonous, it is still possible that reflected deep within is an infinite Heaven. Hawthorne believed that this was possible even in a human breast which appeared least spiritual in some aspects.

By contrast, however, Dimmesdale, who outwardly appears most spiritual, hides an infinite Hell within. His is a case in point with reference to Hawthorne's attitude that the inner life or spirit may be more real than the objective life, for the only thing which gives Dimmesdale a real existence on this earth is the anguish in his inmost soul. This anguish could possibly be seen in the looking-glass with the strong light over it into which Dimmesdale peers, seeking some sort of relief through forcing himself to view the blackness of his own heart. Walking in a daze most of the time, Dimmesdale suffers continuously for a sin he could not bring himself to confess, at least to other mortals. The only relief he felt before his revelation at the end was when he met Hester in the forest, for this was the only time that he was ever true, with the exception of his mirror-gazing moments. When he faced the one who shared his guilt, after all, there was not really much choice. Nor had Hester been true either, for she did not recognize her guilt or warn Dimmesdale before he had suffered irreparable damage. But, confess it or not, Hester did not escape the sight of the guilt which

peered at her in the form of a fiend-like face in the small, black mirror of Pearl's eyes. Nor did Chillingworth avoid seeing his own spiritual condition, a revelation which came after he spoke to Hester. He was said to have lifted his hands in horror as if he had seen a frightful shape usurping his own image in a glass. Having become diabolized through taking on the devil's work, Chillingworth experiences one of those moments when Hawthorne says a man's moral aspect is revealed to his mind's eye. Thus, in Hawthorne we see the mirror of introspection which for better or for worse, usually the latter, gives people a view of their moral states. The mirror, like the artist, can also detect the discrepancy between appearance and reality.

Feathertop, the witch's creation, proudly marches into town, smoking his pipe, presuming to court Polly Gookin, daughter of a fine man, only to be thwarted by his reflection in the mirror, which event is foreshadowed by the reactions of the child and the dog to the scarecrow. Dr. Heidegger's mirror, too, shows things as they really are as it reflects the ridiculous figures of the old, gray, withered people dancing around because they seem to have become young again after having drunk the magic elixir. If Jaffrey Pyncheon had looked into the old mirror in the house of the seven gables, perhaps he would have seen reflected there a half-decayed corpse, notwithstanding the fact that as an inhabitant of the outer world, the street, he is accepted on the basis of such external qualities as dress, bearing, and sunny smile.

In addition to its function as the mirror of introspection, this image is used by Hawthorne as a means of foreshadowing or prophesying the future. Leaning over a basin, Miriam in The Marble Faun sees reflected there three shapes, black as if drowned together. These images are Miriam, Donatello, and the evil model, described as the "shapeless mass, as indistinct as a premonition of calamity." Of course, the scene is precisely that, a premonition of calamity, for all three are drowned together in the sense that there is no happiness possible for Miriam and Donatello after Donatello has murdered the Capuchin, and the calamity predicted will involve the three shadows cast in the basin. Maule's Well, on the other hand, forecasts a more pleasant future. Formerly filled with visions of the past, at the end of the novel, it "was throwing up a succession of kaleidoscopic pictures, in which a gifted eye might have seen foreshadowed the coming fortunes of Hepzibah and Clifford, the descendant of the legendary wizard, and the village maiden, over whom he had thrown Love's web of sorcery" (III, 377).

In his introduction to the "Mosses," Hawthorne remarks that "genius indeed melts many ages into one," words which may well serve as a commentary on his own work, for he has united past, present, and future in the use of this reflector imagery to represent all three, in addition to using a figure which is meaningful to the modern sensibility because of its recognition of the inner life or unconscious. Hawthorne's

emphasis is always on the necessity of balance between inner and outer. Having both insight and outlook will avoid such states as paralyzed Roderick Elliston in "Egotism" who, after looking into a mirror for days with his mouth open to see whether he can get a glimpse of the snake down his throat, admits it is his "diseased self contemplation" which "has engendered and nourished the serpent."

The mirror of Hawthorne's imagination was capable of extending itself even further to include still another myth -- that of Faust. The central fact of the Faust legend is, of course, the bargain with the devil; in exchange for one's soul, he will provide any request, usually for power, pleasure, riches, or knowledge. Except for a few, most of Hawthorne's Faustian characters think they are doing the right thing, but their desire for knowledge beyond the limits of human power often results in dabbling in magic and finally in an almost unconscious pact with a satanic agent, unconscious because we do not actually see them sign their names in blood in the Black Man's book, and they usually do not remember such an incident. But it suddenly occurs to them that the pact has been made just as surely as if it had physically taken place. For Hawthorne, the volition to evil is a sufficient condition of bondage, so a formal contract is not necessary.

One way of making the alliance with the devil is to become transfixed by a vision of evil which blinds one to all good. Hatred of evil is not abhorrent to God, but when it becomes obsessive, when the

victim can no longer see sin, evil, and imperfection in their true relation to eternity, then he is going away from heaven. This results in a sort of monomania, being consumed by one ruling passion. The desire to accomplish some great single purpose may isolate these people from others and drive them to destruction. Ethan Brand is absorbed in searching for the unpardonable sin, while Parson Hooper insists on punishing secret sin by wearing the black veil. Young Goodman Brown lives in a permanent gloom after having been unable to accept the duality of human experience, which contains both good and evil elements. Roderick in "Egotism," having the snake within him, sees nothing but evil in the bosoms of others.

Another way to come under the black man's power is to seek knowledge beyond human bounds. Hawthorne's scientists, who seem to be most guilty in this respect, seek to conquer nature, removing themselves from her laws and operating on the basis of their own. Recognizing no boundaries, they do more harm than good, like Aylmer and Rappaccini. Violation of the human heart may follow as in the cases of Westervelt and Chillingworth as they pass over into the realm of God's prerogatives, Westervelt in connection with exerting his will over Priscilla, and Chillingworth in his delving into the secrets of Dimmesdale's heart. Hawthorne believed no man had the right to uncover the interior of another man's heart for the mere purpose of studying it or revealing its secrets.

In general, then, these Faustian characters seem to have common characteristics. First, the intellect triumphs over the heart, resulting in a monomania or all-consuming passion. This monomania takes different forms. Ethan Brand searches for the unpardonable sin itself; Chillingworth seeks revenge; Aylmer experiences "the tyrannizing influence acquired by one idea over his mind." Rappaccini would sacrifice anything for a small bit of knowledge. Roderick Elliston seeks out the vilest sins of his fellows. And, Hollingsworth's "overruling purpose" is his vast scheme for reformation of the wicked.

Another similar trait is pride. Zenobia accuses Hollingsworth of "all self." He has never done anything unselfish in her estimation. Ethan Brand is characterized by a "pride that distinguishes all enthusiasts of his stamp." Roderick's snake is "'the symbol of a monstrous egotism to which everything was referred, and which he pampered, night and day." Rappaccini is proud of his experiment with Beatrice and Giovanni. Aylmer speaks in "glowing language of the resources of his art." The source of Chillingworth's revenge in part is his wounded pride.

This pride isolates the sinner from other human sympathies. He may then look at others only from the standpoint of cold analysis, that is, viewing other human beings only as they relate to his self-centered interests. Hawthorne's American Note-Books contain the following passage:

> The Unpardonable Sin might consist in a want
> of love and reverence for the Human Soul; in

> consequence of which, the investigator pried into its dark depths, not with a hope or purpose of making it better, but from a cold philosophical curiosity, -- content that it should be wicked in whatever kind or degree, and only desiring to study it out. Would not this, in other words, be the separation of the intellect from the heart? [4]

According to Hawthorne, only a balanced combination of the two can result in an integrated human personality.

To make a pact with the devil is to want to be like God, a desire which can lead only to suffering a hell on earth. A Satanic representative does not lead Hawthorne's characters off to the bottomless pit; they create their own city of darkness and are condemned to live in it until released by death.

The Pygmalion Myth as Hawthorne uses it suggests an organic approach to art. According to the organic theory, the work comes to life beneath the artist's hand rather than being merely pieced together mechanically to fit a predetermined form. It was believed that the form was innate, that it would emerge if the artist was capable of allowing it to do so. As Hawthorne described it in his American Note-Books, organic development is what we see in Nature, which works from the "innermost germ." Using this particular myth to suggest the organic concept is quite effective since most people are aware of the story of Pygmalion, the gifted young Greek sculptor who created a perfect woman, fell in love with his statue, and eventually moved the goddess Venus to bring it to life. In the original myth, a miracle was performed

by a goddess; as adapted by Hawthorne, it becomes a metaphor for artistic creation as did the Narcissus story. Choosing a quite familiar myth, but one from the past, enabled Hawthorne to achieve utmost decrease of distance without its disappearance.

When the creative artist begins his work, he must first discover the innate idea, the thought or germ which first sets his powers into operation; in other words, he must look beneath the exterior for the meaning to be expressed. This first step may be thought of as being inextricably tied up with inspiration. The second, helping that meaning emerge, is impossible without the first. Through his imagination, he perceives the ideal, which is the innate reality and truth of things, then endows this world with life, unity, and meaning; basically, he brings mind and matter together here. If he successfully copies nature's method of working from the innermost germ, the life of the work, its structure and shape will coincide with its basic idea or the thought which inspired it.

Drowne apparently is unable to achieve this kind of work until Captain Hunnewell commissions him to make a figurehead for his ship, the Cynosure. Having had no ability up to that time to create human figures with native warmth, Drowne suddenly is capable of portraying life so vividly that there is some suspicion that he is in league with the devil and has somehow brought a wooden figure to life. Even the famous painter, Copley, is impressed with Drowne's creation, so much so that

he says, "Who would have looked for a modern Pygmalion in the person of a Yankee mechanic"(II, 353)! Drowne apparently for the first and last time was able to give himself up to his materials and allow some higher force to work through him; the figure was in that block of wood, he said, and it was merely his business to find it.

The idea of artistic creation without foreknowledge is again emphasized in "The Snow Image," where two young children make a snow child for a playmate. Hawthorne says it seemed to "grow up under their hands." Artists in general are exhorted to take a hint from these children, who work in a simple and undoubting frame of mind, unaware that a miracle is occurring. Note the organic names of the two children, associating them with flowers.

An example might again be taken from nature. The great stone face, in the story of the same name, has qualities which some human faces lack, like the "grand expression of a divine sympathy, that illuminated the mountain visage and etherealized its ponderous granite substance into spirit." A human being who wishes his face to resemble this one must first discover the qualities which would lie behind such an expression, such as dignity, grace, and kindness and then strive to develop them in his own life. The great stone face is not duplicated by Mr. Gathergold, "Old Blood and Thunder," or the Poet, but by Ernest, who grasped the essential qualities it shadowed forth and developed these in his own life. The outer shape of a man,

like a work of art, grows from what is inside. Ernest allowed the higher force of character to work through him and inform his outer being. Hawthorne believed the artist achieved the crowning glory only when he was conscious of a power "higher and wiser than himself, making him its instrument."

Miriam, in The Marble Faun, concerning Kenyon's statue of Cleopatra, asks whether she ever tried to overcome Kenyon with her fury or her love, and whether he was not afraid to touch her as she grew towards hot life beneath his hand. Kenyon's reply affirms the organic concept revealed in Miriam's words and also connects the Pygmalion Myth with Hawthorne's metaphor of fire, when he says "I kindled a great fire within my mind and threw in the material . . . and in the midmost heat uprose Cleopatra, as you see her" (VI, 154). Hawthorne, who disagreed with Emerson's view that a flowing out described artistic creation, believed rather that pain, pressure, and the fiery crucible more aptly suggested the process.

In addition to its use as a metaphor for artistic creation, the Pygmalion Myth is used to show a coming to life. Life can be gained in three ways, through love, through agony, and through art.

In connection with the first, Hawthorne believed that love awakened people to life. "Indeed we are but shadows; we are not endowed with real life, all that seems most real about us is but the thinnest substance of a dream, -- till the heart be touched."[5] Perhaps

this is what happens to Priscilla, the veiled lady in The Blithedale Romance, who throws off the covering and comes to life through Hollingsworth's intervention. "And the true heartthrob of a woman's affection was too powerful for the jugglery that had hitherto environed her." Priscilla flees to Hollingsworth "like one escaping from her deadliest enemy, and was safe forever." Miriam, too, in The Marble Faun, when Kenyon tells her that Donatello loves her, seems to be enlivened. A "cold, unnatural indifference of her manner, a kind of frozen passionateness" disappears. Donatello's love seems to be the humanizing, life-giving touch which results in a warming of her whole appearance.

A coming to life through agony presents another facet of the Pygmalion idea, if we think of passing from innocence characterized by ignorance and inexperience as an enlivening process. Early in The Marble Faun the point is made that Donatello is the Faun of Praxiteles, a marble image of a young man, which represents the innocence which marked the age of Rome when Praxiteles worked. His innocence is not to last, however, and after the crime the youth is nearly overwhelmed by the blackness of human evil, his own especially. But, with Kenyon's help, "the world of thought is disclosing itself to his inward sight. Out of his bitter agony, a soul and intellect . . . have been inspired into him" (VI, 325, 326). The injection of soul and intellect is to Hawthorne one way of bestowing life.

Art also vitalizes. Pearl, in The Scarlet Letter, is called the "living hieroglyphic in which was revealed the secret they so darkly sought to hide, -- all written in this symbol, -- all plainly manifest, -- had there been a prophet or magician skilled to read the character of flame! And Pearl was the oneness of their being" (V, 248). If Hester may be taken to represent the flesh and Dimmesdale the spirit which must come together in a work of art, then Pearl represents that fusion. The artist offers his "living hieroglyphic."

Warland's work of art in "The Artist of the Beautiful" happens to be a butterfly. His goal is to attain the ideal which Nature "has purposed to herself in all her creatures, but has never taken pains to realize." After nearly a lifetime of labor, Warland achieves his goal with a butterfly that looks so real that Annie asks him if it is alive. Owen replies that this creature has absorbed his own life, his very being, and represents "the intellect, the imagination, the sensibility, the soul of an Artist of the Beautiful!"

In Hawthorne's Note-Books we find germs for various stories which indicate that he worked outward from an innate thought or idea, clothing it with symbol as vehicle, and developing it through introspective analysis. As Austin Warren has said, the tale Hawthorne writes terminates in the enforcement of the text with which its author began.[6] This working from the innermost germ is basic organic theory, connecting nature and art. Art's ultimate goal is like Warland's, to be

"natural, yet superior to nature, in that it embodies Nature's essence."[7]

Hawthorne's attitude here is his characteristic balanced one. With Carlyle, he felt that progress could only be made by an adjustment between the organic and mechanical. Maintained separately, one would result in "idle visions" and the other in "pernicious materialism."[8] We have something like the "neutral ground" then even in his attitude toward the form a work should take.

Like his adaptations of the other myths, Hawthorne uses variations on the Adam and Eve story, not mere repetitions of it, to present his theology. His Garden of Eden, characterized by time and imperfection, belongs to the present world, one that is already fallen. The characters who find themselves in this world may accept it and fall into humanity, or reject it and fall into inhumanity. The fall is not theological, but psychological. To accept this ambiguous world is to become involved with others; to reject it is to stand alone, separated from the "magnetic chain of humanity." The choices are temporal and the fall internal. Apparently, the fall to Hawthorne is a trope or myth for a universal human circumstance, the profound psychological complex of experience and knowledge that leads to maturity of mind and heart.

Roy R. Male, in Hawthorne's Tragic Vision, has suggested that for Hawthorne love between man and woman is the Original Sin. The woman, who represents time and heart, breaks the parental bond when she becomes interested in the man, who represents space and

head. He, stricken in the heart through love for the woman, also breaks the parental bond, which may be seen as the divine parental bond. They come together because of their mutual weaknesses and, in combination, represent the only union which is productive of anything. When their union is consummated, they are thrust like Edith and Edgar in "The Maypole of Merry Mount" from the Eden of innocence and simplicity to "earth's care and sorrow" and complexity. But the balance of head and heart which comes about means a balance of intellect and ego with human sympathy and love. Both thus reach the fullest potential of their beings through their union. Love, which is the cause of this fall, is also its forgiveness because interest in providing for the happiness of another breaks the narcissistic shell and paves the way for the kind of self happiness Roderick Elliston gains when he becomes concerned about Rosina's happiness.

The key moment in life appears to be when the Original Sin is committed. The protagonist in the fall stories has just fallen in love, is soon to be married or has just recently been married. He either accepts the woman, an ambiguous mixture of good and evil, sin and redemption, representative of the very mystery of life itself, associates himself with time, or wanders endlessly in space, lost, sterile, not really alive at all. Hawthorne's characters may be divided into three groups: those who commit the Original Sin and accept the conditions of their fallen world; those who refuse to accept the ambiguity

and mystery of life, which results in sterility and death; and those who side-step the issue entirely.

Those who do fall must accept the full responsibility for their love. Edith and Edgar, residents of the Eden-like Merry Mount, are not really driven out by Endicott but rather provided with a more suitable home for their future estate. When they have committed the Original Sin, falling in love, they must leave Eden. As Endicott calls for more decent garments, we are reminded of Adam and Eve's suddenly becoming aware of their nakedness and putting on clothes.

A rather different setting from Merry Mount but likened constantly to Eden nevertheless is that in The House of the Seven Gables. Like the children of Adam being condemned for his sin, so are the members of the Pyncheon family made to suffer for the deeds of their progenitor, Colonel Pyncheon. Against the background of the garden, called "an Eden subtly tainted, in which grows a blighted white rose bush, which could have been "brought from Eden that very summer," we see the characters, Phoebe and Holgrave, about to fall in love, and Clifford, who sits in what Hawthorne further describes as the "Eden of a thundersmitten Adam, who had fled for refuge thither out of the same dreary and perilous wilderness into which the original Adam was expelled."

Phoebe and Holgrave in the garden are reminiscent of Adam and Eve. Holgrave says the world looks beautiful to him, and if he

could maintain his mood, the house "would be like a bower in Eden."
Phoebe, who works like one of God's angels, is, like Eve, a representative of womankind, lovely and innocent. In strong contrast to Hepzibah and Clifford, whose hour has now long been past, Phoebe and Holgrave are about to commit Hawthorne's Original Sin. In the chapter entitled "The Flower of Eden" Hawthorne says a miracle took place, that Phoebe and Holgrave, in professing their love for each other "transfigured the earth and made it Eden again, and themselves the two first dwellers in it."

Other references to the Adam and Eve myth are found in The Marble Faun, where Hawthorne shows his attitude toward the fortunate fall, fortunate if growth takes place, and the part sin and suffering play in moral growth. Donatello, an "Arcadian simpleton" against the massive age represented by Rome, is innocence personified. This simple, natural creature is to meet Miriam at the Villa Borghese, a place where the ruins suggest decay and death, although it is also quite a beautiful place. Hawthorne says "thus the scene is like Eden in its loveliness; like Eden, too, in the fatal spell that removes it beyond the scope of man's actual possessions" (VI, 93). Donatello is connected to the past by his resemblance to the faun of Praxiteles and also by his connection with Adam suggested by his close affinity to nature, i.e., Adam in the Garden of Eden. Like his ancestors, Donatello is "blissful by an unsought harmony with nature," the same kind of happy harmony Adam knew

before the fall when he was in his proper hierarchical place. But Adam would not grow or change in any way; his state of innocence and ignorance would remain constant.

Donatello, after his crime, enters the true reality which, for Hawthorne, is measured by time. If "golden youth" is to mature, it must realize itself under the impact and engagement with evil whereby the soul is transformed from innocence to conscience. Donatello must be drawn from an unthinking animal existence into thoughtful human life. Hawthorne describes his view through Kenyon who, like an "adventurer who should find his way to the sight of ancient Eden, beholds its loveliness through the transparency of that gloom which has been brooding over those haunts of innocence ever since the fall. Adam saw it in a brighter sunshine but never knew the shade of pensive beauty which Eden won from his expulsion" (VI, 319). Hawthorne is suggesting that something is gained through the fall, although such gains are not guaranteed.

Kenyon, too, learns something from his experiences. Preceding his reconciliation with Hilda, he passes through a carnival in which the celebrants make "the worn-out world itself as fresh as Adam found it on his first forenoon in Paradise." There he is assaulted by a seven-foot tall female, a "giant Eve," who makes a "ponderous assault on his heart." Failing to move him, she shoots him in the heart with a pop gun, covering him with a "cloud of limedust." This

symbolically represents Adam's fall through his heart, or love for Eve. Kenyon is now reduced to human clay and in a position to understand Miriam's suggestion that the fall is an educative process. It is significant that he can even ask Hilda, although she rejects the possibility, "Did Adam fall, that we might ultimately rise to a far loftier paradise than his" (VI, 519)? Donatello thus for Hawthorne becomes "an emblem of a moral problem and his history a mythic restatement of the Fall of Man."[9]

Those who are unable to accept the ambiguity or mystery of life, which means accepting the consequences of the Original Sin as Hawthorne saw it, become frustrated, miserable creatures. Young Goodman Brown is engulfed by the vision of evil which he saw in the forest and refuses to accept sin as a common denominator for all humanity. He is like Giovanni in "Rappaccini's Daughter," who refuses to accept the "Eden of the present world," although it contains the beautiful, almost angelic Beatrice.

Finally, there are those who avoid committing the Original Sin entirely. Zenobia, in The Blithedale Romance, is connected with Eve by her freshness and vitality but despises her female role. Part of her bitterness is attributable to an unsuccessful marriage with the Satan-like Westervelt, with his coal-black mustache, dark sparkling eyes and gold-banded false teeth. In a kind of perversion of normal roles, Aylmer in "The Birthmark" becomes feminine when he decorates

the boudoir in preparation for the operation while Georgiana behaves in a masculine way when she seeks Aylmer's knowledge in the record books of his experiments. Hester Prynne, too, perverts her natural role by binding her luxurious, beautiful hair under a tight-fitting cap and by engaging in mental speculation usually associated with the male. The emphasis of her life is on "head," while Dimmesdale becomes concerned with the feminine characteristic of heart. They both refuse to accept the consequences of their act, although both do penance in a way, Hester outwardly although insincerely, and Dimmesdale inwardly. Nevertheless, they produced Pearl, who was "worthy to have been brought forth in Eden." She exists because of the Original Sin, the price paid to bring anything into being. Connecting Hester and Dimmesdale with Adam and Eve is the fact that "A" in the New England Primer stood for Adam's fall and the beginning of all things, not specifically adultery. The serpent of their experience is Chillingworth who is like Milton's envious Satan, observing the love of Adam and Eve in the Garden, "imparadised in one another's arms, he was stirred up with envy and revenge" Chillingworth's joy at Dimmesdale's guilt, says Hawthorne, is like that which Satan must feel when a soul is lost.

It appears that Hawthorne felt man should accept life's mysterious paradoxes, acknowledge sin as the common lot of all, love God and his fellow men. This ambiguity of life is seen especially in the women characters. Edith's "mystery" parallels Beatrice Rappaccini's

"poison," Georgiana's "birthmark," Faith's "ribbons," and Miriam's "secret." Only a few are able to accept this ambiguity and maintain their wholeness.

Artistic creation is again suggested here in that Original Sin seems to be all tied up with producing anything. It may precede the coming together of vision and word. The ruin which sin and suffering may leave does not appear to be detrimental to the artist. Kenyon mentions the pensive beauty Eden gained through Adam's expulsion. Perhaps this explains what is at the heart of Hawthorne's tragic vision, which so fascinated Melville. "To the eye of the artist, the color of time was very much richer than the blankness of the original sunshine."[10]

Through his deep perception of human nature, Hawthorne was able to achieve insights into universal psychological and moral truths. Myth provided him with a substructure upon which he built his literary narrative, with the result that his best work may be interpreted on many different levels. Thus, we find in his use of myth expressions of those essential and enduring truths which lend meaning to all time. Jung says that each mythic image "contains a piece of human psychology and human destiny," words which describe Hawthorne's accomplishment in connection with mythology. Randall Stewart says Hawthorne probes to the "deepest realities of the mind and spirit," and that "his meanings possess a certain timelessness which carried with it a prophetic sense of the ages to follow."[11] If these psychological truths found in Haw-

thorne's works are indeed timeless, they should have meaning today.

The Narcissian mirror of introspection suggests the weak and inadequate but continuing attempts men make at self analysis. Emerson's self-reliant man, whose motto is "Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string," has been replaced by the uncertain modern man seeking self knowledge. Psychoanalysis, like building a stereo or barbecue pit, is a do-it-yourself project. Freud brought to attention and established scientifically what Hawthorne suggests when he says the life of the spirit may be more real than the outward life.

What Hawthorne's characters see when they pierce the depths seems very like what we now recognize as repressed disturbances in the unconscious mind. According to modern psychiatric pronouncements, bringing these destructive elements to the surface is the first step in arresting their further development, although minute, overzealous self-examination may result in morbidity.

Brooding interminably over real or imagined evil may ultimately result in a strange unbalanced personality, a psychological problem which is emphasized in Hawthorne's use of the Faust Myth. Ethan Brand, discovering the Unpardonable Sin within his own breast, is crushed by the knowledge; Young Goodman Brown, wedded to a vision of evil, belongs to Satan as surely as if a contract had been signed in blood. So, introspection, although valuable to a certain extent, may be carried too far with disastrous results.

A balance may be achieved by recognizing that imperfection characterizes the human condition, but that fulfillment may be attained in this life nevertheless. W. B. Stein has suggested that the acquiring of insight is when a man realizes he is not a demon or a god but a meaningful entity unto himself.[12] This recognition of his own proper sphere of being means finding the "germ" from which a life may flower. Hawthorne's treatment of the Pygmalion Myth suggests this essentially organic existence. As the artist attempts to unite the inner meaning with the outer form, so must a man achieve harmony between intellect and heart, thought and feeling, being and everyday life to achieve an integrated personality. The fragments of his experience must somehow be united into a meaningful whole without distortion, the result being life itself lived as an art.

Remaining within the magnetic chain of humanity closely bound by ties of human sympathy protects people from falling into the individualism which leads to pride and isolation. Love is a stabilizing, balancing element, for it breaks the narcissistic shell of self contemplation and turns attention toward providing for the happiness of another. The Adam and Eve Myth suggests this coming together of opposites, complete only when joined. Summing up the overall current value of Hawthorne's work, Randall Stewart says, "Hawthorne's 'moral' comprehends the Christian doctrine of charity, the psychological doctrine of participation, the social doctrine of the democratic way."[13]

In addition to Hawthorne's use of myths to present the deeper meanings of the human psyche, we find them interesting and significant as metaphors for certain phases of the artistic process. The Narcissus idea of looking beneath the exterior suggests exactly what the artist does in that meaning for him lies under the mere superficialities of life. Once he has found that innermost germ from which a story may grow, Pygmalion-like, the artist brings it to life, taking care lest he thwart its development. When these two steps have been taken, there remains one other. The central occasion in stories involving the Adam and Eve Myth is commission of the Original Sin, through which those involved are thrust into the world of time, sin and suffering. The fertility which results, the possible birth of a child, is comparable to the artist's creation, his literary work, neither of which can be produced without passing through this dark night.

Hawthorne, whose most creative moments came as he sat before a fireplace which cast a strange glow over the entire room, felt that artistic creation was painful. The artist broods over his idea or "germ," finally passing it through the fiery crucible of his imagination, at which time it may emerge beautiful and full of meaning, or like a child, even after much labor, be stillborn. This, I think, is what he means throughout his work whenever he suggests that the descent into darkness is necessary for growth and production, but that nothing is guaranteed.

The key idea throughout all of Hawthorne's philosophy is balance. Every man's life is bombarded with various ideas, influenced by natural and man-made forces from without and negative emotions like fear, anger, and hate from within. He must somehow keep open an intercourse with a world which is materially oriented while maintaining his personal integrity. In addition, he must strive for independence without isolation. Going too far in any one direction may result in disaster. For the artist, whose initial function is observation, crossing the line means falling into cold analysis, using human beings in a merely experimental way. This going beyond the bounds set for human beings is symbolized by Hawthorne's use of the Faust Myth.

Hawthorne raises to a higher power the four myths he adapts by giving them new life and fresh meaning. He has certainly "come at" the "inner life of the legends" by making them entirely his own property, and, through their universal applicability, part of our store of wisdom as well as an important element in our literary heritage. His own achievement is best described by his definition of genius as that which "melts many ages into one, and thus effects something permanent."

FOOTNOTES

[1]Richard Chase, "Myth as Literature," English Institute Essays (New York, 1948), 3-22.

[2]Roy R. Male, Jr., unpublished manuscript.

[3]Male, Hawthorne's Tragic Vision.

[4]Randall Stewart, ed., The American Note-Books by Nathaniel Hawthorne (New Haven, 1932), 106.

[5]Austin Warran, Nathaniel Hawthorne: Representative Selections, xvi.

[6]Ibid., lxv.

[7]Fogle, Hawthorne's Fiction, 78.

[8]Male, Hawthorne's Tragic Vision, 24.

[9]Roy R. Male, Jr.' "'From the Innermost Germ': The Organic Principle in Hawthorne's Fiction," Journal of English Literary History, XX (September, 1953), 235.

[10]R.W.B. Lewis, The American Adam (Chicago, 1955), 126.

[11]Randall Stewart, Nathaniel Hawthorne, a biography (New Haven, 1948), 242.

[12]Stein, _Hawthorne's Faust_, 9.

[13]Stewart, _Nathaniel Hawthorne, a biography_, 259.

CHAPTER IV

PERSPECTIVE

Thus far, we have concerned ourselves primarily with distance and perspective from the standpoint of the artist and his work. Examples have been given in connection with the manner in which Hawthorne uses temporal, spatial, psychic, and mythological distance in order to achieve the universal. But perspective is important in yet another way in Hawthorne's work. The loss of balance or perspective can be fatal to an artist because the work will simply fail. It can also be fatal to an individual who is trying to make a success of his life.

Hawthorne was deeply interested in the balanced life. This becomes quite apparent when one considers the many characters in his fiction who are imbalanced in some way. Many of them, some of whom are artist figures, are destroyed or destroy others because they lose perspective. There are so many examples of such losses that one wonders whether Hawthorne was not almost obsessed with people Sherwood Anderson would describe as "grotesques."

The opening sketch of Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio, called the "Book of the Grotesque," contains a passage we might take as a

commentary on some of Hawthorne's themes:

> That in the beginning when the world was young there were a great many thoughts but no such thing as a truth. Man made the truths himself and each truth was a composite of a great many vague thoughts. All about in the world were the truths and they were all beautiful.
>
> And then the people came along. Each as he appeared snatched up one of the truths and some who were quite strong snatched up a dozen of them.
>
> It was the truths that made the people grotesques . . . the moment one of the people took one of the truths to himself, called it his truth, and tried to live his life by it, he became a grotesque and the truth he embraced became a falsehood.

Anderson seems to be saying that in the beginning all aspects of life formed one beautiful, harmonious, unified whole. But when man attempts to fix life in terms of a black-white morality, to make goodness and evil an "either/or" proposition, to define value in terms of one rigid, narrow and limited ideal, then the harmony is disturbed, the ideal itself is perverted, and life for such an individual becomes, instead of a unified, beautiful, harmonious whole, an ugly grotesque dichotomy of conflicting and opposing impulses, sustained by the tension between "either/or."

In "Young Goodman Brown" the ceremony in the forest is an evil counterpart to the marriage of Faith and Brown three months earlier in the Puritan church, under the opposite aspect of innocence.

To achieve a harmonious vision of experience, Brown must also be able to marry Faith under the aspect of evil; that is, he must reconcile the ideal of virtue and goodness that Faith stands for with the reality of evil. For Brown's marriage to be complete, it must go through two stages, and the continuity of his married state from one world to the other (from Salem to the forest -- from good to evil) would, if in fact successful in establishing itself, be the unifying cord which might reconcile the conflicting forces of experience -- of good and evil -- into one harmoniously oriented universe. In this way could the ideal of Faith, of goodness, be made to exist within the reality of the world of evil, thus forming a total, complete view of Man's whole experience and nature.

But the world of the forest, of evil, is unyielding and inevitable in human life -- it is Faith who must struggle for existence lest she die. Brown must be responsible for saving the identity of Faith without splitting her apart from the witches' communion, but he is the one who urges her to make that break. What he is essentially asking her to do is to split herself apart from the brotherhood of mankind. We can thus see Hawthorne's central irony, which lies in the idea that the world of Salem village, of day and light, is really the "dream" -- in the sense of being the substance of an ideal vision of goodness for Brown -- and that the world of the forest, of witches and night, is really the concrete reality, as Brown is told at the witches' ceremony.

The second stage of Brown's marriage would thus represent the planting of his ideal in the real world, there to take roots, grow, and provide the invisible fruits of sympathy and compassion, which Brown's fellow men so desperately need in the real world of evil. But Brown's words to Faith to look up to heaven and resist the evil one represents his refusal to let go of his "either-or" conception of experience. He insists on opposing his ideal to the world of suffering humanity, instead of fixing it in sympathy with this human world. This narrowing of "truth" down to a rigid, uncompromising ideal, cutting off recognition of the real world of evil as being a valid object for compassionate thoughts and acts, thus limits Brown's understanding of the evil nature in all men. This limitation perverts his ideal, making of this narrow "half-truth" an ugly falsehood, and making Goodman Brown a gloomy, meditative "grotesque."

Brown's grotesqueness is manifest in the denial of sympathy and understanding to his fellow sufferers in sin, which his "either-or" conception of truth forces on him. This denial of sympathy and understanding is revealed in Brown's manner toward the people of Salem and also toward his wife (whom he has failed to marry completely), upon his return from the forest at dawn. It is also revealed in his fear for the lives of the congregation whenever they participate in worship service, or for the life of the minister himself, for these good people are performing what is to Brown an act of blasphemy.

Like his counterpart, Brown, who is overwhelmed by the vision of evil which overcame him that one night in the forest, Aylmer is obsessed with and haunted by a tiny red hand, a rather insignificant birthmark on his wife's cheek. Aylmer, called by Fogle artist, idealist, God, and unwitting devil, refuses to accept the best earth can offer. Seeking, again like Brown, in time the perfection which can only be found outside of it, Aylmer tries to conform matter to ideal. In doing so, he destroys the matter altogether. His, too, is an "either-or" conception of truth. For it is only his lack of perspective which makes the birthmark such an odious thing. Hawthorne says some thought the mark made Georgiana even more beautiful because it lent an air of mystery to her appearance. "It must not be concealed, however, that the impression wrought by this fairy sign manual varied exceedingly, according to the difference of temperament in the beholders" (II, 49). Aylmer, too, does not marry completely, for he refuses to accept the ambiguity of good and evil suggested by that one tiny flaw in Georgiana's otherwise perfect beauty. Given the choice, he, like Brown, chose to see the darkness of human existence and to try to eliminate it rather than learn to live with it.

Apparently wanting or needing a material objectification of his gloomy point of view, Parson Hooper in "The Minister's Black Veil" dons the murky veil which gives a "darkened aspect to all living and inanimate things." It symbolizes an overdeveloped conscience which

prevents normal interaction with society, or perhaps a kind of psychological repression which somehow needs a parallel outward manifestation. Allowing himself the privilege denied to Hester Prynne of hiding his face in shame, Hooper puts himself beyond the pale of all human sympathies, including the love of his fiancee. Some unspeakable darkness has overwhelmed his life so completely that even love cannot reach him. He refuses to explain his weird actions to Elizabeth, yet pleads with her not to desert him, though the veil must remain while they are on earth. His arguments that it is not for eternity are of no avail to Elizabeth who understandably refuses to marry a man who has placed such a barrier between them.

Interestingly, Hooper becomes a more effective preacher in some ways because of the awe-inspiring mask. But it is quite apparent that he has lost all sense of proportion when he insists on wearing the veil to a wedding. Although all men may be linked in evil in some way, it has the effect of driving him further into isolation. It is remarked that Hooper was always amenable to criticism, but that now everybody feared broaching the subject of the black veil, as though his loss of perspective has made him a fearful object.

Fearful too, but mostly to himself, is Giovanni in "Rappaccini's Daughter," who suddenly realizes that his contact with Beatrice has somehow mysteriously infused him with poison. Apparently rather dense, Giovanni, who watches Beatrice in the strange garden from his room

with a view, does not surmise what is going on when he sees the flowers he gave Beatrice die when she touches them, or when the lizard dies from the moisture which drips from the stem of the purple flower. Hawthorne suggests Giovanni is thrown off the track by the fact that things which seem strange at night somehow look different the next morning in the sunlight. At any rate, when Giovanni realizes the truth, he is both astonished and resentful, but quite willing to help remove the poison from Beatrice. Thinking he is quite the hero, Giovanni offers the antidote to Beatrice, whose dual nature is symbolized by the ruined fountain from which water gushes. He is attempting to do exactly what Aylmer had in mind -- that is, to perfect matter, raise it to the level of the ideal -- and the result is the same. It may be that Beatrice is purged of the poison, which symbolizes that same ambiguity of good and evil which Brown could not accept, but she dies in the process, accusing Giovanni of having more poison in him than she. Giovanni insisted on invading the "Eden of the present world," ruled over by Rappaccini, but refused to recognize that that world was a fallen one.

Hilda, in The Marble Faun, tries at first to ignore that same fact -- that it is possible for good and evil to exist side by side in the human heart, and that at least this side of eternity, it cannot be otherwise. Her dwelling place, the dovecote, is high above the street, symbolic of her aloofness from human suffering and sympathies. Kenyon states "you need no mercy, and therefore know not how to show

any." In her narrow-minded, Puritanical opinion, Miriam's sin has darkened the whole universe and, like all other sin, is inexcusable under any circumstances. It takes some time and much inward agony before Hilda is able to view the act of Miriam and Donatello with any degree of perspective.

Until she accomplishes this, Hilda herself is removed from all human sympathy. Like Brown, Hooper, Aylmer, and Rappaccini, she has isolated herself, broken away from what Hawthorne calls the magnetic chain of humanity. She joins other Hawthornian characters who are doomed for some reason or other to live outside this chain. Such isolation may result, thought Hawthorne, in one's becoming involved in abstractions, or coming to the point where he preferred ideas over human beings. We have already seen how Aylmer's love of abstract learning overcame his human love, how Parson Hooper walked continually in shadow, "gazing through a medium that saddened the whole world." According to Jung, such isolation leads to arrogance, sterile brooding, and imprisonment within one's own ego. Most people, he says, require at least a partner, because the basis of experience otherwise is not real enough.

The morbidly vain Wakefield, whose eyes are "small and lustreless," symbolic of his whole ethos, chooses for some strange reason, on the pretext of an ordinary journey, to leave his wife for an extended period of time. His wife knows he loves to be mysterious,

so she does not question him other than by a look when he departs. Hawthorne says he "has no suspicion of what is before him," but is "almost resolved to perplex his good lady by a whole week's absence." This whole week's absence turns into more than twenty years, during which time Wakefield lives a short distance from his home. The imbalanced Wakefield had isolated himself from the magnetic chain of humanity, placed himself in a kind of in-between world where he managed "to give up his place and privileges with living men, without being admitted among the dead."

Becoming estranged from other human beings is not always such a conscious choice as it was with Wakefield. Sometimes good intentions may result in isolation. Hollingsworth, in The Blithedale Romance, is quite devoted to the reformation of criminals. Inflexible and severe, he demands total dedication to his cause from others, feeling that if they are not for him they are surely against him. What makes him a grotesque is his absolute devotion to one truth to the exclusion of all others. Hawthorne's moral is:

> That, admitting what is called philanthropy, when adopted as a profession, to be often useful by its energetic impulse to society at large, it is perilous to the individual whose ruling passion . . . it thus becomes . . . . It ruins . . . the heart . . . I see in Hollingsworth an exemplification of the most awful truth in Bunyan's book of such, -- from the very gate of heaven there is a by-way to the pit (V, 595)!

Hollingsworth's inevitable hell is that he has all he can handle

with his own guilt in connection with Zenobia's death. His dedication to one group of human beings has blinded him to the needs of others, like Zenobia, who need his love and understanding.

Isolated too, partly by the community and partly by her own choice, is Hester Prynne in The Scarlet Letter. As Hester stands on the scaffold after being released from prison, she sees her whole life in retrospect. She looks back, viewing the "entire track along which she had been treading since her happy infancy," to reach this particular point -- infamy and degradation because of her sin. While she stands there she sees Chillingworth, her husband, who is a part of that past, but now an important part of the present because he will seek revenge. The scarlet "A" separates Hester from the community, but it is she who maintains her isolation throughout the years, except for her ministrations as a nurse and helper in trouble. Separated from other women, who concentrate on their duties as wives and mothers, Hester finds time and inclination to indulge in the thought which would have been more disgraceful in the Puritan view than the adultery itself. She is never brought back within the pale of human sympathies, nor does she make any effort to return. In a sense, Hester is buried in the past.

That this tie to the past can be an isolating factor is apparent in the men whom Hawthorne discusses in the Custom House. As Feidelson states, they are embodiments of the kind of past which has stopped acting and evolving new content, "time denatured" as it were. Thus,

the inspector, an "utterly mindless animal," is constantly preoccupied with the magnificent dinners of his past, every course of which he can remember and succinctly describe.[1]

Hepzibah and Clifford in The House of the Seven Gables are inanimated by the past which surrounds them in the dreary house. Hepzibah has become creaky, rusty, unable to do anything useful while Clifford wanders around senselessly in an old, faded robe. Hawthorne says she needs a walk along the noon-day street to keep her sane. Clifford is tempted to jump out the window, throw himself into the stream of humanity, hoping thereby to experience some kind of rejuvenation. Both are partly redeemed from the past by Phoebe's appearance, her insistence upon pulling them into the world of life and love, and her union with the current Maule representative, Holgrave, which ends the kind of inbreeding represented by the sickly chickens. Balance requires the recognition of the oneness of past, present, and future in human life -- in other words, a proper perspective on time. Also involved is a kind of balance between matter and spirit. To reject the first is to reject the physical, the body; to reject the second is to ignore the spiritual, the soul.

The Virtuoso in "The Virtuoso's Collection" has no spiritual insight. Typical of some of Hawthorne's characters who insist upon gross actuality, he says "give me what I can see, and touch, and understand, and I ask no more." His view of things is similar to that of the

Puritans who visit the community of Merry Mount. Grim, rigid, and gloomy, these men are strongly contrasted with the colonists, silken masqueraders who concentrate on pleasure. Like Comus' crew, the Merry Mounters are between animal and human; some are already brutes, some midway, others just before the change. Their way of life has somehow brutalized them. Reminiscent of the people of the Golden Age, it is said that the chief goal of their husbandry was to raise flowers, which, of course, ignores the basic need of food for survival. While the Puritans are time-burdened, the Merry Mounters have no sense of time at all; May dwells all year around. Both are imbalanced. Hoffman makes an interesting commentary on what has happened:[2]

> At Merry Mount . . . those who would transform life into eternity spend their days in pageants, masquerades, and song. The imagery of these mimetic arts in Arcadia allies them to the perfection which their performers vainly seek. Their error is to assume that the escape from time made possible by art is an option allowed in life as well . . .

Owen Warland makes the same error in his ideal and spiritual love for Annie. Hoping that she can be a part of his quest for the beautiful, Warland dedicates himself to the search, only to lose Annie to Danforth, who accepts both time (in his marriage to Annie, who represents time) and space (open door of the shop with its fire, glimmering in the vagueness of unenclosed space). A victim of extremes, Warland, when his goal is temporarily thwarted, abandons himself to physical excesses. "When the ethereal portion of a man of genius is obscured,

the earthly part assumes an influence the more uncontrollable, because the character is now thrown off the balance to which Providence has so nicely adjusted it" (II, 519). But Warland recovers and is able to spiritualize matter, to achieve the beautiful, to accomplish something in the realm of the ideal, although he is a complete failure in the real world. The opposite is true of Hovenden, whose dense materiality prevents his appreciation of anything ethereal, and Westervelt in The Blithedale Romance, who is the material personified, with no tinge of the spiritual about him anywhere.

Still another kind of imbalance or grotesqueness has to do with the search for knowledge which may be stimulated by an inordinate curiosity or a kind of peeping-tom syndrome. The artist, of course, is peculiarly susceptible to this problem. Since this search for knowledge which at times infringes upon the natural human rights of others is often associated with bargaining with the devil or selling one's soul, "inordinate curiosity therefore becomes a kind of psychological symbol of the kind of behavior that is incited by the enemy of mankind."[3] For this reason, we often find characters like Coverdale, Brand, and Chillingworth who are likened to Faust. It must be remembered, though, that Hawthorne does not attack the search for knowledge itself, but condemns it only when it is carried too far, or when it is an excuse for idle curiosity or indefensible prying.

Interestingly, the compact with the devil need not result in

destruction. Stein suggests that this compact, experience with evil, may serve as an indoctrination into truth if self awareness is the result. "For knowledge of self symbolizes man's need to reconcile the outer world of physical nature, human action, and human endeavor with the inner world of his own conscious and unconscious responses to these things."[4] In other words, Stein is describing what Hawthorne himself would call a sense of balance. Bruce Granger, in an article discussing Dimmesdale as tragic hero,[5] says that tragedy arises from the tension between illusion and reality, illusion being the ideal and reality the actual conception one has of himself. Man's noblest illusion is his aspiration to free himself from his particular time and place, in Christian terms, to return to the state of bliss which existed before the fall. The dilemma, continues Granger, is that men require illusion to bring order out of the chaos of the present, but hiding behind illusion results in incapacity for meaningful action. To escape the dilemma, man then must be able to step out from behind illusion and face the terror of the here and now. This Dimmesdale does when he finally ascends the scaffold with Hester and Pearl with all the community looking on. He is saved because his version of the Edenic illusion is in the infinite, not the finite world. Like all the tragically great, Granger concludes, Dimmesdale sees the distance separating his ideal from his actual self and tries to bridge the gap. Before the final scaffold scene, Dimmesdale says to Hester:

> I have laughed, in bitterness and agony of heart, at the contrast between what I seem and what I am (V, 229-30)!

Dimmesdale, to this point, had not fulfilled Hawthorne's admonition -- "Be True." Therefore, to him, the whole universe looks false. After Dimmesdale has been in the forest with Hester, where he learns Chillingworth's real identity, his perspective changes. Like Young Goodman Brown after his forest experience, things now look different to Dimmesdale. If the last part of his name, dale, can be taken to suggest heart, the situation has been a dim dale, a dark heart, one into which its owner could not see clearly. He lacks insight, perspective which will enable him to realize that he is not being true, to face that fact first, and then do something about it. After the encounter in the forest, an experience which Hawthorne says changes the observer, "the spectator of the familiar scene," the town, the people, and even the church look different to Dimmesdale. Apparently, Dimmesdale saw leaving Boston as an attempt to psychologically renounce the mind's past, which is impossible,[6] and chose rather to ascend the platform, admit the truth, face the here and now just once before he died.

Donatello, too, gains insight, self knowledge, perspective, after his encounter or experience with evil. When they first meet, Miriam remarks that Donatello "is not supernatural, but just on the verge of nature, and yet within it." In his relationship with Miriam, Donatello spiritually is on the edge of a precipice, the title to

chapter XVIII where the four friends look into a chasm. Donatello, who before the crime represents infancy in perpetuity, who cannot even feel the melancholy that haunts the spots they visit, after the murder finds a whole new perspective. Even Monte Beni, which always looked cheerful to him, now seems quite gloomy; even the beautiful frescoes seem to have faded since he saw them last. Suffering in a kind of moral wilderness before he is able to accept the consequences of his deed, Donatello almost commits suicide. He wants Kenyon to put in marble the look on his face when the murder was done so that he will never forget the horror of it, but Kenyon wisely desists, warning his friend that it would be infinitely dangerous to linger too long in the dark valley.

Both Kenyon and Miriam notice that Donatello seems to have matured considerably since the murder. Miriam suggests that Donatello has gone in a kind of circle -- that he has been educated by his crime -- that the romance of Monte Beni may repeat the story of the fall of man. Sin, she says, may be a way of attaining a more desirable happiness than the lost birthright gave. Although Kenyon objects to this view with Miriam, he later mentions it to Hilda, who, of course, thoroughly rejects it.

Nevertheless, Donatello has gained insight as have the other three characters in The Marble Faun. Miriam realizes her part in the crime; although she did not actually commit it, she did ask with

her eyes that Donatello do it. Hilda, aware only of her Puritan past, because of present involvements, becomes associated with the burden of the past which Miriam represents, is forced out of her tower, and is capable now of a meaningful relationship with Kenyon. Kenyon, who is usually detached from time, has to involve himself with the present because of his relationships with those two of the past.[7] Up to then, the marble man, Kenyon is now more capable of human understanding, symbolized by his being shot in the heart with lime dust by a seven-foot female. All of this happens in Rome, the eternal city, suggesting again that balance has to do not only with self knowledge or insight but also with a judicial recognition of one's relationship to time.

Those who live in Blithedale seem to reject both aspects of this balance. They place themselves beyond time in the sense that their attempt is to restore a kind of Arcadian simplicity, and behind masks, which hide what they really are sometimes, but at others are quite revealing. Zenobia's unnatural flowers suggest the artificality which is also suggested in her suicide; Westervelt, who is described as totally material, wears false teeth and spectacles; Coverdale who peeps out from various hiding places doesn't need a mask; and finally the whole company put on masks and play at being Arcadians in a chapter entitled "The Masqueraders." Only Silas Foster seems to represent reality. He "leaned against a tree near by, in his customary blue frock, and smoking a short pipe, did more to disenchant the scene, with

his look of shrewd, acrid, Yankee observation, than twenty witches and necromancers could have done in the way of rendering it weird and fantastic" (V, 558).

Summarizing a many-faceted discussion of the loss of perspective or the gaining of insight presents some difficulty. J. Hillis Miller mentions Wallace Stevens' point that there are at least thirteen ways of looking at a blackbird, and, if thirteen, why not more? Miller continues:

> No way of looking at the world is perfect or complete. So rather than seeking some absolute perspective we should yield ourselves to a mobile existence, an existence in which we take up as many 'life-attitudes,' one by one, as we can.[8]

Perhaps this summarizes the problem of so many of Hawthorne's characters who become grotesques because they fail to realize this variety and insist upon devoting themselves to one truth to the exclusion of all others.

In addition, perhaps that very tendency is attributable to the Manichaean quality of New England Puritanism. Viewing life as a constant struggle between good and evil, the Puritans were preoccupied with man's capacity for evil. They tended to overlook any predisposition to good, so that their philosophy bred only negations. Young Goodman Brown is a good example of the results of such an attitude. Because of his religious background, Brown was unable to accept the ambiguity of good and evil, insisting on an either-or situation. Perhaps Aylmer too was the victim of such thinking -- that somehow the flaw could not

coexist with the otherwise perfect. They do not realize that the stain is every man's birthmark, but that it need not obliterate the pure.

Finally, there is the confused attitude toward time and toward the spirit-matter relationship. In Hawthorne's view, true reality is measured by time. Past and present enter into his theory of experience as counterparts of the distinction between the inner state and materiality; as necessary elements of a view of life which informs the actual-imaginary view of fiction. Romance is an enrichment of the actual by the imaginary. The good life is an enrichment of the material by the inner self, an appreciation of the present through a consciousness of the past. The elements of the good life find dramatic counterparts in the two basic elements of the romance, and such a good life is then the material of the romance.[9] The good life then should strike a balance between past and present and morality and materiality. But this does not seem to be the kind of balance reached by most of Hawthorne's characters. It is unfortunate that a man who so prized balance in his own life and that of others found so few who had achieved it.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Charles Feidelson, Jr., "The Scarlet Letter," Hawthorne Centenary Essays, 41.

[2]Hoffman, "Myth, Romance, and the Childhood of Man," 219.

[3]Stein, Hawthorne's Faust, 39.

[4]Ibid., 102.

[5]Bruce Granger, "Arthur Dimmesdale as Tragic Hero," Nineteenth Century Fiction (September, 1964), 197-203.

[6]Lois Adkins, "Psychological Symbolism of Guilt and Isolation in Hawthorne," American Imago, XI (Winter, 1954), 420.

[7]Scrimgeour,"The Marble Faun," 284.

[8]J. Hillis Miller, The Disappearance of God: Five Nineteenth Century Writers (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1963), 10.

[9]Larzer Ziff, "The Ethical Dimensions of the Custom House," Hawthorne: A Collection of Critical Essays, 125.

CHAPTER V

THRESHOLDS

The fact that thresholds, verges, boundaries appear constantly in Hawthorne's work does not mean that he was particularly interested in them as such. They were important to him for dissolving the gross actuality of fact in order to present deeper meaning. His characters find themselves involved in taking steps over certain boundaries which result in enormous changes in their lives -- sometimes undesirable but irreversible changes. There are four general categories into which most actions involving thresholds can be placed. These are becoming involved in ambiguity which one cannot accept; attempting to escape; sealing one's doom because of the step across the threshold; and gaining new awareness, whether good or bad, which might lead to a fuller existence or a better understanding of things as they are.

Like the gray which Hester Prynne always wears, ambiguity represents a blending of black and white, good and evil. This mixture is precisely what Young Goodman Brown cannot accept after he has crossed the threshold between the town where he lives with his wife, and

the forest, wherein he loses his faith after realizing that all those he thought irreproachable are also present. Not only are they there, but most of them are active participants in the witches' sabbath, good friends of the devil, and seemingly anxious to welcome the two new members. Brown resists all he can, but the devil is never worried about winning him over. After his experience in the forest, which represents Brown's first encounter with the fact that good and evil can and do exist side by side, he becomes morbid, unable to maintain any satisfactory relationships with either his loved ones or his community. Brown's initiation into experience was a devastating one.

Overcome by the vision of some evil, Parson Hooper dons the mysterious black veil, behind which nobody shall ever again see. It is never quite clear what has happened to him, as it is in Young Goodman Brown, but apparently he has been convinced like Brown that existence is really one-sided after all, that seeing darkly through the veil is really a proper perspective on things after all. If he had realized or at least accepted the fact that deep within every man is a kind of black veil, hiding there dark deeds known only to one's self, that evil is universal, part of a fallen, finite existence, Hooper might have been able to avail himself of love and companionship. But, alas, he too cannot accept ambiguity, the neutral ground between good and evil, where the souls of most men reside. So he isolates himself outwardly by the black veil, which suggests that such isolation has already taken

place inwardly.

Outward isolation is achieved by Hester Prynne too as she continues to wear the scarlet "A," an act which effectively maintains the distance at which she was set by her sin. If she was compelled to wear it when the sin was revealed, it does not seem that she must wear it until her death, which she does. This suggests that Hester accepts the belief of the community that she belongs in the evil-doers category, that even she eventually cannot see her sin as a part of the evil that is universal.

Thresholds are quite significant in "The Birthmark" as we see Aylmer leaving his laboratory to seek a wife, then bringing her back across that threshold because she is not perfect. It would seem that Aylmer is capable of involving himself with the magnetic chain of humanity as he looks for a partner whom he apparently loves. But, as mentioned earlier, he does not marry her completely because he cannot accept the ambiguity of good and evil suggested by her tiny red birthmark. The flaw is too much for him, compelling Aylmer to kill her in his attempt to remove it. Brown did not kill his wife physically, but for all intents and purposes, their relationship is as non-existent as Aylmer's and Georgiana's. Georgiana, of course, does not fully realize the extent of Aylmer's desire to rid her of the abomination. Nor does she know that when she crosses the threshold of the inner laboratory and sees the distilling process, she is observing what will soon

happen to her -- Aylmer is about to distill the womanhood out of her. His entry into the laboratory this time marks the end of his marriage and perhaps of any other meaningful relationship with a woman.

There is another important threshold in "Rappaccini's Daughter." Giovanni falls in love with Beatrice as he views her great beauty from his window above the evil garden. Aided by the old woman, he crosses the threshold into the garden, becomes involved with Beatrice, only to realize that she is poisonous. Giovanni is shocked and dismayed to find that he has absorbed some of the poison, a fact which makes him doubly anxious to serve her the antidote. Basically, we have the same situation as existed in "The Birthmark"; that is, Giovanni is unable to accept Beatrice's ambiguity, to realize that she, like the ruined fountain which still gushes water, has spiritual depths.

In addition to the threshold's representing the acceptance or refusal of growth, the inability to accept ambiguity, it also is connected with escape. Hepzibah and Clifford in The House of the Seven Gables decide they will attend church one bright sabbath morning, only to realize once they have left the house that they cannot go through with it. "At the threshold, they felt his pitiless grip upon them. For, what other dungeon is so dark as one's own heart! What jailer so inexorable as one's self" (III, 204). It seems impossible for them to escape the past which has engulfed them, too late to rejoin the rest of humanity who have been going forward, moving on, while the Pyncheons of the present

day, at least those in the house, stood still. This was quite a revelation for Clifford and Hepzibah, to whom the house seemed even more dismal when they returned.

This was not to be their last attempt, however. Driven almost to hysteria by Jaffrey Pyncheon's death, the time-stricken "owls" again leave the house. A suggestion of the futility of escape and a kind of foreshadowing of what eventually happens is Clifford's bringing Hepzibah's attention to one of the posts of the front door. "It was merely the initials of his own name, which, with somewhat of his characteristic grace about the forms of the letters, he had cut there when a boy" (III, 299). The time-burdened Clifford cannot cope with the present, which in this novel seems on the one hand cruel and on the other unreal.

As he and his sister try to involve themselves with the present, symbolized by the train ride, they only seem strange. In fact, Hawthorne mentions that were it not for the storm their dark presence would have been much more noticeable as they walked along the street. Clifford is conspicuously peculiar as he loudly converses with the gimlet-eyed man on the train. When they finally get off the train, they are again reminded of time and engulfed by it. The scene which they view is an objectification of their condition: "at a little distance stood a wooden church, black with age, and in a dismal state of ruin and decay . . . . Farther off was a farmhouse . . . as venerably old and black as the church" (III, 315). Clifford then loses all the energy and enthusiasm which

projected him out of the house and into the world of the present, and despairingly tells Hepzibah she "must take the lead now." Hepzibah does all she is capable of and that is to lead them back to the house, from which they can escape only with the aid of Phoebe and Holgrave. When they cross the threshold with these two who are in love, it is apparent that this will be the last time.

Crossing thresholds does not lead to escape, however, for Hester Prynne. But we do get some insight into her character by observing her behavior in connection with crossing certain lines. When she emerges from the prison, for example, she repels the prison official who has his hand on her shoulder, and "by an action marked with natural dignity and force of character . . . stepped into the open air, as if by her own free will." This strong will is further manifested in Hester's behavior in the forest with Dimmesdale. Casting aside the scarlet letter, she urges him to escape, believing anything would be better than the present state of things. She cannot make her will prevail though, primarily because Pearl will not allow her to cast off the letter, but also because Dimmesdale is not fully convinced that they can or should escape. The boundary line which exists between them cannot be erased in this world, says Dimmesdale. It was only temporarily dissolved while they were in the forest, the moral wilderness of the moment.

Thresholds are also associated with doom. Colonel Pyncheon,

whose immorality knew no bounds, not only wrongs Matthew Maule but also builds a house on the very spot where he is buried. Unashamed of his acts, Pyncheon has a house-warming, inviting all the most prominent people who cross the threshold to accept his hospitality. But the social occasion turns into a funeral when the impatient guests enter Pyncheon's private room to find him dead in his chair, apparently from the strange malady associated with the curse that God would give them blood to drink.

The death of a later Pyncheon, Jaffrey, is also connected with a threshold. After some unsuccessful attempts, Jaffrey finally gains access to the house through the "gray medium" of the cent shop. He wants to see Clifford. Hepzibah cannot hold him off any longer when he claims that he got Clifford released and will send him to a mental institution if he is prevented from seeing him. Jaffrey thinks Clifford knows where the deed to the missing property is. If Clifford indeed possessed this information, it would have done the judge no good, for he will not leave that parlor.

Georgiana, like Jaffrey Pyncheon, should never have crossed the threshold:

> As he led her over the threshold of the laboratory, Georgiana was cold and tremulous. Aylmer looked cheerfully into her face, with intent to reassure her, but was so startled with the intense glow of the birthmark upon the whiteness of her cheek that he could not restrain a strong convulsive shudder. His wife fainted (II, 54).

Curious about the inner room, Georgiana decides after she revives to enter it. There she sees the furnace and distilling apparatus, material objects which somehow detract from the magical aura of Aylmer's work. His notebook record of experiments reveals too that in view of his high aspirations, Aylmer has not really accomplished much. He, too, should have been adequately warned by his dream of the dangers of this attempt to remove the tiny red hand from Georgiana's cheek; he dreamed that the hand was wound around Georgiana's heart. Hawthorne says, "truth often finds its way to the mind close muffled in robes of sleep, and then speaks with uncompromising directness of matters in regard to which we practise an unconscious self-deception during our waking moments" (II, 52).

Roger Chillingworth also crosses a threshold to his own doom. He has come from the wilderness where he learned much about various medicines from the Indians, to civilization. He has passed a kind of literal boundary, although one wonders whether these people who so harshly condemn another human being can be considered truly civilized. At any rate, Chillingworth crosses this threshold in reverse in moral terms since he engages in a kind of primitive vengeance against Hester's lover. Filled with hatred and anger, Chillingworth destroys himself in his attempt to destroy Dimmesdale, for he becomes a personification of the very evil in which he participates. It is almost as though once he becomes involved Chillingworth can no longer return to the

point of beginning; he is on an irreversible course.

Wakefield, too, when he leaves his home with the intention of remaining gone for some time, steps aside from the ties which bind him to his wife and thus to a place as a part of humanity. Having stayed away for many years, Wakefield, through force of habit once goes to his own house but is aroused by the scraping of his foot on the step. He pauses crucially at the threshold -- 'his fate was turning on the pivot" -- but he escapes. Wakefield lives nearby, where he can see his wife from time to time from a distance, for some twenty years. Hawthorne says he has as little chance of returning as the dead, for once a man steps aside, he takes the chance of "losing his place forever." "Like Wakefield, he may become, as it were, the Outcast of the Universe." But Wakefield finally does return home. Hawthorne says he will not follow him across the threshold, but it is apparent that he believes things can never be the same -- that Wakefield has destroyed something which can never be replaced.

Hepzibah Pyncheon, as she passes over the threshold of the cent shop "where the projection of the second story and the thick foliage of the elm-tree, as well as the commodities at the window, created a sort of gray medium," weeps. For her, this is a step down "from her pedestal of imaginary rank. Poverty . . . has come up with her at last. She must earn her own food or starve!" She is to be transformed from a "patrician lady" into a "plebeian woman." It is not so bad

to be able to give away goodies, but when she is forced to take money for gingerbread from the insatiable boy, she feels that an "irreparable ruin" has been wrought. Hawthorne seems almost to sympathize with her and admire her when he remarks:

> Life is made up of marble and mud . . . . What is called poetic insight is the gift of discerning, in this sphere of strangely-mingled elements, the beauty and the majesty which are compelled to assume a garb so sordid (III, 59).

Despite her distress, this step is for Hepzibah one which will lead to a kind of new awareness, a fuller existence, a chance to again mingle with the world, break out of the dark past. For it is a gray medium, a link with the street, a connection which might save her. When a customer crosses the threshold of the shop, a little bell rings in the inner house, an object which makes it impossible for Hepzibah to continue to ignore the outside, to remain in what is constantly referred to as another sphere, as if she were really part of a no-man's land -- not fully in the past or in the present.

Her first customer is Holgrave, a Maule it turns out, who tells Hepzibah that she will recover from this shock which she now feels "on the outer verge of [a] long seclusion." Still, those who enter seem to Hepzibah to be intruders into her private world. Rather than being connected with ancestry and tradition, she has now become merely an old maid, "keeper of a cent-shop," part of a vast mediocrity. The trend toward breaking out, begun with the cent shop with Holgrave

as first customer, is continued when Phoebe appears at the front door. Phoebe represents a branch of the Pyncheon line which is associated with all the freshness and health usually connected with the rural. She is thus in strong contrast with her surroundings, the dust, decay, and ruin of the house.

> But, even as a ray of sunshine, fall into what dismal place it may, instantaneously creates for itself a propriety in being there, so did it seem altogether fit that the girl should be standing at the threshold. It was no less evidently proper that the door should swing open to admit her. The maiden lady, herself, sternly inhospitable in her first purposes, soon began to feel that the door ought to be shoved back, and the rusty key be turned in the reluctant lock (III, 90-91).

Phoebe's entrance, which represents the present intruding into the past, is significant for her as well as for the others who are involved with her. She has entered the world of sin and time, where she finds that she can be useful in helping Clifford and Hepzibah and where she matures enough to accept Holgrave's love. So a fuller existence and new awareness are in store for her as well as for Hepzibah, Clifford, and Holgrave.

Having crossed the thresholds of sin and prison, Hester Prynne enters a kind of new existence, too, albeit a rather limited one in that it excludes the possibility of any kind of meaningful relationship with a member of the opposite sex. She has been placed beyond the expectation of loving and being loved in any kind of socially acceptable way. But her new existence has to do with nursing those who are sick. Because

of her sin, she can pass over certain thresholds, appearing when there is sickness as if she can best function in the medium of a darkened household. "When sunshine came again, she was not there. Her shadow had faded across the threshold" (V, 196). It is interesting to note that Hester dwells in a cottage by the seashore, by the verge or boundary where water meets land -- almost between two worlds. It seems almost as though Hawthorne is suggesting that the gray-garbed lady who actually lives in a kind of neutral ground or gray area of existence personifies the ambiguity of good and evil, since both are contained in her nature. Yet there is an implied criticism in his statement, "the scarlet letter had not done its office." Hester, who engages in speculative thought, has never really repented. If her sin is to be seen on the universal level of the Original Sin, however, her fellow human beings have no right to expect special humility from her.

Miles Coverdale, in The Blithedale Romance, sees his illness as a kind of threshold:

> An avenue between two existences; the low-arched and darksome doorway, through which I crept out of a life of old conventionalisms, on my hands and knees, as it were, and gained admittance into the freer region that lay beyond. In this respect, it was like death. And, as with death, too, it was good to have gone through it (V, 388).

Coverdale has passed from the old world to the world of Blithedale, which he expects to be "freer." Spending most of his time prying into the affairs of others, he finally should have realized that although the

world of Blithedale is in a different locale, a kind of world within a world, yet its people are bound by all the problems under which they labored elsewhere. Though he seems throughout the experience to realize his peculiar propensity to snoop, Coverdale never really does anything about it; there is no significant change in his behavior. His method of observation has enabled him to gain a new awareness of the relationships of others, but he has not himself gained any new insight, except for his admission that he is in love with Priscilla, who may well stand for the artistic medium.

Finally, Donatello in The Marble Faun crosses the boundary from innocence to experience, a painful journey but one which leads to moral growth. Hawthorne describes him from the beginning as being in a kind of middle state, "a natural and delightful link betwixt human and brute life, and with something of a divine character intermingled." The murder of the Capuchin is the apex of the brute life, after which either total surrender to evil or movement toward the divine, which is associated with acceptance of responsibility, must take place. Donatello suffers severely the excruciating pain which is usually connected with any kind of birth -- physical or spiritual. In his return to Miriam, Donatello shows his willingness to accept the burden of sin and time, and furthermore the moral growth which has enabled him to face the consequences of his act. Because of their involvement with Miriam and Donatello, both Kenyon and Hilda achieve a new awareness. On the

fringes of Kenyon's thought and perhaps at a later date in Hilda's is the haunting suggestion made by Miriam that perhaps sin is a way of regaining the birthright lost in Eden.

Although throughout Hawthorne's work boundaries are crossed, in many instances boundaries remain. Young Goodman Brown, for example, entered the forest of experience, partook of the knowledge of good and evil, but, unlike Donatello, was not able to accept again the society from whence he came. Hester and Dimmesdale, too, who can come together in the forest and be free for at least a few moments of the stigma of the letter, cannot carry that relationship back out of that wilderness. Owen Warland, like his work, remains on the borderline between the living and the non-living. Miriam, "standing on the utmost verge of that dark chasm . . . might stretch out her hand, and never clasp a hand of theirs." Even after Hilda and Kenyon are reunited, when they see Miriam in the Pantheon, it is said that she "stood on the other side of a fathomless abyss, and warned them from its verge." Hepzibah and Clifford will never overcome what the past has done to them. The Blithedalers learn the world cannot be removed from them, even though they are removed from the world. Despite one's best efforts, lines will always remain, not only between past and present, known and unknown, but also as barriers to communication, for the human condition is at best one of isolation.

Nevertheless, Hawthorne succeeds again is dissolving the gross

actuality of fact. All the thresholds in his work, rather than being actual ones, are symbolic or moral ones. Crossing a boundary line, passing a threshold, almost always seems to describe these symbolic occurrences and to gain significance as it loses materiality or actuality. Another threshold not yet considered is that crossed in showing what Richard Chase calls the "underside" of experience or consciousness, the boundary between the conscious and unconscious. This side of experience is often described by Hawthorne as a kind of symbolic journey. Here we turn from Hawthorne's idealizing the material to a consideration of how he projects or realizes the ideal or mental world.

CHAPTER VI

SYMBOLIC JOURNEYS

The word "journey" means travel or passage from one place to another, but it is not limited to that particular definition. It may suggest a period between two states of being, moving for example from childhood to maturity or the human life span from life to death. It may also suggest moving from one set of attitudes and beliefs to another or to several others, and finally, the passage back and forth of thoughts from the conscious to the unconscious. Obviously, for literature, the most important meaning of the word journey has to do with its symbolic possibilities. It is a threshold between two states, and may be used to dissolve the gross actuality of fact by enabling the author to emphasize the underside of experience, that side which usually is ignored in favor of the concrete, practical side of things.

This journey plot appears often in Hawthorne's works, which record "man's dark odyssey in an alien world."[1] The actual journey is not really important, but its symbolic implications are central to meaning. For example, in "The Lily's Quest," a young couple go forth to find a spot not touched by sorrow, a special place where they

can establish a home. Unaware that there are no such places, they finally discover one they think is right, only to later learn that the spot is to be marked by their own sorrow. Like the anxious seekers for the great carbuncle, for the most part perverts who have no inner reality, for whom the carbuncle is a "visible projection of their desires and aspirations," their wish can never be fulfilled.

As Matthiessen has stated, the main concern of romance is the life within the life. This was what interested Hawthorne most, "the dramatic reality of the issues of conscience."[2] He was always involved with the interior, was always fascinated with what was going on inside the minds of his characters, always careful to present their problems from within rather than from the outside. He explored psychic processes, had a tendency to plunge into the underside of consciousness, the heart of darkness, in order to delineate the burden and ambivalence of personal responsibility in a world which accommodates evil.

So he uses the journey to describe symbolically the movement which almost all his characters make, for better or for worse, toward something which they feel will be an improvement. Sometimes the journey leads to destruction, a permanent personality change, or to a position from which one cannot retreat; seldom does the journey result in any kind of permanent improvement. One constantly recurring motif is the withdrawal and return; another is related to the dreamlike and many times nightmarish qualities of the journey experience, which

suggest a kind of descent into the subconscious, a facing of the blackness within, the kind of blackness which then pervades the entire life, blotting out any light which might have brightened it.

The withdrawal and return motive is apparent in The House of the Seven Gables, in which Hawthorne also employs the cycle motif in that the action of the past is repeated. The family wheel of fortune has turned full circle, from poverty to riches to poverty. Hepzibah, who has withdrawn into the past as completely as possible, is forced to return via the cent shop to the middle ground between the traditionary past which she represents and the present world which she rejects. Her great discomfort is caused by the fact that she would just as soon remain in the past, but is not able to do so because of a poor financial situation. Clifford, perhaps driven on by madness, is impelled to jump out the window, to make a ridiculous leap into the "great centre of humanity," in order to achieve some kind of rebirth or revitalization. Perhaps he and Hepzibah both needed to "take a deep, deep plunge into the ocean of human life, and to sink down and be covered by its profoundness, and then to emerge, sobered, invigorated, restored to the world . . ." But, alas, Clifford is pulled back by Phoebe and Hepzibah.

That the moment for meaningful action for the two is past is further revealed by their unsuccessful attempt to go to church one Sunday morning. As they stand on the threshold after returning to the house, they realize what prisoners they are. Their next withdrawal,

leaving the house when Jaffrey Pyncheon dies, sends them on a journey from which they must inevitably return. Space cannot provide freedom or escape for these two who have been all but destroyed by time. Although Clifford says man should not confine himself in "old worm-eaten timber," he and Hepzibah are nevertheless just so confined by what the house represents. The journey thus symbolically represents their inability to break completely out of the past after such a long confinement, there to participate meaningfully in the present or the future. What they cannot do alone, however, they can do with the aid of Phoebe and Holgrave, who take the two with them as they leave the house to move to Jaffrey's country place, for these two young people represent their return to the "magnetic chain of humanity," and their subsequent possible redemption from the deadening bonds of the past.

Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne cannot so easily break these bonds. Their journey into the forest together, an entry into a moral wilderness in an attempt to bring some order out of chaos, results in the revelation to both of them that they are not ever to be free this side of eternity. There they realize that Pearl is not going to allow them the privilege of being true in private when Dimmesdale refuses to claim them in public. But what Dimmesdale learns there, that Chillingworth is Hester's husband, gives him the necessary energy to rise above his earlier paralysis and take his proper place on the scaffold with Hester and their child. He had made that journey before, had ascended the

scaffold at midnight hoping apparently for some relief, but had not done it properly -- in view of all -- and therefore did not achieve the desired results. Having withdrawn from the world where the only reality he had was the awareness of his unreality, he returns capable now of facing Chillingworth and disposing of his influence. If we see Chillingworth as guilt, it is apparent that "only by knowing him, confronting him face to face, is moral growth possible."[3]

Such was the hard lesson which Donatello, too, had to learn. The journey motif, of course, runs throughout The Marble Faun, as do the withdrawal and return, and ascent and descent motifs; not only have the three artists made a journey to Italy, but the four, including Donatello, wander about Rome, observing various things of interest. It is notable that when they visit the catacombs, which are characterized by death and darkness, subterranean representations of the evil human heart, Miriam gets lost. It may be that Hawthorne is suggesting that this is essentially her spiritual condition, one of being lost. The descent, too, can be taken as symbolic of being lowered into the realm of darkness and sin, or into the depths of evil found in the human heart. When they plan a meeting at the Villa Borghese, Donatello climbs a tree, from which vantage point he views Miriam. In his present moral state of innocence, he is above her, but note that when she appears he descends and alights at her side. This is just what happens to him in their association; he is brought down to her level by the crime. But

after the murder has been committed, Donatello withdraws to Monte Beni, there to brood over what has happened, and decide what to do about it. There he ascends a tower where there is a room fixed up like a bedchamber. But it has religious symbols too, almost as if something of religious suffering, possibly repentance, is to be associated with it. There are holy emblems, a crucifix, holy water, little prints representing the sufferings of Christ, and a human skull. Everything which suggests the cost of sin, the suffering which guilt made necessary but the promise of forgiveness which is nevertheless there, is present in the room, along with the reminder, the human skull, of the transiency of human life. Donatello is enabled because of this withdrawal and ascent to return to the world wherein he must accept responsibility for his deed. The new perspective gained is described in Kenyon's words as he looks down from Donatello's tower:

> How it strengthens the poor human spirit in its reliance on His providence, to ascend but this little way above the common level, and so attain a somewhat wider glimpse of His dealings with mankind! He doeth all things right! His will be done (VI, 298)!

Donatello has taken a kind of journey back into time when he returns to Monte Beni and there, among other things, contemplates the sins of his ancestors. As he ascends in space (tower), he goes back in time. This withdrawal has given him the necessary strength to return to Miriam, to accept his part in the crime.

Hilda, too, has withdrawn -- but her withdrawal is connected

with a descent. She descends from her tower to deliver Miriam's package, an act which can be associated with her coming down somewhat from her aloofness concerning Miriam's crime. But she certainly does not descend far enough to accept the view originally voiced by Miriam and later by Kenyon that the murder is a kind of re-enactment of the archetypal fall. Nevertheless, the change in Donatello is astonishing. Moral growth had taken place. Hawthorne says:

> The effect of this hard lesson, upon Donatello's intellect and disposition, was very striking. It was perceptible that he had already had glimpses of strange and subtle matters in those dark caverns, into which all men must descend, if they would know anything beneath the surface and illusive pleasures of existence. And when they emerge, though dazzled and blinded by the first glare of daylight, they take truer and sadder views of life forever afterwards (VI, 302).

There are those, however, who rather than taking sadder and truer views of life, go to the extreme of seeing nothing but darkness and being overwhelmed by it. R. W. B. Lewis has said the characteristic situation of Hawthorne's fiction is that of an "Emersonian figure, the man of hope, who by some frightful mischance has stumbled into the time-burdened world of Jonathan Edwards." The character is then confronted with a choice whether to accept this world he has fallen into or run away. This accounts for the moving from village to forest, city to country, "for these are the symbols between which the choice must be made and the means by which moral inference is converted into dramatic action."[4] Young Goodman Brown journeys at sunset into

the forest where he is initiated into despair. His withdrawal may be seen as an attempt to immerse himself in experience, but he is unable to accept ambiguity, cannot believe in both the Faith in the town and the Faith in the forest. So, when he returns to Salem village, he has become a gloomy, darkly meditative creature, who can see no good in anybody. Spiritually, he sees everything as though he wore a black veil like Parson Hooper's.

Ethan Brand, too, sees the world from the perspective of a sinful heart. With good intentions, he had left home to search for the unpardonable sin, but is driven in upon himself when he discovers it in his own bosom. His withdrawal resulted in his inability to return to anything except the kiln into which he jumps head first. The descent into the flaming kiln is similar to jumping down one's own throat, and represents symbolically a kind of falling in upon one's self which is what happens to Brand. His withdrawal, return, and descent all symbolize Brand's inner experience, his psychological condition of guilt and despair.

Although it cannot be strictly separated from the withdrawal and return motif, the journey may also be seen as a descent into the depths of the self, a trip into the realm of the unconscious. Emerson in "Self-Reliance" calls for communion with the "aboriginal self," a communion which Thoreau perhaps experienced at Walden Pond. Whitman, discussing his spiritual development, says "I tramp a perpetual

journey /come listen all! /My signs are a rainproof coat, good shoes, and a staff cut from the woods." Poe, too, explores hidden labyrinths of the interior, using the dream as dramatic structure. His narrators in "The Fall of the House of Usher," and "Ulalume" say they are journeying over strange landscapes. Melville's Ishmael, with the "damp, drizzly November" in his soul, says it is "high time to get to sea." Hawthorne, whose tales are "psychological structures with objects, places, or characters functioning symbolically, leading the reader not outward into the world of reality but inward into the mazes of the mind,"[5] has Young Goodman Brown and Robin Molineux go on journeys which seem to merge nightmare and reality. His orientation seems to be one in which fact is external and truth internal,[6] a point which fits in with what Lucas describes as the fundamental quality of romanticism -- "a liberation of the less conscious levels of the mind."[7]

Hawthorne's was a haunted mind, which at times perhaps wanted to shriek, "O God! I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams."[8] According to Jung, the dream is the most effective way of becoming acquainted with the unconscious because it contains both conscious and unconscious material as well as familiar and unfamiliar elements. The arrangement of things stands outside causality, and there are no space-time limits. It is rather like a hidden door in the "innermost and most secret recesses of the soul, opening into that cosmic night which was

psyche long before there was any ego consciousness, and which will remain psyche no matter how far out ego consciousness may extend . . . . All consciousness separates; but in dreams we put on the likeness of that more universal, truer, more eternal man dwelling in the darkness of primordial night."[9]

Jacobi describes in Jungian terms how the contents of the unconscious emerge in dreams. When the threshold of consciousness sinks, the contents of the unconscious ascend in dreams, where these contents are perceived and held fast by consciousness. The meaning of the various contents is investigated, clarified, interpreted, comprehended and given its place in the total psychical situation of the individual, where the individual accepts, digests, and assimilates the meaning found. This meaning is integrated into the psyche where it becomes a piece of instinctive knowledge.[10]

Hawthorne tries to describe what happens in these moments between sleep and waking when the contents of the conscious mind and unconscious mingle. In "The Haunted Mind," for example, he brings up the possibility that at night, in dreams or reveries or memories of past griefs or sins, one takes a kind of journey into the subconscious which causes him to feel shame at some "act of enormous folly."

It is also in this realm of the dream that one may confront what Jung calls the Shadow, the personal dark personification of the contents of the psyche not yet lived, excluded, rejected, repressed,

generally the dark in everybody. He says in Psychology and Religion, "everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is." Further, "a mere suppression of the shadow is as little of a remedy as it is beheading against headache . . . . When an inferiority is conscious one always has a chance to correct it . . . But when it is repressed and isolated from consciousness, it can never be corrected."[11]

The journey of Young Goodman Brown has many qualities which associate it with dreams -- nightmares actually. That his own Shadow is involved here, as well as Faith's, is apparent from the statement that the devil's arguments seemed to spring up in Brown's own bosom rather than to be strictly the devil's suggestions. After all, he has been in the forest for a while before he realizes Faith is there. Furthermore, he is never really sure she is actually there. Perhaps his own dark thoughts have held sway over him and convinced him that his own darkness is shared by the others who he thinks are in the forest. Brown cannot face his Shadow, that dark part of existence which is in everybody, and is therefore destroyed by it. Brown's darkness may be seen as his unconscious into which, while involved in the dream, he has had a peep. He is unable to attain the wholeness of personality which is possible, according to Jung, "when all the pairs of opposites are differentiated, when the two parts of the total psyche, the conscious and unconscious, are joined together and stand in a living relation to

one another,"[12] Hawthorne's neutral ground of the spirit. Jung believes that confronting one's shadow means to become unsparingly critically conscious of one's own nature. It is difficult for one to realize this shadow is part of him; some would rather remain in the shelter of illusions of neurosis. But, he continues:

> However bitter the cup may be, it can be spared to no one. Only when we have learned to distinguish ourselves from our shadow, accepting its reality as a part of our being and remaining always aware of this fact, can the encounter with the other pairs of psychic opposites succeed.[13]

Brown could have accepted Faith's shadow had he been able to accept his own.

Hawthorne expresses again in "The Haunted Mind" pretty much what Jung is saying concerning the Shadow:

> In the depths of every heart there is a tomb and a dungeon, though the lights, the music, and revelry above may cause us to forget their existence, and the buried ones, or prisoners, whom they hide. But sometimes, and oftenest at midnight, these dark receptacles are flung wide open (I, 345).

The dream, the late-night reverie, the time of shadows seems to be the time when haunted thoughts emerge.

Whether Parson Hooper had bad dreams, Hawthorne does not say. But we have the visible proof that some nightmare has engulfed him. Although his "mysterious emblem" gives him great power over souls in agony for sin, it imprisons him in his own heart, a place

Hawthorne calls "the saddest of all prisons." Overwhelmed by his own Shadow, Hooper is impelled to take on an outward sign of guilt, one which drives everybody away from him, setting a boundary no other human being dares cross. As Adkins has explained it, "man's own personality in Hawthorne, as well as in modern psychoanalytic theory, places a greater limit on the individual's health, happiness and achievement than does any external force."[14] Yet, Hooper is able to cast the dark shadow of his belief over other individuals so that even "the legislative measures of that year were characterized by all the gloom and piety of our earliest ancestral sway." Finally, he remarks at the end that he sees black veils on everybody. Hooper has really missed the whole point; those who urge him to remove his veil are not necessarily implying that they are free from secret sin, internal darkness, but rather may be trying to convince him that since the shadow is a part of all men, it is not necessary for him to set himself up as an example just to avoid being called a hypocrite.

One wonders if the spectre who haunts Miriam in The Marble Faun cannot be taken as an image of what Jung had in mind when he referred to the shadow. He seems, first, to have a kind of timeless quality. In the painting of the Archangel Michael with his foot on the demon, the friends note that the face of the demon is Miriam's model, playing the demon's part in a picture two centuries old. Further, he is seen in the subterranean catacombs, in the lower regions. Confronted

by Kenyon, the spectre says he has been wandering 1500 years.

> Inquire not what I am, nor wherefore I abide in the darkness. Henceforth, I am nothing but a shadow behind her footsteps. She came to me when I sought her not. She has called me forth, and must abide the consequences of my reappearance in the world (VI, 46).

If he does represent the Jungian Shadow, it is apparent that Miriam cannot face him and that she wants to be rid of him. There is no way for her to live with him. Donatello in committing the murder is refusing to tolerate the shadow, too, but finds that when he has killed him, the shadow becomes more intolerable. Inevitably, because he has tried to destroy the shadow without, he must put up with the shadow within, the darkness within him which made him commit the act in the first place. Donatello does in the end what Jung insists upon:

> The man . . . who takes unafraid the 'way within' and follows it courageously, overcoming its dangers, to the end will be able also to take the 'way without,' into the world of external reality, without fear; he will master the demands of life in the collective with the help of his abundant tools for controlling nature and will neither lose himself in the labyrinth of the inner way nor go under as a soulless creature in the anonymous crowd, but will rescue the worth of his personality here as there.[15]

Donatello is saved by returning to Miriam to face the punishment which he has coming. His spiritual growth demands that he suffer for his wrong.

Poised as Donatello was between the childhood world of innocence and the adult world of evil is Robin Molineux. What happens

to him is quite dream-like, but still very vivid. He thinks of his past home and wonders whether he is there or here. His mind "kept vibrating between fancy and reality; by turns, the pillars of the balcony lengthened into the tall, bare stems of pines, dwindled down to human figures, settled again into their true shape and size, and then commenced a new succession of changes" (III, 633). Robin is between two worlds -- that comfortable one of the past, and this confusing, bewildering one where appearance and reality seem to merge in such a way that it is impossible for him to tell what is going on. It is suggested, however, that Robin will not be engulfed by his disappointment when he realizes that his kinsman is in disgrace, for another man advises him to stay and try to establish himself anyway.

Two others, who are engulfed by the shadow, are Reuben Bourne and Ethan Brand. Bourne cannot function in any meaningful way after leaving his father-in-law behind in the wilderness to die, and finally ends up killing his own son to attain expiation. Brand, of course, as he views the shadow in his own heart, finds self destruction to be the only way out.

Arthur Dimmesdale thinks self torture will somehow purify him from the shadow of his error, but he is unaware that guilt in the person of Roger Chillingworth dwells with him. Hester is not so plagued because she acknowledges her guilt, openly admits violating the social code. Actually, Dimmesdale is trying to repress the shadow, thus

making it more horrible and much more harmful. This refusal to recognize the shadow is what makes his life seem unreal to him; the shadow is part of reality.

Jaffrey Pyncheon of The House of the Seven Gables also refuses to look within where a vast darkness exists. He has a pleasant outward appearance to all those who meet him on the street, is apparently popular or powerful enough to be in the running for the nomination as candidate for governor, seems to be a complete success. Despite the ancient curse and the fact that it has taken its toll of Pyncheons, Jaffrey laughs about the region of his throat, which is symbolic of his refusal to look inward. Nevertheless, he is driven inward by the fact that his true self emerges. One may flee as Hester and Clifford do, but again like them, must eventually return. "We may present to others an aspect of light, but if our souls be dark, eventually we are driven in upon ourselves; if not in this world, then in the next."[16]

Northrop Frye has said that the romantic uses "within" metaphors rather than "up there" or "out there" metaphors.[17] Hawthorne was certainly interested in the inner life, which could be presented best through the medium of romance and by the use of symbolism. In many of his works, we have seen that the symbolic journey is significant in presenting the underside of experience. Withdrawal and return, ascent and descent all have to do with some kind of moral action or psychological development; the conscious-unconscious relationship, or

the looking within, comes to the fore in a kind of dream setting or twilight area of human experience. The object for Hawthorne is to dissolve the gross actuality of fact, and he is successful because the journey is presented without its concrete and practical aspects and is significant primarily in terms of what it symbolizes. In the next chapter, we will consider how Hawthorne accomplishes the same thing by his use of symbolic settings.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Lionel Trilling, "Our Hawthorne," Hawthorne Centenary Essays, 434.

[2]Matthiessen, American Renaissance, 341.

[3]Male, Hawthorne's Tragic Vision, 96.

[4]R.W.B. Lewis, "The Controlled Division of Sympathies," A Scarlet Letter Handbook, 27.

[5]James E. Miller, Jr., "Uncharted Interiors: The American Romantics Revisited," Emerson Society Quarterly (II Quarter, 1964), 38.

[6]Waggoner, Hawthorne, 38.

[7]F.L. Lucas, "Epilogue," Romanticism: Points of View, 130.

[8]Motto on title page of Aldous Huxley's Point Counter Point, taken from Fulke Greville's Mustapha, the "Chorus of Tartars."

[9]Jacobi, Complex/Archetype/Symbol, 125.

[10]Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung: An Introduction with Illustrations, trans. K.W. Bash (London, 1942), 98.

[11]Herbert Read, et al, eds., The Collected Works of C.G.

Jung, Volume 11, Psychology and Religion: West and East, trans. R.F.C. Hull (New York, 1959), 93-94.

[12] Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung, 123.

[13] Ibid., 131.

[14] Adkins, "Psychological Symbolism of Guilt and Isolation in Hawthorne," 424.

[15] Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung, 13.

[16] Harold Orel, "The Double Symbol," American Literature (March, 1951), 6.

[17] Frye, Romanticism Reconsidered, 8.

CHAPTER VII

SYMBOLIC SETTINGS

As earlier mentioned, Frye indicates that the metaphorical structure for the romantic is inside and downward instead of outside and upward. The creative world for him is deep within. Jung has said that life proceeds on different planes -- material, spiritual, biological, psychological, and that these may reflect each other in analogies; the sunrise, for example, may represent a parallel to the awakening of consciousness. Generally, Jung believes, the only equivalent of the world within is the world without, and just as this world is reached through the medium of the body, so the other is reached through the medium of the psyche.

Many writers have built counterparts to their inner visions, using various things in the outside world to represent psychological states or symbolical actions. Spenser's "Wood of Error" is a good example, as are many other scenes from allegorical works. The landscape of the psyche has been apparent too in the works of those like Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Bewley says Haw-

thorne "projects the inner moral or psychological travail outward into a world of external symbols."[1] Unable to accept the mere surface of existence, Hawthorne has also taken as his terrain the landscape of the psyche, which puts him in the company of other American romantics, for whom, "whether exploring the hills of heaven or the pits of hell, the landscape lies within."[2] It must also be remembered, however, that although Hawthorne wants to read a meaning into the landscape, he also wants to find it there.

In "The Hollow of the Three Hills" we find a vivid description of the scene. Obviously, the hills represent the three human ties broken by the lady. She had brought dishonor to her parents, broken her vows to her husband, and left her child to die. The brown grass, decaying trees, decayed oak, and stagnant pool are all symbolic of her moral decay, providing an apt setting to represent her inner reality. She is haunted by the past enough to seek the withered, shrunken, decrepit witch-like woman in an attempt to discover what she has done. The knowledge is too much for her -- "But when the old woman stirred the kneeling lady, she lifted not her head" (I, 233).

Like this symbolic landscape, the forest in "Young Goodman Brown" may represent his heart, which is populated by fiends. Brown is surrounded by the same kind of darkness which characterizes his dim, optical-illusion view of reality. The whole setting suggests the kind of doubt which eventually is enough to overwhelm Brown, making

him incapable of functioning in society in any acceptable way. We are told that he "thinks" he hears the voices of the deacon and minister, but their shadows do not intercept the light. When the cloud which contains babbling voices goes floating by, he "thinks" he hears the voices of some of the townspeople; he assumes the pink ribbon which floats down belongs to Faith. Finally, he knows not whether she obeyed his admonition to look up to heaven and resist the wicked one. When the flood of doubt finally overtakes him in the dark and dreary forest, Brown goes mad and is himself the most frightening creature there. He shows himself to be as dense as the forest foliage, unable to follow the path his own reason should have made visible.

Such spiritual geography is also apparent in The House of the Seven Gables, a work which interestingly uses the seasons, the shop being opened in mid-summer, the judge's death being followed by a storm, and the departure from the house taking place while some autumn leaves are still on the elm. The house seems almost human to Hawthorne. Its outward and inward appearance symbolize the moral ruin which is the central theme of the work. In addition to the decayed, dark house, there is the white rose bush with a blight at its heart, like the Pyncheon family; the "vagrant and lawless plants," like Jaffrey who, in addition to his other infractions, ignores the law of basic humanity; the chickens, products of inbreeding, exemplary of a "degenerated race"; and the well with brackish water, which dates back to the early history

of the house; "after the workmen began their operations, the spring of water . . . entirely lost the deliciousness of its pristine quality" (III, 22-23). The house and its surroundings then are quite obviously symbolic of the blighted family, almost all of whose remaining members show the effects of the corruption began by an early ancestor.

Hepzibah and Clifford especially are decayed remnants. Unable to function in the outer world, they are nevertheless driven into it by Jaffrey's death in the house. Frightened and dismayed, Hepzibah follows Clifford in his journey away from the past and all it represents. The violent storm not only makes it possible for them to wander down the street almost unnoticed, but is also a direct parallel to what is taking place in their lives at this moment; they are involved in an emotional storm, a frighteningly sudden catapult into the unknown, prepared to meet their problem only with shaky, almost non-existent inner resources.

The storm is interesting too because it takes place on the night when Judge Pyncheon, who is constantly associated with the sun, his sunshiny smile, etc., sits dead in the ancestral chair. The fact that the next morning the world is warmed by sunshine suggests the kind of symbolic relationships we find in Shakespeare where order on all levels is associated with natural order, i.e., good weather. Perhaps Hawthorne is implying that something stormy and violent has gone out of the Pyncheon house, that now it may be possible for Hepzibah and Clifford

to cast off the bonds of the past. Furthermore, Alice's posies bloom on that same morning. Alice Pyncheon, who was the last Pyncheon grievously wronged by a Maule, planted the posies which symbolize the blight at the heart of the family. Now they take on a new role, symbolizing the forthcoming love of Holgrave and Phoebe. "They were flaunting in rich beauty and full bloom to-day, and seemed, as it were, a mystic expression that something within the house was consummated" (III, 338).

Another flower takes on significance in The Scarlet Letter -- the red rose. Blooming right outside the prison from which Hester Prynne emerges,

> the rose is pitying nature, as the prison is pitiless man. The rose is also, however, Hester Prynne, a red rose against the gray Puritan background; and therefore it is the scarlet letter, the natural passion which the prison exists to quell. Beside the fortress-like prison the rose seems pitiably frail, but it is strong with the power of natural vitality.[3]

It may be seen as an example, according to Feidelson, of how the Puritans imprison nature. The prison is called the "black flower" of their town; perhaps the red flower represents natural affection.[4] Pearl, too, is associated with it in the sense that she is the scarlet letter incarnate, the product of the natural affection which the rose symbolizes. Other flowers and weeds reflect the moral status of characters in The Scarlet Letter. Chillingworth is associated with weeds, Pearl with other flowers, Hester as between the burdock and the rose, and

Dimmesdale with no growing thing.[5]

Pearl has a close affinity with nature, which apparently is possible because nature is associated with the wild lawlessness she personifies. Wild creatures seem to feel a close kinship with her. In the forest, she seems to be more at home than anywhere else. But that same forest has quite a different effect on Hester as she goes there to meet Dimmesdale. There is a footpath leading into it, which "straggled onward into the mystery of the primeval forest. This hemmed it in so narrowly, and stood so black and dense on either side, and disclosed such imperfect glimpses of the sky above, that, to Hester's mind, it imaged not amiss the moral wilderness in which she had so long been wandering" (V, 220). Furthermore, the day is chill and sombre, and even the sunlight withdraws as Hester approaches it.

While in The Scarlet Letter and "Young Goodman Brown" there is the suggestion that evil dwells in the forest or wilderness, this is reversed in "My Kinsman, Major Molineux." Here, the city represents the moral tangle in which Robin becomes enmeshed, whereas his country home represents innocence and some kind of moral order. When he thinks about his family on a typical evening getting ready for bed, everything seems to be quietly efficient, organized, peaceful. Here in the city, Robin finds only confusion, bewilderment, ambiguous people and occurrences. It is a kind of nightmarish world where appearance-reality mingle, where he is confronted by a man whose face is weirdly

black and red. He feels amost as if he is being whirled around, bounced back and forth between what is and what seems to be, unaware until the very end that a kind of grotesque parade which takes place will have as its central feature the tarred and feathered figure of his sought-for kinsman.

Another significant symbolic setting is found in the Italian background of The Marble Faun. Von Abele, who calls Rome a "chaotic junkyard of civilization," says that the city seems to be filled with sterility.[6] This comment overlooks the fact that Rome, rich in symbolical associations, provides the background against which Hawthorne portrays the growth of a human soul. It may be seen, as Lewis views it,[7] as a symbol coexistent with the temporal order itself. Called the city of all time, it is related to a threefold antiquity, Christian, Roman, and Etruscan, tied to a past which somehow lives continuously in the present. There is certainly nothing sterile in what takes place in the novel, not to mention all of the great painting and sculpture which represents the fertility of some of the greatest artists who ever lived.

If life itself can be considered an art, here we have four people who, despite the obstacles they each face, are attempting to live it successfully and, if possible, beautifully. Miriam realizes that the darkness which surrounds her might quite possibly dim the light of the others and perhaps even engulf Donatello, whom Lewis calls an "Arcadian Simpleton." Therefore, she tries to keep that darkness from all of them.

But Donatello, who has the kind of affinity with nature which only innocence knows, insists upon prying into her affairs, with the result being his fall from that innocence. Hilda's idea of the beautiful life is to remain aloof from all that is ugly, although she comments that the sights of Rome have moral significance. "There are sermons in stones . . . and especially in the stones of Rome." Perhaps she notices the sermons in inanimate objects but cannot see the same moral lessons which can be gained from observing human beings who have problems. Kenyon, for the most part, is described as a kind of marble man, who really doesn't think about others at all. But, as he stands and looks down from Donatello's tower, Kenyon, who has apparently learned something from his relationship with the two troubled ones, sees a kind of message in the natural surroundings, a parallel between the view and the human spirit. Kenyon also remarks that Donatello should see a moral in the little shrub growing out of the stone pavement which formed the roof of the battlemented tower, perhaps the lesson that growth is possible under the worst circumstances. Although Donatello refuses to acknowledge such a lesson, his flinging over the battlements a worm that would have killed the shrub indicates that he has not completely lost hope.

But Ethan Brand, whose "spiritual and physical journeys precisely coincide,"[8] has no hope left. The setting for his return is a lonely hillside, isolated like him, in which there is a lime kiln, a kind

of furnace which converts marble into lime dust, an apt symbol for Brand's heart, cold and unsympathetic, but aflame with guilt for the unpardonable sin which he finds there. The hillside is surrounded by a forest, again suggestive of isolation, with the kiln in its center, all of which represents the heart of Brand in a kind of moral wilderness. After he kills himself, a kind of peace seems to descend upon the landscape, almost as if, like in The House of the Seven Gables, something evil has been destroyed, or at least removed from the immediate area for a time.

There thus seems to be a kind of sympathy between humanity and nature, not only in the sense that the landscape may quite well describe a state of moral chaos or bliss, but also that nature responds, expresses itself as it were, in connection with human activities. Reuben Bourne, coming back to fulfill a burning obligation to his friend and now father-in-law, Roger Malvin, locates the place where the body lay. There a tree where Reuben had hung his "little banner," so that he could find Malvin when he came back with help, is blighted at the top where the handkerchief was, but luxuriantly alive in the middle and lower branches. The blight at the top is symbolic of the blight which has characterized Bourne's life since that unfortunate day. Yet, I think there is a tendency to sympathize with Bourne somewhat because he left only because of the convincing arguments of Malvin, whose life apparently could not be saved anyway. His only justifiable guilt lay in his failure

to keep the promise to bury Malvin.

Much more responsible for what occurs is Rappaccini, whose evil garden, an inverted Eden, is directly symbolic of his moral state. The hideous plants, poisonous even to their creator, the horrible purple shrub, directly attest to the evil deeds of Rappaccini, who, for the sake of science, has isolated his daughter from all humanity, made her merely the subject of another experiment. Of course, she serves a useful purpose in her poisonous condition, for she can tend the garden without being killed; Rappaccini must don heavy gloves and a mask to even get close to his creations. Given his attitude, losing his daughter in the end probably does not disturb Rappaccini much; after all, her death serves a useful scientific purpose. Now he knows what an antidote will do.

When Coverdale arrives at Blithedale, which is associated with the happy valley, there is a wintry snow storm taking place. Hawthorne calls him a frosty bachelor, not only because he is cold but also because he is somewhat aloof, distant from basic human relationships, incapable of love for another person. All of his energy is expended on snooping. Possibly he did not really consider Blithedale as a kind of arcadian retreat, a paradise away from the ordinary world, but came to partake of the cheery blaze of the woodfire only to observe those others who came. He certainly finds apt objects of interest.

What Hawthorne is exploring essentially in all these works is

the shadow landscape of the self. Although this is often done in the guise of a dimly recognizable "real" world, the emphasis is upon what is revealed about the inner world, that realm where so much that is significant to human life takes place. In addition to the symbolic settings which involve landscapes, natural phenomena like storms, sunshine, flowers, are those related to buildings, inside and out, symbolic interiors, apartments, laboratories, workrooms, as well as objects like paintings, and sculpture. It will be seen that habitations are not just backgrounds but sometimes the very heart of Hawthorne's art.

The most obvious example is The House of the Seven Gables. Built over the spot where the Maule hut was, over an "unquiet grave," the house represents an inherited sense of guilt for the Pyncheons' crime against the Maules. Hawthorne says "the aspect of the venerable mansion has always affected me like a human countenance, bearing the traces not merely of outward storm and sunshine, but expressive, also, of the long lapse of mortal life, and accompanying vicissitudes that have passed within" (III, 17). The house and the family are interchangeable, its decay symbolizing Hawthorne's moral "that the wrong-doing of one generation lives into the successive ones . . ." As Fogle states, "the power of the house is the isolating force of the crime and the past."[9]

In accordance with his ability to present a symbol within a symbol within a symbol, Hawthorne describes Phoebe's room in the

house, which is a spot of sunshine, as she is to Clifford and Hepzibah. Also inside the house is Holgrave's dwelling, containing "a book, face downward, on the table, a roll of manuscript, a half-written sheet, a newspaper, some tools of his present occupation, and several rejected daguerreotypes" (III, 290). These objects reveal Holgrave's interests as a kind of artist figure. As he observes, stands aloof from the action, at least until his involvement with Phoebe, he writes and takes pictures. Holgrave could very well be the serpent in the bosom, the invading Maule who wreaks the final destruction on the Pyncheons, by looking deeply into their interiors, exploiting the human heart only for his own artistic purposes. But he is the one to end it all, which becomes obvious when he refuses to use his hypnotic powers on Phoebe. He resolves the final mystery of the missing property by revealing that the deed is behind the portrait of the evil Colonel Pyncheon, whose pictorial influence over all the other Pyncheons is also at an end.

Another symbolic structure is Donatello's tower among the Apennines. Covered with yellow moss and close-clinging lichens, the castle, which had once been a fortress, now has forsaken rooms, is in a state of decay and ruin. A narrow staircase leads up to "The Owl Tower," from whence Donatello looks down. We are told that a monk once burned for his faith haunts the tower, that the alabaster skull represents some crime, and that the castle is surrounded by an Arcadian Italian countryside. The castle and its setting both suggest the past, a

dark one filled with some kind of secret corruption, and the present of Donatello's struggle with his guilt. Kenyon remarks on the symbolic meaning of the tower which, he says, "resembles the spiritual experience of many a sinful soul, which, nevertheless, may struggle upward into the pure air and light of Heaven at last!" The owls, who usually represent wisdom, are more tolerant of him now, says Donatello, the suggestion being that he has gained some kind of wisdom through his crime. Although the castle is associated with time and age, and thus with ancient crime, or even original sin, it is apparent that Donatello had not heretofore realized that he was in a fallen world. It is almost as though Hawthorne is saying that each man in a sense re-enacts the fall, a necessity if any moral growth is to take place.

Other interiors, like those in The Marble Faun, seem to be commentaries on those who dwell in them. Kenyon, Hawthorne's "marble man," lives in a studio described as follows:

> The studio of a sculptor is generally but a rough and dreary-looking place, with a good deal the aspect, indeed, of a stone-mason's workshop. Bare floors of brick or plank, and plastered walls; an old chair or two, or perhaps only a block of marble (containing, however, the possibility of ideal grace within it) to sit down upon; some hastily scrawled sketches of nude figures on the whitewash of the wall (VI, 139).

Except for some moments of inspiration, Kenyon seems to be incapable of producing anything which comes alive. His vision is starkly realistic, like his dwelling, and omits for the most part that element which

is most important for living art -- the ability to release life, to spiritualize matter.

Perhaps Miriam goes to the other extreme. Her work room is "one of those delightful spots that hardly seem to belong to the actual world, but rather to be the outward type of a poet's haunted imagination, where there are glimpses, sketches, and half-developed hints of beings and objects grander and more beautiful than we can anywhere find in reality" (VI, 57). Yet her view would probably be closer to Hawthorne's own.

Hilda, who likes the picture of the Archangel Michael, unruffled even after slaying the dragon, lives in her tower "above all the evil scents of Rome." Miriam says "in your maiden elevation, you dwell above our vanities and passions, our moral dust and mud, with the doves and the angels for your nearest neighbors." Isolated in her innocence, Hilda is incapable of showing sympathy or mercy toward those who have fallen short of her high aspirations and expectations. When the evil which involves her friends touches her, there is no place to go for relief but down. This descent takes her to human sympathy and ultimately to an association with Kenyon.

Still other interiors are objectifications of human hearts, or moral states. Arthur Dimmesdale's apartment has a "sunny exposure and heavy window curtains to create a noontide shadow, when desirable." Creating a shadow in the middle of the day is a natural thing for the

minister because he himself is a shadow. Hawthorne, in fact, calls him "the dimmest of all shadows," because he has not been true. Supposedly a lover of truth who feels that untrue things are shadow-like, Dimmesdale nevertheless is able to curtain his own guilt with the heavy drapes of hypocrisy.

Eino Railo has noted in The Haunted Castle: A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism that the haunted room of an old castle can become the laboratory of magicians, alchemists, a secret research room of the scientist, in general, a place where some terrifying element is housed. This castle fits into the literature of various periods, since it is a kind of re-rendering of the haunted castle of "terror romanticism." There is no castle in "The Birthmark," but we do have the strange laboratory where Aylmer does his work. It is comprised of two rooms -- one decorated in a rather elaborate manner like a boudoir, and the other containing the furnace, distilling apparatus, and other equipment he finds necessary. This lab may well represent Aylmer's mind and moral being. All of the machinery which it contains is used by Aylmer in his continuing attempts to thwart nature. Natural light is kept out in favor of artificial light, a significant fact since it reveals Aylmer's preference for that which does not contain the flaw of earth, the stain of actuality. This insistence upon perfecting matter results in the death of his wife.

In summary, the foregoing examples reveal that Hawthorne's

settings were for the most part symbolic. By his use of certain kinds of landscapes and interiors which are quite obviously suggestive of various situations and states of mind, he manages not only to overcome the material in favor of the idea, but also to gain a kind of distance or perspective which enables him to concentrate on the inner meaning of particular events. This approach reinforces the themes he is trying to convey. Meaning emerges not only from what the characters say and do, but also from where they do it and what they are surrounded by. Thus, the whole setting is made to serve the central meaning. Furthermore, Hawthorne knew that it was difficult to describe moral states in a directly factual way, that mental processes are somehow out of the realm of straightforward prose, which cannot convey their complexity.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Marius Bewley, The Eccentric Design: Form in the Classic American Novel (London, 1959), 141.

[2]Miller, "Uncharted Interiors," 35.

[3]Fogle, Hawthorne's Fiction, 14.

[4]Feidelson, "The Scarlet Letter," Hawthorne Centenary Essays, 50-51.

[5]Waggoner, Hawthorne, 141.

[6]Von Abele, The Death of the Artist, 88.

[7]R.W.B. Lewis, "The Return Into Time," Hawthorne: A Collection of Critical Essays, 82.

[8]Fogle, Hawthorne's Fiction, 47.

[9]Ibid., 166.

CONCLUSION

W.D. Snodgrass, in an article entitled "An Overview of Recent Poetry,"[1] discusses what he feels was a great artistic revolution from 1870 through 1930. He asserts that this revolution was essentially an attack upon form, led by the Impressionist painters, who attempted to destroy matter so they could release energy. Snodgrass's hypothesis is quite an interesting one to consider. in connection with this thesis. It appears, though, that the revolution began somewhat earlier than he would place it.

This seems to be what Emerson is saying in his 1836 essay, "Nature," when he states that the poet "unfixes the land and the sea, makes them revolve around the axis of his primary thought, and disposes them anew." The poet, Emerson continues, conforms things to his thoughts, so that "the solid seeming block of matter has been pervaded and dissolved by a thought." Matter is dissolved so that the energy generated by the work of art may be released. One may even think of Emerson's belief that truly creative moments can occur only when one crosses the threshold of the house of time as a kind of attack on form, the form dictated by the past and all it represents in terms of artistic

conformity. He believes that when the artist crosses this threshold to go into the woods, he is allowing himself to be surrounded by the beauties of nature at which time he can become a "transparent eyeball," truly see, and effectively communicate with the pervading spirit of the universe. The result of all this is that one can receive the flow of inspiration from without, combine it with his own deep well of cerebration, and allow all of it to flow out again like a beautiful, meaningful fountain of light.

For Thoreau, too, it was important to leave society, cross the threshold from the conventional, soul-destroying workaday world, in order to find out what was really essential, to establish some meaningful values. For him the attack on matter was directed at the outer, material life which he felt must be disciplined and purified so that the inner life could develop fully. Bathing in the pond, for example, suggests the kind of purification ritual by which the dust of the ordinary can be removed. Rebuilding a new hut, a different material existence, based on the newly-discovered needs of the spiritual self, was the only way that Thoreau felt he could integrate the self. Somehow the inner energy had to be released, and it was when form, the conventional bond between man and society, was destroyed that this energy emerged.

Whitman similarly is concerned with the relationship between matter and spirit. Although he seems at times rather preoccupied with the physical, as in his statement about his "lucious" flesh, the

celebration of the body in "Song of Myself," he is nevertheless quite capable of transcending it in favor of the ideal. In "Song of Myself," for example, he seems to be transcending the physical when he says "I effuse my flesh in eddies and drift it in lacy jags." Whitman's attitude toward poetic form, that it must not stand in the way of meaning but somehow facilitate it, is also an attempt to destroy form in order to release energy.

A much more obvious attack on matter in actual artistic productions is the work of Edgar Allan Poe. Grotesque interiors and wild landscapes symbolize states of mind, while the emphasis on decomposition, with the time-eaten edifices like the house of Usher, and the wasting away of Rowena in the horrible chamber in "Ligeia," illustrate Poe's attack on matter. Wilbur, in his introduction to the Laurel Edition of Poe's Works, describes this poetic process as the symbolic destruction of the physical. Such activity does, one must admit, release energy in the form of usually engaging tales.

Hawthorne, too, attacks matter in order to release energy. He always felt that the material world in which he lived and worked was antagonistic to the imagination. It is a well-known fact that he bitterly complained about his inability to produce anything worthwhile when he was busy with a normal job. The energy of the imagination could somehow not be realized unless he had quiet and leisure. But this kind of rejection of matter, or at least preference for the mental or ideal,

extended far beyond merely being free from ordinary activities.

When Hawthorne was relieved of outside responsibilities so that he could write, he concentrated on stories about his Puritan ancestors, tales set in places like Rome, the utopian Blithedale, and stories replete with references to ancient mythology. He usually did not, in other words, describe the contemporary scene, or draw materials from the world of his own time and place, but rather turned back in time for the most part to view in his art the moral problems with which men struggled. Hawthorne's approach to idealizing matter was characterized by gaining temporal, spatial, and even psychic distance. Rather than rejecting matter entirely, he is using fact as a kind of basis for his work, but, through distance and perspective, dissolving it of its gross actualities.

This kind of artistic stance puts Hawthorne between the actual and the imaginary, a place he described as the neutral ground. The emphasis, therefore, is not on whether Hawthorne converts matter to idea, but how. A close consideration of his novels and stories has shown, too, that in almost every instance what happens to the material has a moral or ethical significance. It is this meaning that gives most of his work its universality. By concentrating on the universal, Hawthorne is able to maintain integrity as a writer who believed that there were basic moral problems which all men shared.

Basically, then, Hawthorne does fit into what Snodgrass

describes as the artist who attacks matter in order to release energy. He shows matter being destroyed in his works in many different ways, but the destruction is always symbolic, so that the energy released is the meaning of the work. Distance removes the story from concrete, everyday considerations so that the problem being explored can be isolated and viewed with perspective.

In addition to idealizing the material by distance and perspective, Hawthorne manages to realize the ideal. He projects interior meanings into outward symbols by the use of symbolic journeys and symbolic settings. This symbolic method enables him to explore the underside of experience, that area of human existence best understood in such terms. Thus, the journey may be seen as a descent into the deepest regions of the human soul, where a human being is confronted with his Shadow, Jung's word for the dark characteristics, the propensity to sin, after which experience one may mature or be destroyed like Young Goodman Brown. The journey may also be seen as the plunge into experience, as leading to the kind of initiation which Robin Molineux passes through. Whatever it suggests, and there are numerous possibilities, the journey motif allows the writer to present through symbolism ideas and meanings which might otherwise be lost. This is also true of the use of symbolic settings, which enable Hawthorne to represent vividly inner states by outer scenery. The parallels between matter and spirit are thus made picturesquely clear.

Converting matter to idea is a basic artistic function. That Hawthorne does it is not particularly significant. What is important, however, to a deeper understanding and fuller appreciation of his work is how he does it and what the results are. In connection with the first point, we have seen that Hawthorne rather than destroying matter entirely chooses to dissolve it of its gross actualities. The material is significant to him only in terms of meaning. He presents the inner world of man's experience, but never forgets entirely the outer world's influence. The distance which is necessary for dissolving the gross actuality of fact aids also in achieving universal meaning. Modern psychology, for example, recognizes the role of repressed guilt feelings, like Dimmesdale's, in mental illness; the danger of living in the past, like Hepzibah and Clifford in The House of the Seven Gables; the danger of a prying nature to self and others, a nature like that of Miles Coverdale which finds fulfillment only by intruding into the lives of others; or the disaster which may result from one's inability to see the darkness in himself and others without being overwhelmed by it, as Young Goodman Brown and Parson Hooper are and as Donatello almost is. Hawthorne has thus managed really to explore the universal problems of evil and guilt which have plagued mankind throughout history, an achievement which makes his work not only an important contribution to the history of literature, but also to the history of ideas.

FOOTNOTE

[1]W.D. Snodgrass, "An Overview of Recent Poetry," *Approaches to the Study of Twentieth Century Literature: Proceedings of the Conference in the Study of Twentieth Century Literature* (East Lansing, Michigan, 1962), 89.

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