



MONTCLAIR STATE
UNIVERSITY

Montclair State University
**Montclair State University Digital
Commons**

Theses, Dissertations and Culminating Projects

5-2011

Hawthorne's Independent Women : Individualism and Self-Reliance as Empowerment

Abigail Davis
Montclair State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.montclair.edu/etd>



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Davis, Abigail, "Hawthorne's Independent Women : Individualism and Self-Reliance as Empowerment" (2011). *Theses, Dissertations and Culminating Projects*. 811.
<https://digitalcommons.montclair.edu/etd/811>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Montclair State University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses, Dissertations and Culminating Projects by an authorized administrator of Montclair State University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@montclair.edu.

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

Hawthorne's Independent Women: Individualism and Self-Reliance as Empowerment

by

Abigail Davis

A Master's Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

Montclair State University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

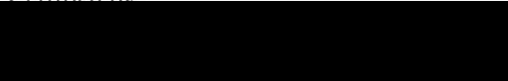
For the Degree of

Master of Arts

May 2011

College/School Humanities and Social Sciences

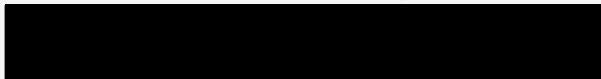
Department English

Certified by: 


Marietta Morrissey
Dean: College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Date 4/28/2011

Thesis Committee:



Monika Elbert
Thesis Sponsor



Alyce Miller
Committee Member



Jonathan Greenberg
Committee Member



Daniel Bronson
Department Chair

HAWTHORNE'S INDEPENDENT WOMEN: INDIVIDUALISM AND SELF-
RELIANCE AS EMPOWERMENT

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Arts

by

ABIGAIL DAVIS

Montclair State University

Montclair, NJ

2011

Copyright c 2011 by Abigail Davis. All rights reserved.

Abstract

This thesis will explore the ways in which Hawthorne addresses the role of womanhood in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables*, by using constructs of 19th-century domesticity and women's position in society. In each novel, Hawthorne clearly depicts what society expects of women, as well as how they should behave according to social and religious standards. A historical and feminist lens will be used to examine the way in which a woman can be both restricted by and freed from a patriarchal society in both novels. Through the characters of Hester, Pearl and Mistress Hibbins in *The Scarlet Letter* and Hepzibah and Phoebe in *The House of the Seven Gables*, Hawthorne demonstrates his interest in female defiance. Most of these characters are aware of their domestic expectations, yet ultimately choose to live according to their own moral laws. As a result, they gain independence and a new shaping in the definition of true womanhood. Both Phoebe and Hester experience numerous struggles but live successfully by developing individuality and a strong sense-of-self. However, women such as Hepzibah exhibit strength and courage but do not possess the capabilities to become the ideal domestic woman. Whereas the women display the ability to remain independent while living within society, the men unsuccessfully live by their own moral law and fail at resisting society's ways. In both novels, Hawthorne privileges women by demonstrating that they can ultimately live by and maintain their own moral law, even while living among the same society that they reject. By demonstrating the ways women can develop individuality and yet reside peacefully in society, Hawthorne shows that women do have the opportunity to maintain strength and begin a new way in which to define womanhood: a way in which other women will follow.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> : Hibbins, Hester, Pearl and Independence	4
Chapter 2: <i>The House of the Seven Gables</i> : Hepzibah, Phoebe and Domesticity	34
Conclusion: Dimmesdale and Holgrave: A Struggle for Individualism.....	55
Works Cited	66

Introduction

The capabilities and actions of the female characters in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables* help demonstrate the role and function of domesticity and womanhood in 19th-century society. Female domesticity and individualism were almost never connected, as women were expected to perform their religious and domestic duties and never stray from what was expected of them. During the 19th century, there were many women who spoke out about the role of women and the desire to increase women's intellect and self-identity. One of these women was Catharine Beecher, an influential writer when it came to women's education and domestic roles. In "Catharine Beecher's Views of Home Economics," Charlotte E. Biester points out that Beecher was a strong advocate for women's education and not only taught in and founded schools for women, but also organized many institutes for women during the 1820s (88).

Although Beecher promoted women's education, she also believed that women should maintain the traditional role of housewife and mother. In *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*, Beecher points out that society believes a woman should tend to her husband, protect her children, and perform various domestic duties, and a woman should view these actions as ways to demonstrate her intellect rather than believe these tasks to be petty or simple. One of the main points that Beecher discusses is time management and the ability to create a "system of order" to successfully complete tasks while displaying intellect and ability (157). In addition to time management, Beecher also discusses numerous women's duties revolving around religion, family, chores and maintaining a stable household (156-57). The numerous responsibilities placed upon women made it

difficult to maintain stability while also displaying intellectual growth. As a result, intellect and individuality became difficult for many women to achieve.

Margaret Fuller was another influential voice during the 19th century when discussing women's roles in society and equality between men and women. In her book, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, Fuller discusses the independence of women, equal reliance between both sexes, the role of women in the 19th century and points out that a woman should be able to express her full potential and intellect without losing any of the femininity that is commonly associated with her sex. Furthermore, she believes a woman should allow her intellect to grow and live freely without being bound to the home (488, 490). Like Beecher, Fuller promotes growth in women both in intellect and spirit, and states, "what woman needs is not as a woman to act or rule, but as a nature to grow, as an intellect to discern, as a soul to live freely and unimpeded, to unfold such powers as were given her when we left our common home" (490). Both Beecher and Fuller share similar beliefs in that women need to grow in intellect, even in their domestic surroundings. The natural growth of soul and intellect are important qualities in the needs of women, but it is important to ask how women obtain the ability to grow. Are they capable of doing so in their already formed position in society or do they need to break away from certain rules and expectations to create their own morals? These questions are answered as the behavior of Hester, Phoebe and other female characters in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables* are explored.

Domesticity and individualism have not often gone hand in hand, and in *Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth-Century America*, Gillian Brown comments on how these two ideas have become related by discussing how domesticity lends itself to

the “reshaping of individualism” within the 19th century (1). Brown points out that when looking at the market society, individualism has been commonly associated with white masculine figures (1). However, this association changes in the 19th century and by focusing upon the ideas of interiority, privacy and psychology, Brown demonstrates how individuality and self-identity become redefined and connected to domesticity (2). Again these ideas are reflected in Hester and Phoebe as they form their own sense of self through their work and personal moral values. While looking at the course of Hester’s and Phoebe’s lives, readers see a connection between their actions and individualism and begin to see the connection Brown makes between these two formerly opposing ideas.

Chapter 1

The Scarlet Letter: Hibbins, Hester, Pearl and Independence

In *The Scarlet Letter's* 17th-century setting, Hawthorne places Puritan history and 19th-century history side by side, demonstrating women's empowerment as separate from the strict religious morals that Puritans expected their citizens to abide by. From the descriptions given in the first chapter of *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne gives a distinct impression of Puritan society. Readers are immediately introduced to "a throng of bearded men, in sad-colored garments" assembled in front of the jail door, "studded with iron spikes" (Hawthorne 53). With this description, Hawthorne describes the Puritan crowd in *The Scarlet Letter* waiting for Hester to emerge from the prison door. As Hester is judged by her community, Hawthorne demonstrates what Hester, as a Puritan woman, would experience after acting against the expectations that have been set forth for her. Instead of being a pious individual who stays within the bounds of morality, Hester chooses to act on her own desires and emotions. Presenting the reader with this strong visual picture, Hawthorne identifies Puritans as individuals who believe strongly in their moral values and demonstrates the power of a patriarchal society by describing men as the first people to which readers are introduced. However, readers should not overlook the critical women who observe and judge Hester as she stands on the scaffold. Instead of providing a support system for Hester, the women seem too adjusted to the values instilled upon them, mainly by men, and do not bother thinking they have the ability to come together as women and slowly break from these beliefs. Instead, they are quick to judge and choose not to deviate from the laws that many of the townspeople have chosen

to abide by. As a result, Hester faces the community with Pearl, the only companion that she is found with throughout the novel.

The Puritan community places Hester on the scaffold, using her as an example of what both women and citizens in society should *not* do. Brook Thomas is accurate in “Citizen Hester: *The Scarlet Letter* as Civic Myth” when he points out that “Hawthorne’s image of the scaffold reminds us that good citizenship requires obedience” (434). Hester has been unfaithful by committing adultery, and has disobeyed the rules of society she is expected to follow. Through the individuality Hester develops while separated from the community, she becomes capable of redefining what it means to be a good citizen, as well as the role of woman. However, Hester is not the only female character Hawthorne uses to represent what it means to be a good citizen. Pearl, Hester and Mistress Hibbins are three female characters that represent different levels of detachment from their patriarchal society. Each woman represents the evolution of the liberation of women during the 19th century, as well as the struggles women faced during that time.

Although Mistress Hibbins is not a main character in the novel, her actions and the way in which she rebels against the conformity of society is important to discuss. Hibbins exhibits qualities that demonstrate individual thought, regardless of what the community thinks. Hibbins is similar to Hester in that she does not conform exactly to the way society expects, but she does not demonstrate the confidence and level of freedom that Hester experiences. Hibbins is shut up in her brother’s mansion, and as Monika Elbert suggests in “Hester’s Maternity: Stigma or Weapon?” she is “imprisoned as much as the matrons are burdened by...man’s laws” (189). Hibbins represents the struggles that many women felt and could not speak about, and she has a connection with Hester

that demonstrates her individuality from the community. When in town, Hibbins is the only individual who openly speaks to Hester about her adventure into the woods with Dimmesdale and is even called “good Mistress Hibbins” by Pearl (Hawthorne 187). Both Hester and Hibbins share the ability to see the sin present in others, and as Elbert suggests, they both “possess a highly evolved sense of intuition, which can detect sin and hypocrisy in the townspeople’s breasts” (188). Just as Hester embroiders clothing for both male and female members of the community, symbolizing the sin present in everyone, Hibbins also detects sin in others when she says to Hester, “Does thou think I have been to the forest so many times, and have yet no skill to judge who else has been there?” (Hawthorne 187). Hibbins’ comment suggests the possibility that others in society have strayed into the woods, or at least symbolizes that at times, people’s hearts stray from the rules and beliefs they are forced to follow. Through this conversation with Hester, Hawthorne is suggesting that women who were confined to society were eager to break free from its rules, but were afraid to, due to the repercussions attached to rebellious behavior.

Even though Hibbins does not play a vital role in the novel, she still serves as a memorable character because she is the only one, other than Chillingworth, who is aware that Dimmesdale is in fact the father of Pearl. Readers should note that Hibbins is based on Ann Hibbins, who Karl Wentersdorf points out is “mentioned in several of the historical works which Hawthorne is known to have drawn on for materials to be used in his novel” (137). She was accused of witchcraft, and after being sent to trial she was killed (137). When Hibbins approaches Hester during the novel and states that she knows about her meeting in the woods, she almost becomes privileged because she knows the

truth about Hester and Dimmesdale's relationship. Since Hibbins seems to see the truth in Hester and Dimmesdale, as well as other townspeople, Hawthorne may be privileging a character seen as an outsider. If this is Hawthorne's intent, he could be proving that those who maintain their individual thoughts and personal beliefs are able to see more clearly the truth compared to individuals who allow society's rules to form their beliefs. Instead of seeing Hibbins' conversations in relation to witchcraft or Satan, her comments could be:

Indicative rather of intuitive insight or commonsense judgment, stemming from her careful observation of the two lovers. She has guessed the truth about Dimmesdale and his relations with Hester. Her remark about the forthcoming public disclosure, with its intentionally terrifying implication that the Black Man is in control of events, is based simply on her conviction that the slowly dying minister will not be able to conceal his agonizing secret much longer. (139)

Hibbins' observations and predictions demonstrate the intellect and intuition that Hibbins possesses which not only gives her a sense of strength, but demonstrates that she also relates to those individuals who are outsiders of society because of what they believe. Instead of viewing Hibbins as a woman who represents everything Puritans were against, she can be viewed as truthful not only to others, but to herself by not denying her beliefs.

Despite Hibbins' ability to maintain her individuality, she does not achieve the liberation and most importantly, the respect that Hester earns from the community. Hibbins is not described with the same beauty as Hester, but instead "seems to ape the scolding women of the first scaffold scene" (Elbert 188). She is considered unappealing

and earns no respect from the townspeople, who also purposely avoid her because of her association with witchcraft. In Hibbins, readers see the first characteristics of a female character straying from the norm of society, but falling short of successfully living by one's own beliefs within society. This balance does not occur for Hibbins; however, it does for Hester.

Hester's character experiences more freedom than Hibbins, allowing Hester to change the meaning of her scarlet letter, become a maternal figure for women in society, and symbolize the changes occurring during the 19th century in regards to women's equality. When Hester stands on the scaffold, there are contrasting descriptions given to both Hester and the matronly women that surround her. Hawthorne describes the bystanders as women with "broad shoulders and well-developed busts" and as having a "coarser fibre...than in their fair descendants, separated from them by a series of six or seven generations; for, throughout that chain of ancestry, every successive mother has transmitted to her child a fainter bloom" (Hawthorne 55). Hester is not part of this group of women who seem to have lost their femininity and ability to support other women, as it is Hester who goes and tends to others throughout the book. Along with the increase in coarser fiber, there was also a decrease in the way these women viewed themselves as a group. Instead of sympathizing with the position in which Hester is placed, they are critical and unsupportive. Clearly, these women are presented in a more masculine manner than Hester. In fact, when Hester is placed on the scaffold, she is described as:

A figure of perfect elegance, on a large scale. She had dark and abundant hair, so glossy that it threw off the sunshine with a gleam, and a face which, besides being beautiful from regularity of feature and richness of

complexion, had the impressiveness belonging to a marked brow and deep black eyes. She was lady-like, too, after the manner of the feminine gentility of those days. (57)

The matronly women watching Hester are described as “astonished, and even startled” at how her beauty “shone out” under such circumstances (58). This contrast between Hester and her townspeople has significance. Since Hester’s beauty stands out *and* she is the one who committed a severe sin, there is something promising about her future and purpose. Instead of being repulsive or unattractive, Hester stands out amongst the crowd, as she is positioned above them on the scaffold. Her beauty and ability to remain calm during her showing demonstrates that she symbolizes the changes to come for women. Hester is described as a mother here, “so picturesque in her attire and mien, and with the infant at her bosom” that she becomes a symbol of “Divine Maternity” and a “sinless motherhood whose infant was to redeem the world” (Hawthorne 60). Hester’s ways do not take away from her maternity, but this initial description sets the tone for Hester and her ability to become a maternal guiding figure for many of the women in the community.

Towards the middle of the novel, many townspeople no longer see Hester as a sinful outsider but instead, a wise, caring and helpful member of the community, signifying the transformation that Hester represents in regards to the awareness that women should gain for their own independence. When the townspeople see Hester walk by, they refer to her as “our Hester,” which is a significant change from the beginning of the novel when many of the women did not want to be associated with her (Hawthorne 133). This inclusion of Hester seems to reinforce the idea that she is still one with the community and can reside within it peacefully. When Hester is approached by women

early on, or if they look at her with a greeting, Hester either lowers her head or lays her finger on her letter and passes them by silently (132). The townspeople begin to accept and sympathize with Hester, and the narrator states that their hatred can be transformed into love, “unless the change be impeded by a continually new irritation of the original feeling of hostility” (131). Hester does exactly this and instead of speaking out about what she has done or voice her opinions about certain aspects of her life, she remains silent and performs acts of service and kindness to her fellow citizens. She does not brag of the life she has been living that seems to leave her satisfied as a result of the independence she has gained. Instead, she learns to portray her individuality through her good deeds and her constant effort to carry on her life and raise her daughter successfully. Living according to her own morals but also acting congenially with other members of society, allows the former views and opinions of Hester to change.

Readers see Hester fully expressing her feelings during her meeting with Dimmesdale in the woods, and for the first time, experiences the ability to express the freedom and passion that she otherwise hides from the community and Pearl. Once Hester unclasps her scarlet letter and throws it “among the withered leaves,” and takes off the “formal cap that confined her hair,” she feels freedom and realizes the weight of the scarlet letter (Hawthorne 160). For the first time, Dimmesdale and Hester are able to discuss their feelings and their sins, and ask for forgiveness. Just as nature is untamed and lawless, Hester feels free to express herself, and both she and Dimmesdale realize that the passion and emotion they feel for each other is real. This glimpse into Hester’s true emotions reminds readers of her true individuality and femininity that she otherwise hides from others.

As readers follow the many experiences and encounters that Hester goes through, her actions make clear that she symbolizes the transformation of her letter 'A' from adulteress to advisor. In "*The Scarlet Letter* (a)doree, or the Female Body Embroidered," Shari Benstock discusses how the letter 'A' opens itself up to numerous interpretations. Although Puritan society constantly enforces its morals and laws, Hester seems to escape these patriarchal values and, "embodies an 'other' femininity that cannot be fully controlled within the terms of phallic law" (399). When Hester is required to wear the embroidered 'A' and remain on the outskirts of society, this isolation seems to allow her time to form her own identity and prohibit society from shaping her. The letter 'A' is never assigned an actual word by Hawthorne and Hester "embellishes the letter, making it an item of adornment, representation of extravagant, excessive femininity" (399). There have been many suggestions as to how the 'A' can be interpreted, including "able" and "angel," demonstrating that the initial attempt to represent adultery no longer exists once Hester places the letter on her chest (399). Once the letter is placed on Hester, she redefines it and relies on no one other than herself and Pearl to help characterize who she is and what she stands for. The scarlet letter becomes liberating and allows Hester to express herself in ways she never imagined. The letter is symbolic of her sexual nature, making others aware that they have the same characteristics inside them as well.

Despite receiving the stigma of adulteress and living separate from society, Hester defies this label and at the end of the novel she becomes a source of guidance for many women in town. As a way to earn money and stay active in the community, Hester constantly embroiders clothing for other members of society. The men and women wearing clothes and embroidery made by Hester symbolize the fact that everyone is

guilty of sin; not just Hester, and not just the female. As the townspeople wear Hester's embroidery, a part of her remains with them and eventually, many individuals in the community begin to forget about the label of adulteress. Hester provides what Erika Kreger refers to as an "admirable balance of altruism and action," as she lends herself to the society that shortly ago shunned her away. In fact, many of the women realize Hester's efforts and her functional role in society. When discussing the interaction between Hester and her fellow citizens, the narrator states, "Such helpfulness was found in her, -so much power to do, and power to sympathize, - that many people refused to interpret the scarlet A by its original signification. They said that it meant Able; so strong was Hester Prynne, with a woman's strength" (Hawthorne 132). Members of town no longer see the 'A' as a negative symbol, but instead, the letter that Hester wears is really a symbol to other women representing the changes they have the ability to make in their lives.

Hester's redefining of the 'A' into advisor comes at the end of the novel when she willingly returns to New England. She still resides in her cottage, lives simply and wears her scarlet letter. Again, her scarlet letter has not remained a stigma in the citizens' eyes, but a sense of comfort and hope:

Women, more especially, -in the continually recurring trials of wounded, wasted, wronged, misplaced, or erring and sinful passion,- or with the dreary burden of a heart unyielded, because unvalued and unsought, -came to Hester's cottage, demanding why they were so wretched, and what the remedy! Hester comforted and counseled them, as best she might. She assured them, too, of her firm belief, that, at some brighter period, when

the world should have grown ripe for it, in Heaven's own time, a new truth would be revealed, in order to establish the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness. (201)

Women now come to Hester for answers because they know she has experienced the same changes and anguish that they are now going through. The women are ready for change, and experience the feelings and passions that set them outside society's expectations of purity and piety. The description Hawthorne gives of the women seeking advice from Hester is written with great significance. The words "wounded," "wasted," "wronged," "misplaced," "erring," and "wretched" are all used to describe what the townswomen are either feeling or experiencing. The negativity and discontent associated with these words accurately portrays the trapped, anxious and helpless feelings many of these women felt when seeking something more in their lives. In contrast, the words "comforted," "counseled," "assured," "brighter," "truth," and "happiness" are associated with Hester's advice and abilities. This description is interesting because Hester, the female who commits adultery and is placed outside of society, is the only one who is associated with advice, truth and guidance. The description of this interaction between the townspeople and Hester demonstrates how Hester's actions and desire to remain an individual within society are ideas that many women in her community want but are afraid to admit. When Hawthorne associates Hester with encouragement, he is demonstrating that her actions were her own and she gains a sense of power through her beliefs.

Hester's ability to provide encouragement and guidance to other women causes her to become the maternal, guiding figure that Fuller discusses in *Woman in the*

Nineteenth Century. Fuller compares women to the virgin mother and asks, "And will she not soon appear? The woman who shall vindicate their birthright for all women; who shall teach them what to claim, and how to use what they obtain? . . . Yet predictions are rash; she herself must teach us to give her the fitting name" (104). In a way, Hester does exactly that. While living independently while also residing in society, Hester initially teaches these women through her own actions, as she does not willingly approach others and speak to them. Once women observe Hester's behavior and the independence she gains, she becomes the advisor for many women. Hester symbolizes the guiding mother that Fuller refers to through the Virgin Mary, as Hester explains to women what they need in order to feel more fulfilled, and what to do with their independence and freedom once they obtain it. This reflects the future of women's rights as there were many women who were seen as leaders of the women's movement who also inspired women to take back their freedom and use it towards earning their own rights as a woman. Just as Fuller states that a woman must teach other women to call her by her fitting name, Hester becomes that woman and teaches these women by listening and guiding them towards developing their own individuality. As a result, they see her as their advisor because she opens their minds to new ideas, and comforts them in regards to their current situation in society and their desire to escape the expectations placed upon them.

However, regardless of their knowledge of Hester's decisions, the townswomen are not necessarily seeking her advice to separate themselves from society. Hester can offer them comfort and advisement, and if Hester represents the changing role of woman, she can also ensure women that their desire for mutual happiness and equality can be reached through individuality and an understanding of one's self. At the end of *Woman in*

the Nineteenth Century, Fuller looks towards the future and calls for a woman who will teach other women how to gain independence and individuality. Fuller states that she wishes other women to live “*first* for God’s sake. Then she will not make an imperfect man her god, and thus sink to idolatry. Then she will not take what is not fit for her from a sense of weakness and poverty. Then, if she finds what she needs in man embodied, she will know how to love, and be worthy of being loved” (103). Hester is the woman who gives this advice to other townspeople, teaching them how to gain strength instead of becoming weak, and helping them realize what they deserve and how to achieve it.

Hester’s goal was not to change her community or completely disregard its beliefs, but change her inner-self instead. When Hester experiences an inner change, she alters what it means to be a good citizen. Although Leland Person argues in “Hester’s Revenge: The Power of Silence in *The Scarlet Letter*,” that Hester “conformed to community expectations” by allowing the Puritan community to remain unchanged, she does exactly the opposite. Person states that despite the change in the meaning of the letter, Hester does not “change Puritan values, nor does she alter the balance of power between herself and Puritan authority” (471). When looking at Hester’s character, the idea of altering power would not be Hester’s purpose. Hester’s goal was not to make a radical change and alter the complete structure of the community. If so, she would have been more vocal and put forth an effort to rebel against more of society’s regulations. Instead, Hawthorne is trying to prove that she acknowledges her faults and can remain within society, coexisting with others while remaining content. She lives according to her own personal and moral law within the community. In fact, by not changing the Puritan

authority, she still remains victorious because women seek her out at the end of the novel for advice and comfort; they are not seeking the guidance of leaders in the community.

Thomas suggests that by Hawthorne allowing Hester to become a strong female individual, he is expanding the reader's notion "of what it [good citizenship] can entail," which demonstrates that a female can be a good citizen, despite her actions and any independence she may have (436). The possibility of incorporating one's domestic sphere in with the social and public sphere may allow an individual to develop her own identity while still participating in certain aspects of the community. Hester seems to be the first individual in her community to try to incorporate her morals with those of society. Throughout the years that Hester lives in her cottage, she still plays a role in society. She performs her needlework in order to make a source of income, even though these tasks do not initially earn her "the label of good citizen" (435). What is important to note, is that because Hester challenges these ideas, she redefines what it means to be a good citizen which differs from the idea of good citizenship initially presented at the beginning of the book. These small changes and advances are what make Hester a symbol of the small changes occurring during the 19th century to allow women a better chance at equality and independence. Hester does not seek a physical and political change in her community, but instead successfully experiences a change within herself. At the beginning of the novel, Hester is reserved, beautiful, and generous, and makes a point not to discuss her sin or her true passions and emotions with anyone. In "Revisiting Hawthorne's Feminism," Nina Baym discusses Hester's loss of beauty as a result of her intellect, but makes a point to argue that this lack of beauty does not make her less maternal: "If Hester's thinking makes her less conventionally sexy, it does not make her less loving, and if motherhood

is Hawthorne's test for true womanhood, then Hester is a paragon" (121). At the end of novel, Hester's beauty and passions may have faded as a result of her intellect, diligent work of hiding her feelings and successfully raising a daughter to carry on the idea of women developing their own identity and individuality. Despite her lack of passion and sexuality at the end of the novel, Hester's purpose has survived as she assists and empowers women when they need guidance.

As a result of Hester choosing to commit adultery and act against the church's teachings, Hester makes the decision to follow her own emotional and moral law. However, Hester is not the first woman to make these strides towards independence. Hester's character is compared to Anne Hutchinson, and in "An American Jezebel: Hawthorne and *The Scarlet Letter*," Amy Schragger Lang points out that "Ann Hutchinson enters the prison, but Hester Prynne comes out of it; the historical figure yields the fictional one. And just as the rosebush springs into being as Hutchinson enters the prison, so its double, the scarlet letter, comes to life as Hester leaves it" (165). The narrator discusses the rose-bush present outside the jail, explaining that it has been kept alive in history and survived after all this time, even possibly springing up "under the footsteps of the sainted Ann Hutchinson, as she entered the prison-door" (Hawthorne 54). Lang considers the rose bush to be an expression of "Hutchinson's martyrdom" and Hester as representative of an "adulteress, antinomian, artist, and angel" (163-165). During the 17th century, Hutchinson was active in holding small meetings for women in her house where she discussed with them sermons and her own personal views on salvation. In "The Political Trial of Anne Hutchinson," Fairfax Withington and Jack Schwartz discuss Hutchinson's trial and why her thoughts were considered so radical during the 17th

century. Hutchinson was accused of Antinomianism, which expresses, “opposition to the law” and “embodies the view that since men can be set free from sin by grace alone, obedience to the law is irrelevant to salvation” (Withington and Schwartz 226). Hutchinson never openly admitted her views to the public, but Puritans still saw her as a religious threat. She was no longer a “profitable member” of society, and threatened the religious beliefs that provided “stability of the state” (226). What was even more threatening was the fact that Hutchinson was a woman speaking out against her role in society. She provided women with an outlet for expression and discussion that was not always offered to them from both society and their home. However, Hutchinson not only attracted the attention of women, but men followed her discussions as well. As a result of Hutchinson’s liberating actions, her beliefs threatened “the Puritan reliance on the Word and on the church as the means of propagating the Word” (229). Therefore, Hutchinson was put on trial to demonstrate that those kinds of actions would not be tolerated by society. Despite these accusations, Hutchinson created the first steps of liberating women and allowing their individual thoughts and voices to be heard.

As Hester walks out the prison door and passes the rose-bush, she symbolizes the same sense of empowerment that Hutchinson exhibited. Michael Colacurcio points out in “Footsteps of Ann Hutchinson: The Context of the Scarlet Letter,” that although quite different, Hester and Hutchinson still share similarities. In fact, he points out that “like Ann Hutchinson, Hester Prynne is an extraordinary woman who falls afoul of a theocratic and male-dominated society” (461). Hester still respects her fellow citizens and does not act out against the individuals who punish her, but wears her scarlet letter to represent her awareness of her sin. However, Hester has also gained independence as a result of her

actions, and similar to Hutchinson, society may see her as a threat because patriarchal leaders in society do not want other individuals, especially women, acting upon their own emotions or personal beliefs. In fact, Lang points out, “Hester becomes the teacher Hutchinson should have been. Sharing the wisdom of her sad experience with other women, she instructs them precisely. . . about matters of the heart” (189). Even if Hester tried to conform back into society, she would experience difficulty after living a more independent life than before. This difficulty is seen in the novel when the narrator states in regards to Hester, “The world’s law was no law for her mind. It was an age in which the human intellect, newly emancipated, had taken a more active and a wider range than for many centuries before” (Hawthorne 134). *The Scarlet Letter* takes place during the 17th century, but Hester represents the strength that women like Susan B Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucy Stone, who were leaders, lecturers and reformers for women’s rights, began to establish during the 19th century in regards to the individual versus society and the position of women in American culture.

At a time when women were identified with the home and considered inferior to men, women like Margaret Fuller helped promote female independence by encouraging women to develop their intellect and spirituality, which will in turn provide them with self-reliance and the ability to gain a sense of individuality within their domestic sphere. Fuller influenced the women’s movement and addressed her female audience about the inequality women faced and their need for self-cultivation before equality of the spheres could be achieved (Fuller 28). One of Fuller’s achievements as a result of her education was the series of Conversations which allowed women to discuss issues and voice their concerns and opinions about societal problems as well as their positions as women. These

Conversations are mentioned in Phyllis Cole's essay "Stanton, Fuller, and the Grammar of Romanticism," when she points out that Fuller "initiated a project for 'thinking women' that also bypassed church traditions, focused on self-development, and hoped for social transformation through it" (539). She urged women to focus on themselves and ask questions such as "What were we born to do?" and "How shall we do it?" (539). These questions and ideas relate to Hester's character, the qualities she exhibits, and how she presents them.

When Barbara Welter discusses the cult of true womanhood, she points out that it was present in, "women's magazines, gift annuals and religious literature of the nineteenth century" (151). The cult of true womanhood was easily accessible and influential to many women by being placed in literature that was often read by women. If women are reading the same literature, they will not stray from what society and those around them deem as socially acceptable. Numerous women never dared to stray from the qualities a woman was expected to have, but after time, some challenged these expectations, and when change started to occur, "True Woman evolved into the New Woman" (174). Hester does not necessarily act against the cult of true womanhood, but transforms how she lives up to these qualities through her own thoughts and actions. Getting to know herself and being able to make her own decisions allows Hester to adjust her beliefs in regards to the expectations placed upon her. Although the community initially sees no sense of piety and purity in Hester's behavior, these assumptions do not mean Hester lacks these qualities. Hester acknowledges her sin but does not deem herself as evil or unworthy of God's love. Hester acts upon her own emotions when she commits adultery, and she is not the only individual involved in this decision. She remains pure to

who she is, acknowledges her faults, and maintains stability without becoming a fallen woman. Hester acknowledges how she broke society's expectations in regards to her religious moral values, but her acknowledgment does not necessarily mean that she repents. She seems to still have a desire and passion towards Dimmesdale, lives independently and comes back at the end of the novel to continue to provide support for women who will follow in her footsteps by making lives for themselves and understand their own needs and passions. Hester also controls her domesticity and submissiveness. Residing outside the community, Hester chooses when and how she will maintain her home and what is necessary for a comfortable life. Additionally, Hester displays a sense of domesticity as she helps those who are sick or ailing, including Dimmesdale who seems to have no control over his condition. Regardless of her knowledge that certain townspeople watch and constantly judge her, Hester sets her own standards as to how to live and work. Additionally, Hester does not appear submissive, and instead her actions can be seen as respectful and proud. She acknowledges her scarlet letter, and when walking through town does not bother the other townspeople, or speak out against those who criticize her. In a way, the secret she holds that Dimmesdale is the father outwits the other members of society, including those of high rank, demonstrating she does not submit to other individuals but respects those around her and lives according to her own moral code.

As women struggled to break free from their restrictive lifestyles and broaden their options, there were particular women who took action to motivate others. The 19th Century was a time of influential women that sparked the curiosity and attention of others in regards to women's rights. In "What Hath She Wrought? Woman's Rights and the

Nineteenth-Century Lyceum,” Angela Ray discusses the numerous achievements for women. In 1860, Susan B. Anthony, a leader of the women’s rights movement, spoke at the Tenth National Woman’s Rights Convention in New York to celebrate many of the advances that had occurred for women (Ray 183). These advancements included a donation towards a women’s college, the New York Married Women’s Property Act, and the “entry of women into colleges and into the professions of medicine and the Christian ministry” (183). These numerous achievements allowed women to move out of the domestic sphere and into the public sphere. Being able to attend college and practice medicine gave women an outlet to display their intellect and allow for growth. The successes and achievements won not only by these female leaders, but by women in general, are represented strongly through Hester, as well as Pearl who carries on the message of female liberation. Hester’s earned respect and her ability to become a source of advice represents many improvements occurring during the nineteenth century that allowed women the freedom they sought after and desired.

Hawthorne offers a possible solution to the problem of enforcing domestic responsibilities upon women who choose to follow their own moral law rather than the law of society. Applying 19th-century ideas of womanhood into the time setting of *The Scarlet Letter*, demonstrates Hawthorne’s use of Hester to symbolize that change that will come about in regards to women’s independence. Sacvan Bercovitch supports this argument when he discusses how *The Scarlet Letter* functions as a novel that represents what is possible in the future. In “Hawthorne’s A-Morality of Compromise,” Bercovitch discusses how Hester’s letter may represent a painful memory, but also symbolize hope: “hope in prophecy, as being more subversive than argument; hope in vision, as being a

more effective agent of progress than action” and “hope in the individual, as being both ends and means of change” (20). Hester’s ‘A’ symbolizing both tragedy and hope, causes the letter to take on a dual meaning, just as Hester represents a duality in the novel by remaining independent and a member of society. Also, the letter represents what Bercovitch calls “hope in the individual as . . . means of change,” showing that Hester again becomes representative of the future and a positive influence for others seeking individuality (20). None of the interpretations of Hester’s ‘A’ result in violent or rebellious destruction and overthrow, again showing that Hester’s purpose in the book is not to completely alter the status of society but to quietly make others realize a change is possible within themselves. Hester symbolizes the stepping stone into a liberated future, and this future depends on others after her, especially women, to continue these changes, influence others, and step forth to discover who they are.

Although Leland Person suggests that Hester works against society’s patriarchal rules, she in fact works in protecting patriarchy when she protects Dimmesdale. Hester refuses to name Dimmesdale as the father of Pearl and keeps her silence throughout the entire novel. In fact, Hester does not speak that often in the novel or make any lengthy speeches other than her conversations with Dimmesdale and Pearl. Even though Person suggests that Hester’s silence is used against Dimmesdale to punish and prolong his suffering, this may not necessarily be the case. Not only would the idea of punishment work against Hester’s maternal and motherly character, but it would make Hester seem like a vengeful woman out to not only punish Dimmesdale but those who also punished her. However, this does not seem like Hester’s purpose. Instead she wants to gain her independence and sense of self while also residing in society, showing that both can work

together and hopefully inspire change in others. Hester's purpose is not to seek revenge but to promote change in a harmless way. In agreement with Elbert, Hester's silence can be seen as an act of defiance and a way to gain power over the "male world," instead of using her silence as revenge (185). When Hester remains silent, she is following what she feels as the correct decision based on her emotional ties to Dimmesdale and what she discovers about herself. As time goes on, Hester seems to realize more about herself which ultimately influences her decisions, as she does not remain silent in all aspects of what she knows. She chooses to protect Dimmesdale because they care for each other, and even though she remains silent about Chillingworth throughout most of the novel, Hester confesses to Dimmesdale what she knows and no longer feels an obligation to obey the orders of Chillingworth. Not only does this show that she will not allow others to tell her how to act, but by ignoring her husband, she takes control over her own life and does not allow him, or society, to dictate how she should behave. Hester's silence places her in a situation of power, but she does not abuse the privileges. This power only contributes to her encouragement to act on her own feelings rather than the words or threats from others. Hester's character, although shunned at the beginning of the novel, becomes a motherly figure at the end of the book and a woman that others can look up to. Baym points out that Hester becomes the advisor and symbol of woman's future when "re-entering civil life adorned with the letter by her own choice, Hester moves Puritan Boston from the Dark Ages toward enlightened modernity" (118). Although Hester's actions seem threatening, she manages to gain her independence, but also successfully function within society, demonstrating the possibility of merging together a community of individuals who choose to live according to their own laws.

Out of Hester, Hibbins and Pearl, Pearl is the female in the novel that experiences the most detachment from patriarchal society, despite Dimmesdale and Chillingworth both playing an important role in her life. Throughout the novel, Pearl looks for a father figure in Dimmesdale, but she may be doing so because of her relationship with Hester. Pearl tends to act out Hester's passions and may desire an attachment to Dimmesdale because that is ultimately what Hester wants as well. Chillingworth's money may allow Pearl a new life, but Hester has already passed on to Pearl the values of individuality and the ability to be an inspiration to other women and lead a life of their own. Just as Hester does not eliminate her ability to coexist within the same community she disagrees with, Pearl does not eliminate male figures from her life, but demonstrates that she has the ability to live and function on her own, even if they do exist. Pearl's detachment from society is seen most in her connection with nature, which is also completely untamed and uncontrolled. She does not allow herself to be instructed or tamed by members of society. Pearl is curious and acts upon her thoughts and curiosities despite those around her, which is seen when she converses with Hibbins in the middle of town and refers to her as "good Mistress Hibbins" (Hawthorne 187). If Pearl is aware of what others think of Hibbins, she does not acknowledge the accusations but treats her as an equal.

Not only does Pearl willingly speak to Hibbins, but she also demonstrates her own sense of individuality and open-mindedness by eagerly pointing out Dimmesdale in the marketplace. When speaking to Hester about Dimmesdale's kiss in the woods, Pearl says she wants to run to Dimmesdale in the middle of town and "bid him" to kiss her "before all the people" (Hawthorne 186). Hester quickly explains to Pearl that their behavior in the forest must be different from that in the marketplace. The division between nature and

society represents the ability to feel freedom, passion and truth in nature, where in the marketplace one must adjust their behavior to society's expectations and keep inner desires secretive. However, Pearl does just the opposite, and since she is associated with nature and its freedom, the truth she speaks in regards to others is expected. The passions that both Hester and Pearl feel demonstrate that although abiding my society's rules to coexist peacefully within society, they ultimately remain unbound by society's laws. Pearl is completely natural and maintains control over her own thoughts and actions. In fact, because Pearl maintains so much independence and does as she pleases, she actually causes Hester to realize her own abilities. When Elbert discusses Pearl's unique and unruly behavior, she points out that her behavior does not in any way hurt Hester, but "Hester's sense of frustration, which comes from raising an unruly Pearl, is ultimately liberating for her, causing her to become more tolerant and open-minded" (184). Hester produced Pearl from her own act of indiscretion, and now must realize the hope, creativity and freedom that Pearl represents for women of the future. Pearl will carry on what Hester began.

Pearl becomes the individual who carries on the idea of female independence and personal law that Hester begins in the novel. Cindy Lou Daniels points out in "Hawthorne's Pearl: Woman-Child of the Future," that Pearl signifies the changing role of women and "provides the impetus toward 'good' for Dimmesdale, and in doing so, provides a new view of the power of the female in a male-dominated society" (224). Hester contemplates what it means to be a woman in society when she thinks about the hostile world that surrounds her and questions whether or not it was positive or negative that Pearl was brought into this world. From this idea, Hester contemplates further:

“Indeed, the same dark question often rose into her mind, with reference to the whole race of womanhood. Was existence worth accepting, even to the happiest among them?” (Hawthorne 135). Pearl provides balance in the hostile world that surrounds Hester and herself, and she makes women feel that they have significance and importance if they follow example and live for themselves instead of anyone else. The importance and uniqueness of Pearl can be seen when Hawthorne describes her:

We have as yet hardly spoken of the infant; that little creature, whose innocent life had sprung, by the inscrutable decree of Providence, a lovely and immortal flower, out of the rank luxuriance of a guilty passion. How strange it seemed to the sad woman, as she watched the growth, and the beauty that became every day more brilliant, and the intelligence that threw its quivering sunshine over the tiny features of this child! Her Pearl!—For so had Hester called her; not as a name expressive of her aspect, which had nothing of the calm, white, unimpassioned luster that would be indicated by the comparison. But she named the infant ‘Pearl,’ as being of great price, -purchased with all she had, -her mother’s only treasure! (81)

In this description, Pearl is considered innocent, lovely, immortal, intelligent and treasured, which are all descriptions that demonstrate the value of Pearl’s character. She is also described as being of “great price” which in a way demonstrates her purpose. Pearl is valuable because she serves in carrying out Hester’s already established ideals of female independence. Additionally, she came as a result of Hester’s adultery, with the scarlet letter as a price that Hester must pay in order to continue on with her life. This punishment ends up becoming more rewarding than detrimental to Hester in the long run,

as the letter becomes transformed, making Hester's actions well worth the sacrifice. Although the product of Hester's sin, Pearl remains innocent and lovely because she is untainted by the same laws that Hester broke in order to act on her true passions. Pearl is also intelligent and treasured because she possesses the knowledge of independence, a connection with nature and the ability to establish her own identity despite the influence of both society and her mother. Most importantly, the purpose Pearl stands for will never fade or die. If Pearl represents empowerment for women and the strength they have to break away from conformity, then her meaning never dies as women continue to elevate themselves above their typical roles and use their intellect and morals to rule their own lives. Again, these ideas do not mean they must live outside of society, disobey rules or stop their beliefs, but they demonstrate the ability to coexist in a society where an individual's morals and beliefs may differ from others.

There is importance in studying the overall mother-daughter relationship between Pearl and Hester, and how this relationship functions in Pearl's development and character. At the beginning of *The Scarlet Letter*, readers are introduced to Hester with Pearl in her arms, immediately demonstrating the strong bond they possess. At times, Pearl is referred to as an elf or demon-child; however, these accusations may be a result of other influences that cause Pearl to be perceived this way. First, the idea of Pearl's association with demon or elf-like figures are formations from the opinions of others, most likely the Puritan members of society, who do not approve of Hester's behavior or the way she has raised her daughter. Lois Cuddy points out in "Mother-Daughter Identification in *The Scarlet Letter*," that "Hester's style of thinking" has been influenced by Puritan society, which is what makes her worry about some of Pearl's behavior and

question her intentions (152). Hester is aware that the townspeople are passing judgment every time they encounter Pearl and witness her behavior. Pearl's sudden outbursts and tantrums are not a result of her being associated with Satan or any devilish influences, but because she acts out her mother's emotions. She not only acts upon her own curiosities, but represents her mother's passions as well. When examining this mother-daughter relationship, Pearl clearly carries out many of Hester's suppressed thoughts and emotions, and as Cuddy suggests, Pearl "speaks and acts out all of Hester's repressions and passions" (152). When looking at how Hester's thoughts and actions influence and affect her relationship with Pearl, it is important to ask whether Pearl encourages Hester to grow and whether Hester's actions stunt Pearl's growth.

Instead of seeing Pearl's actions prohibiting Hester from growing because they are a constant reminder of her sin, Pearl's actions can be seen as encouraging to Hester because they demonstrate the freedom and individuality that she should be encouraging other women to possess as well. Cuddy points out that regardless of the circumstances, "each time Hester is placed under public scrutiny she controls her emotions with an iron will while Pearl reveals Hester's internal battles –with love or rage, anguish or hostility, defiance or fear" (155). This is seen when Hester and Pearl walk through town, and although the children say to each other, "there is the woman of the scarlet letter; and, of a truth, moreover, there is the likeness of the scarlet letter running along by her side! Come, therefore, and let us fling mud at them," Hester does not acknowledge them and continues to walk on (Hawthorne 90). However, Pearl does not act as calmly as her mother and instead "screamed and shouted, too, with a terrific volume of sound, which doubtless caused the hearts of the fugitives to quake within them. The victory

accomplished, Pearl returned quietly to her mother, and looked up smiling into her face” (Hawthorne 91). Pearl seems to sense her mother’s true emotions, interprets them, and acts upon them as she wishes, feeling as though she pleases her mom by being able to portray her emotions.

Pearl also demonstrates her connection to Hester’s by often portraying Hester’s emotions and feelings towards Dimmesdale. There are times when some of Pearl’s actions seem surprising to Hester, but Franny Nudelman, in “‘Emblem and Product of Sin’: The Poisoned Child in *The Scarlet Letter* and Domestic Advice Literature,” points out that “the communication between mother and child culminates in their perfect resemblance. Through the medium of the mother’s body, the child receives its attributes, which are identical to the mother’s own” (204). In the beginning of the novel, Pearl reaches out to Dimmesdale as a baby, when she could not possibly know that he is her father. Additionally, the natural attraction that Pearl has to Dimmesdale symbolizes the love and passion that Hester feels for him, but cannot reveal. Although Pearl is viewed as exaggerating “Hester’s rebelliousness” and forcing Hester to “become a witness to her own shortcomings,” she is not necessarily punishing her mother (206). Instead, Pearl exhibits her own mother’s emotions and seems to provide a balance for Hester between maintaining an acceptable position in society and being able to act up on her own morals. Hester can never truly speak out about her emotions and true feelings, and seems to make up for that by becoming an advisor for the women. As a result of Pearl representing everything that Hester cannot, she provides Hester with a sense of fulfillment in that she seems to express herself, even if her expression is seen through her daughter.

Pearl still has the ability to develop her own individuality, even though she may appear to lack the freedom to grow and develop her own independence by constantly acting out her mother's feelings and intentions. In one way, Hester is partially responsible for the way Pearl looks and dresses. Cuddy points out that Hawthorne would have known how Puritan children dressed, and their attire would have likely mimicked that of adults. Despite this knowledge, Hawthorne does not have Hester dress Pearl as a replica of adults, but "makes a point of designing Pearl to be the only child in the community who does not conform either to her own mother's appearance or to social standards" (159). Even though Pearl does not conform to her own mother's standards, this nonconformity does not mean that Pearl is rebelling in any way. In fact, Pearl's clothing may allow Hester to represent the way she wishes she could dress, which would be different than the plain, common clothing she wears that matches that of the townspeople. What stands out on Hester's clothing is the gold embroidery in her scarlet letter, and it is the bright, colorful stitching that represents the passion and energy that Pearl can so openly display. Pearl ultimately decides whether or not she will choose to accept what Hester teaches her or how Hester dresses her. She sees herself as separate from the other Puritan children and decides on her own what she will believe and how she will behave.

One way in which Hester appears to restrict Pearl is in the way she imposes society's rules upon her. Hester tells Pearl "Thy Heavenly Father sent thee," hoping that Pearl will believe this idea since it is socially acceptable (Hawthorne 88). The "anxiety and a guilty conscience" that Hester feels as a daughter to her own mother, is how she still feels as a mother to Pearl. As a result of her sin, Hester becomes protective and worries that Pearl may face the same troubles that she is going through (Cuddy 163).

Additionally, Lesley Ginsberg, in “The ABCs of *The Scarlet Letter*,” suggests that Hester restricts Pearl because she is “taught to repress her reading of the relationship between Hester and Dimmesdale” (25). Although this may seem restrictive, Hester may instead be protecting Pearl by preventing her from being taken away from Hester or become more negatively affected by society. Hester is aware of how her own sins have affected both Pearl’s life and her “seemingly uncanny perception of Dimmesdale’s guilt” (24). Hester wants Pearl to keep the truth a secret because she is trying to offer Pearl the chance at a life that she could not obtain. Although Hester encourages Pearl to behave more socially acceptable, she seems happy that Pearl acts upon her own actions. Aware of her own sins, Hester “sought to impose a tender, but strict control over the infant immortality that was committed to her charge. But the task was beyond her skill. After testing both smiles and frowns, and proving that neither mode of treatment possessed any calculable influence, Hester was ultimately compelled to stand aside, and permit the child to be swayed by her own impulses” (Hawthorne 83). When meeting with the governor, Pearl does not do as she is told and states that she was not created by God. Instead, she points out that “she had not been made at all, but had been plucked by her mother off the bush of wild roses, that grew by the prison-door” (Hawthorne 97). Additionally, she is often found playing alone in the grass and creating friends in flowers and other parts of nature that appeal to her. She seems to have a free spirit and acts how she chooses, regardless of what others think. Despite Hester’s attempts to keep Pearl’s behavior similar to that of other Puritan children, the freedom and happiness that Pearl often seems to possess symbolizes the freedom and happiness that Hester wishes she could express. Pearl should develop her

own identity while also remaining close with her mother, because after all, Pearl carries on Hester's female independence and idea of personal law,

Through the characters of Hibbins, Hester and Pearl, readers of *The Scarlet Letter* see the gradual progression of detachment from a patriarchal society. Each woman represents a sense of independence, although some exhibit it more freely than others. These women, especially Hester and Pearl, are symbolic of the liberating transformations that women went through during the 19th century. Most importantly, though Hibbins, Hester and Pearl, Hawthorne demonstrates the ability to live according to one's own personal laws while also successfully residing in the community that they feel opposed to. As a result, Hawthorne demonstrates women's ability to transform themselves and develop their own sense of self and power within the community.

Chapter 2

The House of the Seven Gables: Hepzibah, Phoebe and Domesticity

In *The House of the Seven Gables*, Hawthorne reflects upon nineteenth-century ideals of domesticity to help form the characters of Phoebe and Hepzibah. In *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*, Catharine Beecher points out that “women never manage the outward concerns of the family, or conduct a business, or take a part in political life; nor are they, on the other hand, ever compelled to perform the rough labor of the fields, or to make any of those laborious exertions, which demand the exertion of physical strength” (29). Although this is true of Hepzibah, Phoebe does work in the marketplace by having previously sold farm goods before visiting her cousin. Women during the nineteenth century were expected to cultivate “good manners,” develop a successful habit of “system and order” within the home, and provide a cheery atmosphere for their families (141, 157). These qualities of domesticity demonstrate the capabilities of Hepzibah and Phoebe, and ultimately prove which woman successfully encompasses both the public and domestic spheres. However, Hawthorne does not overlook the ability for a woman to demonstrate strength while lacking the ability to be a domestic woman. Both Phoebe and Hepzibah show signs of having experienced domestic labor, but Hepzibah, although at times exhibiting individual strength, does not succeed in effectively managing her cent-shop and becoming the ideal domestic figure. Ultimately, it is Phoebe, who like Hester, uses her successful experiences in both the private and public spheres to gain independence and think for herself while also managing her domestic responsibilities.

Hepzibah, Phoebe and Housekeeping

Women had many expectations placed upon them during the nineteenth century, and the actions and capabilities of Hepzibah and Phoebe help readers decipher how these expectations formed the ideal domestic woman. Beecher suggests women should establish a system of order because of the numerous tasks women performed: “She has constantly changing domestics, with all varieties of temper and habits, whom she must govern, instruct, and direct . . . she has the direction of the kitchen, where ignorance, forgetfulness, and awkwardness, are to be so regulated, that the various operations shall each start at the right time, and all be in completeness at the same given hour” (156). These demands and responsibilities that women were expected to follow are demonstrated through Hepzibah and Phoebe; however, only one of these characters succeeds in fulfilling these duties. Unlike Hester and Phoebe, Hepzibah is not skilled in housekeeping or tending to other household responsibilities. In *The House of the Seven Gables*, Hawthorne uses domestic images and descriptions to help form the character of Hepzibah, and the house’s environment provides readers with their first impressions of her capabilities. When Hepzibah first comes down from her room, the house is described as “a low-studded room, with a beam across the ceiling, paneled with dark wood . . . through which ran the funnel of a stove” (Hawthorne 25). Michael Dunne, in *Hawthorne’s Narrative Strategies*, supports this argument by pointing out there is no fire burning in the stove, the room is equally uninviting, and “although the room is uncomfortable, dark, and dreary, Hepzibah does not light a lamp, open curtains, or start a fire in the stove” (174). Here readers see Hawthorne’s imagery used to portray Hepzibah as a helpless woman who is unable to take care of a home, therefore, lacking the qualities

of a true domestic woman. Hepzibah's lack of domestic responsibility is carried out throughout the novel, as readers realize she is unable to provide for others what Phoebe can.

Hepzibah makes many attempts to successfully provide a comfortable home for herself and Clifford, she these attempts are unsuccessful and she is unable to improve the way she takes care of the house. Later in the novel, the house is still cold, and "shivered, from every attic of its seven gables, down to the great kitchen fireplace, which seemed all the better as an emblem of the mansion's heart, because though built for warmth, it was now so comfortless and empty" (Hawthorne 159). The imagery of the house is dark and gloomy, which initially reflects Hepzibah's personality, and her sadness is represented "through images denoting the absence of domestic security rather than the presence of threats" (Dunne 174). Not only does the house's dismal environment symbolize Hepzibah's isolation from society, but it also reflects her flaws as a woman; the inability to provide comfort and cheer to a home, which Beecher suggests is an important duty in a woman's life. Hawthorne purposefully forms Hepzibah's character through domestic imagery, making a statement about women's position in society; domestic ability was the main way in which women were defined. Many times a woman was judged by her ability to maintain a household and provide comfort and care for her family, and many women worked hard to achieve and successfully uphold these expectations. Barbara Welter, in "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," discusses the four common attributes by which women were commonly judged: piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity. Women's "proper sphere" was considered the home, and "home was supposed to be a cheerful place, so that brothers, husbands and sons would not go elsewhere in search of a

good time” (Welter 163). Hepzibah attempts to make the house suitable for herself and Clifford, but she ultimately fails at living up to the expectations placed upon women, such as the qualities set forth in the Cult of True Womanhood. There is no cheer displayed in any of Hepzibah’s actions, and the fact that she lives alone with Clifford and rarely receives visitors demonstrates that her home is uninviting and does not provide an atmosphere people desire. Women played the role of wife, mother and caretaker and were expected to succeed at all three. Although Hepzibah does play the role of caretaker for Clifford and tries to support herself, readers witness her lack of domestic ability as she loses control over her domestic sphere.

Hepzibah does not succeed in making the Pyncheon house warm and welcoming; however, readers should not overlook the strength exhibited in her character. Even though she is incapable of running a household, she has still experienced the exhaustive labor that comes along with attempting to make a comfortable and welcoming home. Throughout the novel, Hepzibah tries to create a comfortable atmosphere for Clifford, but ultimately does not possess the qualities to do so. When referring to Clifford, the narrator states, “In his last extremity...he would doubtless press Hepzibah’s hand...and close his eyes- but not so much to die, as to be constrained to look no longer on her face!” (Hawthorne 97). Hepzibah’s lack of beauty causes her to become an ugly figure to Clifford, of which Hepzibah is well aware. Hepzibah does not look this way because she has simply isolated herself from others, but as Gillian Brown suggests, because of the work she has put in supporting herself and Clifford:

The bodily risks in labor, the ways labor continually exposes and emphasizes the body. For an elderly, poor, genteel spinster in the mid-

nineteenth century the economic opportunities were few: sewing, teaching, petty shopkeeping. All of these, in Hawthorne's representation, refer to facts and frailties of Hepzibah's body: 'she could not be a seamstress' because of her nearsightedness and 'those tremulous fingers of hers,' she could not teach school because of the 'torpid' state of her heart toward children and the limitations of her memory and learning. (Brown 81)

Even though Hepzibah is a woman, she does not escape the toils and exhaustion of a male's working world and public sphere. Women had their own separate spheres which were their homes, and within these spheres, they worked just as hard to live up to society's standards and make themselves feel successful in their own household. In contrast to Hepzibah, who is unsuccessful in maintaining a welcoming, clean household or being a shopkeeper, Phoebe excels at cleaning up the Pyncheon home and applying herself to completing tasks with all the necessary qualities of a domesticated woman.

Just as Hawthorne uses imagery to describe the character of Hepzibah, he does the same with Phoebe. Exhibiting many characteristics of domesticity, she helps transform the cold Pyncheon house into what feels like a home. Welter suggests that "the true woman's place was unquestionable by her own fireside – as daughter, sister, but most of all as wife and mother. Therefore, domesticity was among the virtues most prized by the women's magazines" (162). One way in which Phoebe differs from Hepzibah is in her natural feminine abilities, but why these differences occur and what is responsible for Phoebe's success is important to examine. In "Phoebe is no Pyncheon": Class, Gender, and Nation in *The House of the Seven Gables*," Keiko Arai discusses Phoebe's ability to perform her chores, cook and clean in relation to her upbringing in New England.

Whereas Hepzibah chooses to live independently and separate from many of her relatives, Phoebe learns from her mother, and “her domestic practicality derives from something she has acquired through learning and training. To Hepzibah, who tells Phoebe that she cannot offer food, Phoebe replies that she can earn it herself” (Arai 41). Phoebe explains to Hepzibah that she learned many things from her New England town, which comes to show that Phoebe symbolizes how girls at a young age were quickly taught how to act like proper women because there was no time to waste in teaching them the basics of housework and taking care of a family (40). Phoebe is constantly referred to as a country girl and her development from girl to woman, which is seen in the way she takes care of not only Hepzibah’s home, but Hepzibah and Clifford as well, is important to examine.

Phoebe quickly warms up the Pyncheon home, and the first night she stays at the house, she “quickly transforms her new bedroom into a home, in striking contrast to Hepzibah’s domestic inaction,” demonstrating that she is able to handle domestic chores (Hawthorne 174-75). She brings happiness to Clifford and fills the house with the warmth and smells of a true home. The domestic imagery Hawthorne uses allows Phoebe to become an image of a true domesticated woman. When Phoebe prepares a meal at the Pyncheon house, “the half-starved rats...stole visibly out of their hiding places, and sat on their hind legs, snuffing the fummy atmosphere, and wistfully awaiting an opportunity to nibble” (72). Instead of associating the rats with fright and horror, Dunne suggests that Hawthorne uses this imagery to demonstrate Phoebe’s transformation of the house. When the rats appear in the kitchen, they are “subsumed into a picture of domestic comfort,” demonstrating Hawthorne’s “symbolic shorthand of domestic imagery that he seems

confident his readers will recognize” (Dunne 176). The imagery of the Pyncheon home helps shape the character of Phoebe and allows readers to see how she takes care of the house in a way that is expected of women. She is performing her household duties that are required of her, and through domestic imagery, Hawthorne demonstrates how society expects women should behave.

In addition to Phoebe becoming a strong female figure because of her domestic capabilities, the way in which Hawthorne describes her actions shows the effort she puts forth to fulfill the responsibilities that commonly took away women’s energy and stability. Hawthorne uses certain descriptions to make Phoebe’s housework seem elegant, and Brown states that “The ‘spiritual quality in Phoebe’s activity’ effectively eliminates the mundaneness of work, linking her processes to that of ‘God’s Angels’ who ‘do not toil’” (77-78). The elegance of women’s work is seen when Phoebe transforms the Pyncheon house into a domestic home overnight. In fact, Phoebe is associated with witchcraft and magic as a result of the house’s transformation. When referring to Phoebe’s “gift of practical arrangement,” the narrator states, “It is a kind of natural magic, that enables these favored ones to bring out the hidden capabilities of things around them; and particularly to give a look of comfort and habitableness to any place” (Hawthorne 53). As Phoebe sweeps the floors and moves the furniture, she only gives “a touch here, and another there,” and the room is warm and welcoming (53). Hawthorne’s domestic descriptions make Phoebe’s chores seem natural and fulfilling because she is following her duties as a woman, but also take on a magical quality as she performs them with such ease. Hawthorne critiques the way in which society thinks women should act, and points out how the real capabilities of a woman are disguised behind her elegance.

When women disguise their capabilities, they also disguise “labor as magic and play” which “spiritualizes housekeeping and shopkeeping, distinguishing them from ordinary human work by their Godlike creative power and ease” (77). Brown points out that “the goal of housekeeping is thus its own erasure in leisure. In *The House of the Seven Gables*, appearance of leisure in house or shop assumes on one hand a superhuman feminine labor, and on the other a feminine incapacitation” and “the elision of women’s agency in their work” (80). Women’s work was tiring and constant, and the ability for a woman to succeed in completing her daily chores took both time and energy. In order to fit the image of a True Woman, a perfect wife, and a caring mother, women seemed to perform their tasks instinctively and needed to appear pleasant while doing it. Hawthorne is making Phoebe’s duties seem leisurely to show that society’s expectations for women take away their power and vigor. Just as Hester slowly realizes her ability to live within society while also living by her moral beliefs, Phoebe’s strength and courage become more evident when she is able to arrive at the Pyncheon home and completely change the environment.

Hepzibah, Phoebe and the Marketplace

Despite Hepzibah’s inability to change the house’s environment or create a desirable and warm atmosphere, other changes occur within Hepzibah that demonstrate individual strength and allow her to reside within society and go about her business on her own. Internally, Hepzibah builds up the courage to take on certain responsibilities, such as taking care of Clifford and supporting him by working, living by her own personal law, and speaking for herself and Clifford, without any help from her cousin, Judge Pyncheon. Hepzibah’s inner strength allows her to become a strong individual,

even if she does not become successful at maintaining a domestic sphere. Hepzibah takes actions into her own hands and demonstrates courage and independence when she opens up her own cent-shop and acts against what society would expect of her. However, her capabilities are limited, as Phoebe ultimately helps her maintain the shop and act cordially towards customers.

One of Hepzibah's acts of defiance can be seen when she detaches herself from her aristocratic lineage and opens up a cent-shop in the Pyncheon house. She chooses not to receive money from her family in order to help her live, and instead, prefers to make a living on her own. However, she is not very good at these capabilities. Kindly conversing with the public does not come naturally to Hepzibah, and Michael Gilmore points out in "The Artist and the Marketplace in *The House of the Seven Gables*," that Hepzibah is also "tortured 'with a sense of overwhelming shame'" and a "continued uneasiness" as she watches the townspeople through the window of her shop (352). Her social status changes as she becomes a common laborer who must demand money for the goods in her cent-shop. Hepzibah knows she must demand money to survive, but she does not possess the cheery, polite manners that would encourage customers to make purchases. Just as Pearl is Hester's reminder of community, Hepzibah's struggles are a reminder of the difficulties that may come about as a result of following her own beliefs and lacking the domestic capabilities to make her tasks easier. Additionally, Hepzibah's social class has caused her domestic flaws, as she was not required to work or learn how to support herself. These factors have worked against Hepzibah, as she now feels helpless when trying to run her own cent-shop. Gilmore discusses the comparison of Hester and Hepzibah in regards to the constant gaze they receive from members of their townspeople

and states, "Hepzibah strikingly recalls Hester Prynne standing on the scaffold with her badge of shame" (352). Although Hepzibah is not standing on a scaffold in front of the community being judged, she is in her cent-shop, gazing out the window, knowing that the townspeople are making judgments in regards to her opening up the shop by herself and for her own profit. However, these doubts and difficulties do not deter Hepzibah from continuing to act on her own beliefs. Through Hepzibah, Hawthorne portrays life in a way that shows readers the overpowering effect of acquiring a sense of justice, even if it ultimately proves her flaws and inabilities as a woman.

In Hepzibah's choice to open up her cent-shop to support herself and Clifford, readers are presented with a role reversal, in which Hepzibah takes on the responsibilities of the male, who was responsible for earning an income to support his family. Baym points out that Hepzibah's "act of defiance" in opening up the cent-shop proves that Hepzibah is playing the part of the male, who works and earns money, *and* the female, who takes care of the home. Similar to how Hester supports her daughter Pearl, Hepzibah "also supports a dependent, but he is a dependent who, in the 'normal' course of things, ought to be supporting her" (610). Hepzibah attempts to take on the responsibility of both sexes and manage her life without abiding by society's rules for acceptance. Hepzibah's opening of her cent-shop demonstrates how she combines the public sphere, commonly associated with the male, into her domestic sphere, which was often associated with women. In "Hawthorne and the Question of Women," Alison Easton discusses the issue of class, and points out that Hepzibah's house is "shockingly opened up to commerce," especially when an "unsupported gentlewomen" like Hepzibah opens up the shop by herself (93). At a time when work premises were often separate from the

home, Hepzibah defies the norm and her shop is “tellingly part of the house” (93). Hepzibah may be successful in establishing the shop within her hope, but she does not successfully function in both spheres. As Hepzibah chooses to move forward and continue with the business, she does not exhibit friendliness and cheerfulness towards her customers, and becomes worried and stressed while interacting with the public. Even though Hepzibah does not exhibit many qualities to make her a domestic woman and successful saleswoman, readers must not overlook the strength she does demonstrate by following through with her ideas and initially opening the shop. Hepzibah opens up the cent-shop to support herself and Clifford, but in the end, Phoebe takes over the shop because she exhibits the proper manners and abilities to socialize with customers in a friendly and inviting way.

Once Phoebe arrives, she quickly manages Hepzibah’s cent-shop because she believes her responsibilities as a woman come first, demonstrating her ability to transition into a new home while also successfully taking over the responsibilities of others. Phoebe’s actions are similar to those of Hester, as Hester realizes that her contribution to society through her embroidery not only allows her to reside peacefully within society, but it also causes her to develop relationships with other women in society. When Hepzibah hears the shop bell ring, the sound always struck “upon her nervous system rudely and suddenly,” instead of making her eager to interact with her customers. Hepzibah clearly does not possess what Beecher refers to as good manners, or “the expressions of benevolence in personal intercourse, by which we endeavor to promote the comfort and enjoyment of others, and to avoid all that gives needless uneasiness” (136). Instead, Phoebe demonstrates proper manners as she tells Hepzibah she is a “cheerful

little body,” and greets customers with her “pleasant voice” (Hawthorne 55, 58). However, Phoebe is not successful solely based on the proper manners and etiquette she displays; she has previous experience selling goods back home. Phoebe tells Hepzibah that she did most of the shopping for her family at home, and when selling goods from her own table at a fair, she ended up with the most sales and says, “I am as nice a little saleswoman, as I am a housewife!” (58). Here readers see Phoebe successful at combining both the public and private spheres, as she maintains her domestic etiquette while also becoming independent in the marketplace. Combining of the spheres makes Phoebe the ideal woman who manages to live up to society’s expectations as well as retain a sense of independence and individuality.

Hepzibah and Phoebe as Caretakers

Just as Hepzibah demonstrates courage and strength by opening her own cent-shop and attempting to successfully create a comfortable home, she also goes out of her way to make Clifford comfortable and happy. Hepzibah attempts to entertain Clifford by reading to him because she knows of his love for “poetry and fiction” (Hawthorne 96). However, Hepzibah does not succeed in bringing out any pleasure in these books:

Hepzibah troubled her auditor, moreover, by innumerable sins of emphasis, which he seemed to detect without any reference to the meaning; nor, in fact, did he appear to take much note of the sense of what she read, but evidently felt the tedium of the lecture without harvesting its profit. His sister’s voice, too, naturally harsh, had, in the course of her sorrowful lifetime, contracted a kind of croak, which, when it once gets into the human throat, is as ineradicable as sin. (96)

Hepzibah's failure to entertain not only causes her to become distraught over making Clifford happy, but it encourages her to try new ways to please her brother. Hepzibah attempts the harpsichord, but that only further demonstrates her inability to entertain, especially with the sound of her voice. However, what is most difficult for Hepzibah to handle is Clifford's reaction to her flawed appearance which causes Clifford to question her moods, and ultimately causes Hepzibah to believe she causes "grief to Clifford" (97). Hepzibah must be given credit for the effort she puts forth to make Clifford happy because she not only reaches out of her comfort zone, but she must face that fact that she cannot provide for Clifford the necessary care and treatment that another more domestic woman could.

Both Hepzibah and Phoebe support and take care of Clifford, but ultimately Phoebe is the individual with whom Clifford feels most enjoyment, resulting from her natural ability to tend and care for other individuals. Again, Phoebe's behavior resembles Hester's. In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester plays the role of caretaker and nurse to society, as she never abandons her ability to comfort those in need. In comparison to Hepzibah, Phoebe successfully comforts Clifford as she becomes what Joel Pfister calls, "the charmingly rural, upwardly mobile, middle-class angel in the house" (149). Phoebe performs all her tasks cheerfully and becomes an important part of Clifford's daily life, just as a caretaker or mother would express sympathy to someone who was ill. In contrast to Hepzibah, Phoebe's voice is sweet and enjoyable, and when she reads books and poetry she provides more comfort to Clifford than Hepzibah did. Marianne Noble discusses the idea of sympathy and the role of women in *The House of the Seven Gables*, and suggests that sympathy "promotes social cohesion" which can be seen in the feelings

Phoebe expresses towards both Hepzibah and Clifford; in a way she tends to both of them. Her sympathy towards both of her relatives allows her to unite the household by making the house a warm, welcoming home. Just as sympathy becomes a “source of happiness,” Noble also suggests that detachment can be “the source of unhappiness” (236-37). If Phoebe represents happiness and sympathy, then detachment can be seen in Hepzibah’s separation from society and her inability to fulfill her role as caretaker. Additionally, Phoebe becomes a fresh and invigorating figure in Clifford’s life, as he refers to her as having a “youthful, fresh, and thoroughly wholesome heart” (Hawthorne 98). Phoebe’s cheerful demeanor, harmonious voice, and ability to tend to a somewhat sickly Clifford are not rare qualities, but qualities that women were expected to demonstrate. As Welter suggests, “one of the most important functions of woman as comforter was her role as nurse” (163). The role of caretaker places a large responsibility upon women, as they were responsible for maintaining a healthy household, especially if other members of her family were responsible for working and earning an income.

In addition to Phoebe and Hepzibah both tending to Clifford, they also work to protect Clifford, which is one aspect of Hepzibah’s life in which she succeeds and demonstrates more experience than Phoebe. Hepzibah’s dislike of Judge Pyncheon allows her courage and passion to come forth. When Judge Pyncheon tries to enter the Pyncheon house to check on Clifford, Hepzibah immediately blocks the doorway. She is described as “looking, we must needs say, amazingly like the dragon in fairy tales, is wont to be the guardian over an enchanted beauty” (Hawthorne 91). Again, readers see the “interesting reversal of gender roles,” as we see the woman rise up in Hepzibah as she becomes the full protector of what she cares about (Baym 610). When Hepzibah prohibits

Judge Pyncheon from entering the house, she becomes a warrior-like guardian to Clifford. She may appear as the protective mother, but she does not contain any other maternal qualities that women were expected to show, such as speaking “gently and cheerily” and keeping a home “neat and in order” (Beecher 238-39). Hepzibah does not tend to the house like other typical caretakers, and instead acts upon her own emotions and instincts to help her survive. Hawthorne is proving that although women, such as Hepzibah, may not contain the skills of domesticity, they can still rise up through their inner strength and courageous abilities. Although Hepzibah does not embody the meaning of an ideal woman, she follows her own morals and feelings which help develop a sense of strength in her character.

Hepzibah’s dislike towards Judge Pyncheon also allows her inner voice to be heard, and just as Hester eventually find her voice in *The Scarlet Letter* when she becomes an advisor for many of the women in town, Hepzibah finds her voice in *The House of the Seven Gables* and uses it to demonstrate her strength and courage. After Judge Pyncheon attempts to dominate over Hepzibah’s words, she states: ““In the name of Heaven. . . in God’s name, whom you insult-and whose power I could almost question, since He hears you utter so many false words, without palsying your tongue-give over, I beseech you, loathsome pretence of affection for your victim!””(Hawthorne 161). After Hepzibah’s speech, the narrator points out that “Hepzibah’s wrath had given her courage,” which demonstrates that her instinct to stand up for what she believes in was the right decision. Although critical of Hepzibah’s abilities, Hawthorne includes these qualities in Hepzibah to make up for her lack of domesticity, so readers know not to dismiss her as weak or unimportant. Her character is important to the story, and although

she may not become the ideal woman, she represents female strength and independence because she has provided for herself and Clifford for many years, without assistance.

Even though throughout most of the novel Phoebe demonstrates her ideal feminine abilities, there are times when her patience and individual strength are tested. Her actions in these situations prove that she maintains self-worth and she deserves respect both as a woman and an individual. When Phoebe first encounters Judge Pyncheon, “a tension at once emerges,” as the Judge mistakes Phoebe for a simple laborer and clearly views her as a lower class individual who does not deserve any compliment or praise (Arai 48). Judge Pyncheon immediately “situates himself superior to her” and Phoebe senses this assumption (48). When she replies that she is in fact Hepzibah’s assistant, she says so with “a little air of ladylike assumption- (for, civil as the gentleman was, he evidently took her to be a young person serving for wages)” (Hawthorne 84). Soon after their conversation, Judge Pyncheon realizes who she really is, apologizes, and feels she is worthy of a kiss. However, Phoebe rejects his kiss, shyly pulls herself away and acts “under a certain reserve, which was by no means customary to her frank and genial nature” (86). Phoebe’s actions not only embarrass Judge Pyncheon, but also demonstrate that she thinks for herself and is conscious of the decisions she makes. Phoebe almost surprises herself, and her actions towards Judge Pyncheon demonstrate that she not only symbolizes the angel in the house and an ideal woman, but she has the ability to stand up for herself, think for herself, and act on her instincts. Phoebe’s actions further her role as the successful woman in the story because she maintains individuality and self-worth while also residing in society and living up to its expectations. There are certain instances that demonstrate Phoebe’s potential to

function successfully as an individual, but there are also moments where she loses her ability to stand up for herself, which often occurs in the presence of Judge Pyncheon. Readers see Phoebe struggle and succeed throughout the novel through her domestic capabilities and physical exhaustion; however, she should not be discredited or seen as insignificant or weak. Her struggles only make her stronger as she learns how to stand up for herself and gain strength in confrontations such as her encounter with Judge Pyncheon.

When Phoebe steps towards the door and blocks Judge Pyncheon's entrance into Hepzibah's home, readers see her struggle for the first time. Phoebe meets him at the doorway and recommends that she call Hepzibah first before he enters, in case Clifford is sleeping. However, Judge Pyncheon has no problem with "putting her aside," while using his "voice as deep as a thunder-growl" to tell Phoebe that she is his "little country-cousin" and a "stranger" in town (Hawthorne 91). Here we see Phoebe unable to stand up and overpower Judge Pyncheon's dominant character. However, immediately after Phoebe is pushed aside, Hepzibah enters the room, and in a way, rescues Phoebe from being completely dismissed. Arai points out that Phoebe's innocence and exceptional behavior causes her to avoid full confrontations with others (Arai 49). Phoebe may be at a disadvantage, but she continues to learn and grow while playing the role of caretaker and mother at the Pyncheon home. Her growth turns into knowledge as she learns how to deal with unfamiliar situations and the weariness of becoming the ideal domestic woman. Again, readers see Phoebe's struggles contribute towards her success as an independent and strong female character.

As a result of Phoebe's growth and experience at the Pyncheon household, she ends up maturing and represents the "nineteenth-century idea of girlhood/womanhood" which reflects upon the belief that a young girl was seen as a smaller copy of a woman because their responsibilities started early (Arai 44). Phoebe does not necessarily go through an extreme transformation that would cause her to rebel against society's rules, but she does go through a change while in her domestic sphere. Reader begins to see the change from child to adult when the narrator describes how Phoebe is affected by her chores and the constant attention she gives to Clifford:

She was not so constantly gay, but has her moods of thought, which Clifford, on the whole, liked better than her former phase of unmingled cheerfulness; because now she understood him better and more delicately, and sometimes even interpreted him to himself. Her eyes looked larger, and darker, and deeper; so deep, at some silent moments, that they seemed like Artesian wells, down, down, into the infinite. She was less girlish than when we first beheld her, alighting from the omnibus; less girlish, but more a woman! (Hawthorne 124-25)

This example demonstrates that Phoebe's surroundings have changed her, and although those around her enjoy her maturity, Phoebe seems worn out and exhausted from her success. Phoebe's fatigue demonstrates the strain that domesticity had on females and shows how she performs these duties better than Hepzibah, as Clifford enjoys her company and views her as a successful woman. The change that occurs from child to woman does not necessarily transform Phoebe, but demonstrates how the expectations placed on women were strenuous and exhaustive, and the fact that she still strives to

succeed demonstrates the power she exhibits as a young woman. Phoebe returns home for a portion of time after realizing the repercussions of striving towards society's expectations, now that she is a woman.

In a way, Phoebe learns important lessons from her visit with Hepzibah and discovers what being a domesticated middle-class woman really entails. Despite the ease in which women were supposed to perform their duties, through Phoebe's character, readers are able to see the time and energy put into their work. Amy Schragger Lang, in "Home, in the Better Sense," states that Phoebe exhibits "all the virtues of middle-class femininity" which in turn explains why she becomes so exhausted after taking care of herself, Hepzibah, Clifford and the Pyncheon home in general (468). Phoebe "perfectly mediates between lower and upper classes" which gives her numerous responsibilities to tend to, keeping her busy and taking up much of her time and energy (468). After Phoebe has been visiting for a while and constantly tending to the shop, house, and Clifford, she begins to lose the glow that initially surrounded her. When Phoebe takes a trip back to the country she says, "I shall never be so merry as before I knew Cousin Hepzibah and poor Cousin Clifford. I have grown a great deal older, in this little time" (Hawthorne 152). Hawthorne is showing the changes in Phoebe's character as a result of her continuous work. Society believed that domestic women felt complete and fulfilled while living up to their duties. Instead, they often became tired and jaded from the work they performed. The worn and exhausted female was not often considered by society because women were viewed as content and satisfied with performing their tasks. Through Phoebe, Hawthorne demonstrates the strength that women truly have outside the expectations of society.

At the end of the novel, readers are presented with the true abilities of the female characters, based on their beliefs and behaviors. Throughout the book, Hepzibah remains independent and lives according to her own moral laws, and by the end of the novel, she does not transform or gain the skills necessary to master the domestic sphere and become a domesticated and feminine woman. Now aware that she lacks the qualities of an ideal woman, Hepzibah will likely leave Phoebe in charge of the domestic aspects of their new country home and live more comfortably as a result of the inheritance. Phoebe ends up becoming the idealized woman, despite the personal courage and strength Hepzibah exhibits. In the last chapter, two townsmen discuss Hepzibah's success with her cent-shop, believing she was capable of managing her shop and earning enough money to move to the new country house. This confusion may be a result of Phoebe's ideal domestic qualities restricting her from being seen as capable of managing a shop and entering into the public sphere. Like Hester, Phoebe faces many struggles throughout the story, at times leaning more towards independence and other times demonstrating the perfect domestic duties of a woman. Ultimately, she remains in her domestic sphere, while also incorporating the public sphere and gaining a large sense of independence. In fact, at the end of the novel she is pleased with Holgrave's decision to change his ways and embraces the same society she does. Pfister points out that at the conclusion of *The House of the Seven Gables*, "Holgrave has fallen in love with Phoebe Pyncheon, and we in turn recognize Phoebe's own hypnotic womanhood as a symbol of her emerging class" (156). Phoebe seems to gain more power and control in her relationship with Holgrave, and by approving his new beliefs, she is also approving of Holgrave supporting her and living according to society's rules and expectations. As a result of Hawthorne describing

Hepzibah and Phoebe through the expectations of nineteenth-century views on domesticity and liberating Hester through nineteenth-century views of womanhood, he demonstrates the ability for women to uphold their responsibilities while also gaining a sense of independence and self-worth.

Conclusion

Dimmesdale and Holgrave: A Struggle for Individualism

The female characters in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables* play an important role in demonstrating the outcome of living by either moral or societal law. Hester's actions help transform the meaning of her scarlet letter, and as Brook Thomas points out, "they alter the sense of good citizenship with which the book begins" (449). Additionally, Hephzibah demonstrates strength and courage while Phoebe symbolizes women's ability to manage both public and domestic sphere. However, the men in both of these novels should not be overlooked. Unlike most of the women in these books, the men fail to live by their moral law and end up either falling back into society's ways or giving up their reformatory impulses. In *The Scarlet Letter*, Dimmesdale cannot sacrifice his reputation by admitting his feelings towards Pearl and Hester and make his sins public at the end of the novel. Additionally, in *The House of the Seven Gables*, Holgrave initially breaks away from society, living by his own moral law and never settling down to a permanent job. At the end of the novel, Holgrave changes his ways and embraces the same society that he earlier critiques. Dimmesdale and Holgrave ultimately fail at becoming individually powerful by falling back into society when they are finally presented with the chance to free themselves.

In *The Scarlet Letter*, Dimmesdale plays an important role in the town, and in "Cultural Confessions: Penance and Penitence in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Marble Faun*," Olivia Taylor points out that Dimmesdale's role as minister causes him to feel "trapped by his position of leadership within the community" (140). Dimmesdale cannot confess the sin he has committed because he fears the reaction

from society. He longs to free himself from the burden his secret has caused him, but his role in society is so vital, that if people found out the truth about his actions, he would be severely punished for acting against the religious morals that he preaches. Not only is Dimmesdale an important part of the community, but he is also, as Taylor suggests, “revered as one of its leaders,” which leads him to accept “the ‘unutterable torment’ of a double identity and the ‘agony’ of a ‘public veneration’ which, inspired by his own falsity, mutilates his ‘genuine impulse to adore the truth’” (137). Being seen as a leader in the community puts pressure on Dimmesdale to live up to religious Puritan expectations and set a positive example for all his followers. Confessing to his affair with Hester, Dimmesdale would be going against all that he has preached to the community during his years as minister. As a result, Dimmesdale becomes an honest and truthful person when conversing with Hester, but takes on a different role in front of the community so they do not find out his sin. Dimmesdale is aware of his duality, and even tells Hester, “I have laughed, in bitterness and agony of heart, at the contrast between what I seem and what I am!” (Hawthorne 153). The law of society has taken control of Dimmesdale and despite Hester receiving the blame for both of their actions, he remains trapped by his position as minister to the public. Although Dimmesdale’s internal struggle causes him to feel separated from society, his inability to transgress and act upon his own passions causes him to remain within the community and under the influence of its laws and beliefs.

Hester’s and Dimmesdale’s diverging paths are specifically described during their meeting in the woods. Hester is described as being outlawed, but also someone who has “habituated” herself to the speculation that she often receives from the townspeople, which is something Dimmesdale has not experienced (Hawthorne 158). Hester has

“wandered, without rule or guidance, in a moral wilderness; a vast, as intricate and shadowy, as the untamed forest, amid the gloom of which they were now holding a colloquy that was to decide their fate” (158). Hester provides for herself, without any guidance or rule, demonstrating her ability to live the life that Dimmesdale is too cowardly to experience. Hester’s life contrasts Dimmesdale’s, as he has “never gone through an experience calculated to lead him beyond the scope of generally received laws; although, in a single instance, he had so fearfully transgressed one of the most sacred of them. But this had been a sin of passion, not of principle, nor even purpose” (158). Dimmesdale cannot think beyond the societal laws that bind him and does not possess the strength or courage, which is seen in Hester, to live independently and be honest about his intentions. Instead, Dimmesdale is caught in society’s “regulations, its principles, and even its prejudices,” all of which form his character and influence his decisions, thoughts and actions (158). Through the descriptions of these two different paths, readers are able to discern why Hester has continued to live successfully on her own and eventually become the advisor for other women. She maintains her strength for seven years not only because she is honest with herself and society, but because she values her independence and self-worth as well. The constant battle Dimmesdale experiences between speaking the truth and confessing causes him to become easily manipulated by Chillingworth.

Dimmesdale’s status in the community allows him to deliver sermons that present only partially truthful confessions, and yet still remain an important figure to the people. When Dimmesdale gives his sermons, he speaks about his own guilt and the pain he is suffering as a result. There are many times when Dimmesdale steps into his pulpit and

Person argues that by Dimmesdale hushing Hester at the end of the novel while standing on the scaffold, he “seems to have *his* revenge” (480). However, this is not necessarily the case, and instead of Dimmesdale’s hushing being a vengeful act, his actions seem to be an act of insecurity and fear. Dimmesdale is overwhelmed by the judgment and embarrassment he would face if he truly confesses, and his inability to be honest and straightforward causes Dimmesdale to act cowardly. Person also suggests that Dimmesdale adopts “a strategic silence of his own about his motives” and “reclaims power of speech in both his sermon and his confession” (479-480). However, readers should recognize that Dimmesdale does not actually confess, and therefore does not gain a sense of power, but instead makes his Election Sermon similar to his others, as he does not identify himself as the partner of Hester and instead causes his audience to assume he is talking about mankind in general. The only motive Dimmesdale seems to possess is to successfully flee with Hester, but this plan quickly changes as he begins his Election Sermon. Dimmesdale gains a sense of motivation, power and energy when he returns from his meeting with Hester in the woods; however, his excitement slowly begins to fade as he realizes he must face the townspeople. If Dimmesdale wants freedom from his sin and to relieve Hester from the burden of their actions, he must come forth and face judgment as Hester does in the beginning of the novel. Dimmesdale appears to gain a sense of power in his sermon by ending his silence, but he ultimately remains silent about the one thing he should admit. Dimmesdale has still not gained the courage to truthfully admit his faults and collapses upon the scaffold with his guilt and sins still intact. Since many of his sermons have not been interpreted as actual confessions, and only as general

symbolism about mankind, many people do not realize Dimmesdale is even making a confession as he stands on the scaffold at the end of the novel.

The torment that Dimmesdale goes through is a reminder from Hawthorne that there are constant repercussions resulting from the inability to be an ideal citizen or be true to one's self and the community. At the end of the novel that narrator states, "Among many morals which press upon us from the poor minister's miserable experience, we put only this into a sentence: - Be true! Be true! Be true! Show freely to the world, if not your worst, yet some trait whereby the worst may be inferred!" (Hawthorne 199). Instead of allowing his parishioners to somehow see the truth in his words or actions, Dimmesdale is unable to confess and be true to himself which ultimately leads to his demise.

Hawthorne also demonstrates the pain one may experience by abiding by society's laws instead of his own. Acting on one's own morals comes with many risks, but when looking at Hester's outcome, her actions also seem rewarding and strengthening. If Dimmesdale is to live by his own morals, he must embrace them, act upon them and end the duality he represents throughout the entire novel. Only when Dimmesdale exhibits honesty and admits he wants to follow his own natural and personal law, will the torment and pain then vanish. Hawthorne favors this idea of natural law and proves, through Dimmesdale, that when an individual becomes trapped by the moral laws of society, that honesty is the only way to set them free. Although Dimmesdale would be risking his life by confessing his inability to be a good citizen, he only ends his life sooner by being dishonest about who he is and the passion he feels towards Hester. Dimmesdale's death proves that if an individual is going to follow their own morals, they should follow

Hester's actions and live successfully and independently while developing their own sense of individuality.

Holgrave, like Dimmesdale, is another male who initially separates himself from society and chooses to live life according to his own laws. In "Hawthorne's Genealogy of Madness: 'The House of Seven Gables' and Disciplinary Individualism," Stephen Knadler suggests, "Holgrave is the radical unpropertied democrat opposed to the judge's Whiggery. His declaration that American society ought to be liberated from 'an odious and abominable past' in its Emersonian repudiation of tradition seems to prophesy the need for revolutionary social change" (301). Instead of becoming an active member of his community, Holgrave keeps many aspects of his life and himself a mystery, and enjoys sitting back and critiquing society. However, at the end of the novel, Holgrave quickly changes his ways, embraces the same society that he ridicules earlier in the novel and in a sense, demonstrates "a betrayal of the novel's radical materialistic critique" (302). Holgrave sees his change as beneficial, but his conversion will ultimately limit his individuality as he is now actively living up to society's expectations.

At the beginning of *The House of the Seven Gables*, Holgrave is introduced to readers as a man who constantly changes professions, having been "a country-schoolmaster," a "salesman in a country-store," and a "political-editor of a country-newspaper," all allowing him to learn a vast amount of knowledge and become very much a thinking man and an intellectual (Hawthorne 125). In "Hawthorne's Romance and the Right to Privacy," Milette Shamir considers Holgrave to be "allied neither with officialdom nor with the rest of the town," and as an "out-of-towner" he roams free in his lodging (770-71). As a result of his experiences, Holgrave has a broad spectrum of

knowledge and seems to be an adventurer who is out to discover many aspects of the world, as well as many aspects of himself. These constant changes cause him to be free from the chains that would commonly bind him to society, and he no longer becomes responsible for other individuals or public opinion and focuses on his own well being. Holgrave not only acts as a reformer, but he also encourages a similar attitude in others, seen when he encourages Hepzibah to open her cent-shop and says to her, "I look upon this as one of the fortunate days of your life. It ends an epoch, and begins one" (Hawthorne 34). Holgrave supports the idea of going against what is expected of an individual and believes in following his own conscience instead of being bound by the past or a legacy. This attitude is responsible for why Holgrave "never lost his identity" and participated in what was commonly seen as controversial hobbies, such as mesmerism (126). Unlike Dimmesdale, Holgrave is true to himself, and does not hide his beliefs. However, these radical characteristics change at the end of the novel, and the once independent Holgrave becomes symbolic of what many other men in society seem to represent; someone who will work, marry, and begin a future with their domesticated wife.

When Baym discusses characters in *The House of the Seven Gables* who display an individual sense of strength and independence, she quickly rules out Holgrave as a potential contender when she states, "Holgrave is –I've come to believe –an unsatisfactory candidate because he is mostly absent from the action. Moreover, his boldest stand against authority is a postmortem daguerreotyping session" (608). Despite Holgrave's potential to become a self-reliant individual who lives by his own morals and beliefs, he fails to do so. Similar to Dimmesdale who speaks of fleeing and confessing

but never actually does so, Holgrave does not actively demonstrate his beliefs, but only discusses them amongst his friends.

In fact, Holgrave contradicts himself in regards to his beliefs. In the middle of the novel Holgrave discusses the legacy of buildings and institutions and says:

I doubt whether even our public edifices –our capitols, state-houses, court-houses, city-halls, and churches –ought to be built of such permanent materials as stone or brick. It were better that they should crumble to ruin, once in twenty years or thereabouts, as a hint to the people to examine into and reform the institutions which they symbolize. (Hawthorne 131)

However, at the end of the novel Holgrave comments on Judge Pyncheon's house, as he now has intentions of becoming engaged to Phoebe, and states, "The country-house is certainly a very fine one. . . but I wonder that the late Judge. . . should not have felt the propriety of embodying so excellent a piece of domestic architecture in stone, rather than in wood" (222). Holgrave's difference in opinion represents the decrease in his desire to reform, and the increase in "building a home with Phoebe" instead (Shamir 772). In one way, Holgrave's decision to start a future with Phoebe can benefit him in that he can establish a home and a family, which represents what most working and prospering men desired. On the other hand, Holgrave's decision does have its drawbacks. Throughout the novel, Phoebe balances both her domestic and public spheres, proving her capable of maintaining her responsibilities and independence. However, it is important to question whether or not Holgrave will be able to successfully balance his private sphere, which he has almost constantly remained in, with the public sphere. Although Holgrave has had many occupations, he maintained his individuality and never worked permanently at one

job. Holgrave will have to realize that along with settling down and beginning a future with Phoebe, he must also sacrifice some of the privacy and critical beliefs he so often expresses earlier in the novel.

Holgrave makes the impression that he is a believer in self-reliance and individuality; however, he is ultimately flawed when remaining independent or outside of society's influences. At the end of the novel, Holgrave quickly changes his ways, embraces the same society that he ridicules earlier in the novel and in a sense, demonstrates "a betrayal of the novel's radical materialistic critique" (Knadler 302). Phoebe's domesticated character says to Holgrave, "how wonderfully your ideas are changed," which shows her approval of his transformation (Hawthorne 222). When replying to Phoebe, Holgrave tells her, "You find me a conservative already! Little did I think to ever become one" which proves that even he is surprised he has changed his beliefs (222). Readers must remember that although Holgrave and Phoebe may build a house of their own in the future, Edgar Dryden points out in "Hawthorne's *Castle in the Air: Form and Theme in *The House of the Seven Gables**" that at the end of the book, "they merely move from one constructed by Colonel Pyncheon into one built by his descendant, the Judge, in effect trading in an old ghost for a new one (314). Inheriting the Pyncheon home may also cause Holgrave to inherit potential problems in his future. When Holgrave quickly changes the way in which he lives, he proves he still has an attachment to society. In order to achieve the happiness he desires with Phoebe, he will need to sacrifice his individuality and adapt certain parts of his character to the expectations of the public.

Ultimately, the women in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables* become that characters who actively demonstrate their independence; Hester supports and provides for both herself and Pearl outside of society and Hepzibah and Phoebe demonstrate independence and the ability to support one's self as well as others. Dimmesdale's pain and suffering would be relieved if he acted with the same courage that Hester demonstrates through her honesty and independence. Additionally, Holgrave's transformation at the end of the novel demonstrates how he deviates from his own self-reliance and moves towards society's laws. The men are the characters who struggle with gaining enough courage to openly demonstrate their ability to live by their own moral laws.

Works Cited

- Arai, Keiko. "“Phoebe is no Pyncheon”": Class, Gender, and Nation in *The House of the Seven Gables*." *Nathaniel Hawthorne Review* 34.1 (2008): 40-61. EBSCO. Web. 10 January 2011.
- Baym, Nina. "The Heroine of ‘The House of the Seven Gables’; Or, Who Killed Jaffrey Pyncheon?" *The New England Quarterly* 77 (2004): 607-18. JSTOR. Web. 13 January 2011.
- . "Revisiting Hawthorne’s Feminism." *Hawthorne and the Real: Bicentennial Essays*. Ed. Millicent Bell. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2005. 107-124. Print.
- Beecher, Catharine E. *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1842. Print.
- Benstock, Shari. "The Scarlet Letter (a)doree, or the Female Body Embroidered." *The Scarlet Letter*. Ed. Ross C. Murfin. New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2006. 396-99. Print.
- Bercovitch, Sacvan. "Hawthorne’s A-Morality of Compromise." *Representations* 24 (1988): 1-27. EBSCO. Web. 17 October 2010.
- Biester, Charlotte. "Catharine Beecher’s Views of Home Economics." *History of Education Journal* 3.3 (1952): 88-91. JSTOR. Web. 14 March 2011.
- Brown, Gillian. Introduction. *Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth-Century America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992. 1-10. Print.
- . "Women’s Work and Bodies in *The House of the Seven Gables*." *Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth-Century America*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990. 63-95. Print.

Colacurcio, Michael J. "Footsteps of Ann Hutchinson: The Context of the Scarlet Letter."

ELH 39.3 (1972): 459-94. *JSTOR*. Web. 25 January 2011.

Cole, Phyllis. "Stanton, Fuller, and the Grammar of Romanticism." *The New England*

Quarterly 73.4 (2000): 533-59. *JSTOR*. Web. 4 December 2009. 25 January 2011.

Cuddy, Lois A. "Mother-Daughter Identification in The Scarlet Letter." *Hester Prynne*.

Broomall: Chelsea House, 2004. 151-66. Print.

Daniels, Cindy Lou. "Hawthorne's Pearl: Woman-Child of the Future." *American*

Transcendental Quarterly 19.3 (2005): 221-36. *EBSCO*. Web. 10 January 2011.

Dryden, Edgar A. "Hawthorne's Castle in the Air: Form and Theme in *The House of the*

Seven Gables." *ELH* 38.2 (1971): 294-317. *JSTOR*. Web. 7 March 2011.

Dunne, Michael. *Hawthorne's Narrative Strategies*. UP of Mississippi, 1995. Print.

Easton, Alison. "Hawthorne and the Question of Women." *The Cambridge Companion to*

Nathaniel Hawthorne. Ed. Richard H. Millington. New York: Cambridge UP, 2004. 79-98. Print.

Elbert, Monika. "Hester's Maternity: Stigma or Weapon?" *ESQ* 36 (1990): 175-207.

MLA Bibliography. Web. 24 October 2010.

Fuller, Margaret. *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. Ed. Larry J. Reynolds. New York:

W.W. Norton & Company, 1998. Print.

Gilmore, Michael T. "The Artist and the Marketplace in the House of the Seven Gables."

The House of the Seven Gables. Ed. Robert S. Levine. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006. 348-64. Print.

Ginsberg, Lesley. "The ABCs of *The Scarlet Letter*." *Studies in American Fiction* 29.1

(2001): 13-31. *EBSCO*. Web. 5 April 2011.

- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The House of the Seven Gables*. Ed. Robert S. Levine. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006. Print.
- . *The Scarlet Letter*. Ed. Ross C. Murfin. Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2006. Print.
- Knadler, Stephen. "Hawthorne's Genealogy of Madness: 'The House of Seven Gables' and Disciplinary Individualism." *American Quarterly* 47.2 (1995): 280-308. *JSTOR*. Web. 19 February 2011.
- Kreger, Erika M. "'Depravity Dressed up in a Fascinating Garb': Sentimental Motif's and the Seduced Hero(ine) in *The Scarlet Letter*." *Nineteenth Century Literature* 54.3 (1999): 308-35. *JSTOR*. Web. 10 September 2010.
- Lang, Amy Schrager. "An American Jezebel: Hawthorne and *The Scarlet Letter*." *Prophetic Woman: Anne Hutchinson and the Problem of Dissent in the Literature of New England*. Los Angeles: California UP, 1987. 161-92. Print. 28 February 2011.
- . "Home, in the Better Sense: The Model Woman, the Middle Class, and the Harmony of Interests." *The House of the Seven Gables*. Ed. Robert S. Levine. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006. Print.
- Noble, Marianne. "Sentimental Epistemologies in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The House of the Seven Gables*." *Separate Spheres No More: Gender Convergence in American Literature 1830-1930*. Ed. Monika M. Elbert. Tuscaloosa: Alabama UP, 2000. 261-281. Print.
- Nudelman, Franny. "'Emblem and Product of Sin': The Poisoned Child in *The Scarlet Letter* and Domestic Advice Literature." *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 10.1 (1997): 193-213. *Project MUSE*. Web. 8 March 2011.

- Person, Leland S., Jr. "Hester's Revenge: The Power of Silence in *The Scarlet Letter*." *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 43.4 (1989): 465-83. *JSTOR*. Web. 10 February 2011.
- Pfister, Joel. "Cleaning House: From the Gothic to the Middle-Class World Order." *The Production of Personal Life: Class, Gender, and the Psychological in Hawthorne's Fiction*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991. 144-161. Print.
- Pimple, Kenneth D. "'Subtle, but remorseful hypocrite': Dimmesdale's Moral Character." *Studies in the Novel* 25.3 (1993): 257-71. *EBSCO*. Web. 24 October 2010.
- Ray, Angela. "What Hath She Wrought? Woman's Rights and the Nineteenth-Century Lyceum." *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 9.2 (2006): 183-214. *Project MUSE*. Web. 10 February 2011.
- Schwartz, Jack and Fairfax Withington. "The Political Trial of Anne Hutchinson." *The New England Quarterly* 51.2 (1978): 226-40. *JSTOR*. Web. 28 February 2011.
- Shamir, Milette. "Hawthorne's Romance and the Right to Privacy." *American Quarterly* 49.4 (1997): 746-79. *JSTOR*. Web. 5 March 2011.
- Taylor, Olivia Gatti. "Cultural Confessions: Penance and Penitence in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Marble Faun*." *Renascence: Essays on Value in Literature* 58.2 (2005): 135-52. *EBSCO*. Web. 25 February 2011.
- Thomas, Brook. "Citizen Hester: *The Scarlet Letter* as Civic Myth." *The Scarlet Letter*. Ed. Ross C. Murfin. New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2006. 432-61. Print.
- Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860." *American Quarterly* 18.2 (1966): 151-74. *MLA Bibliography*. Web. 10 February 2011.

Wentersdorf, Karl P. "The Element of Witchcraft in 'The Scarlet Letter.'" *Folklore* 83.2

(1972): 132-53. *JSTOR*. Web. 1 March 2011.