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THE CULTIVATION THEME IN HAWTHORNE'S NOVELS

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by

Jill Meznar Thompson

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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine Hawthorne's motif of cultivation in his novels The Marble Faun, The Scarlet Letter, The House of the Seven Gables, and The Blithedale Romance.

Cultivation of the soil, which in Genesis becomes necessary as a consequence of original sin, is linked both Biblically and etymologically with spirituality and moral growth. In Hawthorne's first two novels, the act of tilling pictures man's acceptance of his fallen nature and guilty past. The extent of his dedication and the fruit of his labor reflect the individual's moral condition.

Hester, who tends the growth of Pearl, and Holgrave and Phoebe, who till the Pyncheon garden, accept the weight of a guilty past and, as a result, come to a higher level of maturity. Governor Bellingham remains blind to his failures, while judging those in his community, and reaps a meager harvest in the garden of his estate. Chillingworth refuses to believe in the possibility of regeneration and plants the germ of destruction in Dimmesdale's soul, at the same time working his own damnation. His ruinous purpose is pictured in the weeds which he gathers and converts into poisons.

Hawthorne's metaphor is reversed in The Blithedale Romance; for cultivation here brings no spiritual benefit. Instead, the farmers' labor violates nature--a violation occurring in the figure of Zenobia. Because the communitarians resolve to free themselves from the past by establishing a "new Arcadia" and work with no sense of personal guilt, their scheme is a failure.

The cultivation motif in Hawthorne's novels offers, then, the following inference: man must accept the sins of the past and devote himself to virtue, despite the difficulty of his task. As a result of this devotion, the experience and the hardship bring him to maturity.

THE CULTIVATION THEME IN HAWTHORNE'S NOVELS

Hawthorne's emphasis on history and his use of the past have long been subjects of discussion among critics. Scholars of the last decade--notably Hyatt H. Waggoner--have pointed out that "the whole body of his [Hawthorne's] work implies that we must accept the past, and the guilt it entails, before we can move with maturity into the future."¹ This view differs radically from the prevailing belief of those nineteenth-century Americans who saw the individual as a new Adam, free from any sort of inherited guilt.² Emerson, for example, spoke against the notion of a corrupt human nature: "Our young people are diseased with the theological problems of original sin, origin of evil, predestination and the like. These never presented a practical difficulty to any man,--never darkened across any man's road who did not go out of his way to seek them. These are the soul's mumps and measles."³ In Leaves of Grass, Whitman portrays "the new world's representative man as a new, American Adam...in the liberated, innocent, solitary, forward-thrusting personality that animates the whole of that...poem."⁴ He introduces himself as a "chanter of Adamic songs,/ Through the new garden the West,/ the great cities calling."⁵ The term "evil" has no significance to the innocent man. "Evil," he writes, "propels me and reform of evil propels me, I stand indifferent."⁶

Unlike his transcendentalist contemporaries, Hawthorne did not reject altogether the "offensive"⁷ doctrine of

inherited guilt or "original sin" which burdens every man with a fallen nature and a blighted past. Indeed, in his works we find, time and again, a connection between the past and the problem of sin. Christoph Lohmann's article "The Burden of the Past in Hawthorne's American Romances" argues this very point: "I believe," he states, "that...the past in Hawthorne's works often assumes a moral, ethical, and theological function, so that its treatment is frequently identical with his treatment of sin and guilt. This means that when he is concerned with the necessity of man's acceptance of his past or his inability to escape from it, Hawthorne is really expressing in symbolic terms his profound conviction that man must accept his sinful state and cannot evade the consequences of either the sin of his first parents or the sin of his own doing."⁸

In Hawthorne's novels, an individual's struggle to accept the guilt of his past is often linked with the act of cultivation. The metaphor is apt; for tilling the earth, according to the Biblical account of man's fall in chapter three of Genesis, becomes necessary as penalty for the sin of the "first parents" in Eden. This penalty, or curse, places man in opposition to nature and nature in opposition to man. As a result, man finds himself doomed to a lifetime of toil in which bread is hard won from resisting forces:

Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto

dust shalt thou return.⁹

The earth now becomes associated with the nature of the cursed man, for not only did it generate him, but in a figurative sense, it is the receptacle of man's deeds and becomes a repository for his sin. Hence, there can be no harmony between man and the natural world.

Hawthorne's most extended and explicit treatment of this theme is found in The Marble Faun. In this novel he uses images of vegetation and cultivation in order to illustrate the alienation of man and nature. For example, the marked absence of vegetation in Rome and the Italian villages suggests a spiritual barrenness in the inhabitants. Here no "earthly happiness" seems possible for in the soil lie crushed "the myriads of dead hopes"¹⁰ of successive ages. To Kenyon there appears to be no redeeming element in the city of Rome; "all modes of crime," he senses, "were crowded into the close intricacy of Roman streets" (MF, p. 411).

The Italian villagers, Kenyon observes, "appear to possess none of that emulative pride which we see in our New England villages, where every householder...endeavors to make his homestead an ornament to the grassy...wayside. In Italy, there are no neat doorsteps...; no pleasant, vine-sheltered porches; none of those grass-plots or smoothly shorn lawns.... An artist, it is true, might often thank his stars for those old houses....But there is reason to suspect that a people are waning to decay and ruin, the moment that their life becomes fascinating either in the poet's imagination or the painter's eye" (MF, pp. 295-296). These individuals,

oppressed by the weight of the past, take no action to improve their lot. They possess no will to find either relief or restoration and remain indifferent in the face of a fruitless existence. Consequently, they add their portion of grime to the story-upon-story of squalor that past generations have left behind.

"In Italy," Hawthorne writes, "whenever man has once hewn a stone, Nature forthwith relinquishes her right to it, and never lays her finger on it again. Age after age finds it bare and naked, in the barren sunshine, and leaves it so" (MF, p. 165). There seems indeed to be no sympathy between man and the natural world. When Donatello returns to Monte Beni after his fall in Rome, he finds himself estranged from his native surroundings:

They shun me! All Nature shrinks from me, and
shudders at me! I live in the midst of a curse,
that hems me round with a circle of fire! No
innocent thing can come near me! (MF, p. 249)

Although Donatello bemoans this alienation, he feels no desire to find reconciliation by working in his father's vineyards. In fact, he is completely uninterested in the production of Sunshine wine.

Thus, The Marble Faun offers the following inference: man is banished from nature at his fall and, in this fallen state, resists a reconciliation. Harmony with nature requires, then, a humbling of "self," a struggle against the proclivity to remain complacent. The purpose of this paper is to suggest that throughout Hawthorne's novels, a means for this reconciliation lies in the cultivation of the soil. Taken

metaphorically, the act represents man's recognition of his guilty past and his need for regeneration.

The act of tilling in an attempt to extract life and beauty from a desolate earth can thus be construed as man's acceptance of his fallen stature and his hope for mitigating, even transforming the effects of the curse. In the Biblical account, a condition is placed upon such an effort: man must toil with a sense of his transgression. This criterion is made clear in the figure of Cain, who errs through failing to see himself as innately guilty before God and accept the necessity for expiation. His labor, as a result of willfulness and disbelief, does not produce a fit offering; and, in slaying his brother, Cain becomes estranged from the earth: "And God said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth" (Genesis 4:10-12). From Cain's example, the conclusion can be drawn that man's labor is rewarded according to his intentions. A spiritual blessing comes only when one works with an acceptance of the guilt imposed by the curse.

The same "truth" is taught by Christ in his parables of the "sower." He speaks in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, for example, of a man who goes forth bearing seed which is the "Word of God."¹¹ The harvest of sowing "to the Spirit" is, of course, life everlasting--while sowing "to the flesh"

results in corruption (Galatians 6:8,9). Christ often exhorts his disciples to work toward righteousness by laboring in his "fields,"¹² likening the mission of his followers to husbandry. In the New Testament, then, there is a strong association between spirituality and cultivation.

The connection appears also to be reflected in the etymology of the English words "culture" and "cultivate." Colere, the Latin root of these two words, had various meanings, including "to cultivate" and "to honour with worship." The word "culture," furthermore, meant primarily "the tending of natural growth" and was extended in the sixteenth century to signify "a process of human development."¹³ With the association already established Biblically and etymologically, it is not surprising that Hawthorne links the physical act of cultivation with a moral struggle and "human development" in his novels The Scarlet Letter and The House of the Seven Gables.

In these two works, the blighted earth with its vagrant growth is emblematic of the bleak and unfruitful condition of fallen man's heart. The Puritan settlement of The Scarlet Letter has, at its center, "a grass-plot, much overgrown with burdock, pig-weed, apple-peru, and such unsightly vegetation, which evidently found something congenial in the soil that had so early borne the black flower of civilized society, a prison."¹⁴ The soil, so "congenial" to the growth of "unsightly vegetation" reflects the severe and pitiless character of the Puritan settlers who were gathered at the scaffold to cast judgment upon Hester. While the "deep heart

of Nature" can "pity and be kind" (SL, p. 48) to the prisoner, the grim, self-righteous throng cannot. Aptly, then, the site of this Puritan settlement is a wilderness--in need of cultivation even as its inhabitants want spiritual renewal.

In The Scarlet Letter three characters are involved in cultivation of sorts: Governor Bellingham, Roger Chillingworth, and Hester Prynne. Considering Hawthorne's metaphor, it is interesting to examine what the act of cultivation indicates about the sin, the past, and the spiritual condition of these individuals.

Governor Bellingham is described as a "not unkind old minister" (SL, p. 113) and yet he has clearly failed to search out or acknowledge his own inconsistencies and hypocrisies. His authority in the community seems to derive its weight, not from a reputed moral stature, but from his long-established nurture "at the rich bosom of the English Church" (SL, p. 109) and the prominence of his ancestors (whose stern portraits hang in his hall entrance). Hawthorne uses this magistrate as a sort of gauge by which the reader can measure the spirituality of the community itself. As a cultured man and one holding "an honorable and influential place among the colonial magistracy" (SL, p. 100), the Governor is expected to be the very icon of virtue. And indeed, his name is included with those statesmen who "had fortitude and self-reliance, and, in time of difficulty or peril, stood up for the welfare of the state like a line of cliffs against a tempestuous tide" (SL, p. 238). Yet we are told that "among those who promoted the design [to deprive

Hester of her child] , Governor Bellingham was said to be one of the most busy" (SL, p. 101).

Bellingham, while not an incompetent administrator, is as unfit as the clergyman John Wilson to "meddle with a question of human guilt, passion, and anguish" (SL, p. 65). Clearly he has no keen sympathy for human weakness and, in the sternness of his judgment, becomes hypocritical. His self-righteousness is reflected in Hawthorne's treatment of the governor's "suit of mail." This "bright panoply" (SL, p. 105) suggests that the magistrate relied, at least to a degree, on regalia in order to give dignity to his station. The armor has the same effect on Pearl as the "glittering frontispiece of the house" (SL, p. 106) whose "brilliancy might have befitted Aladdin's palace, rather than the mansion of a grave old Puritan ruler" (SL, p. 103). The magistrate's breastplate and helmet are burnished so highly "as to glow with white radiance, and scatter an illumination everywhere about upon the floor" (SL, p. 105). These mirror 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" (SL, p. 106). As Biblical symbols of righteousness and salvation,¹⁵ the breastplate and headpiece in the "suit of mail" provide a commentary on Bellingham's theological beliefs--their prominence suggesting a narrowness of doctrine and the "exclusiveness"¹⁶ of the Puritan faith. The distortion of Hester's image further implies that the Governor is being hypocritical and self-righteous in his judgment of the marked

woman.

Indeed, Governor Bellingham's inconsistencies are not difficult to detect. While his energies are seemingly directed toward an absolute righteous rule over the settlement, we find that these are somewhat diluted by a strong desire to surround himself with the "appliances of wordly enjoyment" (SL, p. 108). Hawthorne points out that "it is an error to suppose...our grave forefathers--though accustomed to speak and think of human existence as a state merely of trial and warfare...made it a matter of conscience to reject such means of comfort, or even luxury, as lay fairly within their grasp" (SL, p. 108). And in Grandfather's Chair, he attributes the erosion of the Puritan virtues to the "pompous and artificial mode of life"¹⁷ among the royal governors. Bellingham, who is seen dressed in an "elaborate ruff" while "showing off his estate" (SL, p. 108), is clearly at fault in this respect. His image is further marred by an association with the witch Mistress Hibbins, who lives in his house and is the "principal actor in all the works of necromancy" (SL, p. 241). Yet, despite the absence of a robust spirituality, not once during the trial of Hester Prynne is the Governor found looking inward upon his own shortcomings.

Hawthorne presents this lack of moral purity through Bellingham's lack of success at agriculture. The earth in the New England settlement, we are told, was unwilling to render a fruitful harvest to any of its denizens. And so the Governor quickly relinquishes "as hopeless, the effort to

perpetuate on this side of the Atlantic, in a hard soil and amid the close struggle for subsistence, the native English taste for ornamental gardening" (SL, p. 106). He succeeds only in growing a few cabbages and a pumpkin vine. His garden-walk is "bordered with some rude and immature attempt at shrubbery" (SL, p. 106). Furthermore, the apple trees and rose bushes (which Grace Pleasant Wellborn in her article "Plant Lore and The Scarlet Letter" links with "spiritual powers"¹⁸) are not credited to the Governor, having been planted by Reverend Mr. Blackstone, the first settler of the peninsula. Bellingham's efforts at cultivation are, then, only partially successful; his "lump of vegetable gold" (SL, p. 107), the richest ornament the New England earth would offer him, is a mere pumpkin.

Bellingham lacks motivation in cultivating because, if the metaphor holds, he promotes himself as a venerable and godly administrator and casts harsh judgment upon the wayward in his community; yet he does not make it "a matter of conscience" to exercise these strict standards upon himself. The Governor's willingness to abandon his gardening efforts indicates that as a Puritan leader, he is, at least in part, wanting. Such an indifference toward cultivation is indeed at odds with the colony's purpose of "planting in the wilderness" a "New England" (SL, p. 249). But not only is the secular Puritan leader amiss in this regard; the spiritual leader is also found wanting. Reverend Dimmesdale's election sermon, which concerns a "high and glorious destiny for the newly gathered people of the Lord" (SL, p. 249) in

their "planting" effort, becomes a mockery when one considers the failure and decline of this spiritual leader. Dimmesdale's "polluted soul" (SL, p. 181) makes vain his own "mission" (SL, p. 249) in the wilderness; the harboring of unconfessed sin renders his calling in "godly New England" (SL, p. 62) empty.

The minister's hypocrisy is nurtured by Roger Chillingworth, the "polluter" of Dimmesdale's soul. Here is a man "who had so cultivated his mental part that it could not fail to mould the physical to itself, and become manifest by unmistakable tokens" (SL, p. 60): a slight deformity of the figure and a furrowed visage. Chillingworth "--a man of thought,--the book-worm of great libraries" (SL, p. 74), claims to long have been "a man already in decay, having given [his] best years to feed the hungry dream of knowledge" (SL, p. 74). The physical deformity, the "bodily disease," is, of course, but an expression of "some ailment in the spiritual part" (SL, p. 136).

Hawthorne often associates, as in Chillingworth's case, the rank growth of weeds with human perversity-- "unsightly vegetation" being a metaphoric display of the tenacity and ugliness of sin. The damnation of those characters who become welded to a vision of evil nurture the "vegetable wickedness" (SL, p. 175) even as they foster corruption.

Roger Chillingworth, after sojourning in the wilderness, returns from the vast and dismal forest into the settlement of Christian men bearing "many new secrets" (SL, p. 72)

gleaned in the dark woods. His exposure to that region which embodies the essence of evil and where iniquitous men consort with the devil suggests that Chillingworth's heart is itself a wasteland. If we consider Donald A. Ringe's notion of Hawthorne's "head and heart" psychology which equates nature with the heart,¹⁹ it follows that one devoid of "heart" should be associated with a wilderness landscape-- that he should, further, convert natural growth into poisons. Leo Marx relates the wilderness in America with the exercise of power--explaining, in The Machine in the Garden, that those who envisioned America as a wasteland considered it a field open for personal domination.²⁰ We see this relationship expressed, to some extent, in Roger Chillingworth. The knowledge he acquires in the wilderness enables him to exert an influence on the minister until as "time went on; a kind of intimacy...grew up between these two cultivated minds" (SL, p. 125) and Chillingworth can become the "chief actor, in the poor minister's interior world" (SL, p. 140).

In entering the Puritan village and executing his revenge, Chillingworth acts as the emissary of the Black Man, cultivating the germ of destruction and death in minister Arthur Dimmesdale's soul. Aptly, the weeds which he gathers and converts into drugs of potency are symbolic of his malicious nature and his ruinous purpose.²¹ In the eyes of the townspeople, the leech first appears to be an angel of light, a "brilliant acquisition" (SL, p. 119) for the settlement. And, indeed, his life had once been made up of

"earnest, studious, thoughtful, quiet years, bestowed faithfully...for the advancement of human welfare. No life," he testifies, "had been more peaceful and innocent than mine; few lives so rich with benefits conferred" (SL, p. 172). But in the regard of the morally discerning (Hester and, later, Dimmesdale), Chillingworth's soul is as noxious as the herbs he collects. Hester, in observing the ungainly figure, wonders if the earth, "quickened to an evil purpose by the sympathy of his eye," would not "greet him with poisonous shrubs, of species hitherto unknown, that would start up under his fingers" (SL, p. 174).

Chillingworth, then, committed to the propagation of evil, seeks to guide the weak minister into sure damnation. His work in the soil is to take unsightly weeds, the harvest of man's fallen nature, and distill them into deadly poisons--toxins for Arthur Dimmesdale's soul. The leech transforms himself into a devil, Hawthorne explains, because he has undertaken a devil's office. The damning "step awry" appears to be his own; but Chillingworth is unwilling to assume full responsibility for his deeds. While admitting that he betrayed Hester's "budding youth into a false and unnatural relation" with his decay (SL, p. 75) and acknowledging that he became a fiend for tormenting Dimmesdale, he claims to be "fiend-like" because "fate" decreed it so (SL, p. 174). "By thy first step awry," he tells Hester, "thou didst plant the germ of evil; but, since that moment, it has all been a dark necessity" (SL, p. 174). There can be no salvation for Chillingworth because his "faith" (SL, p. 174)

sees no possibility for release from the bondage of the past.²² His parting words to Hester, as she entreats him to forgive and be purged, are: "Let the black flower blossom as it may" (SL, p. 174).

The figure of Chillingworth in The Scarlet Letter is indeed a sad commentary on man's inclination to go astray and execute his own damnation. Hawthorne's picture of the human condition is further darkened by Governor Bellingham, whose prejudices are so "fortified" (SL, p. 162) that he hypocritically casts stones at human weakness. Yet the "tale of human frailty and sorrow" (SL, p. 48) is not an altogether bleak one. It is relieved in the figure of Hester Prynne who struggles to ease the burden of her sin and is rewarded with the wisdom and compassion born of suffering.

If we consider Hester Prynne's development in terms of the cultivation metaphor, the fact that she moves to a cottage on the outskirts of town which "had been built by an earlier settler, and abandoned, because the soil about it was too sterile for cultivation" (SL, p. 81) becomes significant; for such an act indicates a willingness to accept the inglorious consequences to her sin. Hawthorne informs the reader that Hester was kept "by no restrictive clause of her condemnation within the limits of the Puritan settlement" (SL, p. 79). She was free to return to her birthplace or any European land, or even move into the New England forest where the "customs and life" of the people were "alien from the law that had condemned her" (SL, p. 79). Yet Hester is compelled to remain, for "her sin, her

ignominy, were the roots which she had struck into the soil" and by these she is bound to the location with "iron links" that "could never be broken" (SL, p. 80).²³ The unfertile land on the outskirts of the settlement is an apt scene for her earthly punishment; here might she live in toil and misery and "so, perchance, the torture of her daily shame would at length purge her soul, and work out another purity than that which she had lost; more saint-like, because the result of martyrdom" (SL, p. 80). Hester's tilling of her "little garden" (SL, p. 81), a scene which the village children frequently observe, pictures, then, the course by which an individual accepts the guilt of the past and moves with maturity into the future.

Hester's garden becomes a metaphoric one--the growth which she tends being Pearl, "that little creature, whose innocent life had sprung, by the inscrutable decree of Providence, a lovely and immortal flower, out of the rank luxuriance of a guilty passion" (SL, p. 89). As the product of a sinful liason between Hester and Dimmesdale, Pearl is a wild growth which must be controlled, tended, and nurtured. She becomes, in effect, the test of Hester's devotion to righteous living. Arthur Dimmesdale convincingly argues to Governor Bellingham that Pearl is the avenue of Hester's moral development: "It is good for this poor, sinful woman that she hath an infant immortality, a being capable of eternal joy or sorrow, confided to her care,--to be trained up by her to righteousness,--to remind her, at every moment, of her fall,--but yet to teach her, as it were by the Creator's

sacred pledge, that, if she bring the child to heaven, the child also will bring its parent thither" (SL, pp. 114-115). Pearl serves ever to remind her mother of the past; yet she also furnishes the hope that the past need not inevitably determine the future.²⁴ Her purpose as a "spirit messenger," Hester comes to see, is not only to execute the "justice and retribution" of Providence, but also to afford "mercy and beneficence" (SL, p. 180), so helping Hester overcome the wild passion which had led her astray.

Hester's lack of success with her daughter parallels her own moral progress. The struggle "to believe that no fellow-mortal was guilty like herself" (SL, p. 87) is not unlike her task to right the chaos of Pearl's character. In the course of seven years, during which Hester questions, "in bitterness of heart" (SL, p. 165), the worth of existence, the scarlet letter does not succeed in doing "its office" (SL, p. 166). With Pearl, also, her efforts seem to produce little softening influence. This "germ and blossom of womanhood [Pearl]," Hawthorne writes, "was to be cherished and developed amid a host of difficulties. Everything was against her [Hester]. The world was hostile. The child's own nature had something wrong in it, which continually betokened that she had been born amiss" (SL, p. 165). Hester, "whose heart had lost its regular and healthy throb," finally wonders "whether it were not better to send Pearl at once to heaven, and go herself to such futurity as Eternal Justice should provide" (SL, p. 166).

We witness a change on both fronts of Hester's struggle when she determines "to redeem her error, so far as it might yet be possible," and expose the identity of Chillingworth. "Strengthened by years of hard and solemn trial, she felt herself no longer so inadequate to cope with Roger Chillingworth as on that night, abased by sin, . . . when they had talked together in the prison chamber. She had climbed her way, since then, to a higher point" (SL, p. 167). The metaphor is clear: Hester must overcome the "malignant" weed in order to bring the flower to fruition. At this point she can see emerging in Pearl "the steadfast principles of an unflinching courage,--an uncontrollable will,--a sturdy pride, which might be disciplined into self-respect,--and a bitter scorn of many things, which, when examined, might be found to have the taint of falsehood in them" (SL, p. 180). "The thought occurred to Hester that the child might really be seeking to approach her with childlike confidence, and doing what she could, and as intelligently as she knew how, to establish a meeting-point of sympathy" (SL, p. 179). The change occurs not only in Pearl, but also in Hester's regard of her daughter--indicating a development, of sorts, in both characters.

Spiritual growth is seen in the image of Pearl clad in seaweed and wearing a freshly green letter "A".²⁵ What formerly was a symbol of doom--represented as a vile, death-inducing stigma when Pearl, in the graveyard, gathers prickly burrs from a tall burdock and arranges them along the lines of the letter--is now a picture of hope.²⁶

Pearl finally develops all her "sympathies" during the scene of revelation at the scaffold. "A spell was broken;" her "errand as a messenger of anguish was all fulfilled" (SL, p. 256). Chillingworth, on the death of Dimmesdale, "shrivelled away...like an uprooted weed that lies wilting in the sun" (SL, p. 260); and Hester's garden is completely free to bear the fruit of cultivation. Hawthorne intimates that Pearl's "wild, rich nature" becomes "softened and subdued" (SL, p. 262).²⁷ She goes on, after Chillingworth's death, to be the richest heiress of her day.

As the reader expects, Hester, in the end, is gentle, charitable, and wise--selflessly devoted to good works. She displays a degree of maturity and self-understanding in laying aside her aspiration to establish a "surer" (SL, p. 263) place for women in society:

Earlier in life, Hester had vainly imagined that she herself might be the destined prophetess, but had long since recognized the impossibility that any mission of divine and mysterious truth should be confided to a woman stained with sin, bowed down with shame, or even burdened with a life-long sorrow. (SL, p. 263)

The statement indicates that Hester not only accepts the burden of her past but recognizes, too, its permanence. The "doom" is indeed "inevitable" (SL, p. 211)--not to be obliterated by removing the letter, as she once attempted in the forest. Yet the past is not necessarily destructive; out of "dusky grief" (SL, p. 263) and pain comes the "triumph" (SL, p. 227) of wisdom and charity.

Ironically, the cultured man such as Bellingham and the

"cultivated" intellectuals such as Dimmesdale and Chillingworth, are not the ones who grow morally and reach this level of maturity. Governor Bellingham, being "fortified in [himself] by an iron framework of reasoning" (SL, p. 162), cannot expel his prejudices. The "stern magistrate" is far too rigid and severe, too convinced of his own importance, for self-examination and reproof. Chillingworth has "so cultivated his mental part" that he has no heart; thus he works ruthlessly to cultivate the germ of destruction in the weak minister while allowing the "black flower" to blossom within himself. The free-thinking Hester, however, is able to make of her guilty past an avenue of development and spiritual growth. By rooting herself at the edge of the Puritan village, she accepts, in effect, the consequences of her sin. Her labor to correct the wayward nature of Pearl subdues the wild passion which had led her astray and makes of her a "self-ordained" "Sister of Mercy" (SL, p. 161).

The theme of man's guilty past, enunciated in The Scarlet Letter, is also pursued in The House of the Seven Gables. The "moral" of this work, according to the Author's Preface, is that "the wrong-doing of one generation lives into the successive ones, and divesting itself of every temporary advantage, becomes a pure and uncontrollable mischief."²⁸ As in his first novel, Hawthorne uses the cultivation metaphor to picture man's acceptance of the past and the transformation of his curse.

At Seven Gables the "wrong-doing" of the Pyncheon line is mirrored in a garden composed of a "black, rich soil,"

fertile "with the decay of a long period of time" (HSG, p. 86) and giving root to lawless weeds. Hawthorne explains the symbolic significance of the noxious plants as being "transmitted vices of society" (HSG, p. 86), directly linked with the sins of the family. Trimming the Pyncheon garden, then, suggests an identification with the cursed line as well as an attempt to control the "uncontrollable mischief." The two characters who endeavor to trim the garden are Holgrave Maule, the last member of a family which years before had cursed the Pyncheon house, and a visiting cousin at Seven Gables, Phoebe Pyncheon.

Cousin Phoebe is an innocent, almost angelic figure (HSG, p. 142), not yet embittered by contact with the hard realities of life. Being that one little offshoot of the Pyncheon race...of a rural part of New England" (HSG, p. 69), she was never directly involved with the family on Pyncheon Street, and on arriving at Seven Gables, seems "widely in contrast" to everything about the old house: "The sordid and ugly luxuriance of gigantic weeds that grew in the angle of the house, and the heavy projection that overshadowed her...--none of these things belonged to her sphere" (HSG, p. 97). Yet Phoebe is quick to establish "feelings of relationship" (HSG, p. 69) with her kin; she does not shun the crumbling antiquity of the house, but, in performing household chores, works "to maintain contact with the chain of humanity reaching back from the present into the past."²⁹ For example, the antique china cups of her great-great-great grandmother which over the years had "contracted no small burthen of dust" (HSG, p. 77), she

washes and returns to use. Uncle Venner observes a "spiritual quality" (HSG, p. 82) in the readiness with which Phoebe conformed herself to the "circumstances, and brought the house...and all its rusty old appliances, into a suitableness for her purpose" (HSG, p. 76). Her ability to adapt the present to limitations imposed by the past, then, is a measure of her virtue.

Ambitious to dispel the oppressive gloom of the decaying house, Phoebe proposes to care for the garden flowers. With the activity she would not only bring under control the wilderness of neglect but would keep herself "healthy with exercise in the open air" (HSG, p. 75). Thus, her effort to restore the blighted flowers becomes an antidote against the unwholesome effects of the house.

Phoebe's experience at Seven Gables, her persistence in countering the weeds which were quick to "run rampant over the flowers and kitchen-vegetables" (HSG, p. 299), effects a visible change in this "country cousin" (HSG, p. 69)-- "a change partly to be regretted, although whatever charm it infringed upon was repaired by another, perhaps more precious. She was not so constantly gay, but had her moods of thought, which Clifford, on the whole, liked better than her former phase of unmingled cheerfulness; because now she understood him better and more delicately, and sometimes even interpreted him to himself" (HSG, p. 175). "She was less girlish," Hawthorne observes, "than when we first beheld her alighting from the omnibus; less girlish, but more a woman" (HSG, p. 175). And Clifford remarks as Phoebe leaves the

House: "Girlhood has passed into womanhood; the bud is a bloom" (HSG, p. 220). Phoebe's alliance with the past also alters her vision of life; she confesses to having "grown a great deal older, in this little time. Older, and, I hope, wiser" (HSG, p. 214). By absorbing the past and its burden, she loses the "shallow gayety of youth" but gains a "deeper and richer" happiness--one "essential to the soul's development" (HSG, p. 215).

Holgrave Maule is opposed to Phoebe in that he cannot come to terms with the past. As a young man he endeavored to rid himself of his ancestry and, with this aim, wandered through New England and the Middle States experimenting with different occupations and cults in an attempt to create a "shifting world" (HSG, p. 184)--one free from the dead weight of the past. Unlike Hester, he does not root himself in the "disputed soil" (HSG, p. 7) which created enmity between Maules and Pyncheons, but, instead, forsakes the town, leaving no trace of Matthew Maule's descendants in the town-record or in the memory of the inhabitants. Holgrave curses all institutions that center on tradition and give society permanence. "A family," he urges, "should be merged into the great, obscure mass of humanity, and forget all about its ancestors. Human blood, in order to keep its freshness, should run in hidden streams, as the water of an aqueduct is conveyed in subterranean pipes" (HSG, p. 185). Though Holgrave would free himself from the heritage of his oppressed family through a nomadic existence, he finds "hope, warmth, and joy" (HSG, p. 306) only after his residence at

the House of the Seven Gables. Believing that "the moss-grown and rotten Past is to be torn down, and lifeless institutions to be thrust out of the way, and their dead corpses buried, and everything to begin anew" (HSG, p. 179), he comes to the House with the purpose of learning better how to hate it. Yet he learns instead that, while men are never free of "bygone times," they need not be its "slaves" (HSG, p. 183) or victims.

The Pyncheon garden furnishes a picture of this hope. Though the "lawless plants" (HSG, p. 86) had succeeded in choking out many of the flower-bearing shrubs, there remained several bushes of rare, albeit blighted, white roses which had been planted by the lovely and virtuous Alice Pyncheon, tragic victim of Matthew Maule's hypnotic powers. Such species of antique and hereditary flowers, Phoebe observes upon first visiting the garden, were in "no very flourishing condition, but scrupulously weeded; as if some person, either out of love or curiosity, had been anxious to bring them to such a perfection as they were capable of attaining" (HSG, p. 87). Holgrave, the tender, claims to have undertaken care of the garden out of a mere need for diversion:

I dig, and hoe, and weed, in this black old earth, for the sake of refreshing myself with what little nature and simplicity may be left in it, after men have so long sown and reaped here. I turn up the earth by way of pastime. (HSG, p. 91)

Yet such a chore could never be a simple pastime; for Hawthorne describes it as a struggle against rank weeds

which embody the evil of departed years and the decay of much time.

Holgrave, as his statement demonstrates, will not admit his integral connection with the past but continues to preach deliverance through casting off the "giant's dead body" (HSG, p. 182). He fails to see that, like the beans found in one of the gables, "ancient seeds" can bring forth a "spiral profusion of red blossoms" (HSG, p. 148). Therefore his experience in the garden is oppressive; "the black mould," he bemoans, "always clings to my spade, as if I were a sexton delving in a graveyard" (HSG, p. 214); and he continues to long for "virgin soil, with the earth's first freshness in the flavor of its beans and squashes" (HSG, p. 214).

The daguerreotypist is transformed only at the novel's conclusion after the death of Judge Pyncheon. His reformatory zeal is suddenly quenched in the presence of the dead man, as the "great black shadow" (HSG, p. 306) of the past once again comes to bear on the present. Phoebe saves Holgrave from despair by bringing the "possibility of happiness" (HSG, p. 306) and, with their union, the animosity between Maules and Pyncheons is at last obliterated. Holgrave's new happiness gives him resolution "to set out trees, to make fences,--perhaps, even, in due time, to build a house of another generation,--in a word, to conform [himself] to laws and the peaceful practice of society" (HSG, p. 307). The transformation is fittingly portrayed in the House's flora: between the angle of the two front gables Alice Pyncheon's Posies "--weeds, you would have

called them, only a week ago...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" (HSG, p. 286).

Holgrave's experience at the House of the Seven Gables works a settling effect upon the young reformer. His labor in the "disputed soil" and his acceptance of the past give him a sense of permanence. The need for discipline and restraint in this "lawless person" (HSG, p. 85) is much like that of Hester Prynne. Hester's "wild passion" which, after a long period of isolation takes the form of free, lawless "speculation," requires tempering; and as a result of her suffering, "passion" and "speculation" are transformed into benevolence and understanding. Holgrave, on the other hand, has no "wild passion." He is first seen as a "calm and cool" observer; and "in his relations...he seemed to be in quest of mental food" (HSG, p. 178). However, his experience at Seven Gables brings him into a love relationship with Phoebe; and at the conclusion of the novel, he is seen resolving to "meet the world" (HSG, p. 307) with a girl "whose essence it was, to keep within the limits of the law" (HSG, p. 85).

In The Scarlet Letter and The House of the Seven Gables, then, the cultivation motif works to emphasize two ideas: first of all, that one must recognize and accept the sins of the past, at the same time working "in a genuine regard for virtue" (SL, p. 160) despite one's burdens and frailties; and secondly, that by passing through this "dark

valley" (MF, p. 273) of experience, one reaches a "profound happiness" (HSG, p. 215)--to use Lewis' words, "a deeper place of perfect beauty."³⁰

Hawthorne's third novel, The Blithedale Romance, is closely related to The Scarlet Letter and The House of the Seven Gables in both theme and tone. Like The Scarlet Letter, it is a "dark tale"--darker, perhaps, than the story of Hester Prynne in seventeenth century New England. The group at Blithedale carries with it the same Utopian ideal as the Puritan colonizers mentioned in The Scarlet Letter: to establish a colony of "human virtue and happiness" on "virgin soil" (SL, p. 47). The new Pilgrims, as they call themselves, are much like Holgrave in ideology. They renounce the oppression of personal history and social institutions, believing such ills can be abandoned for an Edenic life in a new location. Though Holgrave's dogmas are revolutionized through his experience, those of the Blithedale community are not. As a result, their scheme ends in tragic failure.

The cultivation metaphor in The Blithedale Romance, unlike both The Scarlet Letter and The House of the Seven Gables, is reversed to produce an ironic effect. The act of tilling, formerly associated in the novels with human virtue and maturity, is made a mockery by a community which fancies that "their enlightened culture of the soil, and the virtues with which they sanctified their life" would produce "strong and stately" men, "beautiful" women, and "a green garden, blossoming with many-colored delights"³¹ on

the earth. The natural setting of Blithedale is itself ironic if, recalling the Genesis story, we consider that after the Fall, man and his physical world were thrown into mutual conflict. Man no longer can live frivolously in nature. And as expression of this inability, he rebels against the hard toil of cultivation to isolate himself in the "hot-house warmth of a town residence" and to indulge in a "luxurious life" (BR, p. 40).

The "knot of dreamers" (BR, p. 14) deludes itself in believing that merely leaving the "rusty iron framework of society" and working to "lessen the laboring man's great burden of toil" (BR, p. 19) will bring spiritual refreshment and transform, finally, the "new brotherhood" (BR, p. 20) into a "modern Arcadia" (BR, p. 58). The very basis of their institution was "to offer up the earnest toil of [their] bodies, as a prayer no less than an effort for the advancement of [their] race," to perform their "due share of [labor] at the cost of [their] own thews and sinews" (BR, p. 19).

The community embraces the notion of spiritual advancement through cultivation but fails to recognize that, since the Fall, any recreation of "paradise" must be accomplished on a spiritual level. Hence, their labor is empty and they quickly come to regard it as nothing but unpleasant and strenuous exercise:

The peril of our new way of life was not lest we should fail in becoming practical agriculturalists, but that we should probably cease to be anything else. While our enterprise lay all in theory,

we had pleased ourselves with delectable visions of the spiritualization of labor. It was to be our form of prayer, and ceremonial of worship. Each stroke of the hoe was to uncover some aromatic root of wisdom, heretofore hidden from the sun. Pausing in the field, to let the wind exhale the moisture from our foreheads, we were to look upward, and catch glimpses into the far-off soul of truth. In this point of view, matters did not turn out quite so well as we anticipated....The clods of earth, which we so constantly belabored and turned over and over, were never etherealized into thought. Our thoughts, on the contrary, were fast becoming cloddish. Our labor symbolized nothing, and left us mentally sluggish in the dusk of the evening. (BR, pp. 65-66)

As a result, the experiment at Blithedale becomes only an extension of the entangled corruption in the city--indeed, a re-enactment of the "false and cruel principles on which human society has all along been based" (BR, p. 19). The communitarians, who so "unhesitatingly reckoned [themselves]" as "people of superior cultivation and refinement" (BR, p. 24), were too thoroughly "civilized" by the "false and cruel principles" to perceive their delusion. Ironically, the group was not unsuccessful in its agricultural endeavor; yet this success merely furnishes a foil for the ultimate failure of its Utopian scheme. The "slanderous fables" of neighboring farmers forebode the Blithedale catastrophe:

They...averred, that we hoed up whole acres of Indian corn and other crops, and drew the earth carefully about the weeds; and that we raised five hundred tufts of burdock, mistaking them for cabbages; and that, by dint of unskilful planting, few of our seeds ever came up at all, or if they did come up, it was stern foremost, and that we spent the better part of the month of June in reversing a field of beans, which had thrust themselves out of the ground in this unseemly way. They quoted it as nothing more

than an ordinary occurrence for one or other of us to crop off two or three fingers, of a morning, by our clumsy use of the hay-cutter. Finally, and as an ultimate catastrophe, these mendacious rogues circulated a report that we Communitarians were exterminated, to the last man, by severing ourselves asunder with the sweep of our own scythes! (BR, pp. 64-65)

Metaphorically, then, a "superior cultivation" in the corruption of the city (making the communitarians unfit as farmers) wreaks destruction upon nature at Blithedale. Though the neighboring farmers' reports are "fables" and only suggest failure for the community, an actual violation of nature does indeed occur in the tragic fate of Zenobia.

Nina Baym writes that "Zenobia stands for the creative energy of both nature and the self." She is "the natural or pre-civilized woman, or the future possibility of woman."³² Indeed, Coverdale compares Zenobia to Eve "when she was just made, and her Creator brought her to Adam, saying, 'Behold! here is a woman!'" (BR, p. 17). Her earthiness is expressed in those daily walks Zenobia "never would forego"-- which "no inclemency of sky or muddiness of earth had ever impeded" (BR, p. 156). The feeble enterprise of the community pales in the presence of her vitality. Their "heroic" efforts "show like an illusion, a masquerade, a pastoral, a counterfeit Arcadia, in which we grown-up men and women were making a play-day of the years that were given us to live in" (BR, p. 21).

The exotic and rare flower in Zenobia's hair represents the essence--in Coverdale's words, "a subtile expression" (BR, p. 45)--of her character. Coverdale describes it as a

a "hot-house flower,--an outlandish flower,--a flower of the tropics....It yet so assimilated its richness to the rich beauty of the woman," he continues, "that I thought it the only flower fit to be worn; so fit, indeed that Nature had evidently created this floral gem, in a happy exuberance, for the one purpose of worthily adorning Zenobia's head" (BR, p. 45). The flower is markedly out of place in the Blithedale community. Clearly it cannot live in the environment and lasts only for a day. It grows languid at being exposed to the "fervency" of the kitchen (where labor "which falls to the lot of women is just that which chiefly distinguishes artificial life--the life of degenerated mortals--from the life of Paradise" BR, p. 16).

Zenobia's "preternatural" flower is a relic, she claims, "of [her] more brilliant and happier days" (BR, p. 45). It expresses the glory of "natural woman" and "the future possibility of woman." Yet the community works to oppress the woman and drain vitality from the flower. Coverdale, in calling it a "hot-house" bloom, suggests that the flower is artificial, even unnatural. The term brings to mind the seductiveness of a brothel. Clearly, civilized man is perverse in his vision of woman--a theme which is developed in the enslavement of Priscilla as the Veiled Lady. He makes an ideal of the "poor, pale flower" (BR, p. 224) which he has subjugated and exploited and thoroughly corrupts the natural growth of a strong human personality.

Zenobia is crushed because she is already in bondage to the brutal domination of men--as seen in her connection with

Westervelt. Her attraction to Hollingsworth, the "cold, heartless, self-beginning and self-ending piece of mechanism" (BR, p. 218) destroys her "great and rich" heart; for the soil about Eliot's (or Hollingsworth's) Pulpit, being "of the rudest and most broken surface" and having "apparently never been brought under tillage," can only give root to pale columbines and violets--"sad and shadowy recluses, such as Priscilla" (BR, p. 119).

Coverdale had once remarked that the "flower in Zenobia's hair [was] a talisman. If you were to snatch it away, she would vanish; or be transformed into something else" (BR, p. 45). Such a transformation takes place when Zenobia is compelled to declare that "women possess no rights" (BR, p. 141). The effect of this "degradation" is seen in the "cold and bright transfiguration" (BR, p. 164) of the flower--we find that it has been replaced by a jewelled imitation, an emblem of the "artificiality" from which the community sought to be purged.

Zenobia's "warm and generous nature" (which showed the "richness of the soil, however, chiefly by the weeds that flourished in it, and choked up the herbs of grace" BR, p. 189) is not given the opportunity to develop a beauty like that of her flower. Shunned by the callous Silas Foster, the "cold, heartless" Hollingsworth, and the clinical, indifferent Coverdale, she becomes cynical toward the community and hostile toward Priscilla. Thus, the farmers at Blithedale do not reap life and beauty as a result of their labor together; instead, they transform the soil, once held by the "knot of dreamers" as the agent of spiritual discipline, into

"but the sodded earth over [Zenobia's] grave" (BR, p. 245).

The result of the experiment is that Nature's highest purpose--"that of a conscious intellectual life and sensibility"--is "timely baulked" (BR, p. 244). Nature "adopts the calamity at once into her system" and gives forth a "crop of weeds" (BR, p. 244) in the little parallelogram of Zenobia's grave. Priscilla, however, whose only contact with nature had been a little parallelogram of sky, is declared to be, in her Veiled Lady attire, "as lovely as a flower" (BR, p. 169). The misled Coverdale heightens Zenobia's tragedy at the conclusion of the novel by declaring himself in love with the "poor, pale flower" Priscilla.

The failure of Blithedale was ultimately rooted in its very purpose: to construct an earthly Eden and so obliterate the burden of history.³³ Coverdale tersely summarizes their deception: "By projecting our minds outward, we had imparted a show of novelty to existence, and contemplated it as hopefully as if the soil beneath our feet had not been fathom-deep with the dust of deluded generations, on every one of which, as on ourselves, the world had imposed itself as a hitherto unwedded bride" (BR, p. 128). But in spite of his insightful observation (which may be Hawthorne intruding at this point), Coverdale otherwise fails to grasp the nature of the problem. In reflecting on the "exploded scheme" (BR, p. 9), he refuses to see himself as partially responsible, but concludes that the experiment died simply because of an "infidelity to its own higher spirit" (BR, p. 246). Only Hollingsworth realizes that schemes for reformation

must originate within oneself. He abandons his grand edifice for the reformation of criminals--"a very small one answers all my purposes" (BR, p. 243), he confesses to Coverdale. As for reforming criminals, he continues, "ever since we parted, I have been busy with a single murderer" (BR, p. 243)--referring, of course, to himself.

The act of cultivation in The Blithedale Romance does not represent, then, the "dark valley" through which one must pass before reaching "a deeper place of perfect beauty." Instead, the metaphor is reversed. By planting a community in a soil "fathom-deep with the dust of deluded generations," the problems of the "knot of dreamers" are merely compounded. Their efforts to cultivate nature end in a violation of nature. Hawthorne's moral here is evident: without the recognition of personal guilt, even "beautiful" and "noble" (BR, p. 245) efforts toward "earthly happiness" (BR, p. 19) end in "exploded schemes."

The images of cultivation in Hawthorne's novels imply much about his characters' potential for progressing morally and coming to maturity. We find that individuals of high social status and culture are weak when faced with the hardship of experience. Governor Bellingham performs his duties in the community but is unwilling to suffer discomfort either physically or from the agonies of conscience. And so he overlooks his inconsistencies and becomes guilty of hypocrisy and self-righteousness--much like the New Testament pharisees who sat in judgment of the publicans. Coverdale is also drawn to luxurious living; but the "hot-house

warmth" of his town-residence has made him torpid with "illness and exhaustion." The poet partakes only of the "brisk throb of human life" (BR, p. 40) in the city--and has become so detached from human interaction that he is clinical and aloof, "not in earnest either as a poet or a laborer" (BR, p. 68). His stay at Blithedale has little effect on him; we find Coverdale, as the novel ends, still indolent (perhaps even more so), living "very much at [his] ease," faring "sumptuously every day" (BR, p. 246), and incapable of devotion to any person or cause. Zenobia, finally, has too much indulged her passions to bear the kind of asceticism and rejection that Hester undergoes. When cast off by Hollingsworth, she promptly returns to the city to aid Westervelt in victimizing Priscilla. Then, unable to free herself from the entanglements of the past and powerless to win the approval of Hollingsworth, she ends her life in a grisly, however melodramatic, way.

The characters of cultivated intellect prove even more resistant to that experience which results in development of character. Chillingworth, we have already noted, cultivates his mind to the exclusion of his heart. He becomes so attracted to the very mechanism of revenge--to knowing the "spring that controlled the engine," to employing his "black devices" (SL, p. 140) with perfect subtlety--that he entertains no thoughts of penitence and restoration. Indeed, his heart has not the "power" (SL, p. 174) for such a course. Similarly, Arthur Dimmesdale's continual introspection, his active imagination, restrain him from

confession and expiation. The infirmities of his heart, then, find expression in a bodily disease.

Those characters capable of change and development are not shackled by social status, wealth, or intellect--but, on the contrary, seem independent of confinement. Hence, they require the discipline and restraint furnished by the burden of suffering. Through hard experience, we find, Hester's wild passion is subdued, Phoebe's "shallow gayety" is deepened to a richer happiness, and Holgrave's "lawless" existence is given direction and purpose.

The cultivation metaphor works well to illustrate the process of education inherent in this experience. Hawthorne had apparently contemplated the notion of agriculture with respect to sin and human development long before writing The Scarlet Letter. In the Friday, June 23, 1843, entry of The American Note-books, he considers the "hidden virtue" of garden weeds while musing on his efforts at agriculture:

Why is it, I wonder, that Nature has provided such a host of enemies for every useful esculent, while the weeds are suffered to grow unmolested, and are provided with such tenacity of life, and such methods of propagation, that the gardener must maintain a continual struggle, or they will hopelessly overwhelm him? What hidden virtue is there in these things, that it is granted them to sow themselves with this immitigable stubbornness, and to flourish in spite of obstacles, and never to suffer blight beneath any sun or shade, but always to mock their enemies with the same wicked luxuriance. It is truly a mystery, and also a symbol. There is a sort of sacredness about them. Perhaps, if we could penetrate Nature's secrets, we should find that what we call weeds are more essential to the well-being of the world than the most precious fruit or grain. 34

But Hawthorne is obviously uncomfortable with his statement and quickly adds: "This may be doubted, however, for there is an unmistakable analogy between these wicked weeds and the bad habits and sinful propensities which have overrun the moral world; and we may as well imagine that there is good in one as in the other."³⁵ His confusion is in assigning "virtue" to the weeds rather than to the "continual struggle" of the gardener.

Later in The American Note-books we find the idea for a story in which "misfortune, physical or moral, may be the means of educating and elevating us"³⁶ and recognize the theme which recurs in Hawthorne's novels. This "misfortune" is neatly pictured in the cultivation effort. The elements are there: the blight of disease, the choke of weeds, the toil, frustration, hope mocked. "Wicked weeds" are an expression of the "sinful propensities" of the race and threaten to destroy life and beauty. Man's acceptance of his past, his cultivation amid tenacious and stubborn, ever-present "enemies," educates and elevates him--and leads him to maturity. Hester, Phoebe, and Holgrave take this course. The Blithedale community tills the soil without recognizing that "sinful propensities" will finally choke their scheme. And Roger Chillingworth, along with the Italian villagers, simply resigns himself to the "host" which "overruns the moral world."

NOTES

¹Hyatt H. Waggoner, Hawthorne (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 65. For discussion of Hawthorne's use of the "past" see also Johannes Kjørven, "Hawthorne and the Significance of History," Americana-Norvegica (1966), 110-160; Christoph Lohmann, "The Burden of the Past in Hawthorne's American Romances," South Atlantic Quarterly, LXVI (1967), 92-104; Lewis B. Horne, "Place, Time, and Moral Growth in The House of the Seven Gables," Studies in the Novel, II (1970), 459-467; Michael Davitt Bell, Hawthorne and the Historical Romance of New England (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971); and most recently, Robert H. Fossum, Hawthorne's Inviolable Circle: The Problem of Time (Deland, Florida: Everett/Edwards, 1972).

²R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955) pp. 13-27. Lewis offers a detailed and brilliant of America as a New Eden and the American as a new Adam in his chapter "The Case against the Past." In the following chapter he presents the arguments of Oliver Wendell Holmes and Walt Whitman who assert that, to use Lewis' words, "the American was to be acknowledged in his complete emancipation from the history of mankind. He was to be recognized now for what he was--a new Adam, miraculously free of family and race, untouched by those dismal conditions which prior tragedies and entanglements monotonously prepared for the newborn European" (p. 41).

³Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Spiritual Laws," The Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Brook Atkinson (New York: Random House, 1940), p. 191.

⁴Lewis, p. 28.

⁵Walt Whitman, "The Children of Adam," Leaves of Grass, eds. Sculley Bradley and Harold W. Blodgett (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973), p. 107.

⁶Ibid., "Song of Myself," p. 50.

⁷Lewis, p. 28. Lewis states that believers in the American as a new Adam found "of all the inherited notions and practices which [they] studied to reject, by far the most offensive [to be] the Calvinist doctrine of inherited guilt."

⁸Lohmann, p. 93.

⁹Genesis 3:17-19, Authorized Version of the Holy Bible. A statement by Hawthorne in Mosses from an Old Manse demonstrates his knowledge of the burden on fallen man (in Eden, fruit was a "free gift;" after the Fall, man works "in the sweat of his face" for bread): "The idea of an infinite generosity and exhaustless bounty, on the part of our Mother Nature, was well worth obtaining through such cares as these. That feeling can be enjoyed...likewise...by a man long habituated to city life, who plunges into such a solitude as that of the Old Manse, where he plucks the fruit of trees that he did not plant; and which, therefore, to my heterodox taste, bear the closer resemblance to those that grew in Eden. It has been an apophthegm, these five thousand years, that toil sweetens the bread it earns. For my part (speaking from hard experience, acquired while belaboring the rugged furrows of Brook Farm), I relish best the free gifts of Providence."

Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mosses from an Old Manse, "The Old Manse," Centenary Edition, Vol. X (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1974), p. 13.

An entry in The American Note-books makes clear Hawthorne's familiarity with the Genesis account in which a struggle against weeds comes as a result of the fall: "Every day for the last week has been tremendously hot; and our garden flourishes like Eden itself, only Adam could hardly have been doomed to contend with such a ferocious banditti of weeds."

Nathaniel Hawthorne, The American Note-books, Centenary Edition, Vol. VIII (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1970), p. 390.

¹⁰Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Marble Faun, Centenary Edition, Vol. IV (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1968), p. 165--hereafter cited in this paper as MF.

¹¹Matthew 13:3-23, Mark 4:3-20, Luke 8:5-15.

¹²John 4:35,36. The same exhortation is repeated in the other Gospels.

¹³Raymond Williams, Keywords (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 77.

¹⁴Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, Centenary Edition, Vol. I (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1962), p. 48--hereafter cited in this paper as SL.

¹⁵Ephesians 6.

¹⁶Nina Baym, The Shape of Hawthorne's Career (London: Cornell University Press, 1976), p. 94. Baym uses this term in discussing the narrowness of the Puritan's religious beliefs.

¹⁷Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Whole History, Centenary Edition, Vol. VI (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1972), p. 108.

¹⁸Grace Pleasant Wellborn, "Plant Lore and The Scarlet Letter," Southern Folklore Quarterly, XVII (June, 1963), 165.

¹⁹Donald A. Ringe, "Hawthorne's Psychology of the Head and Heart," PMLA, LXV (1950), 121.

²⁰Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 121.

²¹Waggoner, pp. 138-141.

²²Fossum, pp. 110-111.

²³Hester is motivated to stay in New England partially by an attraction to Roger Chillingworth--a feeling thrust upon her by the "tempter of souls" (SL, p. 80) and one which she refuses to admit exists. Yet, through experience, she overcomes this passion and becomes fully devoted to penance. Hester returns to the community even after Dimmesdale's death; for "here had been her sin; here her sorrow; and here was yet to be her penitence" (SL, p. 263).

²⁴See Darrel Abel, "Hawthorne's Pearl: Symbol and Character," ELH, A Journal of English Literary History, XVIII (March, 1951), 50-66.

²⁵The color green is Biblically symbolic of spiritual growth and maturity. Hosea 14:8 "Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found." See also Jeremiah 11:16, 17:8, Psalms 23:2.

²⁶Waggoner, p. 171. In his discussion of The Marble Faun, Waggoner writes that "green is the traditional color of hope."

²⁷One definition of the word "subdue" is "to bring (land) under cultivation" (for example, in Genesis 1:28 Adam is told to "subdue" the earth, meaning to cultivate it). American Heritage Dictionary, ed. William Morris (New York: American Heritage Publishing Company, 1970).

²⁸Nathaniel Hawthorne, The House of the Seven Gables, Centenary Edition, Vol. II (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1965), p. 2--hereafter cited in this paper as HSG.

²⁹Fossum, p. 137.

³⁰Lewis, p. 116.

³¹Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Blithedale Romance and Fanshawe, Centenary Edition, Vol. III (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1964), pp. 61-62--hereafter cited in this paper as BR.

³²Baym, p. 196.

³³Lohmann, pp. 102-104.

³⁴Hawthorne, The American Note-books, p. 388.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 388-389.

³⁶Ibid., p. 255.

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