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MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

The Bachelor Narrator Motif in Nathaniel Hawthorne's Sketches

by

Carol L. Anderson

A Master's Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

Montclair State University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

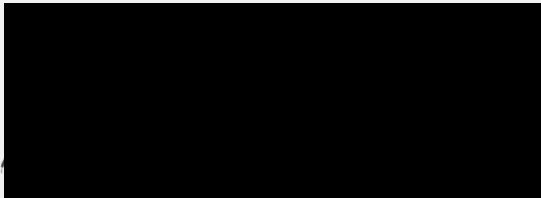
For the Degree of

Master of Arts

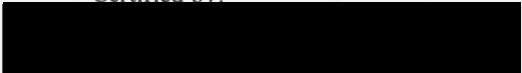
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Abstract

This thesis examines the bachelor narrator motif in seven of Nathaniel Hawthorne's sketches, published between 1831 and 1843. Hawthorne's narrators are artists, alienated from society in general, and from women in particular. Moreover, they are modeled upon the figure of the European flaneur, the idle 'man about town' who believes he can read the character of the stranger in the crowd. In these first person narrations, Hawthorne explores the problems of subjectivity (involving self-concept, including the split between the conscious and the unconscious, and the gap between the mind and the material world) and the problem of knowledge (involving the five senses and reason). The central argument of the thesis is that the bachelor narrators in the sketches are the literary antecedents of the character Miles Coverdale in Hawthorne's novel *The Blithedale Romance* (1852), which tells the story of a failed utopian experiment. In his early period, Hawthorne experimented with many of the narrative strategies and themes in his bachelor sketches that evolve and take shape in the novel. Common to the sketches and the novel is the theme of the alienation of the artist and the uncertainty of knowledge, including knowledge of the self.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter One explores a group of optics-driven sketches, and the related theme of voyeurism. This chapter includes a discussion of "Sunday at Home" (1837), "Sights from a Steeple" (1831), and "Foot-prints on the Sea-Shore" (1838). Women are the objects of a controlling male gaze, and men blame women for disturbing their ability to reason, and for attempting to lure them into marriage. Chapter Two features the dissociated narrator, and includes a discussion of "Monsieur du Miroir" (1837) and "Little Annie's Ramble" (1835). The narrator in

“Monsieur du Miroir” is unable to connect to others, especially women. His view of reality is distorted by a narcissus complex, and by a failure to evolve beyond the mirror stage, as defined by Jacques Lacan. “Little Annie’s Ramble” is framed upon the fairytale *Little Red Riding Hood*. “Annie” can be interpreted as a tale of adult lechery and abduction, and features a flaneur/artist whose fear of women causes him to shift his attention towards a five year-old girl. Chapter Three contains a discussion of “The Haunted Mind” (1835) and “The Old Apple Dealer” (1843). In these two sketches, the senses are unreliable determinants of reality. In “The Haunted Mind” Hawthorne examines the philosophical subject of time from the point of view of a disoriented and alienated narrator. In “The Old Apple Dealer” he critiques America’s naïve belief in progress, and describes the alteration of perception due to the experience of velocity on a passenger train. Coverdale is a composite of the bachelor narrators in the sketches that Hawthorne experimented with at the outset of his literary career. The conclusion examines the first-person narration of Miles Coverdale, who fails to recognize his role in the failure of a utopian experiment. In his portrait of Coverdale, Hawthorne reveals how much in tune he is with the problem of stereotyping on the basis of class or gender.

THE BACHELOR NARRATOR MOTIF IN THE SKETCHES OF
NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

by

Carol L. Anderson

Montclair State University

Montclair, New Jersey

January 2010

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Introduction

Between 1825 and 1837, Hawthorne assembled for publication three collections of his tales and sketches, entitled *Seven Tales of My Native Land*, *Provincial Tales*, and *The Story Teller*. Unified by themes, the first series of tales was to be based upon witchcraft; the second on colonial and pre-colonial subjects; and the third upon native subjects and themes featuring a wandering storyteller. To the detriment of Hawthorne scholarship, the author failed to find a publisher willing to take on his projects. Instead, Hawthorne resorted to publishing over forty of his tales and sketches anonymously and piecemeal in newspapers, magazines and gift-book annuals (CE IX 486). Hence, the integrity of these three planned collections is lost. In this early period of his career, Hawthorne received little or no remuneration for his stories and sketches until the publication of the first version of *Twice-Told Tales* in 1837. Nevertheless, the depression following the Panic of 1837 put a damper on sales of his first book. Despite intense efforts to establish a “secure chronology” of Hawthorne’s tales and sketches, J. Donald Crowley ultimately concedes “little is known about the [original] conception and the makeup of [Hawthorne’s] projected collections” (CE IX 486). Hence, for the purposes of my study, I analyze seven of Hawthorne’s sketches that contain the bachelor narrator motif, and I highlight the hybrid figure of the artist and flaneur (defined as a loungeur or saunterer, an idle ‘man about town’)¹ that emerges full-blown in the character of Miles Coverdale in *The Blithedale Romance* (1852). Of Hawthorne’s seven sketches under consideration, five were subsequently republished in *Twice-Told Tales* (1837, 1842), and two were published or republished in *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846). With the

¹ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989), “flaneur, n.,” *OED Online*, <http://dictionary.oed.com> (accessed 29 July 2009).

exception of "The Old Apple Dealer" (1843), all of Hawthorne's bachelor/artist/flaneur sketches in my study were originally published prior to 1840, between the years 1831 and 1838. I suggest that Hawthorne's version of the flaneur in the bachelor sketches anticipates Poe's flaneur in "The Man of the Crowd" (1840), who is absorbed in contemplating "the scenes without," and is possessed by an "electrified" intellect. Hawthorne, along with his contemporary Edgar Allan Poe, participated in the tradition of flaneur literature, a sub-genre of prose fiction that flourished in the first half of the nineteenth century and culminated in the flaneur character of Sherlock Holmes in the mystery stories by Arthur Conan Doyle at the end of the century. Hawthorne is concerned with more than ratiocination in his bachelor sketches.

The problems of subjectivity (involving self-concept, including the split between the conscious and the unconscious, and the gap between the mind and the material world) and knowledge (involving the five senses and reason) emerge throughout all the sketches. For example, "Monsieur du Miroir" (1837) entails the problem of subjectivity; the narrator suffers from a split personality. "The Old Apple-Dealer" (1843) involves the problem of perception; the narrator imagines he can determine the true nature of a stranger he observes in the midst of a railway station. In a departure from the nineteenth century American sketch tradition, Hawthorne's sketches contain scenes of everyday life that reflect changes in society brought about by technological innovation affecting transportation, communication and commerce, and all of his bachelor narrators are urban spectators. Hawthorne appropriates and makes somber the figure of Geoffrey Crayons, the self-mocking raconteur and flaneur featured in Washington Irving's humorous, sentimental and picturesque European travel sketches and stories. Many of the literary

conventions and themes that appear in *The Sketch Book* (1820-21) reemerge in Hawthorne's sketches; moreover, there is evidence that Hawthorne read Irving's sketches in 1832 (Kesselring 33, 54). Originally, however, the flaneur figure in literature evolved in conjunction with the growth of cities in Europe, and is associated with the idle, independently wealthy and yet alienated bachelor type, who believes he can "read" the character of the stranger in a crowd. Dana Brand explains, "the culture of the flaneur has its origins . . . in the culture of spectacle that developed in London during its first period of extraordinary growth, in the sixteenth century . . . [at] the beginnings of what can legitimately be called an English consumer society . . ." (15).

Brand also claims that the flaneur has its origins in the ancient Greek Theophrastian character book. Theophrastus, a pupil of Plato and Aristotle, wrote his *Characters* in 319 B.C. Based upon character traits, they were the precursors of the English Theophrastian characters, later developed on the basis of profession and class by Sir Thomas Overbury (1581-1613). In their versions of the flaneur, Hawthorne and Poe recall the literary casting of characters by Sir Thomas Overbury; random encounters with strangers yield artistically drawn portraits. In his book on the evolution of the urban spectator, Dana Brand describes Overbury's theory of types. Quoting from Overbury's *Miscellaneous Prose and Verse*, he writes,

In an effort to define the theory of the English character, Sir Thomas Overbury . . . observed that the word *character* derives from a Greek word meaning 'to engrave, or make a deepe impression' and that it is therefore suited to refer to 'those elements which wee learne first, leaving a strong seale in our memories.' The word *character* can also be used, Overbury writes, to refer to 'an Aegyptian hieroglyphicke, for an impresse, or short emblem; in little comprehending much' (168) . . . Overbury's theory of the character, like the genre of the English

character in general, suggests that an urban crowd may be read as a text, that a characteristically brief and random encounter could provide enough information for a trained observer to identify the 'character' of the individual he encounters. (22-23)

For the poet Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867), "the representative writer of urban capitalist modernity" (Benjamin 1), the flaneur flourished in the midst of the city, in the crowd. In "The Painter of Modern Life," Baudelaire writes: "The crowd is his element, as the air is that of the birds and water of the fishes. His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd . . . To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the center of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world . . ." (795). The subject of Baudelaire's essay is Constantine Guys (1805-1892), a French painter who "became the representative modern artist by virtue of his ability to capture and combine the ephemeral and the eternal in the modern world" (Brand 239 n. 99). The essay was "forged out of a clash between nostalgia for lost aristocratic values and fascination with the contemporary street life of commodity culture" (Leitsch 791).

In his depiction of the urban spectator/flaneur and artist, Hawthorne focuses upon vision as the primary sense used in making judgments about the material world. He is influenced by the development of photography, and his tales and sketches reveal his familiarity with artistic and photographic techniques and inventions, such as the camera obscura, the panoramic painting, the daguerreotype, and the diorama, among others. I examine the bachelor sketches individually, although they divide roughly into three groups, based upon common themes, or common narrative strategies. In the order of my

discussion, I discuss the influence of photographic techniques and the theme of voyeurism; the dissociated personality; and the time/space paradigm.

“Sunday at Home” (1837), “Sights from a Steeple” (1831) and “Foot-Prints on the Sea-shore” (1838) comprise the first group of sketches; they demonstrate Hawthorne’s involvement with the techniques of photography, and feature the theme of voyeurism. In these three sketches, the activity of watching others is beneficial *and* injurious. The bachelor narrator is a composite of the flaneur and artist-scholar, implying that the author of the sketch is in the same dilemma as the flaneur, who relies on his sense of sight to decipher his subjects. On one hand, because of the artist’s special gifts, he is able to interpret the nature of the culture around him; on the other hand, the activity of watching others may become a substitute for living, alienating the narrator/artist from others. In their self-defeating attempts to ward off women, these narrators maintain a safe distance from their subjects, and women are blamed for disrupting reason and the creative process. In “Monsieur du Miroir” (1837), Hawthorne also relies upon ideas from the field of photography, in this case to explore the disturbed psyche of his narrator. The theme of dissociation, entailing the disintegration of personality or consciousness,² also links “M. du Miroir” (1837) to “Little Annie’s Ramble” (1835). They form the second chapter. In these two pre-Freudian sketches, the narrators’ descriptions of their interior mental states involve the distortion of perception due to the problem of subjectivity. Hawthorne explores the subjects of time and space and their impact upon perception in “The Haunted Mind” (1835) and in “The Old Apple-Dealer” (1843). This pair of sketches represents the third chapter. In the “The Old Apple-Dealer” (1843), I discuss in detail the alteration in

² *OED*, “dissociate, v.,” *OED Online*, <http://dictionary.oed.com> (accessed 2 November 2009).

perception due to the experience of “velocity,” and the artist’s special skill in describing the imperceptible transition from one era to another.

My interest in these seven sketches led me to consider the implications of the bachelor narrator motif for *The Blithedale Romance* (1852). Therefore, in the conclusion, I discuss certain features of the sketches that carry over into the novel. Nevertheless, further work is needed on *Blithedale* in relation to Hawthorne’s bachelor sketches, including study on the hybrid figure of the artist and flaneur. Hawthorne’s trademark image of the bachelor narrator/flaneur and artist from the sketches reemerges in the obtuse character of Miles Coverdale. As I have realized in the course of my paper, the voyeuristic Coverdale is obsessed with figuring out the behavior and motivation of his acquaintances in the utopian community of Blithedale, despite the fact that, like the narrators in the bachelor sketches, he is not privy to enough data to make accurate sense of what he observes. In his assumptions about his friends’ personal lives, he often relies upon the single sense of sight, and upon his personal biases as well. Secondly, Hawthorne continues to make literary use of the techniques of photography that he uses in the sketches, particularly in the “The Hermitage” and “The Hotel” chapters of the novel. In the conclusion, I make connections between Hawthorne’s flaneur/artist type in the sketches to Miles Coverdale, the character of the flaneur and artist in *Blithedale*. Among other things, the sketches “anticipate” the novel in the alienated bachelor narrator’s futile attempts to “read” his friends’ behavior, along with his habit of spying on them, and in the resistance to women and family life. In *Blithedale*, Hawthorne expands upon the theme of class, adumbrated in “Sunday at Home” and “The Old Apple-Dealer.” In my thesis on seven of Hawthorne’s bachelor narrator sketches, I trace the features of the

sketches that reappear in *The Blithedale Romance*. Common to the sketches and the novel is the theme of the alienation of the artist and the uncertainty of knowledge, including the illusion of knowledge of the self.

Chapter One

The Optics-Driven Sketch, and The Theme of Voyeurism

1. "Sunday at Home" (*Twice Told Tales* 1837)

Typifying Hawthorne's version of the artist and flaneur, the bachelor narrator in "Sunday" is disturbed by his sexual feelings towards women, and is alienated from society. Hawthorne uses the "model of the single point of view, located inside a room contemplating the projected images of an exterior world" (Hamilton *Modern Sketchbook* 169 n. 9) in order to frame his plotless sketch. This model is based upon the optical apparatus of the camera obscura, and Hawthorne adapts the apparatus as a metaphor for defining the relations between the observer and the world. The artist's darkened room is a symbol of the camera obscura, and his discerning and penetrating gaze (i.e., his eye) can be interpreted as the lens.³ Resembling the European flaneur, who muses endlessly upon scenes from without, and experiences life vicariously through his obsession with others, the idle urban bachelor narrator describes how he spends all day Sunday observing the activities of the parishioners in the church he no longer attends. He states: "I love to spend such pleasant Sabbaths, from morning till night, behind the curtain of my open window" (CE IX 21). Jonathan Crary describes the discovery of the camera obscura (which eventually led to the invention of photography) in relation to the role of vision in understanding. He writes:

³ Jonathan Crary further explains that "the camera obscura performs an operation of individuation; that is, it necessarily defines an observer as isolated, enclosed, and autonomous within its dark confines. It impels a kind of *askesis*, or withdrawal from the world, in order to regulate and purify one's relation to the manifold contents of the now 'exterior world' " (39).

It has been known for at least two thousand years that when light passes through a small hole into a dark, enclosed interior, an inverted image will appear on the wall opposite the hole . . .

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the camera obscura was the most widely used model for explaining human vision, and for representing the relation of the perceiver and the position of a knowing subject to an external world . . .

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the camera obscura is no longer synonymous with the production of truth and with an observer positioned to see truthfully. (27, 32)

This concern with vision is relevant to the figure of the flaneur, who attempts to decipher character in random and distant encounters with people he picks out of a crowd.

According to Andy Smith, Hawthorne “was engaging in ‘conceptual and metaphoric’ proto-photographic production” in his early “optics-driven” tales and sketches, prior to his full literary engagement with photography in *The House of the Seven Gables* (47-48). In “Sunday,” Hawthorne’s narrative technique is adapted from photography; he uses the idea of the camera obscura, and his word-pictures are like still photographs.

I intend to show that Hawthorne uses the theme of religion in “Sunday” ironically, and that the narrator’s refusal to attend church conceals his fears of women and marriage. Ostensibly, the narrator is angry over American nineteenth-century secularism, in which religion is no longer part of daily life, and the integrity of a culture is under threat due to its obsession with commerce. He complains that people selfishly take “church” for granted. They rely upon the church bells for keeping track of their busy schedules, and

for the practice of social rituals, like weddings and funerals. Nevertheless, the church is ignominiously ignored six days out of seven. Hawthorne's narrator seems to attribute human qualities to an object for didactic purposes. In an overhead pictorial "shot," the narrator empathizes with the church steeple in its undeserved "neglect" by the masses, imagining that it is "lonely." He states, "Yet, in spite of its connection to human interests, what a moral loneliness, on week-days, broods around its stately height! . . . It looks down into the narrow thoroughfare, the lonelier, because the crowd are elbowing their passage at its base" (CE IX 20). Except on Sundays, the narrator is subject to the noises and distractions of the marketplace. He states: "But, on the Sabbath, I watch the earliest sunshine, and fancy that a holier brightness marks the day, when there shall be no buzz of voices on the Exchange, nor traffic in the shops, nor crowd, nor business, anywhere but at church" (20). The passage recalls the age-old conflict between commerce and/or material interests and spiritual concerns. Nevertheless, by empathizing with the church, Hawthorne's narrator is reflecting upon his own isolated condition, and regrets not attending church, *his only source of sociability*. I argue that the façade of resistance to "social praying" conceals other issues, namely the bachelor narrator's fear of others, especially women.

Colacurcio hints that the answer to the question of the narrator's perplexing refusal to attend church cannot be found in the sketch's known source, the "Sabbath Bells" poem (Summer 1796, text 1818) by Charles Lamb (1775-1834). Colacurcio states: "Possibly Hawthorne's prosy translation—which elaborates without explaining anything—exists to suggest that Lamb's half-hearted question conclusion only half covers the case. Why not *go*?" (*Piety* 494). Colacurcio's question is a good one. The narrator

claims that he is supported by his instinct of faith, and he denigrates the pro forma of organized religion. He objects to the stereotypical assumption that the practice of attending church is a sign of goodness, and vice versa—that the failure to attend reflects badly on one’s character. He states, “It must suffice, that, though my form be absent, my inner man goes constantly to church, while many, whose bodily presence fills the accustomed seats, have left their souls at home” (CE IX 22). The reader agrees with this commonsensical justification for the private practice of religion.

Hawthorne’s narrator proffers another argument in defense of unmediated worship. He takes offense at the aggressive behavior of the moneyed minority in relation to ordinary parishioners as both groups enter church. Despite the success of the American Revolution, the writing of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, an inequitable social system prevails in nineteenth-century America. He states:

. . . the sidewalks . . . are immediately thronged with two long lines of people, all converging hitherward, and streaming into the church. Perhaps the far-off roar of a coach draws nearer—a deeper thunder by its contrast with the surrounding stillness—until it sets down the wealthy worshippers at the portal, among their humblest brethren. Beyond that portal, in theory at least, there are no distinctions of earthly rank. (CE IX 22)

Unlike the humble parishioners in Hawthorne’s sketch, their wealthy counterparts do not have to walk to church, or stand in line waiting to enter. By dint of their status, the privileged members of the congregation *insinuate* themselves between the two lines formed by their “lesser” fellow parishioners. Hawthorne’s religiously independent narrator refuses to participate in a social system that harks back to Winslow’s theocratic model, and instead, envisions the ideology of a utopian, classless society, or at least a more democratic one. In this passage, Hawthorne’s narrator implies that the social system

resists changes to the status quo, due to entrenched power relations that favor the wealthy. Nevertheless, intertwined with his resistance to church worship is the bachelor narrator's resistance to women.

His feelings toward women are ambiguous. Hawthorne's typically voyeuristic artist/flaneur type is irresistibly drawn to women, and he resents them for disturbing his ability to concentrate. Hence, attractive women are stereotypically associated with the disruption of contemplation. He states:

Those pretty girls! Why will they disturb my pious meditations! Of all days in the week, they should strive to look least fascinating on the Sabbath, instead of heightening their mortal loveliness, as if to rival the blessed angels, and keep our thoughts from heaven. Were I the minister himself, I must needs look. (22)

In this passage, Hawthorne reassesses the conflict between the spirit and the flesh. All men, including members of the clergy, are subject to sexual feelings, and the denial of the body is unnatural. Hawthorne seems to be saying that human beings are not neatly divided into sections (i.e., the body, the mind, the spirit, etc.), and the attempt to repress parts of oneself on a particular day of the week is unhealthy, and perhaps impossible. The "whole man" is always present, in all aspects of himself. Resembling the Biblical Eve, the young women that the narrator spies upon are to blame for the feelings of lust that they inspire. In the narrator's stereotypical depiction of women, they are doubly corrupt—sexually provocative, and disruptive to contemplation. The lonely bachelor narrator is avoiding church for psychological reasons—his fear of women and marriage is the underlying cause. Colacurcio explains the bachelor's dilemma in terms of his fear of rejection. He claims that although it would have been better for him to "mix with the

multitude,” the narrator can neither approve of the social hierarchy, nor bear “dismissal . . . ‘on the eve of love’ ” (*Piety* 493). His explanation for the narrator’s avoidance of church is only partly satisfying.

The point is that the narrator displaces his fears of marriage and the family onto abstract issues involving the denigration of secularism and social inequality. He avoids church for personal reasons, and denies himself the satisfaction of sex with women, vicariously experiencing pleasure by watching them from a distance. According to Michel Foucault, it was assumed from at least the eighteenth century onward that an increasing birthrate is positively linked to the fortune and future of a country, and, by implication, in their failure to marry and reproduce, bachelors in particular are under pressure to conform to society’s needs as a whole. Foucault writes,

Of course, it had long been asserted that a country had to be populated if it hoped to be rich and powerful; but this was the first time the society had affirmed . . . that its future and its fortune were tied not only to the uprightness of its citizens, to their marriage rules and family organizations, but to the manner in which each individual made use of his sex. Things went from ritual lamenting over the unfruitful debauchery of the rich, bachelors, and libertines, to a discourse in which the sexual conduct of the population was taken both as an object of analysis and as a target of intervention . . . (*History of Sexuality* 26)

We can examine the narrator’s resistance to marriage and the family in terms of Foucault’s theory of social regulation. For example, the narrator positively identifies with “a third-rate coxcomb,” who is single and therefore free from the obligations of family life. Conversely, he takes pity on married men, who have been unwittingly cajoled into

what he perceives as a deadening relationship. He states, "But, now, with nods and greetings among friends, each matron takes her husband's arm, and paces gravely homeward, while the girls flutter away, after arranging sunset walks with their favored bachelors" (CE IX 25). The passage reflects the bachelor's resentment at having to conform to cultural norms involving marriage and the family. Going to church involves mixing with the opposite sex, and the potential danger of being attracted to "flesh and blood" women. Alluring young women, believing that their purpose is to marry and procreate, entrap unwary bachelors. As husbands, men are no longer free; instead, they are contained within roles assigned to them by society. Conversely, the avoidance of "church" (with its threat of sociability) guarantees that the narrator will retain his freedom; in his view, men are "safe" from women only if kept at a distance. We glean from this passage that society has rules for marriage and the family and that conformity to these rules is mandatory; that the narrator feels threatened by the prospect of being sexually lured into marriage; and that for men, marriage is a trap from which there is no escape. Resistance to the regulation of sex is the underlying theme of "Sunday at Home." Instead of interacting with others, the voyeuristic narrator in "Sights from a Steeple" creates a love affair in the street scene below from his perch at the top of a steeple. Both narrators prefer to avoid direct contact with women.

2. "Sights from a Steeple" *The Token* 1831 (*Twice Told Tales* 1837)

Hawthorne uses optical devices metaphorically in order to frame his otherwise plotless sketches. In "Sunday at Home," he uses the "inflexible representational system of

the camera obscura” (Crary 113) to frame his story. In “Sights from a Steeple,” the author favors an all-encompassing *circular* model of vision. The narrator states:

In three parts of the visible circle, [from] whose center of this spire, I discern fields, villages . . . the waving lines of rivulets, little placid lakes . . . On the fourth side is the sea, stretching away towards a viewless boundary, blue and calm . . .

(CE IX 192)

In both sketches the narrator is in a “fixed” position in relation to the subjects he observes. I suggest that Hawthorne does not privilege one visual model over the other, but chooses the “optic” model according to the narrator’s state of mind. For example, the narrator in “Sunday” completely represses his feelings towards the women he observes, and the narrow aperture of the camera obscura is *constricted*. Conversely, the narrator in “Sights” experiences pleasure vicariously by watching, and the circular purview of the Panopticon is *expansive*. Nevertheless (like the character Miles Coverdale in *Blithedale*), both of the narrators in these two sketches spy on others, and neither breaks out of his isolated state. The relations of power and the impact of commerce upon society are common to both sketches.

In “Sights,” the purview of the first person narrator at the top of a church spire resembles that of the guard at the center of the prison embodied in Michel Foucault’s image of modern power, the panopticon. According to Simon During, “for Foucault, it is Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon (1791) which stands as the type of modern penalty. Bentham himself took the idea of the Panopticon from his brother Samuel, who invented it - a circular building with cells built at its circumference - for Catherine the Great”

(*Foucault and Literature* 156). In an interview (1980) quoted in *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory* (2000), Foucault states,

. . . by the term ‘Panopticism’ I have in mind an ensemble of mechanisms brought into play in all the clusters of procedures used by power. Panopticism was a technological invention in the order of power, comparable with the steam engine in the order of production. This invention had the peculiarity of being utilized first of all on a local level, in schools, barracks and hospitals. This was where the experiment of integral surveillance was carried out. (Hawthorn 253)

Prisoners, students and patients are under the surveillance and control of a central authority in the Panopticon; in a projection of the symbolic power of the poet to interpret or “fix” reality, Hawthorne’s narrator constructs a love affair between two young people from the material of random events. Nina Baym states, “. . . the speaker [in the “Steeple” sketch] occupies a stationary position and observes the movement of life around him” (59). More particularly, from within the boundaries of this circular enclosure, Hawthorne’s narrator feels safe and powerful. From a great height, he vicariously enjoys an imaginary love scene, in a projection of his own desire to fall in love.

The nameless subjects of the town under surveillance cannot in turn observe the invisible narrator, an omnipresent godlike “watchman, all-heeding and unheeded,”⁴ who dreams of being able to remove the roofs of houses and peer into the hearts, minds and lives of the townspeople (CE IX 192).⁵ Admitting that he must rely instead upon his own limited sense of sight and guesswork, the narrator creates an imaginary tableau from the

⁴ Note the description of God in Job 9: 11: “Lo, he passes by me, and I see him not; he moves on, but I do not perceive him.”

human activity in the streets below involving a rich merchant, his two daughters and a young man. Readers become spectators looking in on a private world. We follow the eye of the narrator, which, like the lens of a camera, scans and focuses in upon images in the surrounding landscape. Lacking the formal characteristics of a literary plot (unified by a beginning, a middle and an end), the mood and structure of the sketch are anchored in the metaphor of an impending summer rainstorm. In accord with Hawthorne's narrative technique of ending his sketches with an artificial emotional "uplift," the rainstorm "conveniently" resolves itself into a rainbow. The underlying theme of the sketch is the compulsion of the artist and flaneur to create a story out of a series of scenes he observes from a distance, to compensate for his alienation from others.

Complicating matters, Hawthorne's narrator is a sexually inhibited male scopophilic. The narrator fits the profile of the voyeur, who is sexually stimulated or satisfied principally from looking. In the sketches that depict the narrator as voyeur (including "Sunday at Home," and "Foot-prints from the Sea-Shore"), the world is bleakly divided in two, between those who are involved with the business of living, and

⁵ Dana Brand explains that "the development of urban spectatorship was an international process" involving Europe and "the English-speaking world" (26). Hawthorne borrows the trope of the "Limping Devil" (CE IX 192) from the frame story written by Alain René Le Sage in 1703 to create the complex persona of his narrator. Brand outlines Le Sage's story. He writes, "a Spanish student nobleman named Don Cleofas frees a crippled devil named Asmodeus from a bottle and is rewarded by being brought to the top of the highest steeple in Madrid" (26). In his series of Sherlock Holmes mysteries (written in the 1890s), Sir Arthur Conan Doyle adapts the idea of the omniscient observer to create his type of the English private detective and flaneur. Brand quotes Holmes: "In the opening pages of 'A Case of Identity' Holmes observes to Watson: '*If we could fly out of that window hand in hand, hover over this great city, gently remove the roofs, and peep in at the queer things which are going on ... it would make all fiction stale and unprofitable*'" (204 n. 17 italics mine). The idea of omniscient ubiquity appears in Le Sage, Hawthorne and Doyle. Brand makes the connection between Le Sage and Doyle, but does *not* link Le Sage to Hawthorne to Doyle. In "A Case of Identity," Doyle seems to be borrowing the motif of the free-floating, omniscient urban spectator from "Sights from a Steeple."

those that watch. This division is analogous to the relationship between the crowd and the flaneur, who paradoxically draws life and comfort from being near strangers that he watches from a safe distance. Those that simply watch are on the margins of society. Hawthorne's narrator makes a cryptic remark at the outset of the sketch, indicating that vicarious experience (although more "safe" in that it does not involve interaction with others) is less satisfying than "real" experience. He states: "So! I have climbed high, and my reward is small" (191).

Inside this typically concise but perfectly symmetrical sketch are two seemingly disparate but thematically linked scenes involving the trope of *collision*. One involves the abrupt encounter between processions of soldiers and schoolboys (who stereotypically mimic the soldiers) with a funeral train; another entails a confrontation between a triangle of two young women and a young man with a rich old merchant. In the first scene, the soldiers are reminded of the suddenness of death in combat and in the second scene, a parent stymies sex. The central theme of the sketch involves the conflict between domestic and sexual impulses (including woman, love, and the *joie de vivre*) and opposing social forces (such as the omnipresent threat of war, and the practical world of commerce) associated with male aggression that threaten to undermine or interrupt the personal. In the wharf scene, for example, the narrator states: "Business evidently has its centre there, and many a man is wasting the summer afternoon in labor and anxiety, in losing riches, or in gaining them, when he would be wiser to flee away to some pleasant country village . . ." (CE IX 193-194). The obsession with making money is a threat to love and personal happiness.

The rich old merchant first spied on the wharf is a literary Midas *type* associated with corruption, greed and the annihilation of love, and simultaneously represents the stereotypical possessive father threatened by the advances of suitors. Among other things, the trope of the thunderstorm signals the repression of natural instincts and is associated with the father's primal anger in the phrase, "the darkness of the whole air gathers speedily upon his visage" (197). Nevertheless, the narrator hints at the irrepressibility of love in the presence of cultural and familial tendencies that threaten to suppress it. He describes how one of the rich old man's daughters defiantly makes eye contact with the young man. He states: ". . . the old merchant . . . likes not the sweet encounter [and] thrusts aside the youth with little courtesy . . . How disconsolate the poor lover stands! . . . till he catches a backward glance of mirth from a bright eye . . ." (197). Hawthorne's narrator creates an affair of the heart in the imagined interactions between the subjects he observes from a distance.

In her landmark feminist reading ("Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" 1975) of the male viewer of cinema, British writer and filmmaker Laura Mulvey "describes how sexual difference and inequality are inscribed not only in the content or subject matter of film but in its formal visual apparatus—its characteristic ways of looking—as well" (Leitsch 2179). Put simply, part of her claim is that the process of male gazing upon the female object of desire simultaneously inspires fear and pleasure. In addition to images of war, the first cloud scene (which anticipates the love scene between the two young people) contains the double image of *coitus interruptus* as well as the fetishistic treatment of a female body part. The narrator uses covertly prurient language to describe the tantalizing vision of the enticing leg (and/or phallus) of an imaginary female spirit

“thrusting through, and suddenly withdrawn [from] an airy archipelago of clouds” (CE IX 191-192). Bringing into play Mulvey’s feminist revision of Freud’s theory of scopophilia (in which sexual pleasure or satisfaction can result from watching),⁶ Hawthorne’s narrator experiences sexual pleasure vicariously by imagining that the flirtatious daughter in his sketch will succeed in rebelling against her father’s rule. Hence, the reader is inculcated in the voyeuristic pleasure of the narrator. In the interactions that the narrator envisions between the father, his two daughters and the young man, perception is altered to fit the requirements of the narrator’s psyche. In his identification with the handsome young “lover” in the scene below, the narrator avoids the threat of rejection in “real” life, and anticipates the success of pursuit. Hence, the narrators in “Sunday” and in “Sights” prefer isolation to rejection. In the trope of the rainbow, the sketch ends on an artificially positive note. We are complicit with the narrator in hoping that the young man in “Sights” will come down off his “perch” and reach out to a member of the opposite sex, in order to confirm our belief in the natural impulse to love. In our culturally determined (i.e. “sentimental”) wish for a “happy ending” between boy and girl, we are complicit in society’s regulation of sex, for the purposes of marriage and procreation. At the end of “Foot-prints on the Sea-Shore,” the narrator breaks his “hermit’s vow” and makes contact with a trio of young girls.

3. “Foot-Prints on the Sea-Shore” *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, January 1838 (*Twice Told Tales* 1842)

⁶ *OED*, “scopophilia, n.,” *OED Online*, <http://dictionary.oed.online> (accessed 8 October 2009).

Throughout this sketch, Hawthorne uses words (such as “impression,” “print,” “images,” “record,” “evanescent,” and “shadow”) evocative of the techniques of photography. According to Andy Smith, just as early photographers wanted “to accurately record and stabilize an image,” writers (like Hawthorne) wanted to “stabilize phenomena in order to record human behavior accurately” (46). “Foot-prints on the Sea-Shore,” “Sights from a Steeple,” “Sunday at Home” and “Monsieur du Miroir” all form part of a group of Hawthorne’s early tales and sketches that reflect his immersion in an “optics-driven” culture. Hawthorne looks back to Defoe’s shipwreck novel for the metaphors of the footprint and the fort.

Despite the publication of *Twice-Told Tales* in 1837 (generously subsidized by his lifelong friend Horatio Bridge), Hawthorne continued to struggle to connect to an audience of sympathetic readers, and to make his living as a writer. In accord with the writer’s hunger to connect to the world, Hawthorne’s narrator in “Foot-prints” invites the reader to join him for a walk on the beach, the surface of which is a metaphor for the artist’s broad writing tablet. He states: “Now let us pace together—the reader’s fancy arm in arm with mine . . . from that craggy promontory to yonder rampart of broken rocks” (CE IX 452). The narrator insists upon establishing a personal relationship with the reader, revealing intimate thoughts and feelings (including those that involve sexual fantasies) that the reader is forced to be privy to. Kristie Hamilton explains that American sketch writers follow the confessional model established by Michel Eyquem de Montaigne (1533-1592); moreover, Kesselring’s listings indicate that Hawthorne read Montaigne (57). In his famous *Essais* (1580), Montaigne pursued the character he referred to as “Myself.” Hamilton writes:

Montaigne provides . . . the prototype for this convention [of intimate correspondence] with his claim that his *Essays* were written ‘to amuse a neighbor, a relative, a friend, who may take pleasure in associating and conversing with me’ (‘Of Giving the Lie’). The intimacy with readers that Montaigne asserts in order to justify self-revelation among aristocratic peers would become especially important to nineteenth-century writers of the sketch, albeit for different reasons. (*America’s Sketchbook* 28-29)

Hawthorne is concerned with the impact of the artist’s tendency to withdraw into a world of his own. Like the bachelor narrator in Hawthorne’s travel sketch “My Visit to Niagara” (1835), the narrator in “Foot-prints” finds solace in nature, isolated from others. The feeling of transcendence associated with the beauties of nature is a Romantic trope, and is not limited to bachelors. Hawthorne uses the trope ironically, to critique his bachelor narrators’ naïve belief in their own self-sufficiency. The narrator in the “Foot-prints” sketch is determined to “[bind to himself] with a hermit’s vow, to interchange no thoughts with man or woman, [and] to share no social pleasure . . .” (451). Nina Baym rightly claims that in many of his sketches Hawthorne warns against the impulse of withdrawing from the world into a world of fantasy. In *The Shape of Hawthorne’s Career*, she states, “. . . the sketches argue that an exclusively social existence can destroy spiritual vitality and resiliency. To correct this, one withdraws temporarily—but not into one’s private fantasies . . .” (59). The sketch contains the dilemma of establishing a balance between the need for solitude with the need to interact with others, and focuses in particular upon the figure of the reticent bachelor narrator and artist. Hawthorne conceals the theme of the dangers of isolation in the metaphor of the footprint

from *Robinson Crusoe* (CE IX 453). Both Robinson Crusoe and Hawthorne's narrator escape and then return to the world of society. The discovery of a paradoxical single footprint in the sand triggers a fear of the Other in Defoe's narrator. He states:

. . . I was exceedingly surpriz'd with the Print of a man's naked Foot on the Shore . . . I stood like one Thunderstruck, or as if I had seen an Apparition; I listen'd, I look'd around me, I could hear nothing, nor see any Thing . . .

(Defoe 112)

The Other in Defoe's novel is ostensibly the savage; in Hawthorne's sketch, the Other is Woman. Nevertheless, in both works, there is evidence that the narrator's fear of the Other can be interpreted as a division of the self in which the Other (as a reflection, or shadow) is the unconscious—the lonely, fearful, sabotaging, unknowable, other self. Hawthorne's narrator “reconnects” to himself only in the renunciation of his vow of solitude. Hawthorne's plotless sketch is framed by a series of encounters with a group of young girls, who draw the narrator out of his shell.

From a distance, the narrator catches sight of three young girls and is distracted by a feeling of desire, which in turn threatens his vow of solitude. They suddenly vanish, and the sexually inhibited narrator is deprived of even the voyeuristic pleasure of spying on them. Noticing a likeness between the girls and a flock of tiny seabirds, he envisions both groups as phantom spirits that (like the unstable images of the daguerreotype) tantalize him with their “airy flutterings” and then disappear from view. The young man's fear of abandonment and a yearning for friendship belies his claim that he craves solitude, and implies a contradiction between what the narrator thinks he requires, and what he secretly longs for. Shifting his attention to philosophical matters, he ponders his

own mortality, and realizes that all the efforts of poets, statesmen and warriors are ephemeral. Even love poetry (and by implication, all literature) will eventually disappear in the same way that writing in the sand is washed away by the sea, leading him to doubt whether his artistic endeavors will endure. He states: "Cut deep, that the record will be permanent! . . . Is it accomplished? Return then, in an hour or two, and seek for this mighty record of a name. The sea will have swept over it . . . Hark, the surf-wave laughs at you! (CE IX 455). The word "record" in this passage reiterates the analogy between literature and photography; in both artistic disciplines the aim is to interpret and "fix" reality, by different means. I suggest that the artist's sense of reality depends upon being understood by readers. Like the flaneur, who is afraid to be alone and reaches out to the crowd to confirm his sense of self, the artist reaches out to others through his art to confirm his sense of self. The flaneur, the bachelor, and the artist merge in the persona of the bachelor narrator in "Foot-prints." In Hawthorne's sketch, time is a threat to the survival and appreciation of art, and women are a threat to the integrity of the artist.

The narrator climbs over the ruins of an old fort (a symbol of aggression), which is split by an opening to the sea. His thoughts compulsively return to the subject of desire, provoked by the image of waves pummeling the rocky shore. He interprets the action of the sea entering a chasm as a metaphor for the sex act. The repression of sexual desire affects the narrator's perception of nature; in his sexually and socially "needy" condition, he is *compelled* to see the landscape in sexual terms. The narrator describes the scene from inside the chasm, which he envisions as a womb. He states:

Here is a narrow avenue . . . affording passage for the rising sea to thunder back and forth, filling it with tumultuous foam, and leaving its floor of black pebbles

bare and glistening . . . at the outlet, two or three waves are seen struggling to get in [the chasm] at once; two hit the walls athwart, while one rushes straight through, and all three thunder, as if with rage and triumph. While watching this scene, I can never rid myself of the idea, that a monster, endowed with life and fierce energy, is striving to burst his way into the narrow pass. (CE IX 455-456)

On one hand, sexual intercourse can be interpreted as an act of nature necessary for the propagation of the species. The sexual imagery as it relates to reproduction is transparent in the sketch.⁷ On the other hand, Hawthorne's metaphor is symbolic of the power dynamic between the sexes, and a reflection of the narrator's secret desire to dominate women. In the metaphor of the chasm, sex is a one-sided invasion of war in which the male is victor over the female. The male takes possession of the female ("with rage and triumph") through an act of violence. The trope of violation reemerges in *Blithedale*, in the stabbing of Zenobia.

The passage brings to mind Helene Cixous's theory of male dominance in her essay "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1975). She traces how the phallus came to be a privileged signifier in our "biblico-capitalist society" (2050). According to her feminist theory, our patriarchal culture is based upon the logic of gender opposition, in which "one half of the opposition is essentially destroyed for the other half to make 'sense' " (2037). According to Jeremy Hawthorn, phallogentrism is "a term . . . used to refer to the interlocking social and ideological systems which accept and advance a patriarchal power

⁷ According to David S. Reynolds, "In 1827 the existence of the human egg—the ovum—was discovered, and soon it was found that conception came when a man's sperm enters the egg . . ." (*Waking Giant* 209). Hawthorne's "chasm" passage reflects his awareness of the biology of sexual reproduction (in the analogy between pebbles/eggs and waves/sperm).

symbolically represented by the phallus” (259). Fredric Jameson interprets the phenomenon of phallogocentric domination in Marxist terms. In *The Political Unconscious* he writes: “. . . the process of cultural ‘universalization’ (which implies the repression of the oppositional voice, and the illusion that there is only one genuine [read: male] ‘culture’) is the specific form taken by what can be called the process of legitimation in the realm of ideology and conceptual systems” (87). Hawthorne’s narrator is conflicted. He is attracted to women, but he resists reaching out to them for fear that they will control him. I suggest that his fears are apparent in his one-sided fantasy of male domination. In the same scene, the wandering narrator finds carcasses of animals and birds trapped within the chasm. The womb and, by extension, all women are associated with life as well as death. In his negative perception of women, he unfairly, and stereotypically associates the inevitability of death with the female gender.

In his second encounter with the girls, the narrator’s natural feeling (euphemistically described as “a strangely pleasant sensation”) of desire for them increases. They become the object of the male gaze, and voyeurism takes the place of the natural sex act. He states: “These, these are the warm realities of those three visionary shapes that flitted from me on the beach” (CE IX 457). His fear of real “flesh and blood” women causes him to run away from them, reminiscent of Robinson Crusoe’s hasty retreat into his man-made enclosure upon his discovery of a single footprint.”⁸ The trope of visibility in Foucault’s panopticon is reversed in Defoe’s novel and in Hawthorne’s

⁸ Crusoe states: “When I came to *my Castle*, for so I think I called ever after this, I fled into it like one pursued. Whether I went over by the ladder . . . or went in at the hole in the rock, which I called a door, I cannot remember; no, nor could I remember the next morning, for never frightened hare fled to cover . . . with more terror of mind than I to this *retreat*” (Defoe 112 italics mine).

sketch. For example, the apparently self-sufficient and isolated characters in “Foot-prints” and *Robinson Crusoe* hide out in a place of fortification, and irrationally fear the intrusion of others, implying that Foucault’s power/knowledge nexus engenders a kind of general social paranoia. The locus of control is displaced onto an invisible, threatening Other. More self-reflective than the narrator in “Sunday at Home,” Hawthorne’s narrator admits that his fear of women originates in the psyche of his own (Calvinistic) self. He states:

. . . with an inward antipathy and a headlong flight, do I eschew the presence of any meditative stroller like myself, known by his pilgrim self, his sauntering step, his shy demeanor, his observant yet abstracted eye. From such a man, as if another self had scared me, I scramble hastily over the rocks and take refuge in my nook. (458)

He is divided between desire and fear of women. In addition, implicit in his avoidance of women is the stereotypical fear that their presence may impact negatively upon his ability to perceive reality. For example, in his preferred solitary, contemplative state, he claims he is able to distinguish reality from the mere world of material objects. He retreats into his “hermitage,” where he feels that he can enter the “real” world (evident only in his dreams), in broad daylight and *away from women*. The material world, which he knows is not real, disappears in this “magic spot.”

Sigmund Freud explains the belief that women interfere with perception in his theory on the uncanny. He states:

It often happens that neurotic men declare that they feel there is something uncanny about the female genital organs. This *unheimlich* place, however, is the

entrance to the former *Heim* [home] of all human beings, to the place where each one of us lived once upon a time and in the beginning. There is a joking saying that ‘Love is home-sickness’; and whenever a man dreams of a place or a country and says to himself, while he is still dreaming: ‘this place is familiar to me, I’ve been here before’, we may interpret the place as being his mother’s genitals or her body. In this case, too, then, the *unheimlich* is what was once *heimlich*, familiar; the prefix ‘*un*’ [‘un-’] is the token of repression. (“The Uncanny” 947)

In the conflict between the spirit and the flesh, contemplation is incompatible with sex with women. Stubbornly refusing to acknowledge his basic loneliness, he claims that he is “self-sufficient to [his] own happiness” (CE IX 461). We realize that he indulges in self-pleasure, taboo in Hawthorne’s time. Hinting that the secret behavior has become habitual, the narrator states: “. . . many a secret hour has given me a right to call [the nook] my own . . . Have not my musings melted into its rocky walls and sandy floor, and made them a portion of my own? (CE IX 458). The narrator’s ejaculate becomes part of the earth’s organic materials. Solo sex is a release, and, as a loss of potential genetic material, it threatens the stability and fortune of a nation. In her discussion of this scene in “Hawthorne, modernity and the literary sketch,” Kristie Hamilton states,

Hawthorne evokes in these titillating passages the dual antebellum discourses of bachelor reverie and masturbation, made both thrilling and threatening for readers in anti-onanism advice manuals of the day . . . Though taken quite literally as a physiological pathology, the bachelor’s succumbing to masturbatory fantasy was also a figure in antebellum culture, therefore, for the self-induced dissolution of the self. (115)

I argue that in characterizing (albeit in euphemistic terms) solo sex as “natural,” Hawthorne is taking aim at the sexual purity movement, which nurtured a phobia of masturbation (Pfister 23; David S. Reynolds 206). In opposition to reformers’ fears of self-pollution, the narrator shamelessly describes how he indulges in a forbidden act. We sense that in Hawthorne’s view, masturbation is *not* sinful. Nevertheless, implicit in the sketch is the fear that this “habit” may lead to social alienation. For example, the narrator reaches out to the girls *only after* he has satisfied himself, implying that he wants to control his own sexuality, thereby alienating himself further from the women he is attracted to, *ad infinitum*. Theoretically, once satisfied, he is less vulnerable to (and can resist) the women he finds attractive “in the flesh.” As it is depicted in Hawthorne’s sketch, the habit of masturbation is self-defeating, as it tends to lead the narrator back into isolation, and away from women. The narrator is unable to reconcile the sexual with the cerebral parts of himself. He recoils from society in general, and especially from the society of young and beautiful women, since they in particular threaten the integrity of his private, thinking, artistic self.

Rejoicing in the sounds of his own voice echoing between the rocks, he deliberately (or perhaps subconsciously) brings himself to the attention of the girls. In his third encounter, the three young girls look down upon him from the top of the cliff. In a reversal of the male-centered power dynamic envisioned in the “chasm” scene, the bachelor narrator becomes the object of the female gaze. In response, he places them on a pedestal. To him, they seem “like angels between [him] and their native sky” (460). In this idealization of women, he distances himself from the opposite sex. Nevertheless, the conflict between solitude and sociability is patently resolved at the end of the sketch.

According to Michael Dunne, Hawthorne preferred to end his sketches with an “emotional uplift” as a way of controlling his material as well as his reader. In *Hawthorne’s Narrative Strategies*, he writes: “In place of an Aristotelian plot, then, Hawthorne must have chosen to rely on some other narrative strategy to compel his reader’s attention. In fact, his choice was the creation of a controlling narrative voice” (63). In a gesture of self-remonstrance, the bachelor narrator symbolically kills off his fearful, shy self by pelting stones at his own shadow, and then joins the girls and their fisherman friends to enjoy the catch of the day. In contradiction to the anti-social character of the flaneur, the “Foot-prints” narrator chooses to connect to the girls he has observed from a distance.

In the sense that the narrator ultimately responds to the invitation to socialize, the outcome of the sketch is positive. In accord with society’s purposeful regulation of sex described by Foucault in *The History of Sexuality* (26), the reader hopes that the narrator will overcome his fear of women, and strike up a relationship with one of the girls. The description of the girls as “angels” contains the double image of Woman as unattainable, *and* as a source of sympathy. In her essay on the presence of Scottish Common Sense philosophy in novels by Stowe and Hawthorne, Marianne Noble claims that women are agents of sympathy and provide access to the reality of the material world. On the role of women in *The House of the Seven Gables*, she writes, “the female sentimental characters are affirmed as sites of moral authority and happiness [and, conversely,] detachment is the source of unhappiness” (272-273). Like the narrator in “Foot-prints,” Hawthorne lived through a period of self-imposed isolation as an aspiring young writer, which

impacted negatively upon his mental health. Quoting from a letter written by Hawthorne to Longfellow on the dangers of isolation, Colacurcio writes,

Hawthorne really did repent his early tendencies to ‘solipsism’ . . . the 1837 letter to Longfellow . . . protests that the young Hawthorne never ‘meant’ to be ‘carried apart from the main current of life’ but that he had in fact ‘secluded himself from society’: ‘I have made a captive of myself, and put me in a dungeon, and now I cannot find the key to let myself out.’ (*Piety* 544 n. 34)

Hawthorne abandoned bachelor life when he married Sophia Peabody on July 9, 1842. In a series of highly romantic letters (written between March 6, 1839 to June 30, 1842) Hawthorne passionately courts his future wife. He made her acquaintance in November of 1837, proposed in July of 1839, and ultimately married her three years later (not long after his brief stint at Brook Farm). Throughout his love letters prior to their marriage (CE XV 290-635), and in letters written many years subsequent to their marriage, Hawthorne acknowledges how necessary Sophia is to his sense of self. In a letter (in which he invokes Plato’s Theory of Forms) to his wife dated April 7, 1856, he writes, “Nothing else is *real*, except the bond between thee and me. The people around me are *shadows*. I am myself a *shadow*, till thou takest me in thy arms, and convertest me into *substance*. Till thou comest back, I do but walk in a *dream*” (Noble 274 italics mine). In stark contrast to the narrator’s ambivalence towards women in the “Foot-prints” sketch, in his letters to Sophia, Hawthorne unequivocally acknowledges that his powers of perception and sense of reality depend entirely upon her physical presence. The bachelor narrators in chapter two only fantasize about women; hence, their views of the world are distorted.

Chapter Two

The Dissociated Narrator

4. “Monsieur du Miroir” *The Token* 1837 (*Mosses from an Old Manse* 1846)

Monsieur du Miroir is an idle city-dweller, a wandering gentleman-poet and scholar, and a middle-aged bachelor of small independent means, who fits the profile of the flaneur. At the outset of the sketch, his hopes for personal happiness and success have deteriorated, along with his youth and good looks; he examines his past to account for his sense of personal failure. Like the flaneur, he directs his gaze outwards, towards his reflection in the mirror; ironically, he is the subject of his own gaze. He studies his impenetrable reflection in the same way that the flaneur studies the impenetrable subjects in the crowd. The barriers to the understanding of the self are analogous to the barriers of understanding others; therefore, I claim this sketch deserves to be included in my group of seven bachelor sketches. Hawthorne seems to be stressing that, since we are privy to our own thoughts, it seems as if we should be able understand ourselves more accurately than we understand others. Nevertheless, according to the theory of Jacques Lacan, “the SUBJECT can never be anything but divided, split, alienated from himself. The split is irreducible, can never be healed . . . [it] denotes the impossibility of the ideal of a fully present self-consciousness; the subject will never know himself completely, but will always be cut off from his own knowledge . . .” (Evans 192).

Robert L. Gale informs us that Hawthorne “record[ed] the germ of this story in his *American Notebooks* (7 September 1835): ‘To make one’s own reflection in the mirror the subject of a story’ ” (334). He frames his plotless sketch in the trope of a person’s reflection in the mirror. According to J. D. Crowley, “Monsieur du Miroir” and

“Sunday at Home” are part of a group of eleven tales published (in 1836, dated 1837) after the failure of “The Story Teller” collection (CE IX 495). The everyman narrator of “Monsieur du Miroir” experiences a psychological crisis—musing on his own mortality, he realizes that he has created a separate identity from the image of his physical body in the mirror, and that his twin companion is an “emblem” of his own misspent life. He is delusional, and suffers from a dissociated personality. Invoking the Foucauldian panopticon, in which he is a prisoner being spied upon, the narrator imagines that his mirror image has him under constant surveillance. In “Monsieur du Miroir,” Hawthorne brilliantly explores the problem of subjectivity. In the personification of the steeple and the mirror in “Sights” and “Monsieur du Miroir,” he employs the literary technique of defamiliarization in order to accentuate the deleterious effects of isolation on the workings of the mind. Jameson provides a helpful description of the technique in *The Prison-House of Language*. He writes:

Shklovsky’s famous definition of art as a defamiliarization, [is] a making strange (*ostranenie*) of objects, a renewal of perception . . . Art is . . . a way of restoring conscious experience, of breaking through deadening and mechanical habits of conduct (*automatization*, as the Czech Formalist will later call it), and allowing us to be reborn to the world in its existential freshness and horror. (51)

According to Colacurcio, along with “Wakefield” and “The Haunted Mind” (and, in my view, “Little Annie’s Ramble”), this sketch “belongs essentially to the genre or syndrome of dissociated mentality” (*Piety* 490). Ironically, as the subject of his own investigations, the narrator’s self is no more accessible to him than the inner self of any stranger in a crowd. The subject of the sketch is the elusive identity of the self.

Like the daguerreotype of early photography, which took fifteen to thirty minutes to expose, the identity of the narrator is difficult to stabilize or “fix.” Ivan Kreilkamp quotes from an early essay on photography by Lady Elizabeth Eastlake.⁹ She describes the technical problem that early experimenters faced. She states:

But having thus conjured up the ethereal spirit of photography, they failed in all attempts to retain it in their keeping. The charm once set going refused to stop—the slightest exposure to light, even for the necessary purpose of inspection, continued the action, and the image was lost to view in the darkening of the whole paper. In short, they wanted the next secret, that of rendering permanent, or, in photographic language, of *fixing* the image. (Kreilkamp 418)

In his essay on the “optical unconscious” and Victorian poetry, Kreilkamp claims that the invention of photography widened the rift between a person and his image, between the “actual body and the represented body” (415). In the production of multiples of a single image, he claims that “[photography] became associated with a *gothic discourse of doubling*” (419 italics mine). In other words, the invention of photography precipitated a crisis in the concept of the self. Hawthorne adapts the techniques of photography for literary purposes throughout his early sketches and stories, before and after the practical invention of photography in 1839. According to Andy Smith, “even after photographic processes were invented, Hawthorne returned in his writings to the early days of proto-photographic experimentation in an effort to grasp its significance” (48). In Hawthorne’s sketch about one’s own reflection, the self is both reproducible (as its own “double”), and

⁹ From her essay entitled “Photography,” in *Photography: Essays and Images: Illustrated Readings in the History of Photography*, ed. Beaumont Newhall. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1980), 90.

paradoxically, cannot be “fixed.” The sketch is replete with key words and phrases that relate to photography and photographic techniques. Certain words and phrases relate to the self and its double (such as “reflection,” “resemblance,” “duplicates,” “exact imitation,” “facsimile,” “twin-children,” “twins of fate,” “repeating,” “redoubled,” “copies,” “mutual ghosts,” “true metal/copper-washed,” “sterling coin/counterfeit,” “face and form,” “imitate,” “face to face,” “mutually reflected spheres” and “ape”). Other key words relate to the self as unknowable, or “unfixed” (such as “blackness,” “nothingness,” and “unreal image”). The reflection in the mirror is a metaphor for the dissociated self.

The inverted syntax in the first sentence of “Monsieur du Miroir” hints at a disordered sense of reality. The more the narrator studies himself in the mirror, the less he understands himself. He states: “Than the gentleman above-named, there is nobody, in the whole circle of my acquaintance, whom I have more attentively studied, yet of whom I have less real knowledge, beneath the surface which it pleases him to present” (CE X 159). The problem of subjectivity, involving the split between the conscious self and the unconscious self, and the split between human understanding and the material world, is epistemological, philosophical and psychological. The psychological theory of Jacques Lacan is applicable to my discussion of the alienation of the self. He builds upon the theory of Freud, and departs from Freud as well, by “foregrounding the category of the subject” (Jameson *Political Unconscious* 66).¹⁰ In his essay, “The Mirror-Stage as Formative in the Development of the I” (written for a lecture in 1936, and rewritten for publication in 1949), Jacques Lacan describes the *Imaginary* stage of development, in

¹⁰ Jameson further explains that “The Lacanian rewriting of Freud should not be read as a mere variant on that Freudian hermeneutic, but rather a substantial and reflexive shift from the Freudian proposition about the nature of the dynamics of the subject (wish-fulfillment) to the interrogation of that problematic itself . . .” (*Political Unconscious* 66).

which the toddler establishes a relation between the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt* (the inner world and the outer world) by viewing himself in the mirror. Paradoxically, his feeling of agency is based upon a fiction, since “according to Lacan, knowledge itself is structured like paranoia, in that it projects a coherence onto the world that may not be there” (Leitsch 1286 n.7). For Lacan, the concept of the mirror stage evolved beyond its original application to the development of the child between six months and eighteen months of age. According to Dylan Evans,

. . . the mirror stage [represents] a permanent structure of subjectivity . . . it is a stadium (stade) in which the subject is permanently caught and captivated by his own image . . . The mirror stage shows that the ego is the product of misunderstanding (*méconnaissance*) and the site where the subject becomes alienated from himself . . . it is also closely related to narcissism, as the story of Narcissus clearly shows . . . (115-116)

According to Freud, the motif of the *doppelgänger* is an example of the uncanny in literature (“The Uncanny” 940). Hawthorne frames “Monsieur du Miroir” upon the ancient Greek fable of Narcissus, in which a beautiful youth falls in love with his own reflection in water and pines to death. Closely related to the original Greek version of myth, Lacan’s concept of narcissism “can thus easily veer from extreme self-love to the opposite extreme of ‘narcissistic suicidal aggression’ ” (Evans 6).

In a demonstration of the interdependence of love and hate in the narcissistic personality, Hawthorne’s narrator rejects M. du Miroir, *despite* a strong family resemblance. He states: “. . . his name would indicate a French descent; in which case, infinitely *preferring that my blood should flow from a bold British and pure Puritan*

source, I beg leave to disclaim all kindred with M. du Miroir" (CE X 160 italics mine). In this pre-Freudian sketch, Hawthorne exposes the powerful barriers to self-knowledge that can lead to unhappiness and/or prevent personal fulfillment. Moreover, in the narrator's allusion to his Puritan origins, we can locate the subliminal source of this self-loathing behavior in the (Calvinistic) Puritan belief in mankind's innate depravity. In the Puritan mindset, turning towards God meant turning away from oneself. In *The Puritan Origins of the American Self*, Sacvan Bercovitch writes, "The Puritans felt that the less one saw oneself in the mirror the better; and best of all was to cast no reflection at all, to disappear" (14).

This inner discord, manifested in the emotions of distrust and disgust towards M. du Miroir, is symptomatic of the narrator's split personality. For example, despite the fact that M. du Miroir shares his physical pain, mood swings, illnesses, the heartbreak of broken love affairs, and is indignant when his idol has been wronged, the narrator doubts the sincerity of his friend's loyalty. The narrator states: ". . . in my mistrustful moods, I am apt to suspect M. du Miroir's sympathy to be mere outward show" (CE X 162). In his impossible requirements for friendship, no expression of loyalty on the part of M. du Miroir will satisfy the narrator. He turns against himself (as the man he sees in his reflection). In response to M. du Miroir's blind devotion to him, the narrator is ashamed of recognizing his constant companion in public, especially when the latter indulges in his "fondness for water" (163). The more M. du Miroir seems to frolic, the more disgusted at him the narrator becomes. The narrator states:

When no cleaner bathing-place happened to be at hand, I have seen the foolish fellow in a horse-pond. Sometimes he refreshes himself in the trough of a town-

pump, without caring what other people think about him. Often, while carefully picking my way along the street, after a heavy shower, *I have been scandalized to see M. du Miroir, in full dress, paddling from one mud-puddle to another, and plunging into the filthy depths of each.* (163 italics mine).

This passage describes the conflict between the gentleman narrator and his liberated other, between the ego and the disorderly id. It also describes the conflict between the spirit and the flesh. Bercovitch describes the Protestant habit of self-loathing. He states: “For the Puritans, . . . dirt disfigured the reflection . . . [in the process of cleansing] God wanted them to experience the slime . . . asks John Bunyan—well, ‘first take a glass and see where it is ‘durty’’: ‘labour to discern your every crime’ . . . ‘plunge’ yourself into the foul waters of your heart till you know there ‘is none worse than yourself’ ” (15).

The act of plunging into filthy waters, in Bunyan or in Hawthorne, is a metaphor for the profound ambivalence towards selfhood, and implies a sense of self-loathing. Unlike his unruly nemesis, the narrator conforms to the norms of social behavior. He avoids the puddles and preserves his dress clothes and his sense of decorum. In contrast, the whimsical M. du Miroir disobeys society’s norms. He enjoys his romps through water, and paradoxically, he manages to stay dry and clean. The narrator’s disdain over the indecorous behavior of M. du Miroir seems to conceal his envy over his companion’s *joie de vivre*. Despite his superior status, he is envious of his double’s tendency to act without restraint. The narrator’s desire to break loose from a rigid pattern of behavior is implicit in the different methods (e. g., one “picks his way,” the other “paddles”) he and M. du Miroir use to navigate their way through puddles of rain. Interestingly, stereotypical

British and French cultural traits are at war with one another in the conflict between the rigidly conventional British narrator and the frivolously joyful and French M. du Miroir.

The division of the self is also apparent in the narrator's conflicted feelings towards women. Unable to take responsibility for the pattern of chronic romantic failure with the opposite sex, the narrator projects his frustrations onto his apparently interfering nemesis. He resents the constant intrusion of M. du Miroir in all his activities, and blames him for spoiling a romance. He states: "Once, presumptuous that he was, he stole into the heaven of a young lady's eyes, so that while I gazed, and was dreaming only of herself, I found him also in my dream" (CE X165). The reader surmises that the self-obsessed narrator, like the figure of Narcissus from Greek myth, has sabotaged his own chances for success with young women. The narrator has failed to evolve beyond the mirror stage, and is unable to connect to women. Instead, he is in love with himself. According to Evans, "Lacan . . . defines narcissism as the erotic attraction to the specular image: this erotic relation underlies the primary identification by which the ego is formed in the mirror stage" (120). Leland S. Person makes the connection between the narcissistic mindset of the narrator and the nineteenth century male purity movement. He writes:

Hawthorne's 'Monsieur du Miroir' (1837) illustrates his concern for the issues raised by male reformers — issues involving male continence, integrity, and self-control. As manhood came under increasing pressures for self-making and success, imitative and other-directed concepts of male identity met head-on with romantic notions of self-reliant, even narcissistic male identity. (52)

In the first half of the nineteenth century, sexual behavior was at odds with the culture of reform. On the one hand, prostitution was on the rise; on the other, sex was socially

regulated, especially through the proliferation of manuals on sexual conduct (David S. Reynolds 200-203). Living in an era that disapproved of premarital sex, masturbation, or any “anarchic sexual possibilities of solo masculinity” (Bertolini 708), the lonely bachelor narrator is reduced to keeping company with M. du Miroir. In a passage that can be read as a solo sexual fantasy, if not an actual act of masturbation, he states:

If I must needs have so intrusive an intimate, who stares me in the face of my closest privacy, and follows me even to my bed-chamber, *I should prefer—scandal apart—the laughing bloom of a young girl*, to the dark and bearded gravity of my present companion. *But such desires are never to be gratified.*

(CE X 166 italics mine)

The years roll on, and he becomes entrenched in his solitude. The narrator is alienated from society in general, implying that marriage is the only legitimate avenue to social inclusion. Resembling the “Foot-prints” narrator, the artist-scholar/narrator suddenly realizes that he and his artistic legacy will be forgotten, since his faithful and loving “associate” will disappear upon his death. He states:

And when the coffin lid shall have closed over me, and that face and form, which more truly than the lover swears it to his beloved, are the sole light of his existence, when they shall be laid in that dark chamber, whither his swift and secret footsteps cannot bring him,—then what is to become of poor M. du Miroir.

(167)

In a fit of conscience, the everyman narrator reconnects to himself. As the image of his own misspent life, he sees his own aging face in the mirror, and not the “other” of his distorted narcissistic imaginings. He has failed to live up to his potential, as a man and as

an artist. Fearing death, he reflects upon the state of his soul, instead of fixating on the image of his physical body in the mirror. The ideas of Otto Rank apply to my discussion of death and the doppelgänger. In his discussion of the theme of the double in literature, Freud acknowledges his debt to Otto Rank. In his essay on the uncanny, he writes,

[Rank] has gone into the connections which the 'double' has with *reflections in mirrors*, with shadows, with guardian spirits, with *the belief in the soul* and with the fear of death . . . For the 'double' was originally an insurance against the destruction of the ego, 'an energetic denial of the power of death' . . . and probably *the 'immortal soul' was the first 'double' of the body.* (940 italics mine)

Otto Rank's theory of the double is borne out in the sketch. For the narrator, M. du Miroir's reflection of a person in the mirror hints at the possibility of the existence of the spiritual world, and the soul's survival after death (CE X 170). Like the narrator in "M. du Miroir," the narrator in "Little Annie's Ramble" is a middle-aged bachelor narrator unable to express his desire for women. To compensate for this "lack," he redirects his attentions to a five year-old girl. A violent sexual fantasy is concealed within Hawthorne's first children's story.

5. "Little Annie's Ramble" *Youth's Keepsake, a Christmas and New Year's Gift for Young People* 1835 (*Twice-Told Tales* 1837)

On one level, "Little Annie's Ramble" is a story about the restorative effects of children upon world-weary adults. A middle-aged bachelor wanders through town, and "takes a chance stroll with a child" (Hamilton "Hawthorne, modernity and the literary sketch" 112). On another level, "Little Annie's Ramble" contains a dark tale of adult

lechery and child abduction. The narrator is either nostalgic or predatory, according to one or the other of two competing versions of the story. Nevertheless, the presence of gothic horror in association with the hand and the smile lends credence to the interpretation of the sketch as a tale of abduction. The stranger's gothic smile in "Annie" is associated with the deceptive smile of the wolf in "Little Red Riding Hood."¹¹ The manipulative stranger in "Annie" uses deception in the abduction of a little girl. I suggest that, in his attraction to little girls, he can be categorized as a pedophile, if not a child molester.¹² He is also a flaneur, a wandering and aging bachelor whose suspicious sexual proclivity is linked to the danger of life in cities. Hawthorne depicts modern life in the sketch, and its impact upon the urban spectator and artist.

"Little Annie's Ramble" depicts modern life, associated by Wordsworth with "the accumulation of men in cities' and the concomitant development of a culture in which all events and all information have the status of spectacle, consumed by those who 'crave' it" (Brand 3-4). Coleridge and Wordsworth were opposed to modern life, with its "thirst for the sensational" (3). According to Brand, the system of capitalism changes our sense of perception, and creates a sense of fragmentation in the self. He states, "Capitalism and modern industrial technology produce an immense and perpetually renewing spectacle of commodities and images. Experience becomes more various and stimulating, at the same time as it appears less substantial and meaningful" (2). The

¹¹ *OED*, "wolf, n." Def. 10f: a wolf in lamb's skin, in sheep's clothing, etc., as a person who conceals intentions under an appearance of gentleness or friendliness (in allusion to Matthew 7: 15); and "wolf, n." Def. 5c (a): a sexually aggressive male; a would-be seducer of women. *OED Online*, <http://dictionary.oed.com> (accessed 23 November 2009).

¹² *OED*, "pedophile, n.": an adult who is sexually attracted to children. *OED Online*, <http://dictionary.oed.com> (accessed 23 November 2009).

flaneur/artist in “Foot-prints” describes how he “treads the crowded streets” at noon, fearful of the sensation of “melting into the indistinguishable mass of human kind” (CE IX 461). In “Annie,” Hawthorne expands on his critique of city life adumbrated in “Foot-prints.” For example, the narrator in “Annie” employs the trope of an invading army to describe the impact of the new system of industrial capitalism on the aesthetics of life in cities. He states: “A street musician has seated himself on the steps of yonder church, and pours forth his strains to a busy town, a melody that has gone astray, among the tramp of footsteps, the buzz of voices, and the war of passing wheels. Who needs the poor organ grinder?” (CE IX122). In the trope of annihilation, modern life renders the organ grinder, his music and, by extension, all the artists and the arts of civilization obsolete. Kristie Hamilton describes the impact of modern life as disorienting to one’s sense of self. Pertinent to several of Hawthorne’s sketches, she attributes the change in the concept of the self to *evanescence*. She writes,

In “Foot-prints on the Sea-Shore” (1838), Hawthorne fashions two classes of evanescence. The first is evanescence as the effective annihilation of the self, brought on by the crowds and momentum of modernity, in which the individual is rendered invisible to others and incapable of self-recognition. (“Hawthorne, modernity and the literary sketch” 112)

In “Annie,” evanescence (i.e., the process or fact of vanishing away) is linked to spectacle.

Hawthorne’s narrator is simultaneously drawn to and repulsed by the superficial attractions of the nineteenth-century mall, including the spectacle of caged animals, subsequently featured in the tawdry spectacles of the circus impresario P. T. Barnum

around 1850 (David S. Reynolds 297). His failure to adapt to the new capitalistic form of society, defined by the perpetual exchange and display of commodities, is exhibited in a yearning to return to the simpler joys of his youth. And, like the narrators in “Sunday,” “Foot-prints,” “Sights from a Steeple,” and “M. du Monsieur,” he is conflicted in his relations with women. He is attracted to Annie because he feels “safe” in the little girl’s company. To him, she resembles the child of his own lost youth. The narrator in “Annie” misses something transcendent, which he associates with scenes of his childhood. In the historical introduction to *Hawthorne’s True Stories, A Wonder Book, Tanglewood Tales*, Roy Harvey Pearce somewhat simplistically describes Hawthorne’s nostalgic attitude towards childhood. Pearce writes,

Underlying that scheme [of harmony] is Hawthorne’s insistent belief, one which runs through virtually all of his writing, that childhood is that period of life in which innocence, directness, and clarity are paramount facts. It was a period that had inevitably to be left behind once a child entered upon the tragic rigors of adulthood. Yet it could be remembered, recovered in the imagination, so as to serve as a measure of what the adult had lost and what he had gained. (CE VI 306)

I argue that Hawthorne weaves the taboo subject of pedophilia into the story of “Annie,” thereby acknowledging the sexual component in the relations between children and adults, especially between little girls and adult men. Like “some bright bird in the sunny air,” Annie is pure and ethereal. In contrast, with his black clothes and melancholy air, Hawthorne’s bachelor narrator resembles the pallbearer and modern hero described by Baudelaire in the “Salon de 1846.” He writes:

Regarding the attire, the covering of the modern hero, . . . does it not have a beauty and charm of its own? . . . Is this not an attire that is needed by our age, which is suffering, and dressed up to thin black narrow shoulders in the symbol of constant mourning? The black suit and the frock coat have . . . their poetic beauty as an expression of the public mentality: an immense cortege of undertakers—political undertakers, amorous undertakers, bourgeois undertakers. We are all attendants at some kind of funeral. (Benjamin *Modern Life* 105-106)

In light of his resemblance to Baudelaire's somber modern hero, Hawthorne's narrator is a product of the modern age, and the product of cities in particular.

In their ramble through town towards the circus caravan, the odd couple strolls past the shops, enthralled by the phantasmagoria of material goods. The concept of phantasmagoria, as explained by Michael W. Jennings in the introduction to *The Writer of Modern Life*, evolved out of “an eighteenth-century illusionistic optical device by which shadows of moving figures were projected onto a wall or screen . . . [and] stands squarely in a tradition beginning with Karl Marx . . . who suggests that the commodities that flow through the capitalist system of production and exchange take on the qualities of a religious fetish” (Benjamin 13). Fetishized commodities figure prominently in “Little Annie's Ramble.” Mundane items in shop windows trigger thoughts of sex, love and marriage in the narrator's mind. In selecting certain objects in favor of the plethora of objects that compete for his attention, it is apparent that, subconsciously, the strolling stranger is in quest of a bride. In his misperception of objects, I suggest that the narrator is experiencing delusions, indicating an abnormal state of mind. For example, in the jewelry store “the rings of the wedlock, and the costly love ornaments, glistening at the

window” attract his eye (CE IX 123). The shapes of cakes in the bakery window are suggestive of a pair of voluptuous breasts. He states: “. . . those dark majestic masses, fit to be bridal loaves at the wedding of an heiress, mountains in size, their summits deeply snow-covered . . . My mouth waters . . . devouring the vision of a plum cake” (123-124). Substituting breasts for cakes, he imagines “nibbling” on a woman’s breasts. Resembling the deranged Nathaniel in E. T. A. Hoffmann’s famous “Sand-man” tale (1816),¹³ he becomes angry at the sight of a wooden doll, and cynically imagines a similarity between the toy doll and female pedestrians who stroll past the toy store window. His sudden shift in mood is reflective of the narrator’s ambiguous attitude towards women; he is both attracted to them, and intimidated by them. Imagining that the doll is human, he exclaims, “Dame Doll! A toy yourself, you look forth from your window upon many ladies that are also toys, though they walk and speak, and upon a crowd in pursuit of toys, though they wear grave images” (CE IX 125). In the narrator’s worldview, “painted” women are playthings and prostitutes, commodities for sale and exchange in the marketplace. For Baudelaire, “In the form which prostitution has taken in big cities, the woman appears not only as a commodity, but . . . as a mass-produced article. This can be seen in the way the individual expression is artificially concealed by a professional one, as happens with the use of cosmetics” (Benjamin *Modern Life* 165). Women, then, are like prostitutes, who in turn resemble mass-produced products in the marketplace.

The narrator’s perception of reality is distorted in the conflict between desire and fear of women. Little Annie becomes the object of his resentment. In the narrator’s mind, she takes on the negative characteristics of her gender. He depicts Annie as a sexually

¹³ Freud brilliantly analyzes the story in terms of the Oedipal complex in his essay “The Uncanny.”

precocious and seductive five year-old in order to shift the blame for his own inappropriately sexual fantasies onto his hapless victim. In her essay “Honeymoon with a Stranger,” Elizabeth Freeman links works as disparate as “Little Annie’s Ramble” and *Lolita*. Theorizing on the nature of the man-girl relationship in American literature between 1830 and the 1950s, she states,

In the *American pedophilic picaresque*, it is a little girl who leads an adult ‘astray’ . . . the little girl as tour guide promises to coordinate her male companion’s transitions through a jumble of rural and urban spaces. Second, as child bride on her honeymoon she mediates historically shifting norms and forms of ‘intimacy’—particularly the relationship between familial and sexual ‘love.’ (865-866 italics mine)

Hawthorne scholar Monika M. Elbert describes women and the bourgeois mentality in her essay entitled “The Surveillance of Woman’s Body in Hawthorne’s Short Stories” (2004). Elbert rightly claims that the sexuality of women is threatening to men in several Hawthorne short stories, including “Little Annie’s Ramble.” Women are contained like prisoners in the panopticon, and are subjects of the controlling male gaze. She writes: “Hawthorne’s stories serve as vignettes exemplifying the compulsion to control woman’s body—as the narrators and male protagonists take on Foucauldian surveillance, . . . unrestrained female sexuality (*or unrestrained in the eyes of men*) is perceived as a danger to the social order” (23-24 italics mine). Annie’s “flaw” is her sexuality.

Annie inadvertently entices the narrator by dancing to the music of the organ grinder, causing him to lament the discrepancy in their ages. He recoils at the bizarre image of the two of them dancing, temporarily gaining control of his unnatural impulses,

and his hold on reality. He states: "But where would Annie find a partner? . . . What a company of dancers we would be! For I, too, am a gentleman of sober footsteps, and therefore, little Annie, let us walk sedately on" (CE IX 122-123). The tension between inhibition and desire is evident in this passage, recalling the conflict between the spirit and the flesh in the narrators of "Sights," "Sunday" and "M. du Miroir." In "Annie" (as in the "Foot-prints" sketch), the fear of women leads to sadistic fantasies of violence against women, anticipating Coverdale's sadistic fantasy of the murder/suicide of Zenobia in *Blithedale*. In the narrator's mind, Annie takes on the attributes of a beautiful and poised adult woman, whom he unfairly stereotypes.

He resents the special treatment of women, and their sense of entitlement. According to the narrator's way of thinking, chivalry is anachronistic. He describes how "Nobody jostles her; all turn aside to make way for little Annie; and what is most singular, she appears conscious of her claim to such respect" (CE IX 122). Denigrating her as vain, he writes, "Annie, more than I, seeks for a glimpse of her passing figure in the dusty looking-glasses at the hardware stores" (123). His desire to possess her is concealed within the overt compliment of making her the subject of his book. In the artist/narrator's attempt to convince himself (and the reader) of his desire to immortalize her in print, he states, "What would Annie think, if, in the book which I *mean* to send her, on New Year's day, she should find her sweet little self, *bound* up in silk or morocco with *gilt* edges, there to remain till she become a grown woman . . . That would be very *queer*" (124 italics mine). Nevertheless, in his use of the words *mean*, *gilt* (i.e., guilt), *bound*, and *queer*, the narrator reveals his secret fantasy in the trope of *containment*. Despite the fact that she is a child, and he is a middle-aged man, I argue that the

delusional narrator fantasizes about taking Annie on an extended honeymoon, until such time she reaches adulthood and is no longer appealing to him (since he is only attracted to young girls). Ultimately, Annie and the narrator become the featured subjects of his sadomasochistic fantasies when he hears the sounds of a child being spanked. He states, “But, well-a-day, we hear a shrill voice of affliction, the scream of a little child, rising louder with every repetition of that smart, sharp, slapping sound, produced by an open hand on tender flesh” (128). It can be argued that the bourgeois narrator is *shocked* out of his delusional state by the image of his own violent sexual fantasy, and releases Annie.

“Little Annie’s Ramble” has an elliptical pattern. A little girl leaves and returns home, and the town crier’s bell signals her removal and her return. In the absence of plot, Hawthorne relies upon the story of “Little Red Riding Hood” as a framing device. The original means of abduction combine several factors—the clanging bell, the absence of elders, and the desire of a little child to explore the world away from home. The town crier (whose original announcement precipitates a child kidnapping) vindicates himself for his role in the initial misfortune. Nevertheless, we do not know whether Annie is released to her mother, or is walked home by the narrator. In fact, despite the reassurances of the narrator, we don’t know whether or not she returns home at all, or, alternatively, if the sketch is simply a sexual fantasy. He states: “Stop, stop, town crier! The lost is found . . . Oh, my pretty Annie . . . let us turn homeward . . . you may return at the first summons, with an untainted and unwearied heart, and be a happy child again” (CE IX 128-29). Although Annie has been abducted, in the narrator’s subliminal use of the word “untainted,” we are led to believe that she has not been molested prior to her release. The bachelor narrator in “Annie” is an example of the flaneur, a product of

modern life described in the poetry of Baudelaire, in the writings of Walter Benjamin, and in Ik Marvel's *Reveries*. At the same time (like the wolf in "Little Red Riding Hood"), he is a sexually disturbed middle-aged man who is attracted to young girls, and is afraid of women. He convinces himself that he seeks comfort in the company of a stranger's little girl in order to reconnect to the "lost" self of his own childhood.

Conversely, in the subconscious projection of himself as a predatory animal (i.e., a wolf), he reveals his secret and socially taboo desires. Like the narrator of "Little Annie's Ramble," the narrator of "The Haunted Mind" is dissociated from himself. He yearns for the comfort of the "ideal" woman in order to ward off his fear of death; nevertheless, the reader senses that he prefers his solitude to the company of women. His sense of reality is disturbed when he wakes up sometime after midnight (i.e., L., *intempesta nocte*), and is unable to determine what time it is. In this gothic dream sketch, Hawthorne examines the role of the senses upon perception; in particular, he focuses upon sight and hearing to establish a sense of reality.

Chapter Three

The Time/Space Paradigm

6. "The Haunted Mind" *The Token and Atlantic Souvenir* 1835 (*Twice-Told Tales* 1842)

The narrator hints that he has lived a life of pleasure that he regrets, and that he is unsuccessful in affairs of the heart. He is a bachelor of independent means, who wanders idly through life. As in "Monsieur du Miroir," in "The Haunted Mind" the narrator looks at his life in retrospect, in order to assess its worth. In *Blithedale*, Coverdale looks back upon the most significant phase of his life, and is unable to describe events accurately. The narrator of "The Haunted Mind" fits the type of the flaneur, who (like Miles Coverdale) stands outside the mainstream of life, looking in at the activities of others (CE IX 308-309). The theme of sketch is difficult to pin down; nevertheless, as in *Blithedale*, epistemological uncertainty is its underlying "project," and the senses are unreliable determinants of reality. The subject of the sketch, like the subject of "M. du Miroir," is fundamentally split, and alienated from himself. The cause of this insomniac bachelor's crisis is never spelled out, although it is associated with fears of loneliness, and "old-bachelorhood." Nevertheless, in a repetition of the strategy of an emotional uplift, the narrator experiences an epiphany at the conclusion of the sketch, which seemingly allows him to overcome his fears of isolation and mortality.

Upon waking up in bed in the middle of the night, he is totally disoriented. He is unable to tell what time it is, and he is not sure whether he is awake or still dreaming. In the gothic tradition commonly associated with the works of his literary contemporary and nemesis Edgar Allan Poe, in "The Haunted Mind," Hawthorne "blurs those states of mind

usually considered to be categorically separate such as waking and sleep, thereby questioning material notions of reality” (Frank and Magistrale 338). Relying upon his sense of hearing to tell the time, Hawthorne’s narrator establishes that it is two o’clock in the morning. He states:

The distant sound of a church clock is borne faintly on the wind. You question with yourself, half seriously, whether it has stolen into your waking ear from some gray tower, that stood within the precincts of your dream . . . You count the strokes—one—two, and there they cease, with a booming sound, *like the gathering of a third stroke within the bell.* (CE IX 304 italics mine)

In the third phrase (“You count the strokes . . . like the gathering of a third stroke within the bell”) of the passage, Hawthorne employs the trope of the echo to explore the philosophical subjects of the inexorable passage of time as well as the indefiniteness of time. The phrase, “the gathering of a third stroke,” describes both the *sound* of the echo within the bell heard *after* the strike, and the *interim* or moment *between* strikes. The interim occurs between the vanishing past and the distant future. This interim is what the narrator identifies as the *present*. He states: “You have found an intermediate space, where the business of life does not intrude; where the passing moment lingers, and becomes truly the present: a spot where Father Time . . . sits down . . . to take a breath. Oh, that he would fall asleep, and let mortals live on without growing older!” (305). By definition, “passing moments” cannot “linger.” The narrator is attempting to stop time in order to grasp the elusive moment of the present. He writes: “Yesterday has already vanished among the shadows of the past; tomorrow has not yet emerged from the future”

(305). The present can only be described negatively, as the period *between* the past and the future.

Although the narrator relies upon time to establish a sense of reality (between past and present, between sleep and wakefulness, between being and nothingness), he cannot adequately describe this ordering principle of existence. The narrator in "The Haunted Mind" also fails to confirm the time through his sense of sight. Looking out his window, he states equivocally: "You may *almost* distinguish the figures on the clock that had just told the hour" (305 italics mine). By constantly addressing his reader in the collective, second person plural mode of narration (using variations of the word "you" in excess of fifty times in an eight-paragraph sketch), the narrator implies that feelings of uncertainty and angst over what constitutes reality are not peculiar to him, and can (and should) be felt by everyone. The narrative device of foregrounding the narrator-reader relationship breaks down the reader's resistance to thinking about the difficult philosophical subjects of time, space, reality and mortality. The reader *can* imagine waking up in the middle of the night and looking at the clock to tell the time, and feels connected to the narrator *until* he fantasizes about death.

The narrator's sense of cold provokes a yearning for the mother (in a return to the womb) and by association, the dread of death. He states:

You speculate on the luxury of wearing out a whole existence in bed, like an oyster in its shell, content with the sluggish ecstasy of inaction . . . You think how the dead are living in their cold shrouds and narrow coffins . . . and cannot persuade your fancy that they neither shrink nor shiver, when the snow is drifting over their little hillocks . . . (306)

The indecipherable present is the interim between the past and the future, and between the physical events of birth and death. The bachelor narrator is in a liminal state, implying that his sense of disorientation is connected to his inferior status as a single man. According to Freud, the bed is a trope for the womb and the grave. He writes, “this process of estrangement of the familiar (of the ‘home’) is exactly the same as the process of repression. The fear of being buried alive, for example, is a distorted desire to return to the mother’s womb—the ‘home’ of all humanity” (Leitsch 917).¹⁴ Hence, according to Freud’s theory, in “The Haunted Mind” (and in “Foot-prints on the Sea-Shore”), the womb is associated with birth and death. Conversely, in opposition to Freud, Lacan “links anxiety with the fear of being engulfed by the devouring mother” (Evans 10). Whether anxiety is caused by separation from the mother, or by a lack of separation, the narrator cannot get a grip on the present. As a result, he seeks solace in the past, and fears the future. A modern everyman, he is visited by ghostly figures (Sorrow, Hope, Fatality, Shame) from his past, one of which appears to represent the ghost of abandoned love. Ironically, these pale figures visit him at midnight, indicating that it may not be two o’clock in the morning after all. Familiar objects (table, book, letter, hat and glove) are temporarily visible by the light emanating from the hearth’s dying embers; when the light vanishes, so does the narrator’s sense of reality (308). Out of fear and desperation, the narrator conjures up the figure of “an ideal female ‘other’ ” (Colacurcio 488) whose comforting presence alters the narrator’s gloomy mood to one of joy and hopefulness. Nevertheless, he has no wife or family; his idealization of women as sources of comfort

¹⁴ An idea summed up in a helpful synopsis of Freud’s famous essay, “The Uncanny” (1919).

is evocative of the bachelor's potential achievement of happiness through marriage. The ending of the sketch is "artificially" positive.

In "The Haunted Mind," darkness and night are associated with anxiety, strange visions and dreams, remorse over the unfulfilled past, the physical sensation of cold, epistemological uncertainty, the fear of death, and social alienation. These sensations resemble the flaneur's feeling of angst in the midst of a city. On the other hand, sunlight and day are associated with scenes of normative domesticity. Hawthorne seems to be saying that the more formal organizational aspects of social life (embodied, for example, in kinship regulations, marriage forms and communal relations) are requirements for a sense of normalcy, and that conversely, the bachelor life leads to social alienation, which, in turn, leads to depression, a distorted sense of reality and even madness. Embedded in his gothic dream vision are the imponderables of time, the role of sense in determining what is real, and a feeling of abnormality resulting from the bachelor's failure to achieve happiness through marriage. In "The Old Apple-Dealer," Hawthorne describes how the new experience of "velocity" distorts one's perception of space. In the midst of a busy and noisy railway station, the artist/flaneur fixes his gaze upon an old apple vendor. In his role as flaneur, the narrator has the time to observe strangers in the crowd; and, in his role as artist, he makes sense out of a seemingly chaotic scene, in which two eras seem to intersect.

7. **"The Old Apple-Dealer"** *Sargent's New Monthly Magazine of Literature, Fashion, and the Fine Arts* January 1843 (*Mosses from an Old Manse* 1846)

Hawthorne's opposition to social change brought about by the evolution of science and technology is implicit in the narrator's sympathetic portrait of the old apple dealer. In "The Old Apple-Dealer," the narrator is an artist and flaneur who evaluates modern life, associated with the evolution of cities and commerce. He identifies with the old apple dealer, the subject of his investigations. The old apple vendor (like Hawthorne, the artist) is struggling to survive in a changing and inhospitable environment. Moreover, Hawthorne assumes the role of the flaneur in preparation for writing his sketch. Over a period of several months in the fall and winter of 1841-1842 (and prior to his marriage to Sophia), he closely studied the character of a clean but shabbily dressed apple vendor that he noticed in the railroad station house of Salem. He recorded his impressions of the old man in an entry in his journal dated January 13, 1842 (CE VIII 222-226). His diary entry is an outline for the sketch, and includes his reading of the personality and life history of his subject, the comparison of the two vendors, and the victimization of his subject by forces out of his control. Anticipating Melville's liminal Bartleby, Hawthorne's anonymous apple dealer is "poor, neglected, friendless, unappreciated [and] devoid of hope" (CE X 439). In the competitive universes of Hawthorne's sketch and Melville's story, characters that refuse to compromise their moral standards and/or take charity are under threat of extinction. In the occupational trials of the old apple dealer (which anticipate the trials of Priscilla in *The Blithedale Romance*), the world of this sketch is depicted as a slave economy outlined by Karl Marx in Volume 1, Chapter I of *Das Kapital* (1867).¹⁵ The subject of class is prominent in the sketch and the novel. In the

¹⁵ Marx writes: "*Après moi le deluge!* is the watchword of every capitalist and of every capitalistic nation. Hence Capital is reckless of the health or length of life of the labourer, unless under compulsion from society. To the out-cry as to the physical and mental

uneven and unfair exchange of goods for (too little) money, the destitute old apple dealer is reduced to subsisting on the sales of snacks in order to satisfy his customers' "little freaks of appetite" (CE X 440-441). Hawthorne was likewise forced to accommodate his publishers in order to eke out a living, and for much of his writing career he had to find additional means of support, initially through hack editorial jobs, and then through political appointments. In Karl Marx's concept of commodity fetishism in *Das Kapital*, objects are not as simple as they appear. Like the apple dealer's "merchandise of cakes, apples and candy" (CE X 441), and Priscilla's ubiquitous hand-sewn purses in *Blithedale*, Marx's commodities represent "bundles of social relationships, transcendentals, with a life of their own once they enter the sphere of market exchange and values" (Bullock and Trombley 141). Hawthorne observes a scene in a railway station, which forms the basis of his critique on the modern technological era. In his journal, he writes:

Now imagine this old man, so subdued, so helpless, so without a stake in the world . . . —imagine him sitting in the Station house, in the midst of the bustle and movement of the world, where all our go-ahead stream of population rushes and roars along beside him . . . —all sorts of various people sweep by him; and there he remains, nervous, chill and patient. (CE VIII 226)

In the span (1804-1864) of his life, Hawthorne was witness to rapid technological change.¹⁶ Ironically, the Mannings' family stagecoach business failed in the advent of

degradation, the premature death, the torture of over-work, it answers: Ought these to trouble us since they increase our profits? . . . It takes centuries ere the 'free' labourer, thanks to the development of capitalistic production, agrees, *i.e.*, is compelled by social conditions, to sell the whole of his active life, his very capacity for work, for the price of the necessaries of life, his birthright for a mess of pottage" (Marx 786).

¹⁶ In addition to the steam-powered passenger train (1830), other inventions of the period were the typewriter (1829), the sewing machine (1830), the reaper (1831), the revolver

the railroad. Hawthorne worked as secretary and bookkeeper for the stagecoach line in 1820, and his maternal antecedents generously supported Hawthorne throughout his college years (1821-1825) at Bowdoin (Gale 302-303), as well as during his period of literary apprenticeship between 1825 and 1837.¹⁷ Although the sketch features the passenger train, a profusion of inventions altered nineteenth century culture. In his sympathetic depiction of the old man in the midst of the railway station, Hawthorne critiques America's naïve belief in progress. According to David S. Reynolds, "the cumulative effect of inventions and other advances [fostered] a boundless faith in scientific progress . . . The mixing of technology with providence into a mark of human progress . . . blossomed in the 1830s and 1840s" (227). Despite his fascination with photography and its techniques, Hawthorne was not entirely sanguine on the technological inventions that were leading to the mechanization of society; he critiques the idea of "progress" in the notebook entry and in the sketch. According to Benjamin, "In Baudelaire, it is very important that the 'new' in no way contributes to progress . . . His hatred was directed above all at 'faith in progress,' as at a heresy, a false teaching, not a commonplace error" (165). Hawthorne's narrator favors the prototype of the underdog and stoic, and resents the prototype of the smooth and successful businessman incarnated in the old man's rival. In the contrast between rival salesmen, Hawthorne

(1836), the steel plow (1837), the bicycle (1839), the stapler (1841), the pneumatic tire (1845), the daguerreotype (1839), and the telegraph (1838).

¹⁷ In a letter to Longfellow (dated June 4, 1837) on his literary career, Hawthorne writes: "I have now, or soon shall have, *one sharp spur to exertion*, which I lacked at an earlier period; for *I see little prospect but that I must scribble for a living*" (CE XV 252 italics mine). The phrase "sharp spur to exertion" is "apparently a reference to the railroad between Salem and Boston, which would drive out of business the Manning family stage coach line, NH's principal source of income since his graduation from Bowdoin" (CE XV 254 n. 6).

addresses the impact of commerce on society; and, in the hybrid character of the artist and flaneur, he addresses the problem of the indecipherable subject in the crowd.

Hawthorne's prototype for his narrator is the flaneur, who evolved in association with the growth of cities. He is unable to resist the temptation to categorize his subject by type; unsurprisingly, he is unable to describe him accurately. He states, "To confess the truth, it is not the easiest matter in the world, to define and individualize a character like this which we are now handling" (CE X 444). In his role as urban spectator, he resembles the narrator in "Sights from a Steeple." He creates a whole picture by studying little pieces of his subject's life. And (like Miles Coverdale in *Blithedale*), the narrator of "The Old Apple-Dealer" admits his frustration at having to imagine the whole person and his history from incomplete data. He states: "The lover of the moral picturesque may sometimes find what he seeks in a character, which is, nevertheless, too negative a description to be seized upon, and represented to the imaginative vision by word-painting" (CE X 439). In the phrase, "find what he seeks in a character," the artist is compelled to fill in the unknowable details of his subject. In the phrase "too negative a description to be seized upon, and represented ... by a word-picture," the narrator admits that the resulting efforts of his artistic labor (like the opaque photographic negative) fail to provide a clear and accurate picture of the subject under observation.

In "The Old Apple-Dealer," Hawthorne repeats the experiment of a narrative technique that relies upon the technology of photography. In "Sunday at Home" he frames his sketch in the model of the camera obscura. In "Foot-prints on the Sea-Shore" and "Sights from a Steeple" he employs the panoramic model of vision associated with the diorama, introduced in Paris in 1822 by Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre (David S.

Reynolds 277). In “The Old Apple-Dealer,” the narrator is unable to capture the portrait of his subject in isolation. Instead, he must rely upon the technique of foil. He states:

The portrait must be so generally negative, that the most delicate pencil is likely to spoil it by introducing some too positive tint. Every touch must be kept down or else you destroy the subdued tone, which is absolutely essential to the whole effect. Perhaps more may be done by contrast, than by direct description. (444)

The portrait of the old apple dealer only emerges in the contrast between the old man and his young rival and nemesis. Hawthorne’s fascination with photographic techniques is evident in this passage; they become metaphors that demonstrate his themes. In “The Old Apple-Dealer,” Hawthorne is primarily interested in examining the deleterious impact of technology on society, in the shift from an agrarian to an industrial society. He critiques the new era of mechanical production by comparing the personalities and selling practices of two apple dealers, and at the same time, he describes the moment of a cultural revolution. In Jameson’s Marxist interpretation of history and texts in *The Political Unconscious*, he explains that “every social formation or historically existing society has in fact consisted in the overlay and structural coexistence of several modes of production all at once, including vestiges and survivals of older modes of production . . .” (95). In accord with Jameson’s theory, Hawthorne’s sketch represents a clash between two modes of production, resulting in a “cultural revolution.” The sketch is set in the railway station, a “[building] that [serves] transitory purposes” (Benjamin 31).

Hawthorne invokes the idea of evanescence in the impact of the disorienting atmosphere of the railway station upon the mind of the artist. His narrator states: “While awaiting the departure of the cars, my observation, *flitting to and fro* among the livelier

characteristics of the scene, has often *settled* insensibly upon this almost hueless subject” (CE X 439 italics mine). In fixing his attention upon a static subject, the narrator succeeds in calming his over stimulated senses, thereby resisting the effects of evanescence. The incongruous figure of the old apple dealer is associated with stasis (and with an older, slower, and seemingly more stable world that existed prior to the advent of a commodity culture) in the midst of the kinetic activity of the railway station. The narrator states: “He sits on a bench in the depot room; and before him on the floor, are deposited two baskets, of a capacity to contain his whole stock in trade” (440). The apple dealer’s nemesis is a successful young entrepreneur, negatively described as “another cake-and-candy merchant, who likewise infests the rail-road depot . . . a very smart and well-dressed boy . . . who skips briskly hither and thither, addressing the passengers in a pert voice” (444). Paradoxically, although he mentally reproaches the old apple dealer for his passive (and economically self-defeating) style of selling, the narrator simultaneously resents the young man’s more successful entrepreneurial skills in the marketplace of the railway station. Nevertheless, in his journal entry, Hawthorne unambiguously prefers the old apple dealer over the pert young man, whose aggressive sales tactics include making deliberate eye contact with prospective customers. He writes:

He does not sit down, like the old man, but moves briskly about, asking in a pert voice, yet with somewhat of a well-bred tone and pronunciation, ‘Any cake, Sir?—any candy?’ The contrast produces an unfavorable feeling (at least in my mind) towards the pert, brisk boy; and so I am a customer of the old man.

(CE VIII 226)

Hawthorne's narrator also prefers the old vendor to his young rival; nevertheless, he plays the devil's advocate in his critique of the old apple dealer's passive selling approach. He states: "[he] makes no sign of offering his wares to the public . . . this activity in business would require an energy that never could have been a characteristic of his almost passive disposition, even in his youth" (CE X 442). The old apple dealer's passivity is out of place in the fiercely competitive marketplace of the railway station; similarly, Hawthorne's reserved personality hindered his chances for literary success in the competitive world of publishing. According to Elizabeth Peabody, Hawthorne "had no genius for negotiations with booksellers" (CE XV 21). Hence, sympathy tilts towards the old apple dealer. He relies on a strategic location in selling his wares, where passengers must walk past him. Moreover, the old man knows that the *display* (in the form of an artful arrangement of a generous supply) of commodities is crucial in sales; hence, he is vigilant in replenishing his snacks as soon as they are depleted. Despite these sales strategies, he is barely able to subsist.

The narrator's ambiguous and even contradictory attitude towards the two candy merchants in this sketch looks forward to the ambiguous (i.e., condemnatory *and* sympathetic) attitude of the narrator towards Hepzibah and Phoebe in their contrasting roles as petty merchants in the one-cent shop (*The House of the Seven Gables* Chapters IV and V). On the one hand, Hawthorne seems to admire the quality of adaptability in the presence of rapid social and technological change; on the other, he resents crass materialism that defines modern life. In his complex characterization of Phoebe, she is both crass and yet worthy of success. For instance, Phoebe single-handedly saves Clifford and Hepzibah from having to turn to the judge for financial support; and yet, her

successful skills in the one-cent shop smack of canny manipulation inherent in business practice. In her charitable treatment of distant relatives, Phoebe's heart is in the "right place." Ergo, she deserves to be successful, since her skills in sales are offset by her generosity.

In addition to comparing the two apple vendors in their success or failure in the marketplace, the narrator compares the old apple dealer to the locomotive and all that it represents. In his critique of the new industrial era of capitalism, Hawthorne examines the impact of speed upon perception. The steam engine is at once a symbol of progress and a threat to the "communicative relationship between man and nature" (Schivelbush 11). The shrieking of the locomotive's wheels on the iron tracks as it comes to a violent halt in the "car-house" speaks to the untamable nature of the agents of mechanical production. The "steam-fiend" is seemingly unstoppable, and is associated with the physics of momentum. Ironically, the locomotive resembles the "beast of burden" that it replaces, indicating a yearning to return to an era that is rapidly passing away. Like a dangerous wild beast, it "skims," "rushes," "dashes," "plunges," "glances" and "roars" (CE X 445). In *The Railway Journey*, Wolfgang Schivelbusch explains how the shift from animal power to machine power impacts upon perception. He writes:

As long as the conquest of space was tied to animal power, it had to proceed within the limits of the animals' physical capabilities. One way of gaining an immediate perception of the distance traveled was to observe the exhaustion of draught animals . . . Steam power, inexhaustible and capable of infinite acceleration, reversed the relationship between recalcitrant nature (i.e., spatial distance), and locomotive engine . . . Motion was no longer dependent on the

conditions of natural space, but on a mechanical power that created its own spatiality. (10)

In the mad scene of disembarkation, the narrator experiences an epiphany regarding the contrast between the death of an old era and the birth of a new one. Repeating the technique of foil, the narrator compares the old man to the passenger steam engine. He states:

The travelers swarm forth from the cars. All are full of the momentum which they have caught from their mode of conveyance. It seems as if the whole world, both morally and physically, were detached from its old standfasts, and set in rapid motion . . . *I have him now. He and the steam-fiend are each other's antipodes; the latter is the type of all that go ahead—and the old man is doomed never to share in the world's exulting progress.* (445-446 italics mine)

The word “progress” is used ironically. Implicit (especially in the dichotomy between “doomed” and “exulting”) in the passage is the idea that scientific and technological progress is distinct from, and frequently antithetical to, social evolution. The rapid transportation of passengers from one location to another is misinterpreted as progress. And, the experience of velocity alters perception. For example, in “The Old Apple-Dealer,” objects move inexorably forward in space, in the echo that follows their exit from view. The narrator tells us that the train’s “reverberating roar still fills the ear” after it leaves the station and is no longer in sight (CE X 445).

Newton (1642-1727) developed his first law of physics over one hundred and fifty years prior to the practical invention of the railroad. Wolfgang Schivelbusch connects Newton’s law to the invention of the railroad. He writes:

As it is the function of the rail to overcome natural resistances, or obstacles, it can be defined as a technical means to implement Newton's First Law of Dynamics, which states: 'Everybody continues in its state of rest, or of uniform motion in a straight line, unless it is compelled to change that state by forces impressed upon it.' The technical principle of the railroad is a practical demonstration of Newton's law of motion . . . (20-21)

Ironically, Hawthorne's contrasting characters also conform to Newton's first law of physics—the young apple dealer is the body in motion, that stays in motion, and the old apple dealer is the body at rest, that stays at rest. The young apple dealer is associated with progress and momentum; simultaneously, he is the forerunner of the American con man type. The old apple dealer persists in an environment of technological progress, stubbornly and idealistically refusing to sacrifice his integrity or to rely upon the charity of others. His inability or refusal to hawk his wares is a positive characteristic in the presence of an aggressive and heedless consumer-driven culture, and lends the old man an aristocratic air. In the double contrast between the two vendors and between the old apple dealer and the locomotive, it seems as if Hawthorne is making a value judgment against a progressive (and providential) model of history. The old apple dealer, like Hawthorne, the artist, is negatively affected by the pressure to survive in a competitive environment. The old man's anxiety, caused by his fear of failing in the marketplace, is revealed in the compulsion to arrange and rearrange his small store of sweets (CE X 443).

Hawthorne addresses the problems of perception in several ways in "The Old Apple-Dealer." In his depiction of the railway station, he engages in the debate of "shrinkage [of the natural world] as economic gain versus shrinkage as loss of

experience” (Schivelbusch 11). Secondly, he uses photographic metaphors to explore the subject of epistemology. For example, Hawthorne’s narrator admits that by visual observation alone, he is unable to describe his subject accurately. He relies instead upon the technique of foil, analogous to the processes of photography, in which a picture is created from a negative. Ironically, the narrator is ultimately unable to paint an accurate portrait of the old man. In *Blithedale*, Coverdale is unable to discover the secrets of his friends’ lives, despite the advantage of interacting with them.

CONCLUSION

Brook Farm: The Model for *The Blithedale Romance*

Hawthorne framed his novel on the utopian experiment of Brook Farm (1841-1847), a nineteenth century model for social reform. It was founded by George Ripley, who idealistically envisioned the members of Brook Farm as “the true followers of Jesus . . . a band of brothers . . . one family [that] attaches no importance whatever to the petty distinctions of birth, rank, wealth, and station” (Cain 11, italics mine). Leading transcendentalists and artists of the day, including Emerson, Fuller, Alcott, as well as Hawthorne supported the utopian community, either as members and/or investors or guest lecturers. In 1844, Brook Farm came under the influence of Charles Fourier (1772-1837), whose proposals advocated open relations between the sexes (Cain 336).¹⁸ In the foreground of the novel, a monomaniacal reformer uses sex to manipulate others, undoing the utopian experiment. At the outset of *Blithedale*, four main characters are set to pair off, as if to conform to society’s expectations for marriage and procreation. Shattering society’s normative expectations, at the end of the novel only one marriage materializes, which produces no issue. In contrast to society’s procreative norms, Hawthorne brings forward the interrelated themes of sexual repression, voyeurism and sexual aggression from the sketches to the novel, which terminates in a fantasy of sexual violence. In the failure of the fictional utopia of Blithedale, the author takes aim at the radical proposals of the transcendentalists, who had faith in the reformation of society. In

¹⁸ In his blueprint for universal happiness, Fourier believed that human “needs [for variety, for personal self-assertion and distinctiveness] could be met without stirring up hostilities and struggles among people, that competition might be preserved and aggressiveness channeled in harmless directions . . .” (Kolakowski 237). Among other things, in *Blithedale* Hawthorne blasts the utopian belief in the possibility of universal fraternity.

the betrayal and abandonment of his friends, Coverdale is quintessentially anti-utopian. While seeming to participate in the agrarian experiment of Blithedale, he covertly carries out his own private experiment in surveillance, in pursuit of literary material. In *Blithedale*, Hawthorne implies that secret and selfish motives will always undermine socialist projects.

The Bachelor Sketches and *The Blithedale Romance*

The character of Miles Coverdale evolves out of the nameless and isolated, struggling artist-scholar and flaneur type that Hawthorne experiments with in his bachelor sketches, which qualify as preliminary studies written in preparation for a finished work.¹⁹ He is alienated from his friends and acquaintances, despite his desire to get close to them. Instead of interacting with them, Coverdale's friends become the objects of his artistic and controlling male gaze. In defense of their privacy, they keep him at a distance. Judging his friends according to stereotypes, he is denied access to their life stories. Unsurprisingly, the practice of stereotyping widens the gap between him and the subjects he studies. An irreversible pattern of pursuit and retreat is established between the narrator (i.e., the subject) and the friends (i.e., the objects) he keeps under surveillance, which culminates in the death of Zenobia. In writing *Blithedale*, Hawthorne draws upon his experiences (between April and November of 1841) as member/investor at Brook Farm to explore the subjects of class, gender and sexuality, as well as the subject of epistemology. In the preface, he insists that his novel is not a *roman à clef*; that his characters are entirely fictitious; and, that he is not critiquing the theory of socialism (CE III 1-2). In opposition to these claims, the artist-narrator is modeled after Hawthorne,

¹⁹ *OED*, "sketch, n." Def. 3b. *OED Online*, <http://dictionary.oed.com> (accessed 3 December 2008).

and Zenobia and Hollingsworth resemble Hawthorne's literary friends Margaret Fuller and Herman Melville. Furthermore, according to at least one Hawthorne scholar, the novel "is an underrated satire of philanthropic socialism" (Wineapple "A Brief Biography" 33). Like Hawthorne in his trial period at Brook Farm, Hawthorne's narrator in *Blithedale* is in the transitional stage of manhood, prior to his "compulsory" participation in society as husband and father.

Vincent J. Bertolini explains the bachelor's dilemma. In his essay on the paradox of the erotics of bachelorhood in antebellum America; he writes, ". . . the bachelor's sociosexual identity is undefined and unregulated. Located in a kind of negative conceptual space, on the threshold between domestication and transgression, the bachelor is a liminal concept in antebellum culture and a transitional state within proper masculine development" (709). In his transitional bachelor state, Coverdale does not conform to society's expectations for manliness. He takes to his bed with a cold upon his arrival at the commune, enjoys being nursed back to health by the burly reformer Hollingsworth, and shuns the attentions of the breathtakingly gorgeous Zenobia. In his depiction of the shy and self-absorbed Coverdale, Hawthorne seems to be critiquing society's requirements for manliness, and the obligation to marry. In his first person narration, Hawthorne builds upon the hybrid persona from the sketches, in which the artist is faced with the dilemma of reconciling his requirements for solitude and sociability. Coverdale resembles the isolated narrators in "Sunday at Home" and "Monsieur du Miroir." At the end of his narration, the moribund Coverdale retreats to his rooms, and ceases to write. Throughout *Blithedale*, Hawthorne expands upon the theme of class adumbrated in "Sunday at Home" and "The Old Apple-Dealer." Coverdale is revealed as a prime

candidate for personal reformation, in his supercilious treatment of those below him in the social scale. Moreover, he habitually spies upon his friends, in an attempt to pry into the “secrets” of their private lives; women, in particular, are the subjects of his controlling male gaze. In the novel, as in the sketches, Hawthorne conflates the problem of perception with voyeurism. Although Zenobia and Priscilla are the objects of his intense male gaze, Coverdale is denied full access to their personal histories. Like the narrators in “The Haunted Mind” and “Monsieur du Miroir,” Coverdale revisits his past in order to account for his feelings of ennui. The plot involves events that take place twelve years prior to the telling of the story. Anticipating the psychoanalytic methods of Freud, Hawthorne focuses upon the way in which his narrator reconstructs his past, rather than upon past events. In my discussion of class in the novel, I examine Coverdale’s treatment of Old Moodie in Chapter I, and his behavior towards Priscilla in Chapter IV. In stereotyping Moodie and Priscilla as members of the lower classes, he fails two tests of “brotherly love.”

Coverdale is a flaneur—a bachelor, traveler, and poet of independent means, who meanders through life with the express purpose of watching others. People are fodder for his art. As the novel opens, Coverdale is preparing to journey to Blithedale; nevertheless, he has qualms about sacrificing his comfortable bachelor existence for the sake of an experiment in communal living. He writes: “The greater, surely, was my heroism, when, puffing out a final whiff of cigar-smoke, I quitted my cosey pair of bachelor rooms—with a good fire burning in the grate, and a closet right at hand, where there was still a bottle or two in the champagne-basket . . . and plunged into the heart of the pitiless snow-storm, in quest of a better life” (CE III 10). Coverdale is a confirmed bachelor, even though he is

only a young man. The conflict between desire and fear of women, which involves resistance to marriage and all that it entails, reemerges in *Blithedale*. In the first key incident, Coverdale commits a sin of omission, which becomes the first in a series of betrayals. Prior to the onset of his journey, the idle poet rudely brushes off the request for a “great favor” by Old Moodie, a street peddler of hand-sewn trifles (reminiscent of the prototype of the proletariat in “The Old Apple-Dealer”). In a preemptive move, Coverdale replies, “ ‘A very great favor, do you say? My time is brief, Mr. Moodie, and I have a good many preparations to make. But, be good enough to tell me what you wish’ ” (7). In the phrase, “My time is brief,” Coverdale reveals that he won’t make time for Moodie, who accurately senses his indifference. Coverdale is not compelled to excuse himself for not helping him, since he is socially superior to Moodie. Although Moodie and Coverdale are habitués of the same neighborhood, the two men occupy different social spheres, which do not intersect. Coverdale arrogantly refuses to acknowledge his own uncharitable attitude towards the shabby street peddler, and blames Moodie for retracting his request for a favor. He writes: “But the old fellow, in his civil and demure manner, was both freakish and obstinate; and he had now taken some notion or other into his head that made him hesitate in his former design” (9). Ironically, in Chapter XXII (“Fauntleroy”), Coverdale discovers that Moodie comes from a wealthy family, although he lives in poverty. As heir to his brother’s estate, Moodie is later restored to wealth. Nevertheless, he chooses to devolve his inherited wealth upon his daughters, and to remain a member of the *dèclassés*. Moodie, Priscilla, Zenobia, and Hollingsworth all experience status reversals. As Hawthorne depicts it in *Blithedale*, social status is subject to change and is therefore an arbitrary criterion for judging others.

The next day at Blithedale, Coverdale is threatened for the second time with the possibility of having to accommodate a member of the lower classes. In Chapter IV (“The Supper-Table”), he bristles at the intrusion of an obviously socially disadvantaged and frail young woman into the elite group of properly invited, socially acceptable Blithedalers. At odds with the communal spirit of Blithedale, Coverdale commits a breach of hospitality. Although he is not the host, he arrogantly demands to know who Priscilla is, and where she comes from (26-27). His reaction to Priscilla is offensive, but typical in human interactions. Hawthorne is implying that the tendency to situate oneself in the social hierarchy is universal. In the same way that the narrator resents Moodie, he resents Priscilla; Coverdale feels that she does not belong in his social circle. He writes, “The stranger, or whatever she were, remained standing . . . dressed in a poor, but decent gown, made high in the neck, and without any regard to fashion or smartness . . . she shivered either with cold, or fear, or nervous excitement . . . and it was hardly possible to help being angry with her, from mere despair of doing anything to comfort her . . .” (CE III 27). In the exercise of disciplinary power described by Foucault in *Discipline and Punishment*, Coverdale looks upon Priscilla as “the leper . . . caught up in a practice of rejection, of exile-enclosure” (198). As it turns out, Priscilla inherits her family’s wealth (Chapter XXVIII “Blithedale-Pasture”), proving that stereotyping on the basis of class is arbitrary.

Because he is secure from want, Coverdale is unable to empathize with those (like Priscilla and Moodie) who struggle to survive in the “slave economy” described by Marx in *Das Kapital*. In the young poet’s stead, a former blacksmith delivers Priscilla to Blithedale, and a hard-working farmer invites her into his humble home. In a repetition of

the technique of foil from “The Old Apple-Dealer,” the uncharitable Coverdale contrasts negatively with Silas Foster and Hollingsworth, who don’t question Priscilla’s right to be included in the group of communitarians. The narrator’s indifference to others foreshadows the failure of the utopian experiment at Blithedale. Hawthorne is commenting on society’s tendency to stereotype; Blithedale is a microcosm of the society of Hawthorne’s day, in which stereotyping is both habitual, and ironically at odds with the principles of democracy laid down in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Resembling the artist-narrators in “Sunday at Home,” “Foot-prints on the Sea-Shore,” “Sights from a Steeple” and “Little Annie’s Ramble,” Coverdale is also a voyeur. He derives pleasure vicariously, from watching, and is afraid of “flesh and blood” women, like Zenobia.

Although he is attracted to Zenobia at first sight (Chapter III “A Knot of Dreamers”), Coverdale represses his feelings for her. Imagining himself as Adam and Zenobia as Eve in the first shameful moment after the fall, he writes,

Assuredly, Zenobia could not have intended it – the *fault* must have been entirely in my imagination – but these last words, together with something in her manner, brought up a picture of that fine, perfectly developed figure, in Eve’s earliest garment. I almost fancied myself actually beholding it. Her free, careless, generous modes of expression often had this effect of creating images, though pure, are hardly felt to be quite decorous, when born of a thought that passes between man and woman. (CE III 17 italics mine)

In the phrase “I almost fancied myself actually beholding it,” the reader surmises that the narrator envisions her naked. Resembling the voyeuristic narrator in “Sunday,” Coverdale

stereotypically blames Zenobia for the feelings of lust she inspires in him. Speculating on her lack of virginity, Coverdale disqualifies Zenobia as a potential love object. He writes: "A bachelor always feels himself defrauded, when he knows, or suspects, that any woman of his acquaintance has given herself away . . . for I should not, under any circumstances, have fallen in love with Zenobia" (48). He fears falling in love with a "tainted" woman (who represents "used goods"), and, as a result, he punishes himself by eliminating a beautiful woman as a prospective love interest. Other voyeuristic bachelor narrators in Hawthorne's sketches harbor similar fears of women they desire, with similar detrimental effects. Coverdale's direct antecedents are the narrators in "Sunday at Home," "Sights from a Steeple," "Monsieur du Miroir" and "Foot-prints on the Sea-Shore."

Like Coverdale, the voyeuristic narrator in "Sunday at Home" would rather watch women, than interact with them. He observes that women are aggressive in courtship, since their purpose in life is to marry and procreate. In opposition to the social norm, his goal (like Coverdale's) is to maintain his status as a bachelor, despite the pain of isolation. By avoiding women completely, he avoids the ritual of marriage, and the accompanying rite of inclusion into society. Fearing rejection in "real life," the narrator of "Sights from a Steeple" creates an imaginary love affair while observing the movements of the townspeople. He vicariously assumes the role of a handsome young suitor, who courts and wins the hand of a pretty girl. The triangle of a young man and two sisters in "Sights" reemerges in the erotic triangle of Hollingsworth, Zenobia and Priscilla in *Blithedale*. Fearing rejection, Coverdale eliminates himself from the competition for Zenobia and Priscilla. He experiences love vicariously, in Hollingsworth's double

courtship of the two Fauntleroy sisters. The narrators in the novel and in "Sights" are voyeurs and artists, incapable of love. The narrator in "Monsieur du Miroir" suffers from a Narcissus complex, causing him to both hate and love himself. He fails to progress beyond the mirror stage in development, and is unable to connect to women sexually. The pattern of self-defeating behavior in courtship in "M. du Miroir" reemerges in *Blithedale*. For example, Coverdale perversely discusses the subject of Hollingsworth in conversation with Zenobia and Priscilla, which alienates the narrator from both women, and promotes his rival in their eyes. Consequently, like the narrator in "M. du Miroir," he is also forced to "keep his own company." Hollingsworth, on the other hand, romantically pursues both sisters, increasing his odds for success in courtship. In the conflict between desire and fear of women, the narrators in "M. du Miroir" and in *Blithedale* sabotage their chances for success with women. The unhealthy repression of desire has an outlet in phallogentric fantasies of rape and/or murder in "Foot-prints on the Sea-Shore" and in *Blithedale*. Nevertheless, there is no emotional uplift at the end of the novel to offset violent male fantasies.

Conflicted over the double impulse of fear and desire, men resort to aggression in their relations with women in the "Foot-prints" sketch and in the novel. Fantasies of sexual violence in the sketch reemerge and escalate in the violent death of Zenobia, which is scripted by Coverdale. The "chasm" scene and the scene of the recovery of Zenobia (Chapter XXVII "Midnight") contain symbolic rapes and/or murder. According to Brenda Wineapple, the drowning of Zenobia is cathartic for Hawthorne, who feared and admired women in general, and professional women writers in particular. She writes:

Like Hester Prynne before her, Zenobia is Hawthorne's homage to and rebellion against strong, sexual women; she is the mirror of himself, a writer, a scribbler, an outsider, and a nonconforming conformist. As these portraits suggest, Hawthorne could identify with women, and he constructed vibrant female characters whom he punishes, humiliates, and kills, *as if exorcising that which enthralls*.

Hawthorne censured and scolded those women who, he felt, threatened to rob him of his income, his professional stature, [and] his masculinity . . . ("A Brief Biography" 33 italics mine)

In killing off the periodical writer Zenobia (who resembles Fuller), Coverdale and Hawthorne kill off the female literary competition. Coverdale kills off the chance for love.

In his complex persona as artist, flaneur and voyeur, Coverdale is consumed by the project of reading the minds and hearts of his three acquaintances at Blithedale. He realizes that the tendency to speculate is both occupationally necessary, and personally hazardous. The subjects of his writing project are a divinely ordained problem to be solved. He writes, "It is not, I apprehend, a healthy kind of mental occupation, to devote ourselves too exclusively to the study of individual men and women . . . *He – and Zenobia and Priscilla, both for their own sakes and connected with him* – were separated from the rest of the Community, to my imagination, and *stood forth as the indices of a problem which it was my business to solve*" (CE III 69, italics mine). Like the narrator in "Sights from a Steeple," Coverdale is the panoptic observer who enjoys spying on others for the purpose of writing their stories. He is obsessed with the motives and secrets of Hollingsworth, Priscilla and Zenobia, and, at the same time, he is alienated from them.

According to Colacurcio, Coverdale relegates himself to the margins of his tiny group of friends by his initial failure to respond to Moodie's request for a favor. He writes,

From the very first, our curious but self-protecting point-of-view character misses his chance to get up close to the motives that control the unhappy unfolding events at Blithedale . . . failing to let himself become involved in some primary relation to the principal persons at Blithedale, Coverdale merely wanders . . . in search of clues from the outside. ("Nobody's Protest Novel" 3-4)

In other words, had Coverdale taken Priscilla under his wing at Blithedale, as Moodie wanted him to, she may have shared her story with him. In contrast to Coverdale, Hollingsworth passes the initial test of "brotherly love" by coming to Priscilla's aid. Hence, unlike Coverdale, he has learned that Priscilla and Zenobia are sisters, and that Moodie is their father (CE III 87). Those that pass the test of brotherly love qualify as friends, who are then privileged to learn others' "secrets." Conversely, friendship and trust (as well as information) are withheld from those (like Coverdale) who fail the test. As a reward for his beneficence, Hollingsworth is allowed access to Priscilla's life history, becomes her friend, and then marries her. Ultimately, he is rewarded for his goodness by marrying an heiress. The "threshold" scene in Chapter IV ("The Supper-Table") is crucial, since it foreshadows Hollingsworth's reward. Like a bridegroom with his bride, Hollingsworth carries Priscilla from the coach to the doorstep of the farmhouse, and then "urge[s] her forward, not merely within the entry, but into the warm and strongly lighted kitchen" (CE III 26). Conversely, Coverdale treats Priscilla like an intruder, is denied access to her story and is punished for his turpitude. At the end of the novel, he is alone and suffering from writer's block. In Chapter XI, Coverdale fails

another test of brotherly love. Impressed with a stranger's gentlemanly appearance, he callously betrays the whereabouts and identities of his three friends to the manipulative and nefarious Professor Westervelt. In Chapter XII ("Coverdale's Hermitage") and Chapter XVII ("The Hotel"), Hawthorne's visual models (associated with artistic and photographic techniques) from the sketches reemerge in the novel.

Reminiscent of the dark room in the "Sunday" sketch, the Castle in *Robinson Crusoe*, and the hermitage in the "Foot-prints" sketch, Coverdale retreats to a natural tree house and observatory in Chapter XII. The "natural turret" is modeled upon the camera obscura and the panorama from Hawthorne's sketches. It is associated with the artist's requirement for solitude, and the concomitant dangers of isolation. As in "Foot-prints on the Sea-Shore," reverie is associated with masturbation, which in turn is linked to artistic endeavor. Coverdale writes, "It was an admirable place to make verses . . . [and] being so pervious to air currents, it was just the nook, too, for the enjoyment of a cigar" (99). In addition, the theme of voyeurism is linked to perception and knowledge. Despite his vantage point in the pine tree, the poet is unable to decipher the nature of the relationship between Zenobia and Westervelt. Although he can observe them through peepholes he has made in the grapevines, he can only hear disjointed pieces of their conversation. Like the narrator in "Sights," he relies instead upon body language to construct a relationship. He speculates "that there was a sort of familiarity between these two companions, necessarily the result of intimate love—on Zenobia's part at least—in days gone by, but which had prolonged itself into as intimate a hatred, for all futurity" (102). Like the narrator in "The Old Apple-Dealer," he "finds what he seeks" in a character. Coverdale reconfirms that Zenobia is not a virgin in his suspicion that she has been intimate with

Westervelt. Therefore, he can confirm that he has made the right decision in disqualifying her as a potential love object. Nevertheless, he stereotypically confuses Zenobia's lack of purity with a lack of goodness. Because of her mysterious and possibly checkered past, he rejects her; subsequently (as if to punish himself for his decision), he becomes obsessed with her. In the aftermath of the rift between him and Hollingsworth at Blithedale, Coverdale exchanges his hermitage in the country for a hotel room in the city.

Coincidentally, Zenobia and Priscilla are staying at the boardinghouse opposite his hotel, allowing him to spy on his friends without being seen. The combination of his eye and the darkened room recalls the model of the apparatus of the camera obscura from "Sunday at Home." Despite the change in venue, Zenobia (like the prisoners in Foucault's panopticon) cannot escape Coverdale's controlling male gaze. Mulvey links visual pleasure to Freud's castration complex,²⁰ arguing that

the process of gazing on the female object of desire is both pleasurable and threatening . . . The female object of the gaze, because she lacks a penis, is associated with the primordial fear of castration; although that threat initiates the male subject's integration into the symbolic order, it also creates considerable anxiety. For this reason, the controlling male ego must attempt to escape the threat of castration evoked by the very gaze that gives it pleasure. (Leitsch 2180)

One way of disarming the threat to the male ego is to punish the female object of the male gaze. Mulvey's theory seems to be borne out in Coverdale's subsequent murderous

²⁰ Mulvey argues that psychoanalytic theory (itself based upon sexual difference defined as the difference between having and lacking a penis) conditions and naturalizes forms of pleasure. Her critique of the system of power and authority based upon phallogocentric values is implicit in her groundbreaking essay on visual pleasure.

male gaze towards Zenobia, the female object of his desire. Moreover, the reader is inculcated in the violent and murderous fantasies of the narrator.

Resembling other beautiful and intimidating female characters in Hawthorne's stories and sketches, Zenobia possesses a "passionate, luxurious" sexuality (165) which simultaneously attracts and terrifies Coverdale. He is caught spying on Zenobia, who retaliates in two ways. She rebelliously returns his gaze, and then (as if punishing him for spying) drops a curtain down her window, cutting him from view (159). By rendering herself invisible, she reverses the relations of power between the omniscient observer and the inmates in Bentham's principle of power, in which "the inmate must never know he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so" (Foucault DP 201). Resembling the invisible guard in the tower of the panopticon (who keeps his prisoners under constant surveillance), Coverdale demands instant access to Zenobia's apartment, thereby violating the boundaries between public and private spheres. He writes:

All at once, it occurred to me how very absurd was my behavior, in thus tormenting myself with *crazy hypotheses* as to what was going on within that drawing-room, when it was at my option to be personally present there . . . *My relations with Zenobia . . . gave me the right . . . to call on her . . .* I soon found myself within the house, the rear of which, for two days past, I had been so sedulously watching" (162 italics mine).

Having entered their apartment without an invitation, he is unable to discover the "truth" about Zenobia, or her sister. Unsurprisingly, neither of the two women is willing to satisfy his demands for an explanation of why they are in town, in company with the oily

Westervelt. Coverdale subsequently takes revenge on Zenobia for her slight by failing her in her hour of need. I claim that, in his desire to punish her for arousing sexual feelings in him, and for being rejected in favor of Hollingsworth, Coverdale vicariously participates in the symbolic rape/murder of Zenobia by the reformer Hollingsworth. The sadomasochistic fantasy in "Little Annie's Ramble" reemerges in the novel, in the symbolic violation of Zenobia.

The suicide death of Zenobia is crucial, especially in the aftermath of the "accidental" piercing of her body by Hollingsworth during rescue efforts. There is a direct link between the narrator's repression of his feelings for Zenobia at the outset of the novel in Chapter III ("A Knot of Dreamers"), to his failure to save her in Chapter XXVI ("Zenobia and Coverdale"), to his desire to punish Zenobia posthumously, in Chapter XXVII ("Midnight"). Coverdale's depiction of the rescue scene in Chapter XXVII contains the feature of the symbolic rape in the "chasm" scene in the "Footprints" sketch, and is reminiscent as well of the symbolic act of violence (in which a child is being spanked) in "Little Annie's Ramble." Like the female characters in Hawthorne's short stories that resemble the prisoners in Foucault's panopticon (Elbert 31), Zenobia becomes the object of the empowered male gaze. First, I examine the narrator's abandonment of Zenobia in Chapter XXVI, and his uncharacteristically masterful "rescue" of Zenobia in Chapter XXVII.

Coverdale is the last person to see Zenobia alive after the scene of her rejection by Hollingsworth in Chapter XXV ("The Three Together"). He misses his last chance to get close to her, and perhaps win her love in the absence of his rival. However, in his role as artist, his only goal is to record the scene of her grief, not to comfort her or to woo her.

Characteristically indifferent to others, he uncharitably fantasizes Zenobia out of the way in Chapter XXVI ("Zenobia and Coverdale"). He writes: "But, indeed, what could mortal do for her? Nothing! . . . Destiny itself, methought, in its kindest mood, could do no better for Zenobia, in the way of quick relief, than to cause the impending rock to impend a little further, and fall upon her head" (223). He fails to recognize several signs of her impending suicide. For example, he ignores the significance of her request to deliver a message to Hollingsworth that he has "murdered" her; and the significance of her obvious reference to Ophelia (the most famous suicide in the most well-known drama in English literature) does not register with him. His lack of sympathy towards Zenobia prevents him from discovering the "truth" of her intentions in time to save her. In *Blithedale*, the lack of charity is linked to the obfuscation of knowledge, which is linked to death. Indirectly, then, Coverdale is responsible for Zenobia's death. Despite his premonitions of disaster, the narrator describes how he falls asleep at the moment Zenobia needs him most (228). His failure to save her from herself is a sin of omission, and reflects his lack of manliness, as well. Ironically, he only takes action *after* she drowns herself, when it is too late to save her. Nevertheless, during the search for her body, he takes possession of Zenobia indirectly, by keeping her discarded shoe as a memento (231-232). Suspecting that she is dead, he is no longer intimidated by her, or afraid of the feelings of desire that a "flesh and blood" woman inspired in him. His fixation on her shoe is fetishistic, and represents the pathological displacement of erotic interest onto an inanimate object. His interest, although libidinal, may be disconnected from genital arousal. I suggest that he is spared the discomfort of arousal formerly

inspired by the shoe's owner. In his role as "helmsman," Coverdale is the author and director of the scene of the rescue of Zenobia.

Chapter XXVII ("Mid-night") resembles a scene from a tragic drama, and features a symbolic rape and murder. Hawthorne uses the technique of foil from the sketches in the contrast between the fatherly Silas and the two young suitors. Silas Foster is sympathetic towards the broken-hearted Zenobia, while Coverdale and Hollingsworth resent the victim of their callous treatment. Their anger towards Zenobia emerges in the way they retrieve her body. Although Hollingsworth is the "actor" who retrieves her body from the river, Coverdale is co-conspirator in the act of violence against women. He writes: "Hollingsworth at first sat motionless, with the hooked-pole elevated in the air. But, by-and-by, with a nervous and jerky movement, he began to plunge it into the blackness that upbore us, setting his teeth, and making precisely such thrusts, methought, as if he were stabbing a deadly enemy" (233). Ironically, both men symbolically take possession of Zenobia after death, when she is no longer sexually responsive. Subliminally, Coverdale's depiction of the posthumous stabbing of Zenobia by Hollingsworth reveals his secret desire to overpower and dominate members of the opposite sex, adumbrated in the chasm scene in the "Foot-prints" sketch. In addition, Coverdale vicariously participates in the symbolic rape/murder of Zenobia, despite the fact that during the rescue, it is Hollingsworth who stabs her in the heart with his pole, and causes her to bleed. He cannot own up to his frustrated desire for Zenobia; therefore, Hollingsworth gets to play the main (and murderous) role in the dramatic scene. Moreover, when she is brought ashore, Coverdale describes Zenobia's contorted body in graphic detail, as if to further humiliate her in death (when she is helpless to defend

herself). He writes: "Six hours before, how beautiful! At midnight, what a horror! . . . Being the woman she was, could Zenobia have foreseen all these ugly circumstances of her death . . . she would no more have committed this dreadful act, than have exhibited herself to a public assembly in a badly fitting garment!" (236). Focusing upon the artistic interpretation of events, he trivializes Zenobia as a woman of fashion and compares her suicide to a lapse in appearance.

In *Blithedale*, Hawthorne inverts the hetero fantasy of a happy ending from "Sights from a Steeple," which culminates in a love affair. He annihilates the possibility of love between men and women adumbrated at the end of "Foot-prints on the Sea-Shore." And, like the bachelor narrators in "M. du Miroir" and "Sunday at Home," Coverdale refuses to conform to the regulation of sex described by Foucault in *The History of Sexuality*. Confined to his room like the narrators in these last two sketches, he ends up a confirmed middle-aged bachelor, "with no very decided purpose of ever being otherwise" (246). One may speculate that in falling in love with a woman who "swerv[ed] one hair's breath out of the beaten track" (CE III 224), the well-to-do narrator was frustrated in his "obligation to preserve a healthy line of descent for his family and social class" (Foucault *History of Sexuality* 121). Prior to her death, Zenobia ultimately acknowledges to Coverdale that she has had relationships with men, confirming his belief that she is "tainted." In the aftermath of her death, he ironically refuses to acknowledge his failure to intervene in her suicide. As Coverdale describes it (Chapter XXVIII "Blithedale-Pasture"), Hollingsworth deserves all the blame for her death. Subsequent to Zenobia's death, Coverdale ironically convinces himself that he has been in love with Priscilla. She is a "safe" choice for him, because all along she has been unavailable to

him; throughout his telling of the story, she has been drawn only to Hollingsworth. Ultimately, he can allow himself to be attracted to her because, like Old Moodie, she comes from aristocratic and wealthy family and, as far as he knows, she is chaste. Nevertheless, because of his original inhospitable treatment of Priscilla, Coverdale (unlike Hollingsworth) is unworthy of her.

On one level, Coverdale is an artist and a chorus character whose role is to comment upon the actions of an unfolding drama. He prefers to live vicariously, “suffering [his] colorless life to take its hue from other lives” (245). He is the site of contending views on the relations between the sexes, which in turn are structured upon stereotypes that undermine relationships and the chance for happiness. On another level, in his characteristic failure to commit, respond to, or protect others, he is destined to remain alone. In Chapter I (“Old Moodie”), he avoids helping Moodie; in Chapter IV (“The Supper-Table”), he is inhospitable to the friendless Priscilla; in Chapter XI (“The Wood-Path”), he betrays his friends to Westervelt; in Chapter XVI (“Leave-Takings”), he deserts his friends over a quarrel with Hollingsworth, and deserts the farmer-workers at Blithedale prior to the harvest season; and in Chapter XXVI (“Zenobia and Coverdale”), he abandons the distraught Zenobia. Coverdale explains his philosophy of expediency, which works against utopian ideals. Paradoxically, he claims he is willing to sacrifice anything (including his life) for a good cause, *unless it is inconvenient to do so*. In the novel’s final chapter (Chapter XXIX “Miles Coverdale’s Confession”) he attempts to rationalize his behavior in the experiment of Blithedale. He writes, “Yet, were there any cause, in this whole chaos of human struggle, worth a sane man’s dying for, and which my death would benefit, then—*provided, however, the effort did not involve an*

unreasonable amount of trouble—methinks I might be bold to offer up my life” (246
italics mine). He ends up alone and artistically stifled at the end of the novel as *payback*
for his basic lack of sympathy towards everyone in his small circuit of acquaintances and
friends, endlessly speculating upon the crucial events of his past. In contrast to the
everyman characters in “The Haunted Mind” and “Monsieur du Miroir,” Coverdale
refuses to assume responsibility for his own actions (including the refusal to act) and their
consequences.

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