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THE FUNCTION OF THE PIVOT IN THE FICTION OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

THESIS

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In traditional romance, the hero takes a mythical journey into the underworld where he meets and overcomes evil antagonists. Hawthorne has transferred much of that hero's role to a pivotal character whose paradoxical function is to cause the central conflict in the tale or novel while remaining almost entirely passive himself. The movement of the tale or novel depends on the pivot's humanization, that is, his return to and integration within society. Works treated are "Alice Doane's Appeal," "Peter Goldthwaite's Treasure," "Roger Malvin's Burial," "Rappaccini's Daughter," "Lady Eleanore's Mantle," "The Minister's Black Veil," "The Antique Ring," "The Gentle Boy," *Fanshawe*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The House of the Seven Gables*, *The Blithedale Romance*, and *The Marble Faun*.

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Some of these mountains, that looked at no such mighty distance, were at least forty or fifty miles off, and appeared as if they were near neighbors and friends of other mountains, from which they were still farther removed. The relations into which distant points are brought, in a view of mountain scenery, symbolize the truth, which we can never judge within our partial scope of vision, of the relations which we bear to our fellow creatures and human circumstances. These mighty mountains think they have nothing to do with one another, each seems itself its own centre, and existing for itself alone; and yet, to an eye that can take them in, they are evidently portions of one grand and beautiful idea, which could not be consummated without the lowest and loftiest of them. I do not express this satisfactorily, but have a genuine meaning in it nevertheless.

--from Passages from the French and Italian Notebooks of Nathaniel Hawthorne[1]

[1]Cited by Hyatt H. Waggoner, Hawthorne: A Critical Study, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 68-69.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Very soon after the first American printing of Nathaniel Hawthorne's last novel, The Marble Faun (1860), James Russell Lowell praised the author for "his faith in his powers":

> Happy the author whose earliest works are read and understood by the lustre thrown back upon them from his latest! for then we receive the impression of continuity and cumulation of power, of peculiarity deepening into individuality, of promise more than justified in the keeping: unhappy, whose autumn shows only the aftermath and rowen of an earlier harvest, whose would-be replenishments are but thin dilutions of his fame.[2]

The "continuity and cumulation of power" that Lowell mentions have been noted by modern critics as well, and at least one, Randall Stewart, has used the notion to demonstrate the slow process of Hawthorne's

[2]James Russell Lowell, "The Marble Faun. A Romance of Monte Beni," Atlantic Monthly, 5 (April 1860), 509-10; rpt. in The Merrill Studies in The Marble Faun, ed. David B. Kesterson (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1971), p. 2.

maturation. In this thesis, I have built upon Stewart's essay, "The Development of Character Types in Hawthorne's Fiction," in which he categorizes character types who recur throughout Hawthorne's career. The first group includes the scholar-idealist and related characters who are "tortured by a secret guilt"; second are the various villains; third are the three kinds of heroine--"the wholesome New England girl," the snow-maidens, and the dark, exotic women; and finally, there is a miscellany of characters including the detached observer, the reformer, and feeble-minded old men.[3] In his conclusion, Stewart writes, "to trace the sequence of development in the various groups [of characters] . . . is to see how a character of comparative simplicity becomes gradually more complex through the addition of traits contributed by successive characters."[4]

[3]Randall Stewart, "The Development of Character Types in Hawthorne's Fiction," in the Introduction to his The American Notebooks of Nathaniel Hawthorne (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932); rpt. in Regionalism and Beyond: Essays of Randall Stewart, ed. George Core (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), pp. 9-46.

[4]Stewart, p. 46.

There is one character type which Stewart does not describe. Like Stewart's types, the "pivot" evolves from the simple to the complex, and he is delineated not only by his characteristics, as Stewart's types are, but by his function as well. The pivot appears in certain tales, in *Fanshawe*, and in each of the four finished romances--*The Scarlet Letter*, *The House of the Seven Gables*, *The Blithedale Romance*, and *The Marble Faun*. By my definition, the pivot cannot be the protagonist but is another character who forms a center around which all the other characters revolve. More specifically, the pivot is the major cause of the principal conflict in the tale or novel, usually because he hides a secret or a mystery which the other characters wish to discover. The nature of the pivot is such that he does not or cannot take an active role in the development of the plot. Because the pivot does not actively resist, he is constantly manipulated, either overtly or covertly, by the others. At the beginning of the tale or novel, the pivotal character makes a major break away from a normal society. He is estranged or isolated from life, and the movement of the tale or novel depends on the pivot's return to and integration within society.

One of the most important of these aspects of the pivot is the inability or unwillingness of the character to resist manipulation by the other characters. This idea can be related to one offered by Newton Arvin in his biography of Hawthorne. In the chapter entitled "The House of Pride," Arvin develops the premise that in the first three major novels (he refuses to accept The Marble Faun as a completed work) Hawthorne's characters isolate themselves and suffer guilt and punishment as a result. Arvin's premise is much like Stewart's treatment of isolation as a theme, but whereas Stewart concerns himself with the effect of isolation on individual characters, Arvin proposes that the theme of isolation and guilt underscores the "centrifugal" pattern of these three novels. Part of the helplessness of the pivot derives from the effect of, in Arvin's words, "the movement from the center outwards." In other words, as each of the characters separates himself from the others, and as each manipulates the pivot, the effect is centrifugal. The pivot, the beginning point of all the relationships, is nearly destroyed when these connections begin to pull and tear away from him in their efforts to fly out. Ironically, the other characters, whose "movement from the center outwards" threatens to annihilate the pivot, are usually brought to death, ruin, or impotence. Those who are not

are those who finally come to see the growth of the pivot; they either stop manipulating and isolating the pivot or they accept him into normal society, or they mature along with the pivot and are integrated into society along with him. In the denouement the pivot is the beneficiary of the return of the characters in the tale or novel to life and integration, although he is in no way responsible for that return.

In none of the novels does the pivot correspond do the protagonist, and it seems that Hawthorne was careful in the novels, at least until *The Marble Faun*, to maintain separate pivot and protagonist. The two are sometimes played off against each other as opposites, although in *The House of the Seven Gables* the pivot is a mirror reflecting the weaknesses of the others in the novel. However, certain of the tales have characters whose functions are dual--that is, one character has the roles of both pivot and protagonist. The conflict of the tale is carried on within the character. Reuben Bourne, in "Roger Malvin's Burial," undergoes an intense internal battle largely caused by his inability to reconcile the passivity of his pivotal role with the demand for action made by his role as protagonist. The beginnings of a pivot can be seen in Peter Goldthwaite in "Peter Goldthwaite's Treasure." He is a partial pivot, as evidenced by his manipulation, his hiding

of a great secret, and his unearned return to the arms of society. He is not a full pivot because he takes an active part in the development of the plot and because he strongly resists his manipulator. Only one character in a tale, Catharine in "The Gentle Boy," is a complete pivot. She comes early in Hawthorne's career, and there is not another full pivot until The Scarlet Letter.

Hawthorne's first novel, Fanshawe, precedes the tales, but its pivot places it closer to the other novels than to the shorter works. It would belie the truth to say that the young Hawthorne who wrote Fanshawe had no conception of the relationship of the pivot to the other characters, but it is also not true that the pivot appeared full-blown in his earliest work. The pivot in Fanshawe is Ellen Langton, whose origins are in the tradition of the sentimental heroine, but whose benign presence is the impetus behind the actions of the other characters at Harley College. There is neither power nor realism in Ellen, and this makes her an ineffectual pivot.

The Scarlet Letter is Hawthorne's first mature novel, and it contains Hawthorne's first fully defined pivot. Pearl plays a dual role as a symbol and as a realistic character, and this dual role improves and complements her function as the pivot of The Scarlet Letter. The living symbol of the token on her mother's breast, she is the

reflection of the actions of the other characters. As they seek to maintain their selves and to gain power over each other, the symbolic Pearl is manipulated by each. The second Pearl, the realistic character, becomes important at the end of the novel; she alone survives in a normal state, a condition made possible by the inheritance from her mother's husband, Roger Chillingworth.

The pivot of The House of the Seven Gables is Clifford Pyncheon. His lack of volition is well-known, but his manipulation by the other characters is sometimes very subtle. Clifford's role in the novel is that of the living embodiment of the house and its curse; his presence is a constant reminder of the Maule curse and the decay of the Pyncheons. The move to cousin Jaffrey's summer house is a move toward a more normal society, but Hawthorne leaves the conclusion ambiguous.

The most nearly perfect of all the pivots is Priscilla in The Blithedale Romance. She fits the paradigm completely. Her presence is the source of conflict and an invitation to be abused at the hands of Zenobia, Hollingsworth, Coverdale, Westervelt, and even Old Moodie, her father. Her unwillingness to participate in the action or to resist the unconscious control of her person and psyche by the others has much to do with her mysterious background. Priscilla, as the pivot, is simultaneously

the center around which everything revolves and the center which, were the logical to occur, would be pulled apart by the centrifugal action. Priscilla survives, illustrating the power in passivity.

In contrast to the earlier novels, the idea of the pivot in The Marble Faun is very complicated indeed. The inconclusive ending and the complex structure frustrate all efforts to understand the pivot as separate from other characters. I believe that Hawthorne meant Donatello to be the pivot, but the waters are muddied by the presence of Hilda and Miriam, both of whom have pivotal characteristics overlapping Donatello's. At the beginning of the novel, Donatello's innocence is as natural as that of an animal, and when he commits a crime for which he is neither culpable nor capable of understanding, he is forced to form a concept of evil. The murder starts his maturation, and his growth shocks the others into reevaluating their own lives. For Hilda Donatello is the symbol of the fortunate fall and of the conflict between nature and civilization, and as such he starts her moral struggle to reconcile her religion with reality--something she never fully achieves. Donatello is also the symbol and reflection of Miriam's great burden. He commits the murder out of blind devotion, and when Miriam perceives the violent change in him she begins to see him as both

a goad and a penance. *The Marble Faun* is a radical break from Hawthorne's usual treatment of the pivot.

Looking backward over Hawthorne's writings, as Lowell would have us do, from *The Marble Faun* to the earliest tales and *Fanshawe*, we realize that the concept of the pivot did not change much. What changed was Hawthorne's idea of Romance and the way that characters represent the Actual. As Hawthorne's perception of society became more pessimistic, the pivot's return to society became a weaker and weaker requirement, until it finally disappears in *The Marble Faun*. Hawthorne began to diversify the conflict surrounding the pivot so that the very unified social ostracism in *The Scarlet Letter* which surrounds Pearl is disintegrated in *The Marble Faun* in which each of the characters is concerned only with his own isolation and introspection; rather than manipulating Donatello in order to discover the truth behind his mystery, Hilda, Miriam, and Kenyon run away to avoid seeing the truth in their own lives. At the end of the novel, Hawthorne can no longer make a strong statement for integration into society, and I believe this is what caused him to write such an unsatisfying conclusion.

No one can tell, of course, whether Hawthorne consciously developed the pivot with these functions and characteristics in mind. Whatever brought the pivot

about--whether dictated by Romance or devised by Hawthorne--its presence cannot be denied. Perhaps for "an eye that can take them all in," the characters, like the individual mountains, can be seen as "portions of one grand and beautiful idea, which could not be consummated without the lowest and loftiest of them."

CHAPTER II

THE SHORTER WORKS

It has been said that Hawthorne's tales were exercises in preparation for his novels. Fred Lewis Pattee writes, "it is to be doubted if Hawthorne had any theory of the short story or any suspicion that the tale differed from the novel save in the one attribute of length."[1] The brevity of the short story form and Hawthorne's mastery at compressing and paring down characters, however, contribute to one major difference between the novels and the shorter works: all but one of the tales have no pivot. That is, they have no character who stands separate from the protagonist, isolated and manipulated by others who seek to discover or suppress his secret background. The pivot appears in varying degrees of development in the shorter works. Some tales have partial pivots, characters who have certain pivotal functions or characteristics but who either die or who otherwise lack other important attributes of the pivot. The majority of the tales have pivots who are not distinguishable from the protagonists

[1] _The Development of the American Short Story_ (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1923), p. 98.

because one character embodies both functions. In other tales, an inanimate object seems to have the pivotal role. Finally, only one tale has a fully developed pivot. The various stages of development of the pivot in the tales indicate that Hawthorne used the shorter works, in effect, as a testing ground for the novels, although I can find no evidence that the pivot evolved in the same gradual order that Randall Stewart perceived in the development of Hawthorne's other character types.

One of the earliest examples of a partial pivot can be found in "Alice Doane's Appeal," written around 1828 or 1829. This tale within a tale is one of the most puzzling among the early works because of its unusual structure. Many interpretations have been offered,[2] and on one of these the presence of a pivot in "Alice Doane" depends. If one agrees with the reading offered by Helen Elias, who challenges the traditional view of Leonard Doane as the victim of the Wizard's machinations, then one must

[2]See Nina Baym, "Hawthorne's Gothic Discards: Fanshawe and 'Alice Doane,'" Nathaniel Hawthorne Journal (1974), pp. 105-15; Stanley Brodwin, "Hawthorne and the Function of History: A Reading of 'Alice Doane's Appeal,'" Nathaniel Hawthorne Journal (1974), pp. 116-28; Robert H. Fossum, "The Summons of the Past: Hawthorne's 'Alice Doane's Appeal,'" Nineteenth Century Fiction, 23 (Dec. 1968), 294-303; Seymour L. Gross, "Hawthorne's 'Alice Doane's Appeal,'" Nineteenth Century Fiction, 10 (Dec. 1955), 232-36; John Schroeder, "Alice Doane's Story: An Essay on Hawthorne and Spenser," Nathaniel Hawthorne Journal (1974), pp. 129-34; and Hyatt H. Waggoner, "Hawthorne's Beginning: 'Alice Doane's Appeal,'" University of Kansas City Review, 16 (Summer 1950), 254-60.

agree that the Wizard is a partial pivot.[3] Elias shows, through several major clues in the study, that a strong case can be made for the Wizard's innocence and Leonard's guilt. She contends that Leonard dupes everyone, including the reader, into believing that the Wizard is the cause of all the evil, when it is really he whose deranged mind has been the source of incest and murder in the tale.

Elias points out that Leonard suffers delusions and "shifting perceptions"--the narrator of the tale reveals Leonard as "characterized by a diseased imagination and morbid feelings."[4] It is true that Leonard sees his own reflection in Walter Brome's advances toward Alice, and when he kills Walter, he sees the "likeness of [his] father" (p. 273). The deranged young man perceives all through the filter of his imperfect mind, projecting his own incestual guilt onto Walter and even Alice. During his "confession" to the Wizard, he begins to imagine the old man is laughing at him. Afterwards he is "tortured with the idea of his sister's guilt" (p. 273) and believes

[3]"Alice Doane's Innocence: The Wizard Absolved," Emerson Society Quarterly, 62 (Winter 1971), 28-32.

[4]Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Alice Doane's Appeal," The Snow-Image and Uncollected Tales, Vol. XI of the Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. William C. Charvat et al. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1974), p. 270. All subsequent references to this tale, and to all other works of Hawthorne in this thesis, are taken from the Centenary Edition, and page numbers will be incorporated into the text.

that a "fiend [is] whispering to him to meditate violence against the life of Alice" (p. 274). As the tale progresses, and as the young man becomes more and more desperate to justify the murder of Walter Brome and to hide his incestual feelings for Alice, Leonard places the blame on the only person he knows to be helpless against his accusations--the Wizard. It is interesting that, despite evidence in Leonard's narrative that he is not to be trusted, many readers have failed to see that he makes a scapegoat of the old man.

Elias argues that the outward manifestations of Leonard's madness should be proof enough that he is lying, and this argument leads directly to a view of the Wizard as a partial pivot. The old man, described as "senseless as an idiot and feebler than a child" (p. 270), is unable to resist Leonard's lies. The wild story the young man tells especially seems to implicate the old man because the Wizard seems to know the story before it is told:

> While Leonard spoke, the Wizard sat listening to what he already knew, yet with tokens of pleasurable interest, manifested by *flashes of expression across his vacant features*, by *grisly smiles and by a word here and there*, mysteriously filling up some void in the narrative. (p. 272; italics mine)

I contend, however, that the old man is senile and probably unaware of his transformation by Leonard from a harmless old man into a corrupting evil influence. The Wizard's role, as it is shaped by Leonard's testimony, is nearly

like that of a pivot whose function it is to be the center of the conflict. With the blame he is forced to carry, the Wizard appears to be the manipulative power behind Walter Brome's advances toward Alice, but the old man is in reality the manipulated victim; manipulation by other characters is one of the characteristics of the pivotal function. It can also be argued that the continued presence of the Wizard renews the conflict because as long as Leonard can blame someone else for his actions and appear spotless, he will continue his evil plans. Finally, though, it is impossible to determine the fate of the Wizard because the narrative is interrupted. Whether the Wizard is martyred as a witch, as is suggested by the closing scene in the graveyard, or dies eventually of old age, he does not benefit from a return to a more normal state and is therefore denied the possibility of being a full pivot.

Another kind of partial pivot is one who shares his function with the protagonist; that is, the same character is both pivot and protagonist. One protagonist who might have been a pivot is Peter Goldthwaite in "Peter Goldthwaite's Treasure." In keeping with the theory that the tales were exercises for the novels, Sargent Bush, Jr. has written a study which stresses the similarities between this tale and _The House of the Seven Gables_ and between

Peter and Clifford Pyncheon.[5] Bush sees Peter as an étude for Clifford; the correlation would reassert Randall Stewart's theory of how Hawthorne developed characters and at the same time would help illustrate Peter's dual role. Both Peter and Clifford are owners of a house someone else wants because it hides a mysterious ancestral treasure. Each of the men is manipulated by a strong male adversary who isolates him in his house. Clifford uses passivity as a defense against Jaffrey and, in fact, seems only vaguely aware of the reasons his cousin wants to control him. But Peter, who is more active, slowly dismantles his house board by board, looking for the hidden money. His adversary, Mr. John Brown, causes the resolution of the tale when he offers to buy Peter's house for a fair market value. This sudden generosity is especially fortuitous for Peter, whose treasure turns out to be worthless paper money from the Revolutionary War. On the other hand, the resolution of the tale puts Peter into Mr. Brown's power; ominously, the lawyer closes the tale with the promise that he will apply to the court for a guardian to watch over poor Peter from now on.

As Bush writes, "Significantly, a friend's generous action prevents Peter's complete destruction and presumably

[5]"'Peter Goldthwaite's Treature' and The House of the Seven Gables," Emerson Society Quarterly, 62 (Winter 1971), 35-38.

paves the way for return to self-control, economic stability, and social reacceptance" (Bush, p. 37). Peter's reconciliation, no matter how pallid, reflects his function as a pivot who receives but does not cause such a reconciliation. In Peter resides the central conflict of the tale: he is isolated, the other characters try to manipulate him, and he benefits from a return to society. But in spite of all this, Peter is not a full pivot. He takes too active a role in the development of the plot, especially in resisting John Brown; furthermore, the tone of the tale itself makes Peter too much of a comic hero for the reader to see any important implications in his role. But the most important reason that Peter Goldthwaite is not a complete pivot is that he is the protagonist. There are other tales in which the two functions are fulfilled by the same character, and in these tales the combined pivot-protagonist does not pose a problem. The short story form limits the number of characters which can be introduced effectively, and Hawthorne was forced to combine in one character the source of the conflict and the will to escape from it. The role of the protagonist, always stronger than that of the pivot, will cancel out certain important factors of the pivotal role, namely his passivity and his manipulation by other characters. It is also important to note that in the novels, the four finished romances, there

is not one dual pivot-protagonist because Hawthorne was able to set the two functions opposite each other in separate, complex characters.

"Roger Malvin's Burial" has a dual pivot-protagonist, and it is intriguing to see how Hawthorne intertwines the two roles. In order to make the character revolve around himself, Hawthorne places the conflict and its constant renewal in the mind of the character. In this way, the character can also be seen to manipulate and be manipulated by himself. "Roger Malvin's Burial" tells the story of a young man who grows into manhood and middle age tortured by the knowledge that he has left a man to die in the wilderness, alone and unburied. The circumstances justify the act, for the two were retreating from an Indian war, wounded, and the dying older man entreated the younger to save himself. Reuben Bourne, the young man, lives to marry the dead man's daughter, but Reuben never returns to the forest to fulfill the promise he made to Roger Malvin to bury him. A combination of pride and shame works on his imagination and keeps him from revealing his secret:

> But concealment had imparted to a justifiable act much of the secret effect of guilt; and Reuben, while reason told him that he had done right, experienced in no small degree, the mental horrors, which punish the perpetrators of undiscovered crime. By a certain association of ideas, he at times almost imagined himself a murderer. For years, also, a thought would occasionally recur, which, though he perceived all its folly and extravagance, he had not the power to banish from his mind; it was a haunting and

> torturing fancy, that his father-in-law was yet sitting at the foot of the rock, on the withered forest leaves alive, awaiting his pledged assistance. These mental deceptions, however, came and went, nor did he ever mistake them for realities; but in the calmest and clearest moods of his mind, he was conscious that he had a deep vow unredeemed, and that an unburied corpse was calling to him, out of the wilderness.[6]

Reuben Bourne is quite evidently the protagonist of "Roger Malvin's Burial," and he functions as the pivot as well. Every relationship in the tale hinges on Reuben, and, interestingly, each one of these involves death. The most important kinship in the tale is between Reuben and the corpse of his father-in-law. After all, the death of Roger Malvin and Reuben's subsequent remorse impel Reuben to seek expiation, which he seems to receive when he kills his son in the forest. The son's death is a symbolic sacrifice. In a more subtle way, Reuben is the cause of his wife's death, but it is her spiritual, rather than physical, death. He has slowly strangled her love for him by the coldness of his heart, and he delivers the final blow to her soul when he reveals his true part in her father's and their son's deaths.

Reuben fulfills another requirement of the pivot in that the secret he carries for so long is the principal conflict in the tale. He constantly suffers because he

[6]"Roger Malvin's Burial," Mosses from an Old Manse (Centenary Edition, Vol. X), p. 349.

fears that his wife, or son, or the community will discover his secret. He is not actively manipulated by the other characters, but his pride leads him to believe he is. He thinks that revealing his secret would ruin him in the eyes of his family and friends, never considering that they could forgive him for that which he could never forgive himself. This inherent pride of Reuben's isolates him, as pivots are isolated, in order to protect the secret from discovery.

The dual aspect of Reuben's role in "Roger Malvin's Burial" is emphasized in the final scene in the forest. Up until that scene, the story is developed through a depiction of the mental state of Reuben, and there is no plot development in the traditional sense until the family moves into the forest. Reuben's pivotal role takes precedence over his role as protagonist. But Reuben's role as pivot seems to end when he begins to take an active part in the plot development. However, there is yet one more essential requirement of the pivot to be fulfilled by Reuben: he must benefit from a return to society. This dark tale, with its even darker close, has yet a glimmer of hope in it. As Reuben and his wife stand over the body of their dead son,

> Reuben's heart was stricken, and the tears gushed out like water from a rock. The vow that the wounded youth had made, the blighted man had come to redeem. His sin was expiated, the curse was gone

> from him; and in the hour, when he had shed blood dearer to him than his own, a prayer, the first for many years, went up to Heaven from the lips of Reuben Bourne. (p. 360)

The last action of Reuben, the murder of his son, explains his dual role. As protagonist, he is the instrument of the act which redeems him; as the pivot, he receives the grace, the blessing, which he neither earns nor deserves.[7]

Beatrice Rappaccini, in "Rappaccini's Daughter," presents a complex question to puzzle out. She can be described as a partial pivot who fulfills almost all of the requirements of the pivot, but her death prevents her from being a full pivot. Her most important function is to embody the central conflict--in this case, what appears to be good and what appears to be evil. The other characters--Dr. Rappaccini, Giovanni, and Dr. Baglioni--in the story revolve around the central figure of Beatrice, simultaneously attracted by her beauty and repelled by her poisonous nature. Also, she remains passive while they use her as a

[7]Sheldon W. Liebman does not believe that Reuben expiates his sin by killing the boy; he discusses the unsatisfactory resolution of the tale in "'Roger Malvin's Burial': Hawthorne's Allegory of the Heart," _Studies in Short Fiction_, 12 (Summer 1975), 253-60. Using biblical allusions and connotations in the tale, Burt J. Fishman also asserts in his article "Imagined Redemption in 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" _Studies in American Fiction_, 5 (Autumn 1977), 257-62 that Reuben is never redeemed. Frederick Crews agrees, calling the murder "an expiation that is simply not plausible," but he adds that it is "absolutely necessary and inevitable"--in his article "The Logic of Compulsion in 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" _PMLA_, 79 (Sept. 1964), 457-65.

pawn in a scientific, rather than a moral, battle. One sad aspect of Beatrice's relationships with the three scientists is that there is no true love, no true interest save that of scientific inquiry. Even Giovanni doubts whether he has actually ever loved her.

From her birth, Beatrice has been to her father a creation to be cultivated; she is, in her own words, "the offspring of his science, his intellect," not his heart.[8] Dr. Rappaccini uses his "fatal science" (p. 125) to embue her with loathsome poison in order to isolate her from the harmful world. Like God, he places his creation in a garden and provides it with a helpmate. His Eve is given an Adam, but it is the man in this case who introduces true evil into the garden. Giovanni becomes Beatrice's spiritual and physical murderer, guided by Dr. Baglioni. In the original Garden, of course, Adam and Eve received the punishment of death for their rebellion against God. But death, in the perverted Eden of Dr. Rappaccini, is a release from a kind of hell for Beatrice; instead of a punishment, death seems to be a blessing bestowed on the girl by the one true God. Once Beatrice has realized the desolate loneliness and isolation earth holds for her, she gives up all hope of earthly happiness:

[8]"Rappaccini's Daughter," _Mosses from an Old Manse_ (Centenary Edition, Vol. X), p. 123.

> No, no; there could be no such hope. She must pass heavily, with that broken heart, across the borders of Time--she must bathe her hurts in some fount of paradise, and forget her grief in the light of immortality--and _there_ be well! (p. 126)

Had Giovanni's antidote worked, Beatrice might have been a perfect pivot. She might have been able to forgive Giovanni and her father and might have been able to live a life enriched by her experience with evil. Why, then, does she die? Perhaps Randall Stewart explains it best in his treatment of Lilias Fay's death in "The Lily's Quest": "Her death, like that of Sylph Etherege, has [its] true _raison d'être_ [in] the enforcement of a moral."[9] Beatrice is sacrificed in order to make the reader see the guilt in her father, in Dr. Baglioni, and in her lover Giovanni, whom she asks in desperation, "Oh, was there not, from the first, more poison in thy nature than in mine?" (p. 127).[10] Had she lived, the effect of the tale would have been weakened. One might argue that Beatrice's heavenly hope fulfills the final role of the pivot, who returns from isolation to experience a kind of rebirth into a happier

[9] "The Development of Character Types in Hawthorne's Fiction," _Regionalism and Beyond_, p. 32.

[10] In his article "Ambiguity in 'Lady Eleanore's Mantle,'" _Emerson Society Quarterly_, 58 (I Quarter 1970), 97-101, Sheldon W. Liebman ironically notes that the early critics of "Rappaccini's Daughter" and "Lady Eleanore's Mantle" read both tales as "indictments" of their title characters; critics believed the two women were somehow responsible for the evil and sin in their separate stories.

state, but I argue that Beatrice's death is a final, an irrevocable, isolation. There can be no return for Beatrice; therefore, she cannot be a full pivot, but a partial one.

Again, one of the most important functions of the pivot is his embodiment of the central conflict, and in certain of the tales this function is carried by an inanimate object which has been given a symbolic meaning.[11] The object is often, but not always, inseparable from the character who possesses it; but without it, the character probably would not be a pivot. The idea of the inanimate pivot was suggested by Hyatt Waggoner in his critical study of Hawthorne:

> "In the 'Antique Ring' Hawthorne's story-teller is asked, 'what thought did you embody in the ring?' Both the manner of the reply and the reply itself suggest the naïveté of the question: 'You know I can never separate the idea from the symbol in which it manifests itself.'"[12]

"The Minister's Black Veil" is an example of a tale with an inanimate pivot. A New England minister chooses to cover his face with "two folds of [black] crape"[13] which drastically alter his sight, appearance, and mood. Why he

[11]For a related study, see Darrel Abel, "Black Glove and Pink Ribbon: Hawthorne's Metonymic Symbols," New England Quarterly, 42 (June 1969), 163-80.

[12]Hawthorne: A Critical Study, p. 77.

[13]"The Minister's Black Veil," Twice-Told Tales (Centenary Edition, Vol. IX), p. 38.

dons the veil is never revealed, though, as Fogle remarks, "Hawthorne holds out the suggestion that the veil is a penance for an actual and serious crime, while at the same time permitting no real grounds for [that interpretation]."[14] The veil has an aura of mysteriousness which constantly causes speculation about its true meaning, and the Minister's refusal to remove it continually renews the conflict between him and his parishioners. The contrast between normal and abnormal, between the real and the imaginary, and between good and evil is summed up in that "simple piece of crape" (p. 39):

> "How strange," said a lady, "that a simple black veil, such as any woman might wear on her bonnet, should become such a terrible thing on Mr. Hooper's face!" (p. 41)

Although the idea of the veil cannot be separated from the man who wears it, the black veil itself is what carries the function of the pivot. Unfortunately, the symbol overwhelms the character, and I believe that this is what causes the story to fail. Had the Minister's moral and psychological dilemma been the central conflict, and the veil been made an external mainfestation of that struggle, the focus of the story would have been clearer. As it is, however, a serious tale has been reduced to a quibble over the Reverend Mr. Hooper's concupiscence.

[14] Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and the Dark, rev. ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), p. 36.

Another tale with an inanimate pivot is "Lady Eleanore's Mantle." The mantle is the central symbol in the tale, representing not only Lady Eleanore's pride but concealing the poison of the small-pox. As it becomes apparent to the characters in the story that the epidemic can be traced back to the state ball, Lady Eleanore and her mantle become objects of fear and scorn. The mantle itself is a source of wide and constant speculation about its origins. Some say it was embroidered by an old seamstress on her deathbed, and her fingers stitched the power of death into the fabric. The gossip about the mantle continually renews the conflict in the tale because it comes to symbolize the Old World corruption of the New. Lady Eleanore, who has brought the mantle from Europe to set herself above the provincials in her dress, finds herself eternally isolated by it. Again, the idea of the symbol and the person associated with it cannot be separated, and again, the symbol proves stronger than the character. What Lady Eleanore had planned to use to her own purpose instead turns on her and destroys her. Here, however, the tale does not fail, because both Lady Eleanore and her mantle are symbols for the same thing--pride--and Hawthorne does not invest the character with more complexity than the allegory warrants.

"The Antique Ring" is a final example of a tale with an inanimate pivot. The main conflict embedded in a pivotal character is usually more darksome than the conflict embodied in this inanimate ring, but the fact that there is some pivotal function here indicates the wide range of variation that the pivot can take. In this simple tale, a young man gives his fiancée a ring, and because this particular young man has a reputation as a story-teller, the girl asks him to tell her the "history" of the ring. The young man begins the jewel's tale by placing it on the finger of the unfortunate Earl of Essex, who is about to be executed in the Tower of London, and he ends the tale with the ring being dropped into the collection plate of an American church. Throughout the tale, the hue of the ring becomes darker and bloodier, as though an evil spirit inside were gathering the sins of the people who come to wear it. It passes from unfaithful lover to thief to drunkard to slattern and on and on; wherever it goes, "it brings nothing but sorrow and disgrace."[15] Whoever wears the ring is singled out--isolated in a way--as a person of evil aspect. The evil spirit is finally purged from the ring when someone performs penance by donating it to the church. The now purified ring finds its way into

[15]"The Antique Ring," The Snow-Image and Uncollected Tales (Centenary Edition, Vol. XI), p. 348.

the possession of a faithful and true woman, the young man's fiancée. If a ring can be supposed to experience emotion, then one can say that this ring returns to a happier state of affairs. It also follows that the ring does not cause a change in its condition. "The Antique Ring" comes very close to having a pivot which fulfills all the requirements of that function, but the fact remains that a ring, like a mantle and a veil, is not capable of experiencing the human growth and emotions necessary to the development of the true pivot.

There is, in fact, only one tale which displays a fully-developed pivot who has all of the functions and characteristics which distinguish a pivot from the other characters in a tale. It is ironic that the tale "The Gentle Boy" has a full pivot, since the story comes so early in Hawthorne's career. Composed very soon after the publication of _Fanshawe_, and about the same time as "Alice Doane," "The Gentle Boy" is nevertheless one of Hawthorne's most mature efforts. Hawthorne himself commented on the maturity of his early work, writing that

> In youth, men are apt to write more wisely than they really know or feel; and the remainder of life may not be idly spent in realizing and convincing themselves of the wisdom which they uttered long ago.[16]

[16]Preface to "The Snow-Image," _The Snow-Image and Uncollected Tales_ (Centenary Edition, Vol. XI), p. 6.

"The Gentle Boy" anticipates Hawthorne's later works in tone, theme, imagery, and technique, and in a more important way this tale demonstrates Hawthorne's early concern for the functional relationships between characters. Only this tale and Fanshawe and the four major romances have fully-developed and complete pivots.

F. O. Matthiessen, writing about this tale, observes that "Hawthorne introduced more material than can be adequately presented in a short story. He may have furnished a theme for a tragedy rather than actually have written one."[17] What Matthiessen proposes as a flaw in the tale makes it a perfect vehicle for a pivot. The complex and varied relationships provide a medium for a pivot, but the presence of so many round characters obscures his presence. It is necessary to eliminate those characters who seem to have pivotal functions in order to prove that the mother of the gentle boy--Catharine--is the pivot.

The plot of "The Gentle Boy" is quite simple: Tobias and Dorothy Pearson, a Puritan couple, take in the abandoned son of a Quaker couple and are reviled by the Puritan community for their action. The boy, Ilbrahim, is torn between his love for his natural mother, Catharine, who has chosen to follow her "inner voice" fanatically, and

[17]American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 218.

the Pearsons, who, through the course of the tale, begin to sympathize with the Quaker tenets. At the close, the young boy dies just as his mother returns with the news that the king has forbidden any further persecution of the Quakers by the Puritans. At first glance, Ilbrahim would seem to be the pivot. One critic's opinion is that "structurally, ["The Gentle Boy"] turns upon the misfortunes of the boy Ilbrahim. . . . the central character in the narrative is Ilbrahim."[18] Caught between two opposing and cancelling forces, he passively accepts what happens to him. He allows Tobias to take him home, silently acquiesces when his mother turns him over to the care of the Pearsons, and he ceases to resist when the Puritan children beat him nearly to death. After his beating, his spirit dies, and the death of his body gradually follows. The conflict of the tale, the opposition of the Puritans and the Quakers, has its battleground in the frail body of the Quaker child, and his death symbolizes the futility of such earthly struggles. His hope is for a peaceful place in Heaven, not having found one on earth. Ilbrahim experiences no growth but undergoes a regression. The boy's death keeps him from

[18] G. Harrison Orians, "The Sources and Themes of Hawthorne's 'The Gentle Boy,'" New England Quarterly, 14 (Dec. 1941), 664-78. See also Louise Dauner, "The 'Case' of Tobias Pearson: Hawthorne and the Ambiguities," American Literature, 21 (Jan. 1950), 464-72; she writes, "both Ilbrahim and Catherine [sic] command our major attention" (p. 470).

receiving the benefit of the truce between the townspeople and his mother. Thus, he cannot be a pivot because he does not return to a better state of society in the end.

Another critic proposes that "the story revolves about the figure of Tobias. He is victimized and suffers in as great a degree as does Ilbrahim, the Gentle Boy, himself; and as Everyman caught in the middle of viciously contending forces, he certainly cannot be regarded as a mere 'Puritan symbol.'"[19] It is evident that Tobias is in the center of the conflict between the Puritans and the Quakers, just as Ilbrahim is, but he is not Everyman. That he "cannot be regarded as a mere 'Puritan symbol'" is an understatement; Hawthorne makes it clear from the beginning that Tobias is neither strongly allied with the Puritans nor comfortable with his newly-found Quakerism. What Tobias tries to do is assimilate and synthesize the two religions, an impossibility, and for his efforts he suffers. Although it can be demonstrated that Tobias is at the center of the conflict, he does not cause the conflict as a pivot would, nor is his presence in the tale a source of renewal for the discord.

The pivot of "The Gentle Boy" is Catharine. Without her, there would be no direct conflict in the tale at all.

[19]W. R. Thompson, "Patterns of Biblical Allusions in Hawthorne's 'The Gentle Boy,'" The South-Central Bulletin, 22 (Winter 1962), 3.

If Catharine were not a Quaker, the Puritans would have no cause to persecute her, the boy, or the Pearsons. One of the passages Hawthorne deleted from the Token version of the tale emphasizes the Quakers' responsibility for their persecution, and it helps to explain Catharine's position as a pivot:

> The principle of [the Puritans'] foundation [of a refuge in the New World] was such, that to destroy the unity of religion, might have been to subvert the government, and break up the colony. . . . The magistrates of Massachusetts Bay were, moreover, most imperfectly informed respecting the real tenets and character of the Quaker sect. They had heard of them, from various parts of the earth, as opposers of every known opinion, and enemies of all established governments.[20]

As a representative member of the Quaker sect, Catharine gives the Puritans every reason to believe that she herself is as dangerous as they suppose her to be. In the meeting house, where she has interrupted the Sunday service with an endless tirade against the Puritan oppression, Catharine is "recognized . . . as the woman who had assaulted the governor with frightful language as he passed by the window of her prison."[21] She is a threat both to their religion and to their government because she

[20]Cited by Seymour L. Gross, "Hawthorne's Revisions of 'The Gentle Boy,'" American Literature, 26 (May 1954), 198 and by William A. Tremblay, "A Reading of Nathaniel Hawthorne's 'The Gentle Boy,'" Massachusetts Studies in English, 2 (Spring 1970), 81-82.

[21]"The Gentle Boy," Twice-Told Tales (Centenary Edition, Vol. IX), p. 83.

attacks the very foundations they are set upon. She poses an affront to their moral belief that a person is as responsible to his family as he is to God. Furthermore, her exotic religion, set in opposition to theirs, constantly renews the conflict between herself and the community. Because she has abandoned her motherly duties toward Ilbrahim in order to follow her religious compulsions, Catharine is the source of another basic conflict in the tale--the struggle of Ilbrahim and Tobias to reconcile the two extreme religions.

One function of the pivot is that he cannot or does not take an active role in the development of the plot, and Catharine might at first seem to violate that requirement. In the scene in which she intrudes upon the Puritan worship, she gives "vent to the flood of malignity which she mistook for inspiration," and then becomes immediately passive, saying, "I have done my mission . . . . Reward me with stripes, imprisonment, or death, as ye shall be permitted" (p. 83). Catharine has "provoked her fate" (p. 83), but she has no control over what the Puritans do to her, and thus she is more a recipient of action than the perpetrator of it. Wherever she goes, she receives punishment for being "the apostle of her own unquiet heart" (p. 87): "she had pined in the cells of a Catholic Inquisition before she had felt the lash and lay in the dungeons

of the Puritans" (p. 88). Catharine's religion estranges her from everything that is considered normal in life--motherhood not the least of it--and her manipulation by the Puritans threatens to destroy her; isolation and manipulation, characteristics of the pivot, are especially important in "The Gentle Boy" because they underscore Hawthorne's belief that neither of the two religious extremes is the answer to man's needs.

What finally delineates Catharine as the pivot is that, at the end of the tale, she benefits from the return to society in spite of all her previous efforts to the contrary. She returns from banishment to deliver the good news that the Puritans have been forbidden by law to persecute the Quakers, only to discover that her only son is dying from the effects of the persecution. Although her first impulse is to redouble her fanaticism, time eventually dulls her pain:

> But in process of time, a more Christian spirit--a spirit of forbearance, though not of cordiality or approbation, began to pervade the land in regard to the persecuted sect . . . . When the course of years had made the features of the unobtrusive mourner familiar in the settlement, [Catharine] became a subject of not deep, but general interest; a being on whom the otherwise superfluous sympathies of all might be bestowed. Every one spoke of her with that degree of pity which it is pleasant to experience; every one was ready to do her the little kindnesses, which are not costly, yet manifest good will; and when at last she died, a long train of her once bitter persecutors followed her, with decent sadness and tears that were not painful, to her place by Ilbrahim's green and sunken grave. (pp. 104-105)

Catharine, whose somewhat mysterious background and fanatic religion are the cause of the continued conflict in the tale, is the only true pivotal character in Hawthorne's tales; she is isolated, manipulated, and, despite her stubbornly passive resistance to reconciliation with the forces that threaten to destroy her, she is eventually incorporated into the Puritan community.

Though very early in his career Hawthorne had a pivot in "The Gentle Boy," he did not continue to use full pivots in his tales. There is at least one reason that this might be true, that being that Hawthorne had used a rather broad theme for "The Gentle Boy," involving a comparatively great number of round characters in the conflict. In contrast, many of his later tales are concerned with the psychological dilemmas of single characters. Without more than one character of primary importance, the relationships necessary for the presence of a pivot are not developed. Not until he begins to write the four major romances does Hawthorne use the pivot as effectively as he does in "The Gentle Boy."

CHAPTER III

FANSHAWE

More than forty years separate Hawthorne's first novel from his second, and although much has been made of the wide disparity between the two, many critics have praised *Fanshawe* for its evidences of the mature Hawthorne. It is important to note, however, that both novels have a pivot, even though the author's so-called "long apprenticeship"[1] (the writing of the tales) comes between them. That the pivot underwent very little change during those years of experimentation is not surprising, considering that Hawthorne altered little in the other aspects of his writing. What did change was Hawthorne's ability to create characters of depth and imagination, and the contrast between the pivots of *The Scarlet Letter*--Pearl--and *Fanshawe*--Ellen--illustrates this development very well. The function of the pivot remains the same, though, in spite of the difference in character exhibited by Pearl and Ellen, and when we consider the presence of a pivot in two works so widely placed in the author's career, "the gap between the

[1]Buford Jones, "After Long Apprenticeship: Hawthorne's Mature Romances," *Emerson Society Quarterly*, NS 19 (I Quarter 1973), 5.

immature Fanshawe: A Tale . . . and The Scarlet Letter: A Romance"[2] seems not quite so wide.

An early critic of Fanshawe, writing in the same year of its publication, chided the anonymous author for his unbelievability, and this in an age that fostered sentimentality:

> The plot lacks probability; there is too much villa[i]ny in some of the characters; or rather, there are too many bad characters introduced; their number is disproportioned to that of the good ones. The flight of the heroine is without sufficient motive, especially as her nature was but little spiced with romance; her rescue is effected by improbable means; and finally, the gullibility and unsophisticatedness of the amiable principal of Harley College, is rather a caricature than a portrait.[3]

The plot is wildly improbable, especially in scenes involving Fanshawe. Twice the pale, consumptive "scholar-recluse"[4] saves the fair Ellen by staring down her adversary, the Angler (Butler), a man "well set, and evidently strong and active."[5] Fanshawe and Butler stand as opposites: the young man represents the pure ethereal world of an intellectual idealist--he is a perfect example

[2]Jones, p. 1.

[3]Review of Fanshawe attributed to William Leggett, in Critic, 1 (22 Nov. 1828), 53-55. Reprinted in part in The Recognition of Nathaniel Hawthorne: Selected Criticism since 1828, ed. B. Bernard Cohen (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1969), pp. 3-4.

[4]Waggoner, Hawthorne: A Critical Study, p. 27.

[5]The Blithedale Romance and Fanshawe (Centenary Edition, Vol. III), p. 356.

of the "effete, dying scholar"[6]--and Butler symbolizes all that is gross, sensual, and animal in man. Unfortunately, Hawthorne's determination that good prevail over evil, that the sexually pure overcome the sexually impure, in spite of the inherent natures of the characters in whom he has clothed those ideals, makes the working out of the plot difficult and at times quite silly.

Standing as he does in opposition to evil, and appearing weak and impotent, Fanshawe might at first glance seem to have some characteristics of the pivot, but there are several reasons that he does not fit that role. One of these is the early death of the scholar. Much of the atmosphere surrounding Fanshawe has a hint of doom about it, and the premature demise of the hero is foreshadowed throughout: "there was a nobleness on his high forehead, which time _would have_ deepened into majesty" (p. 346; italics mine); Fanshawe is involved in the kind of study "from which [he] could not turn away his eye _till death were the consequence_" (p. 350, italics mine). Fanshawe's death prevents him from being a full pivot, as Beatrice Rappaccini's does her, because he cannot benefit from a return to society. Another very significant block between Fanshawe and the pivotal role is his position as protagonist.

[6]Robert Eugene Gross, "Hawthorne's First Novel: The Future of a Style," _PMLA_, 78 (March 1963), 60.

As we have seen, the two functions should remain separate, because the pivotal role demands that the character be passive while the protagonist must be active in the development of the plot. Although Fanshawe's contribution is very slight (he asserts himself over the more corporeal Butler through the "influence of a superior mind . . . . [and a] bright and steady eye" [p. 360]), he is the only character to thwart the Angler successfully.

Isolation as a result of manipulation, another characteristic of the pivot, is not to be confused with Fanshawe's deliberate isolation of himself. He is passive throughout most of the novel (only forced into action by the direst of circumstances), not because he is incapable of action but because he willfully places himself above and outside the circle of human affections. The author observes that, after Fanshawe's first meeting with Ellen,

> [the scholar] called up in review the years, that, even at his early age, he had spent in solitary study--in conversation with the dead--while he had scorned to mingle with the living world, or to be actuated by any of its motives. (p. 350)

Even Ellen, whose "soft, sweet voice" (p. 351) beckons him to join her in "the living world," is an object far removed from his true affections. Fanshawe's self-imposed isolation puts him one step farther from a possible role as a pivot because it prevents him from being the starting point of every relationship in the novel. He is like "a

ruler in a world of his own, and independent of the beings that surround[] him" (p. 346).

Of the remaining characters--Edward Walcott, Dr. Melmoth, Mr. Langton, and Ellen--only one has any pivotal function. Ellen, her role colored by her origins in the sentimental heroine tradition, is a full pivot, although a rather innocuous one. All of the other characters revolve around her. Edward and Fanshawe are in love with her, Dr. Melmoth is her guardian, and Butler is trying to marry her. Another function of the pivot, which Ellen unknowingly fulfills, is to begin and perpetuate the action in the story through some hidden secret or mystery. That is, Butler, believing her father dead, and knowing that Ellen has not received the news of it, contrives a way to marry her and claim the inheritance. At the same time, Ellen's mysterious relationship with Butler sets the other men in motion to prevent her from compromising herself.

All through the novel Ellen is isolated in various ways. At the beginning, her father isolates her from her family when he sends her to live at Harley College. Set away from the main path, the College insulates her from the rest of the world where she could have girl friends--confidantes--her own age. Ellen is further set apart by the actions of Butler, who is able to place the suspicion on her rather than on himself. And, true to the sentimental

heroine tradition, Ellen isolates herself, believing that her first flight to Hugh Crombie's Inn has marked her forever: "The stain had fallen upon her reputation--she was no longer the same pure being, in the opinion of those whose approbation she most valued" (p. 430). She despairs of ever regaining the good graces of her guardian and lovers, and her guilt leads her to resignation. She accepts her fate at the hands of the evil Angler, and this resignation demonstrates one more attribute of the pivot--passivity and helplessness against manipulation. In a way, her guilty feelings isolate her from her accustomed place in the bosom of society.

Two final characteristics of the pivot, the manipulation of Ellen and her eventual return to society, must be discussed separately. Ellen is manipulated or controlled by all of the major characters in varying degrees. Dr. Melmoth has the least influence over her, mainly because he is a caricature and has no serious effect on the delineation of Ellen as a pivot. Ellen's father, as we have already seen, controls the girl from a distance. He sends her to live with relatives and later friends, after her mother's death, because he does not care to attend to her personally. In fact, "her affection for Mr. Langton was not, indeed--nor was it possible--so strong, as that she would have felt for a parent who had watched over her

from infancy" (p. 428). Butler bases his machinations on an intense reaction of Ellen's filial emotions, but his plans are almost ruined by Ellen's suspicions that saving her father will not provide "an equivalent for all she must sacrifice" (p. 428). She feels "a sense of duty" to her father, however, and it is at least strong enough to make her sacrifice her honor for him.

Even Fanshawe controls Ellen, not through any reciprocal love, but by virtue of her being awed by his intellectual powers. Fanshawe also symbolizes sexual purity, so that Ellen, confronted by him in the garden during her private interview with Butler, "felt compelled" (p. 363) to obey the young man's order to return to the house. As she does so, she has a feeling of having been sullied by Butler, and feels guilty of some unspoken crime.

Butler's manipulation of Ellen is dual in that it is both overt and covert. When he first begins to approach her, he does so slowly and confident of success. He speaks in low and secretive tones, charming her as a snake fascinates a sparrow, taking care not to startle her away. As it becomes certain that he will be thwarted, he becomes frustrated and violent. The confused Ellen begins to experience the "movement from the center outwards" that every full pivot feels at the moment of greatest tension in the novel. At the very instant that she realizes she has been

duped by his charade, just as he turns on her to rape her, Ellen has reached the limit of her endurance. Her mind is reeling with the present danger, and she realizes how utterly abandoned she is. The only way to describe Ellen's reactions at this point is to use the phrase frantic passivity, for it is at this moment that Ellen's role as a pivot is finally decided. She will either be destroyed in some way by the centrifugal effect of the conflict or she will be saved through no effort of her own.

The manipulation of Ellen by Edward Walcott is multifaceted. Even as an undeclared lover, he has a certain amount of control over her vested in him by society. As her superior, in both strength and intellect, he is an unofficial censor of her actions and thoughts. But in a more subtle way, Edward is a vaguely sinister influence on Ellen, perhaps because Hawthorne tried to infuse Edward with evil characteristics in order to make him a gothic hero. Even as diluted and benign as Edward's evilness is, though, I think that it is what makes the centrifugal effect of the conflict on Ellen so marked. If she had had a clear idea of who her allies were, she might not have made such an easy target for Butler. The evil in Edward also seems to explain the curious remark by the early reviewer of <u>Fanshawe</u> when he wrote, "there is too much vila[i]ny in

some of the characters; or rather, there are too many bad characters introduced."

This subtle, sinister influence of Edward over Ellen is manifested in the interesting relationship between Edward and Butler. Several times in the novel Hawthorne prefigures some action or word of Butler by one of Walcott's. Their natures are similar. Edward has "many youthful follies, sometimes approaching near to vices" (p. 343), but while he manages to avoid any serious trouble, Butler, who "unfortunately fell into certain youthful indiscretions" (p. 453), earns Mr. Langton's reprobation and is ruined. Both men set out to control Ellen, each for his own purposes, and at times, because of Hawthorne's intentional parallels, the distinction between Edward's good intent and Butler's evil one is blurred. A minor example of this occurs early in Chapter II when Walcott and Ellen are out riding near "'that dark forest'"; Edward comments on its "'hidden wonders, of rock, and precipice, and cave,'" and says, "'If it were earlier in the day, I should love to lead you there'" (p. 345). Some time later, in Chapter VIII, Butler "took her hand, and led her towards the forest" (p. 437) and toward a terrible fate. Only a person with "a most accurate acquaintance" with the forest could reach the cave to which Butler carries Ellen, and

yet whose name but Walcott's does she find traced into the smooth walls of the cave?

Another parallel occurs between Chapters III and VIII in a scene often cited as an overly obvious attempt to foreshadow. The scene does seem too contrived, and its major purpose is to introduce the Angler into the story. Considering the light it throws on Walcott, though, Hawthorne is justified in his heavy-handed use of symbolism. In this scene, Ellen deliberately drops a pebble into a pool to save a large trout from Edward who, lacking "any piscatorial instrument of death" (p. 354), can only wish to catch such a prize. The trout swims away, only to be caught by the Angler, and Edward remarks, "There, Ellen, he has captivated your protégé" (p. 355). This scene directly parallels what is to come later when Fanshawe saves the hapless Ellen from Butler by throwing "a small fragment of rock" (p. 450) to frighten the girl's oppressor. She, too, gets away only to be caught by that other angler, Walcott. Edward's comparison of Ellen to her protégé, the fish, underscores the plight of the poor girl who, like the fish, could be happy except for "the hook and the line" (p. 354). The juxtaposition of the two scenes points out two hooks and lines and two anglers for the "fish," Ellen, to be wary of. The argument that Butler and Walcott pose the same threat to Ellen is

strengthened when the reader considers that Butler's dying mother mistakes Edward for her long-neglectful son. Even more ironic is that Edward returns to the riverbank to fight the Angler, but "he could see only his own image in the water" (p. 358).

The similarities between the two men can only be drawn out so far before the analogy fails, although the idea of doubles and alter egos is a topic Hawthorne seems to have been concerned with at the time. The early version of "Alice Doane's Appeal," which explores the relationship between the doubles Walter Brome and Leonard Doane, was written during the same period in Hawthorne's career. While it is interesting to see the double motif and how Hawthorne uses it to emphasize Ellen's dilemma as a pivot, it is also necessary to consider that Walcott is more useful to the author as the man who marries Ellen than as the man who deceives her. Fanshawe, as the protagonist, returns Ellen to her rightful place in society, and, as one might guess, her place is at the side of Edward Walcott. Newton Arvin explains it thus: "An early grave is Fanshawe's reward for cherishing a solitary ambition, and the happiness of Ellen and Edward is their reward for taking no step aside from the common path."[7]

[7]Hawthorne (New York: Russell and Russell, 1961), pp. 55-56.

In the end, it is the reward of happiness that makes Ellen a pivot. She suffers isolation and manipulation by the other characters, and while she takes no active role in the development of the plot, she has a secret background that provides for the central conflict in the novel. Because her origin lies in the sentimental heroine tradition, Ellen is rather weakly depicted, a flaw that often leads critics to find fault with the author for failing to rise above the work produced by that "damned mob of scribbling women" that Hawthorne himself later came to deprecate. However, Ellen is Hawthorne's first pivot, and, as such, is important as a point of comparison for the other pivots, who, having undergone considerable refinement, still betray elements of Ellen Langton.

CHAPTER IV

THE SCARLET LETTER

It is very difficult to distinguish the pivotal role in *The Scarlet Letter* because three of the four major characters exhibit what appear to be pivotal functions. Of the four--Hester Prynne, Pearl, Arthur Dimmesdale, and Roger Chillingworth--only the last can be said to have no claims to the role of pivot. However, Roger Chillingworth serves an extremely important function in *The Scarlet Letter* because it is through his actions that the pivot is eventually defined and set apart. In order to personify and intensify the feelings and laws of the community, Hawthorne uses Chillingworth in a seemingly incongruous alliance with "the Puritan philosophy [as] its major advocate."[1] In this manner, the suffering of the adulterers is maintained at a blazing intensity. Without Chillingworth as a zealous and self-appointed representative of the harsh Puritan justice, the sinners would have been judged by "the larger and warmer heart of the multitude,"[2] and the intense relationships and interactions that

[1] Allen Austin, "Satire and Theme in *The Scarlet Letter*," *Philological Quarterly*, 41 (April 1962), 510.

[2] *The Scarlet Letter* (Centenary Edition, Vol. I), p. 65.

make the pivot possible might have been cooled. The pivot's function to perpetuate the conflict is not replaced by Chillingworth, but amplified by him.

The definition of the pivot as being isolated and manipulated by the other characters brings Dimmesdale readily to mind. He is the most obviously manipulated person in the novel, tortured both inwardly and outwardly by all three of the other major characters. Chillingworth's delving into the minister's mind constantly irritates his already inflamed soul. Pearl is another influence; although "her mission to her father . . . has been a hidden one,"[3] she is to her father what she is to Hester--the visible manifestation of her parents' disordered minds. Even Hester exerts a certain amount of control over Dimmesdale, though in an oblique way. By keeping her oath to Chillingworth, she is an accomplice to his torture of her lover. Later, when she does reveal that the old man is her husband, she uses Dimmesdale's agitation to gain control over him and to persuade him to leave the country with her.

Another aspect of Dimmesdale's character that would mark him as a pivot is his isolation. He is doubly, even triply isolated. First, the young minister is a spokesman

[3]Anne Marie McNamara, "The Character of Flame: The Function of Pearl in <u>The Scarlet Letter</u>," <u>American Literature</u>, 27 (Jan. 1956), 553.

for Puritan theology as it exists in a small, insular community, and he is secluded both physically and spiritually from the established religious and academic culture of Europe which nurtured him. His position as minister raises him above a common familiarity with his parishioners. Second, Dimmesdale commits adultery within this narrow society, and while he condemns the sin just as wholeheartedly as do the most zealous of the Puritans, he believes himself a special case, saying, "We are not, Hester, the worst sinners in the world" (p. 195). Ironically the same man who can "exhort [Hester] to repentance, and to confession" (p. 66) can find it in himself to avoid the confession of his part in the crime. Dimmesdale is afraid to be ejected from society as Hester was because he has not her strength of will and because "it would always be essential to his peace to feel the pressure of a faith about him, supporting, while it confined him within its iron framework" (p. 123). Nina Baym, addressing this same point, writes,

> [Dimmesdale] fails to confess partly because he cannot bear the thought of social ostracism. For a being who defines himself largely by the image he sees reflected back from the watching eyes around him, loss of social grace implies loss of identity.[4]

To alleviate the guilt he feels, Dimmesdale inflicts his own punishment in the form of fasts and scourges--two modes

[4] _The Shape of Hawthorne's Career_ (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), p. 139.

of penance associated "with the old, corrupted faith of Rome" (p. 144). This self-torture is evidence of the minister's rejection of the Puritan tenet of public confession and castigation of sin, and it emphasizes at the same time Dimmesdale's unique position of trying to hide from the Puritan religion while trying to hide in it. Third, Dimmesdale is isolated by the ever-present companionship of old Chillingworth, whose imperceptible probing of the minister's heart "render[s] him suspicious of all mankind" (p. 130) and keeps him from establishing normal relationships with others.

Finally, however, it is Dimmesdale's actions to isolate himself, rather than the efforts of the others to manipulate him, that are of consequence in a consideration of the pivot. Like Hawthorne's earlier scholar Fanshawe, Dimmesdale deliberately removes himself from the sphere of ordinary human fellowship: on the one hand, he performs his duties as a minister to the people of Boston, with "sympathies so intimate with the sinful brotherhood of mankind . . . that his heart vibrated in unison with theirs" (p. 142), but on the other, he "trust[s] no man as his friend" (p. 130) and is careful to maintain a distance. Very early in the narrative, the minister is revealed as "a being who felt quite astray and at a loss in the pathway of human existence, . . . only . . . at ease in some

seclusion of his own" (p. 66). The perversion of Dimmesdale's affinity for solitude is his morbid fascination with self, which becomes so great that he quite easily interprets a comet as a celestial symbol of his adultery: "[he] had extended his egotism over the whole expanse of nature, until the firmament itself should appear no more than a fitting page for his soul's history and fate" (p. 155). His egocentricity cuts him off from the one person who could have empathized with him--Hester--so that in seven years he allows no public glance in her direction. In this matter, he unwittingly allies himself with his nemesis, the old physician, for, as Darrel Abel points out, Dimmesdale, "like Chillingworth, . . . wronged [Hester] and left her to bear the punishment alone."[5]

As we have seen in the previous analysis of _Fanshawe_, a character's deliberate isolation of himself has a twofold importance. Foremost is the fact that a character who has no realistic human affections cannot fulfill the requirement that the pivot be the link between other characters. If he has no ties, no attachments, there can be no real influence over him. Moreover, the character has committed an act of will that, in effect, asserts his superiority over those who would control him. Although there

[5]"Hawthorne's Hester," _College English_, 13 (March 1952), 305.

are external pressures affecting Dimmesdale, it is still he who shapes those forces to his own intent. The minister continues to live with Chillingworth, for example, because he believes the salvation of his soul lies in constant torture. Taking his punishment into his own hands is his way of denying both the Puritans and God their due. In the final scaffold scene, Dimmesdale ascribes his actions to God's will and at the same time supersedes God by declaring that he is saved:

> God knows; and He is merciful! He hath proved his mercy, most of all, in my afflictions. By giving me this burning torture to bear upon my breast! By sending yonder dark and terrible old man, to keep the torture always at red-heat! By bringing me hither, to die this death of triumphant ignominy before tht people! Had either of these agonies been wanting, I had been lost for ever! (pp. 256-257)

Frederick Crews shows that "the ultimate source of Dimmesdale's anguish is not Chillingworth but his own remorse,"[6] an emotion which takes precedence over any other, including love and hate. Therefore, Dimmesdale, above and outside the sphere of human affections, is not "the structural and thematic center"[7] of _The Scarlet Letter_ but is, rather, a satellite around some other character who fits the pivotal role more perfectly.

[6]"The Ruined Wall: Unconscious Motivation in _The Scarlet Letter_," _New England Quarterly_, 38 (Sept. 1965), 312.

[7]Darrel Abel, "Hawthorne's Dimmesdale: Fugitive from Wrath," _Nineteenth Century Fiction_, 11 (Sept. 1956), 81.

Hester Prynne is another character who exhibits some of the characteristics of the pivot. She too is isolated and controlled in many ways. We have already seen how Dimmesdale becomes too involved in his suffering to notice her except to be grateful that she refuses to reveal his name as the father of Pearl. One very poignant scene--the Election Day processional--reveals just how much pain the minister can inflict upon the co-author of his sin:

> Hester Prynne, gazing stedfastly at the clergyman, felt a dreary influence come over her, but wherefore or whence she knew not; unless that he seemed so remote from her own sphere, and utterly beyond her reach. One glance of recognition, she had imagined, must needs pass between them. She thought of the dim forest . . . . How deeply had they known each other then! . . . She hardly knew him now! He, moving proudly past . . . so unattainable in his worldly position, and still more so in that far vista of his unsympathizing thoughts. . . . And thus much of woman was there in Hester, that she could scarcely forgive him,--least of all now, when the heavy footstep of their approaching Fate might be heard, nearer, nearer, nearer!--for being able so completely to withdraw himself from their mutual world; while she groped darkly, and stretched forth her cold hands, and found him not. (pp. 239-40)

Chillingworth is a strong influence on Hester as well. In fact, it was he who sent her to the New World against her will[8] and put her in a position "which made her liable to sin"[9] and then used his authority as her husband to make her an accomplice in his torture of her lover. Even knowing

[8]Baym, p. 128.

[9]Abel, "Hawthorne's Hester," p. 305.

that Puritan law would support him, Chillingworth refuses to acknowledge Hester, strangely preferring to concentrate his revenge on Dimmesdale, rather than on his wife. Hester wonders which is worse, to be punished, or to be ignored by her husband. Chillingworth knows the answer, saying, "I leave thee alone; alone with thy infant, and the scarlet letter!" (pp. 76-77). Chillingworth's statement points to Pearl, who completes the circle of characters around Heater. The child's preoccupation with the token can be interpreted as a manipulation of Hester; it is almost "as if the one only thing for which she had been sent into the world was to make out [the] hidden import of the scarlet letter" (p. 178). Her father rightly interprets her as "meant for a blessing . . . and for a retribution" to Hester (p. 114).

As it does with Arthur Dimmesdale, society plays a large part in the isolation and manipulation of Hester. Every one of the Puritans sees himself, no matter how lowly his position, as better than Hester. She fulfills one more requirement of the pivot in that she seems to accept passively their unkind treatment, never attempting to leave Boston or otherwise avoid her sentence until very late in the narrative. To the good citizens of Boston, Hester becomes a symbol which they change according to their whim; the import of the scarlet letter metamorphoses from that of

sin to that of benevolent goodwill, in spite of the true spirit of the woman who wears the token. What never changes is the isolating effect of the letter. Hester takes up her abode on the edge of the settlement, away from the common path, and no one, except Mistress Hibbins and the elders, would dream of speaking to her.

However, Hester reacts to society in much the same way Dimmesdale does. She, too, willfully withdraws from the community, resenting its judgment against her so much that she eventually sees herself in the role of martyr (p. 80). Hester avoids the Puritans as actively as they do her; her livelihood depends upon them, but "in all her intercourse with society . . . there was nothing that made her feel as if she belonged to it" (p. 84), and she goes about her business, invoking the scarlet letter by touching it if any person comes too close (p. 162). Yet, while Dimmesdale accepts "the view that society has the right to judge them," Nina Baym observes that Hester "deliberately reject[s] the judgment,"[10] preferring instead to see herself as more sinned against than sinning.

During "the whole seven years of outlaw and ignominy" (p. 200) that she suffers, Hester is learning hard-earned lessons from her teachers, "Shame, Despair, Solitude!"

[10]Baym, p. 129.

(p. 199). She breaks "the links that united her to the rest of mankind" (p. 159), which necessarily means her rejection of the Puritan code. Over the years, it is useful to Hester to appear contrite, but the time comes when the "years of hard and solemn trial" (p. 167) are too much to bear any longer. She begins by rebelling against Chillingworth's domination, an act which signals an open break with the Puritans. When Hester makes plans to leave Boston, she is ready to fling the scarlet letter and all it betokens into the ocean, unlike Dimmesdale, who, because his guilt is all internal, is prepared to carry it with him for the rest of his life. It is easy for Hester to "instinctively exercis[e] a magnetic power over a spirit so shattered and subdued, that it could hardly hold itself erect" (p. 197), and it is clear that without her strength Dimmesdale would never have tried to escape. Hester's strong will, hard to discern under her façade of submission, keeps her from being the pivot. Certain aspects of the pivot can be seen in Hester, but each can be revealed as Hester's careful control of what appears to be the truth, while giving herself freedom to think and do as she wishes. It is true that "seven years . . . [had] wrought out no repentance" (p. 177).

In order to define Pearl as the pivot in _The Scarlet Letter_, the question must be asked whether the central

conflict would have been perpetuated without her. In one sense, the answer is yes; without "the sin-born infant" (p. 63) as the obvious proof, the adultery committed by Hester and Dimmesdale would not have been quite so obvious, but the sinners would still have been aware that they had broken a sacred law. It is difficult to speculate about the degree of ruin Dimmesdale would have experienced had Pearl not been conceived, but one can be reasonably certain that the minister's supply of guilt would not have been meager. Hester would still have quietly chafed against the Puritans, and she probably would have eventually sought a way out from under their uncomfortable strictness. So the basic conflicts in the novel, Hester's rebelliousness and Dimmesdale's morbid egotism, would have existed without Pearl.

But Pearl is more than a mere child. As many critics have noticed, Pearl is the most abstract of all the characters, serving both as symbol and as real child. She is the "scarlet letter endowed with life" (p. 102) and as a symbol--with all the various manifestations that it implies--Pearl is indeed the pivot of the novel: it is her initial appearance in the scaffold scene that compels Chillingworth to seek revenge; her continued existence impels Hester's thoughts and actions.

Because she is the "sin-born infant" Pearl's lot is irrevocably thrown in with Hester's: "Mother and daughter stood together in the same circle of seclusion from human society" (p. 94). Arne Axelsson has noted that "Pearl [is] the innocent victim, whose isolation from society and playmates is the result of the negligence, mistakes or sins of the people about her, in particular her mother."[11] The child becomes an object of scorn and ridicule and receives rough usage at the hands of the Puritan children because the conflict between the parent of Pearl and the parents of the Puritan monsters is fought on the small field of the playground. Neither Pearl nor any of the other children understands why they must hate each other. Pearl can effectively resist society's manipulation of her only by flaying out at its most vulnerable part--the only segment that is afraid of her. Certainly in no position to attack the whole of Boston, the child establishes a fantasy world wherein the weeds are Puritan brats and the trees are their elders.[12] She is easily learning the lesson of her parents; where open conflict is too dangerous, seclusion is the only answer.

[11]"Isolation and Interdependence as Structure in Hawthorne's Four Major Romances," _Studia Neophilologica_, 45 (1973), 393.

[12]Richard Brodhead, _Hawthorne, Melville, and the Novel_ (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1976), p. 56.

Despite all that has been made of Pearl's being the yoke around Hester's neck, the child has no real influence over her mother save only a kind of symbolic power invested in her by Hester herself. In other words, Pearl's unique character, her prattle about and fascination with the scarlet letter, have no real import except that with which Hester's imagination imbues the child. She continually watches Pearl "ever dreading to detect some dark and wild peculiarity, that should correspond with the guiltiness to which she owed her being" (p. 90). It is in Hester's fancy that Pearl takes on the aspects of the elf-child, for, as Hyatt Waggoner shows, Pearl's existence, like that of the rosebush outside the prison door, is innocent;[13] neither the child nor the rose has true supernatural meaning. Unfortunately, Hester distrusts Pearl and hesitates to make the child a soul-mate. She becomes more a keeper than a mother, and we see little proof of the fulfillment of her promise to "teach . . . little Pearl what I have learned from the scarlet letter" (p. 111). In fact, one would be hard put to discover in the novel one instance when Hester's desperate grasp of Pearl illustrates love rather than selfishness. On the contrary, it is Hester's "first impulse [upon leaving the prison] to clasp the infant closely to her bosom not so much [from] motherly affection,

[13] Hawthorne: A Critical Study, pp. 128-29.

as that she might thereby conceal a certain token, which was wrought or fastened onto her dress" (p. 52). Thereafter, Hester seems to hide behind Pearl, drawing attention to the child by dressing her so that her "whole appearance . . . irresistibly and inevitably reminded the beholder of the token which Hester Prynne was doomed to wear upon her bosom" (p. 102).

While it can easily be seen that Pearl is isolated and controlled by society, and subsequently by Hester, who modifies the emblematic meaning assigned to Pearl by the Puritans, it is not so readily discerned just how the minister and his companion Chillingworth manipulate her. One requirement of the pivot is that he hide a secret or mysterious background which provides an impetus for the conflict. Again, therefore, the symbolic Pearl is more important then the real child. Ironically, Pearl owes her existence to both Dimmesdale and Chillingworth. The first man is her father, whose passionate actions brought her into the world, much against his own wishes; the second is her mother's husband, a physician whose intervention at the prison preserves the infant's life. Very subtly, then, Hawthorne gives each man a part in creating and sustaining the very cause of their mutual hatred. To the cuckolded Chillingworth, the child is a cipher to be solved because

she is the living representation of her father. His interest is her goes not much farther.

To Dimmesdale, though, Pearl represents his sinful nature. It seems that the greater his repulsion for the pollution in his soul, the more he fears and avoids Pearl. During the audience at the Governor's hall, for example, the minister kisses Pearl in the presence of several Puritan elders. But this scene occurs before Chillingworth has begun his inquisition in earnest and before the minister has become so debilitated that he fears a child. Many times he refuses Pearl's request to acknowledge her in public because, like Hester, he interprets the child's innocent curiosity with a greater meaning than is perhaps there. Too, he becomes so preoccupied with his sin that he begins to add new dimensions to things and events which have little to do with him. In the chapter entitled "The Child at the Brookside," it is most interesting to see how the pathetic Dimmesdale is affected by Pearl's tantrum; more like a child than a man, he whines to Hester,

> "Pray hasten her; for this delay has already imparted a tremor to my nerves. . . . I pray you, . . . if thou hast any means of pacifying the child, do it forthwith! . . . I know nothing that I would not sooner encounter than this passion in a child. Pacify her, if thou lovest me!" (pp. 208, 210)

Hawthorne points out Pearl's jealousy as being displaced by the minister, and it is almost as if her mother has

acquired a new child rather than a husband. Indirectly, then, Dimmesdale isolates Pearl from Hester.

The centrifugal effect the pivot experiences is not so pronounced in _The Scarlet Letter_ as it is in some of the other novels. There is a certain "movement from the center outwards," as each of the adults--Hester, Dimmesdale, and Chillingworth--seeks to isolate or protect himself while trying to control the others, but Pearl does not come near destruction, perhaps because she is a child. It is true, though, that these other characters who have exerted so much power over Pearl and over each other are all brought to death or submission. Dimmesdale dies on the scaffold, taking with him the reasons to make Pearl a symbol. Chillingworth dies soon after, no longer desiring to live. Hester remains, but is no longer a control over Pearl because the child's "errand as messenger of anguish was all fulfilled" on the scaffold (p. 256). The result of the final scaffold scene, according to Arne Axelsson, "is Pearl's total integration with humanity."[14]

Just as the two men gave Pearl life, so do they make it possible for her to complete the final requisite of the pivot. When Dimmesdale acknowledges "the wild infant" as his daughter, he sets her free: "A spell was broken. . . . and as her tears fell upon her father's cheek, they were

[14]Axelsson, p. 395.

the pledge that she would grow up amid human joy and sorrow, nor for ever do battle with the world, but be a woman in it" (p. 256). Yet to Chillingworth falls the duty of providing for Pearl's future independence from the Puritans. As pivot, Pearl must benefit from a lessening of the strictures society has placed on her and Hester. She must, in other words, receive a promise of a future better than her past. Chillingworth fulfills this promise when he wills all of his property to Pearl. None of the inheritance is marked for Hester, a significant act because in this way Pearl is clearly delineated as a pivot. The money allows Pearl to leave Boston. Although Hawthorne makes it apparent that, wealth being greater than moral prejudice, she "might have [later] mingled her wild blood with the lineage of the devoutest Puritan among them all" (p. 261), it would have gone against Hawthorne's very purpose to unite Pearl with those who have so successfully oppressed her: she _must_ leave Boston. Hawthorne has often been criticized for tacking on such a seemingly awkward "happy ending," but in light of a discussion of the pivot, his intention is perhaps clarified.

CHAPTER V

THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES

The following paragraphs illustrate the role of Clifford Pyncheon as the pivot in The House of the Seven Gables. Reading the passage closely, one notices that each of the principal characters lends color and vitality to the lifeless personality of Clifford. Throughout the novel, Clifford seems parasitical in his relationships with the others, for he needs their strength. Clifford's reflection of the qualities of others is evident as the narrator describes the scene in the Pyncheon garden:

> Clifford, as the company partook of their little banquet, grew to be the gayest of them all. Either it was one of those up-quivering flashes of the spirit, to which minds in an abnormal state are liable; or else the artist [Holgrave] had subtly touched some chord that made musical vibration. Indeed, what with the pleasant summer-evening, and the sympathy of this little circle of not unkindly souls, it was perhaps natural that a character so susceptible as Clifford's should become animated, and show itself readily responsive to what was said around him. But he gave out his own thoughts, likewise, with an airy and fanciful glow; so that they glistened, as it were, through the arbor, and made their escape among the interstices of the foliage. He had been as cheerful, no doubt, while alone with Phoebe, but never with such tokens of acute, although partial intelligence.
>
> But, as the sunlight left the peaks of the seven gables, so did the excitement fade out of Clifford's eyes. He gazed vaguely and mournfully about him, as if he missed something precious, and missed it the

> more drearily for not knowing precisely what it was. . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> Alas, poor Clifford! You are old, and worn with troubles that ought never to have befallen you. You are partly crazy, and partly imbecile; a ruin, a failure, as almost everybody is--though in some less degree, or less perceptibly, than their fellows. Fate has no happiness in store for you; unless your quiet home in the old family residence, with the faithful Hepzibah, and your long summer-afternoons with Phoebe, and these Sabbath festivals with Uncle Venner and the Daguerreotypist, deserve to be called happiness! Why not? If not the thing itself, it is marvellously like it, and the more so for that ethereal and intangible quality, which causes it all to vanish, at too close an introspection. Take it, therefore, while you may. Murmur not--question not--but make the most of it.[1]

Like Pearl, the pivot of The Scarlet Letter, Clifford emerges from a prison, but unlike Pearl, he lacks the inner spirit to stand up to and defy his hostile environment. When Clifford returns from thirty years in prison, it is evident that he has accepted his role as the victim of society. He passively allows the past to dominate him. "Accepting the past as irrevocable," Alfred Levy has shown, "is a way of predestining a man to a given course of action, a way of robbing him of his free will and, ultimately, of his dignity as a human being."[2] Therefore, because Clifford has surrendered his struggle against the world to live

[1]The House of the Seven Gables (Centenary Edition, Vol. II), pp. 157-58.

[2]Alfred Levy, "The House of the Seven Gables: The Religion of Love," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 16 (Dec. 1961), 191-92.

a life of peaceful drowsiness, he ceases to exist as a separate person. Instead, he derives his moods and ideas by passively incorporating them from other people. Like a mirror, or more appropriately, like Maule's Well, Clifford reflects the truth--while he mirrors, he imbibes from Hepzibah and Jaffrey their negative intent to isolate him and from Phoebe and Holgrave their positive efforts to release him from the House of the Seven Gables.

Clifford returns from a physical imprisonment of thirty years with only the belief that he will remain a psychological prisoner for the rest of his life. Unfortunately, Hepzibah has spent the same thirty years preparing for his release, all the while planning to indulge his every whim when he is once again in her care. Hepzibah is a prisoner of an ideal past, and she uses the house to protect her from the uncaring world outside. Arne Axelsson points out that "all through the book the old house . . . represent[s] isolation and oppressive seclusion,"[3] and in this sense, Hepzibah and Clifford are victims together. They take on the moldy aspect of the house by their queer mode of dress; they seem to cling to the past--remain in the house--because it has proved a refuge to them before. To Clifford, though, the oppression of the

[3]Arne Axelsson, "Isolation and Interdependence as Structure in Hawthorne's Four Major Romances," Studia Neophilologica, 45 (1973), 398.

house is stultifying, for as Marius Bewley shows, the an-central mansion "renders visible his isolation from human society, his exclusion from the inner sphere of reality."[4] The aged child-man wishes to much to plunge into "the mighty river of life" (p. 165) that he nearly leaps from an upper-story window onto a passing parade. Hepzibah, on the other hand, uses seclusion as a means of preserving the gentility of the Pyncheons. Uncle Venner observes that she "had always a grave kind of way . . . a grown-up air" even when she was a girl "only the height of [his] knee" (p. 62). Hepzibah "fed herself from childhood with the shadowy food of aristocratic reminiscence" (p. 37), and she evidently plans to sustain Clifford on the same fare. When Holgrave tells Phoebe that "Dead Men" rule the living world, that "Whatever we seek to do, of our own free motion, a Dead Man's icy hand obstructs us!" (p. 183), he might well be thinking of Hepzibah, whose icy hand obstructs Clifford.

Hepzibah's motivation for isolating her brother comes from her desire to protect Clifford from the harsh eyes of the world because he is unable to defend himself. It is no accident that Hawthorne draws a comparison between Hepzibah and one of Chanticleer's wives, whose concern over

[4]Marius Bewley, The Eccentric Design: Form in the Classic American Novel (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 190.

her chick prevents it from learning to take care of itself. Many times the relationship between the old brother and sister is put in terms of that between a mother and a child. But Hepzibah's love is partly a selfish one, and beside her wish to protect Clifford is one to keep him secluded in the house in order to preserve the Pyncheons, especially those still living in the House of the Seven Gables, from public ridicule. Uncomfortably Hepzibah sees herself in Clifford, who reflects her image much more truthfully than a real mirror can. At one point, she fears that her brother has fled the house to escape Cousin Jaffrey, and

> with that thought, she seemed to behold [Clifford's] gray, wrinkled, yet childish aspect, in the old-fashioned garments which he wore about the house. . . . This figure of her wretched brother would go wandering through the city, attracting all eyes, and everybody's wonder and repugnance, like a ghost, the more to be shuddered at because visible at noontide. To incur the ridicule of the younger crowd . . . the harsher scorn and indignation of a few old men. . . . To be the sport of boys . . . [and to be] goaded by their taunts, their loud, shrill cries, and cruel laughter . . . into some wild extravagance, which was certain to be interpreted as lunacy. (pp. 247-48)

Later, when the old couple actually leave the house, Hepzibah repeats her fear that Clifford is a lunatic and that she herself has gone mad. Moreover, she is ashamed of the figure she cuts, and would "fain to shrink deeper into herself . . . as if in the hope of making people suppose that here was only a cloak and a hood, threadbare and

woefully faded, taking an airing in the midst of the storm, without any wearer!" (p. 255). Therefore, it can be seen that Hepzibah isolates and controls Clifford in an effort to maintain her own aristocratic image; this is not to say that she does not love her brother, but it is to say, rather, that the separation of thirty years has spiritualized that love into an idea, a driving force for which "she had wilfully cast off" her friends (p. 245). That she constantly and deliberately withdraws into the house is evidence that "she is powerless . . . to cope with the present."[5]

The heavy weight of the past which Hepzibah places on Clifford is doubled by Jaffrey. Indeed, the Judge is the most active of all the characters in controlling and isolating Clifford, for he is responsible for his cousin's initial and subsequent imprisonment. Hawthorne contrasts the two men in every possible way--the one is slight, ethereal, weak, childish, sensitive, and withdrawn from society, while the other is coarse, gross, substantial, politically active, and stupid. Jaffrey is representative of the past because he owns the house and has inherited the Pyncheon family characteristics. James F. Ragan, with reservations, writes that "Jaffrey Pyncheon is

[5]Levy, p. 193.

Colonel Pyncheon come again."[6] Clifford, however, represents the future when men will supposedly rely no more, as Holgrave would say, on the laws of "Dead Men."

The contrast between the two cousins is meant to illustrate the conflict between appearance and reality and between the past and the present. For although Jaffrey is the symbol of the past to Clifford and Hepzibah, to the world he represents progress and political ambition in the present. Outwardly the Judge throws himself into current affairs, but inwardly his life is dominated by the obsession that Clifford has knowledge of hidden wealth. In this matter, Clifford is of great importance to The House of the Seven Gables because he must, as a pivot, have a mystery or secret background which impels the central conflict in the novel. As long as Clifford lives, Jaffrey will seek to wring the secret from him because the Judge believes in the old family tradition that there is a land grant promising untold millions waiting to be claimed. Both Jaffrey and Hepzibah allow this family legend to dominate their lives, and in the pursuance of it they manipulate Clifford.

As fearful to Clifford as the Judge is, it would seem that Jaffrey is at least as formidable as his ancestor,

[6]James F. Ragan, "Hawthorne's Bulky Puritans," PMLA, 75 (Sept. 1960), 421.

the colonel. But Hawthorne makes it clear that the present-day Judge is somewhat less substantial than Colonel Pyncheon, lacking what the author later personifies as "the stubborn old Puritan Integrity" (p. 285). The "religion, honesty, [and] moderate competence" (p. 286) of that old Puritan become greed and envy in Jaffrey. The same "process . . . [that] refine[s] away [the] grosser attributes of body" (p. 121) makes Jaffrey slighter than his ancestor and renders Clifford but a shadow of them both. Yet, one aspect of the Pyncheons--animal sensuality--remains in both Jaffrey and, in a refined form, in Clifford, and in this way the one man slightly reflects the other. They inherit their animal nature from the old Colonel, who "had worn out three wives . . . merely by the remorseless weight and hardness of his character in the conjugal relation" (p. 123). Jaffrey "had wedded but a single wife" but had managed to send her to an early grave "in the third or fourth year of their marriage" (p. 123). Phoebe unconsciously perceives his sensuality; when the Judge attempts to plant an unctuous kiss on her cheek, the girl draws back and her "eyes sank" (p. 118). Earlier, when confronted with Clifford's "look of appetite" which had "nothing intellectual to temper it," Phoebe's reaction is the same--it makes her "drop her eyes" (p. 107). Although Clifford's sensual vitality is diluted, it appears greater to those

who are around him because he is so weak otherwise. Perhaps he fears Jaffrey all the more because his feminine passivity can be easily overwhelmed by the Judge's masculine aggressiveness. And Perhaps Jaffrey hates Clifford all the more because he wishes to shatter his overly-feminine cousin the same way he crushed his wife.

The force which refines Jaffrey and Clifford works on Phoebe as well, but because she is able to incorporate the past into the present, she stands somewhere between the two men, sharing certain characteristics with them both. Several times Clifford and Phoebe are compared as playmates, beautiful and happy together like children. Clifford perceives Phoebe in the same way he sees the hummingbirds and flowers in his garden. Like the sunshine, Phoebe warms the invalid and imparts new energy to his lifeless spirit. Hawthorne continually points out how hopeless Clifford would have been without the young girl's "spiritual force" (p. 137) that keeps him from "yield[ing] to the torpor which had crept through all his modes of being" (p. 136). She soon "grew to be absolutely essential" (p. 136) to the well-being of the old couple, although, as Levy states, she was "an ingenuous girl, who did not realize her powers."[7] At one point, Holgrave tries to impress her with an idea of her importance:

[7]Levy, p. 193.

> "Whatever health, comfort, and natural life, exists in the house, is embodied in your person. These blessings came with you, and will vanish when you leave the threshold. . . . Your poor Cousin Clifford is [a] . . . dead and long buried person. . . . I should not wonder if he were to crumble away, some morning, after you are gone, and nothing be seen of him more, except a heap of dust." (p. 216)

Hepzibah recognizes the special relationship between Phoebe and Clifford, saying first of her brother, "He never was a Pyncheon!" (p. 60) and then of the girl, "Phoebe is no Pyncheon" (p. 79). Hepzibah means, but does not understand, that neither has the same reverence for the name as does she.

On the other hand, Phoebe has inherited a few of the same Pyncheon characteristics as Jaffrey, and this had much to do with her refusal to pander to Clifford's every whim. Clark Griffith has shown that both the girl and the Judge are associated with the outside of the house--both introduce new conflicts for Hepzibah and Clifford. Griffith also indicates that neither Jaffrey nor Phoebe has an inclination to question his place in society, and neither does any soul-searching.[8] Each has an absolute sense of right. When Alfred Levy says of Phoebe applies to the Judge as well--"She steadfastly refuses to accept the fact that she is liable for the burdens of the past."[9] One

[8] "Substance and Shadow: Language and Meaning in The House of the Seven Gables," Modern Philology, 51 (Feb. 1954), 190-91.

[9] Levy, p. 200.

important trait that Phoebe and Jaffrey share is their annoyance at Clifford's reluctance to join life. Of course, the Judge is interested in acquiring the hidden money, and so long as his cousin refuses to see him, his plans are thwarted. Phoebe, however, has an abhorrence for the unknown; she is "by nature as hostile to a mystery, as the sunshine to a dark corner" (p. 218).

This blending of "the stern old stuff of Puritanism, with a gold thread in the web" (p. 76)--in other words, the admixture of the Pyncheon traits exemplified by Clifford at one extreme and Jaffrey at the other--gives Phoebe a distinct power over Clifford, and she is able to use it to bring him out of his stupor. She will not allow him to vegetate because she sees the potential intelligence in his eyes and is annoyed by his tendency to let it lapse into disuse. Like the house, Clifford is unaware of, but benefits from, Phoebe's lively influence:

> It really seemed as if the battered visage of the House of Seven Gables, black and heavy-browed as it still certainly looked, must have shown a kind of cheerfulness glimmering through its dusky windows, as Phoebe passed to-and-fro in the interior. (p. 81)

Phoebe also steers her cousin away from thoughts of death and decrepitude, preferring instead to dwell on "the well-worn track of ordinary life" (p. 142): "Whatever was morbid in his mind and experience, she ignored, and thereby kept their intercourse healthy by the incautious,

but, as it were, heaven-directed freedom of her whole conduct" (p. 143). Phoebe, "as integrated as any human being can be,"[10] exerts a positive, rather than a negative, influence over Clifford, and it is ironic that she is unconscious of doing so, whereas Jaffrey and Hepzibah are fully aware of the power they have over the invalid. But although Phoebe is unaware of the effect she has--like "the fire upon the hearth [which] can gladden a whole semicircle of faces roundabout it [without] . . . know[ing] the individuality of one among them all" (p. 140)--she is even more unaware of what she has gained from Clifford. Gazing into his mirror-like face, she has learned sorrow and torment, becoming more of a woman and less of a girl. If she had been more like Clifford, and less like Jaffrey, Phoebe might have become as obsessed with Clifford's pain as her old maid cousin Hepzibah, and "we should have soon beheld our poor Phoebe grow thin, and put on a bleached, unwholesome aspect, and assume strange, shy ways, prophetic of old-maidenhood and a cheerless future" (p. 175). Therefore, it can be seen that Phoebe controls Clifford without isolating him, and at the same time that she contributes life to him, he gives her a sense of death. Indeed, as the author avers, "there was something very beautiful in the relation that grew up between this pair" (p. 141).

[10]Axelsson, p. 397.

Holgrave plays a smaller part in the definition of Clifford as pivot, but he is especially important because it is he who provides the information about the deaths of both Jaffreys which vindicates Clifford. Although, as Walter Blair has noted, "the judge's death, which marks the end of the curse, is the most important cause of Clifford's recovery,"[11] Holgrave paves the way for the old man's name to be cleared and helps him return to the mainstream of society, an important part of the pivot's delineation. Blair goes on to point out that "the union of Holgrave and Phoebe [is] another token of the conclusion of the curse"[12] and the move to the new house is an indication that Clifford will cease to suffer manipulation and isolation.

In two ways Holgrave is mirrored by Clifford. First, both are isolated from the common path of everyday life, but Holgrave differs from Clifford in that he has chosen a prideful aloofness. Second, both men reject the giant's corpse of the past that lies on them; both make similar speeches concerning the purification of the house, as Holgrave says, by fire--"purified till only its ashes remain!" (p. 184). It could be that Clifford only repeats what he has heard Holgrave discuss many times before, but it is

[11]"Color, Light, and Shadow in Hawthorne's Fiction," New England Quarterly, 15 (March 1942), 81.

[12]Blair, p. 81.

significant that Hawthorne never has the two men discuss this topic together. It is probable that they merely share the sentiment. But in the same fashion that Hepzibah and Phoebe gain new knowledge from having seen their reflections in Clifford's face, Holgrave also acquires a new state of mind. If the future world were to exist in the form which Holgrave and Clifford claim it will--that is, with no burden or sense of the past--man will become fanatically concerned with only the present, for having no past he can see no future. So Clifford returns to the house after his abortive attempt to discard the past totally, and he passes on to Holgrave what he has learned. Man cannot divorce himself from his ancestors, but neither should he be a slave to them.[13] Perhaps Holgrave synthesizes his old hatred and new respect for the past, which would explain why he seems to change his mind so suddenly about the construction material of houses.

Clifford fits the paradigm of the pivot perfectly. Marius Bewley calls him "the only one who is perfectly innocent, and entirely the victim."[14] One aspect of the pivot, that he be drawn apart by the movement of the other characters from the center outwards, is intensified in Clifford's case by the fact that three of the other four

[13]Ragan makes much the same point, p. 422.

[14]Bewley, p. 180.

principals in the novel are directly related to him by blood. Also, the confinement of Clifford in the old house, with all of its accompanying connotations concerning the Pyncheon family traits, magnifies the relationships between the old man and his manipulators. In this context, it is interesting to compare the sentiments expressed in Oliver Wendell Holmes' Elsie Venner:

> Relations are very apt to hate each other just because they are too much alike. It is so frightful to be in an atmosphere of family idiosyncracies; to see all the hereditary uncomeliness or infirmity of body, all the defects of speech, all the failings of temper, intensified by concentration, so that every fault of our own finds itself multiplied by reflections, like our images in a saloon lined with mirrors![15]

As I have tried to show, Hepzibah and Jaffrey isolate and restrict Clifford in order to control him more perfectly, and their task seems all the easier for recognizing and knowing how to manipulate the weakness in him. Clifford's passivity facilitates their dominance over him, although Hepzibah's purpose is more subtle and less evil than that of the Judge, who ultimately "is responsible for Clifford's madness by remaining silent when his knowledge would have declared [him] innocent of murder and saved him from imprisonment."[16] Phoebe, too, contributes to the centrifugal

[15] Oliver Wendell Holmes, Elsie Venner: A Romance of Destiny (Boston: Riverside Press of the Houghton Mifflin Co., 1861, 1891), pp. 151-52.

[16] James E. Miller, Jr., "Hawthorne and Melville: The Unpardonable Sin," PMLA, 70 (March 1955), 99.

effect on the pivot because, at the same time that she works to integrate her old cousin into society, she herself is struggling to grow into independent womanhood and to free herself from Clifford's potentially suffocating dependence. This emotional tug-of-war puts an additional strain on the old man's feeble nerves.

One requirement of the pivot is that he hide a mysterious background which perpetuates conflict in the novel. Yet, there are two conflicts, one implied and one apparent. On the surface, Clifford provides the impetus to goad Jaffrey into redoubling his efforts to uncover the Pyncheon family inheritance, which he believes Clifford to have knowledge of. On another, deeper level, the old man's thirty years' imprisonment alternately puzzles and annoys Phoebe because she cannot comprehend the vast blankness of a thirty-year death. Yet, if it were not for that mysterious abyss stretching out behind Clifford, symbolizing all that Phoebe is not, the girl might never have confronted the meaning of life. Although the growth Phoebe experiences is slight measured against her position from the beginning of the novel as a fully-integrated member of society, she is nevertheless the only character who acquires a true sense of the relation of life to death.

The secret background Clifford hides is finally dispelled by Holgrave, who comes forward at the end of the

novel to reveal himself as a Maule and to remove the guilt surrounding Clifford's involvement in the deaths of the two Jaffreys. In this matter is Holgrave important to the delineation of Clifford as the pivot, because he paves the way for the old man's return to society. According to the definition of the pivot, Clifford must have no real part in bringing about this return. Also to be taken into consideration is the fact that by his marriage to Phoebe the daguerreotypist symbolizes a new beginning for the family.

One last aspect of the pivot remains to be explained. The pivot cannot take an active role in the development of the plot, and Clifford seems to violate this stipulation three times. He tries to leap from the balcony, he attempts to go to church with Hepzibah, and he instigates the flight from the house. In every instance, however, his ability to imbibe the moods and energy of others significantly comes into play. During the balcony scene, the author sets forth the attractiveness of the "mighty river of life" as it might present itself to such a person as Clifford: "It might so fascinate him, that he would hardly be restrained from plunging into the surging stream of human sympathies" (p. 165). One critic comments on Phoebe's role in this scene:

> Through Phoebe's ministrations Clifford's desire to join the stream of life in the present is aroused.

> But the effect upon him is not one of gradual recognition of the necessity between permanence and change in life; his is rather a violent reaction against the past that is nothing less than suicidal, as is revealed in his attempt to escape from the house . . . by throwing himself out of the window.[17]

Phoebe also seems to influence him the second time when he decides to go to church. It is significant that the old couple turn back at the door because this is the first time Clifford is shown as being embarrassed over his queer position in life. He is not ready at this point to join life's procession, but he has learned a valuable lesson.

The third, and most violent, time that Clifford seems to commit an act of volition is when he and Hepzibah run away from Jaffrey's corpse. There is no denying that Clifford instigates all the action in this scene. Yet repeatedly Hawthorne attributes Clifford's actions to some outside agency:

> He was possessed and swayed by a powerful excitement. It was this, indeed, that gave him the control which he had at once, and so irresistibly, established over [Hepzibah's] movements. It not a little resembled the exhilaration of wine. Or, it might more fancifully be compared to a joyous piece of music, played with wild vivacity, but upon a disordered instrument. As the cracked, jarring note might always be heard, as it jarred loudest amid the loftiest exultation of the melody, so there was a continual quake through Clifford. . . . (p. 254)

Clifford's new vitality "had . . . startled [him] into manhood and intellectual vigor; or, at least into a

[17]Christoph Lohman, "The Burden of the Past in Hawthorne's American Romances," South Atlantic Quarterly, 66 (Winter 1967), 98.

condition that resembled them, though it might be both diseased and transitory" (p. 258). The further the old couple get from the house, the more animated Clifford becomes, but once his feverish activity tires him, he immediately turns himself over to Hepzibah's control once more. As Ragan comments, Clifford comprehends how important and stabilizing the past is when he realizes he must return to the house: "A dreary home Hepzibah! But you have done well to being me hither!"[18] It is not a stipulation of the pivotal role, but Clifford learns from his experience and, like Pearl, is taught to accept the good from the world of his ancestors while rejecting that which is destructive. It is worthy of remark that both Pearl and Clifford leave their homes to take up a new residence elswhere, and although the endings of both _The Scarlet Letter_ and _The House of the Seven Gables_ have troubled critics as being "inorganic,"[19] a consideration of the function of the pivot perhaps alleviates this disparagement. When the little party of four quits the House of the Seven Gables, they are taking the first step toward the greater good of humanity and away from the morbid isolation that drained

[18]Ragan, p. 422.

[19]See William Charvat, Introduction to _The House of the Seven Gables_, p. xxii.

the family's vitality. On this point, Holmes and Hawthorne seem to be in perfect agreement:

> The centrifugal principle which grows out of the antipathy of like to like is only the repetition in character of the arrangement we see expressed materially in certain seed-capsules, which burst and throw seed to all points of the compass. A house is a large pod with a human germ or two in each of its cells or chambers; it opens by dehiscence of the front-door by and by, and projects one of its germs to Kansas, another to San Francisco, another to Chicago, and so on; and this that Smith may not be Smithed to death and Brown may not be Browned into a mad-house, but mix in with the world again and struggle back to average humanity.[20]

[20]Holmes, p. 152.

CHAPTER VI

THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE

The setting of The Blithedale Romance is important in two ways. On one level, the book is a thinly disguised narrative of the author's experiences at Brook Farm. In fact, a popular pastime among early readers of the novel was to try to guess the "real" identities of the characters. But on another and more significant level, the book is an exploration of human relationships, and Hawthorne uses the setting at Blithedale to isolate the characters in order to illuminate them. The narrator Coverdale filters the story through his "mediating consciousness,"[1] and Hawthorne, through Coverdale, constructs Blithedale as a stage on which is acted out the drama of Coverdale himself, Zenobia, Hollingsworth, Old Moodie, Westervelt, and the pivot--Priscilla.

In The Scarlet Letter and The House of the Seven Gables, the principal characters withdraw from society in the same manner as do those in The Blithedale Romance. But the essential difference is that the characters in

[1] James H. Justus, "Hawthorne's Coverdale: Character and Art in The Blithedale Romance," American Literature, 47 (March 1975), 26.

Hawthorne's first two novels accept the structure of society as unchangeable, and, indeed, the "moral" at the end of each of these two novels seems to be that acceptance of or integration into society is the better way, even given the faults of the good people of Boston and Salem. At the end of Hawthorne's third novel, however, the characters do not affirm man's place in the greater sympathies of mankind. The Blithedalers withdraw from society, not only to hide from it but to accomplish its reform as well. But in spite of their belief that they "had divorced [themselves] from Pride,"[2] they have brought that sin with them. Their isolation is all the more difficult to escape because it is self-imposed and is based on pride. Whereas the seclusion enforced on the characters in The Scarlet Letter is external--with Hester, Dimmesdale, and Chillingworth reinforcing it from the inside, each to his own purpose--the Blithedale utopians paradoxically seclude themselves from each other, a motion which tears the community apart from the inside. They move to the city because of their inability to suppress personal pride for the good of the commune.

At the center of the conflict in the novel, both at Blithedale and in the city, is Priscilla, the pivot. Before Priscilla's role as the pivot can be well understood,

[2]The Blithedale Romance and Fanshawe (Centenary Edition, Vol. III), p. 19.

however, it must be asserted that she is a living symbol of the conventional world outside Blithedale. Although Zenobia is the only one to recognize Priscilla as a symbol of all that those in the commune have vowed to destroy, Priscilla's passive, overly-feminine, and conventional nature affects her relationships to all the other characters. Priscilla is, as her sister exclaims, "the type of womanhood, such as man has spent centuries in making it" (p. 122). It is ironic then, considering their avowed purpose to destroy old conventions, that the members of the Blithedale community readily accept Priscilla as "a domestic sprite" (p. 35) and reinforce her womanly weakness as a type of ethereal, moral beauty. That the people at Blithedale do not recognize their part in maintaining one of society's degrading conventions is important, but more significant is their exploitation of Priscilla, despite all good intentions. While certain of the characters are more active in the manipulation of Priscilla, all of them--to the last one, including Silas Foster--are guilty of perpetuating Priscilla's isolation and vulnerability. They do not help her to change from her stereotyped role. And she remains the opposite of Zenobia, perhaps, as Nina Baym has shown, because

> Zenobia is the natural and external woman, [while] Priscilla is the woman in history, distorted by her social role and misrepresented by the ideals derived from her. She is considered an inferior

> being, subjected, exploited, and yet idealized. The ideal is pernicious because it derives from woman's subjected state and ultimately ennobles the condition of slavery. As seamstress Priscilla represents the whole range of exploited feminine roles in society, all of which, from wife to prostitute, were viewed by feminists as examples of economic subjection of woman to man.[3]

The natural consequence of being truly feminine, with no tempering qualities of the masculine, is to be exploited by other characters who have certain male-like attributes such as aggression, strength--both intellectual and physical--and independence. In fact, during the course of the novel, Priscilla is controlled by each of the other characters according to the degree of masculinity he has. Old Moodie, for example, is the most feminine of all the others in *The Blithedale Romance*, only slightly more assertive than Priscilla. At the beginning he significantly gives over the major portion of his parental power to Hollingsworth, after having failed to assign it to Coverdale. Ironically, Old Moodie has great control over Zenobia's happiness, actually contributing to her moral collapse and eventual suicide when he takes away her inheritance and gives it to Priscilla.

Because they are stronger than Priscilla, and because they use their strength to control, shape, or manipulate the girl, Coverdale, Zenobia, Hollingsworth, and Westervelt

[3] "*The Blithedale Romance*: A Radical Reading," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 67 (Oct. 1968), 561.

play important roles in the delineation of Priscilla as the pivot. The latter three engage in a mutual combat over her, and it is largely through their actions that she feels the centrifugal effect of being in the center of the conflict. "Simply a victim, her debilitation directly caused by the conditions of her exploited life,"[4] Priscilla's plight is underscored by the fact that she plays a pivotal role both inside Blithedale, where Coverdale watches Zenobia and Hollingsworth struggle over her, and in the city, where Coverdale discovers Zenobia and Westervelt manipulatint Priscilla as the Veiled Lady. The common denominator is Zenobia, whose part in Priscilla's drama is reported and enhanced by the poet Coverdale.

Nicholas Canady, Jr., has shown that "in The Blithedale Romance the prominent motif of veils, masks, and disguises--many of which do conceal evil or secret sin or do hide reality--signifies a barrier in human relationships."[5] In fact, the requirement that the pivot hide a mysterious background is obscured by the masks donned by the other characters, who are themselves, as Christoph Lohman

[4]Baym, p. 562.

[5]"Community and Identity at Blithedale," South Atlantic Quarterly, 71 (Winter 1972), 30.

indicates, hiding something.[6] But the reader must never forget that Coverdale (his very name implies a secret or hidden place) is the reporter, and he admits to dressing up his characters in order to emphasize them. Therefore, because the reader's view is essentially that of Coverdale, he is inclined to indetify with the beautiful, vital Zenobia and to reject the colorless Priscilla as peripheral. Coverdale biases the reader almost imperceptibly, constantly setting up Zenobia for display against the pale backdrop of Priscilla. And in this manner he manipulates the girl. He often shows the weaknesses of the younger girl and takes a humorous attitude toward her attempts to mature. She "remind[s] [him] of plants . . . doing their best to vegetate among the bricks of an enclosed court" (p. 50), and she has a "smile like a baby's first one" (p. 73). When she stumbles, it

> was a thing to laugh at, but which brought water into one's eyes, and lingered in the memory after far greater joys and sorrows were swept out of it, as antiquated trash. Priscilla's life, as I beheld it, was full of trifles that affected me in just this way. (pp. 73-74)

Coverdale's true feelings about Priscilla--even in light of the "confession" he makes in the last sentence of the novel--are summed up in a statement which also

[6]"The Burden of the Past in Hawthorne's American Romances," South Atlantic Quarterly, 66 (Winter 1967), 103.

has much to do with his treatment of her in his narration:

> If any mortal really cares for her, it is myself, and not even I, for her realities--poor little seamstress . . . --but for the fancy-work with which I have idly decked her out. (p. 100)

Even while Coverdale seems to be "completely detached,"[7] he is guilty of manipulating Priscilla by omission. His failure to save the girl makes him "an unwilling ally to Westervelt's and Zenobia's using of Priscilla."[8] But, after all, the liberal sprinkling of the feminine in Coverdale's character makes him a rather benign influence over her, a fact that is made clear several times, as in the incident at the hotel when Priscilla, under the more powerful control of Westervelt, declines the poet's offer of help (pp. 172-73). Coverdale prefers to avoid involvement and is content to stage his characters from a distance. Without him, the relationships between them would not have been quite so interesting or apparent.

Just as Coverdale shapes the reader's perceptions of Priscilla and Zenobia by playing them off against each other, Zenobia seeks to emphasize the same contrasts, especially during her tenure at Blithedale. In a way, Zenobia has a veil of her own, an outward display of

[7] John Caldwell Stubbs, _The Pursuit of Form: A Study of Hawthorne and the Romance_ (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), p. 131.

[8] Stubbs, p. 132.

opulence which she enhances by the hot-house flowers and the oriental name which she affects. It is of great import that Zenobia, whose disguise is so rich and striking that she occupies everyone's attention, would feel threatened by Priscilla's rivalry and would feel a constant need to show herself as superior. The dropping of the veil over the poor girl's head at the conclusion of Theodore's tale is a bold affirmation of what Zenobia has been doing to Priscilla all along. She has been shaping Priscilla's image--literally by her actions and figuratively through her words--so that the Blithedalers will see the girl the way Zenobia means for her to be seen. Many times the reader notices that Zenobia "ha[s] been decking out Priscilla . . . [with] fragrant blossoms," only to discover that the woman has placed among them "a weed of evil odor and ugly aspect . . . " (p. 59). The older woman often compliments the girl only to insult her the next moment. In the same way that she flings away the weed when reprimanded by Coverdale, or her hot-house flower when it wilts, Zenobia tosses Priscilla aside time and again, especially when it appears that her cultivation of the young girl's image has failed to produce the desired response from the other characters.

Both the tone of the relationship between the two women and the pattern of Zenobia's isolation and manipulation

of the girl are set at their first meeting. It is unclear whether Zenobia is aware at that time that Priscilla is her sister, but the younger woman knows, for she has idolized Zenobia for years. When Priscilla fixes "a pair of large, brown, melancholy eyes upon Zenobia" (p. 27), she is recalling the earlier "spiritual visits to her spiritual sister" that she had made as a child (p. 186). Zenobia, however, has no such emotional ties, and her action, which Coverdale "never thoroughly forgave" (p. 28), is to repel the girl and insult her before the other colonists. The same scene, with variations, is played over several times in the narrative. Even though Priscilla worships her sister, Zenobia feels an antipathy for her, which Baym describes as that between life and death:

> It has often been said that Zenobia is Eros and Priscilla Agape, where the terms are understood in their Neoplatonic sense of earthly versus spiritual love. If we take Eros in its more contemporary sense, it must be opposed not to Agape but to Thanatos, and that is indeed what Priscilla represents. Where Zenobia is the life force, capable of good, capable of evil but above all simply a reservoir of energy striving to realize itself, Priscilla is spiritually opposed to life; love without passion, art without energy, woman without body.[9]

With Baym's reading in mind, then, it is not difficult to imagine why Zenobia would resent Priscilla. The Blithedalers attribute spirituality to those "large, brown,

[9]Baym, p. 561.

melancholy eyes," but Zenobia sees the girl as a spaniel, a cloying and clinging pet whose dependence is stifling and parasitic. Much the same way that Clifford imbibes his spirit from those around him, Priscilla derives energy from Zenobia and the others. Unlike Clifford, however, Priscilla gains little and gives nothing in return.

Outwardly, Priscilla and Zenobia do exemplify the opposites outlined by Baym, but what Roy R. Male, Jr., has recognized is that Zenobia hates her sister not because of their disparities but because of their likenesses.[10] It is the same antipathy which Oliver Wendell Holmes spoke of as that between members of the same family who hate to see themselves mirrored in each other. In _The House of the Seven Gables_, Hepzibah, Jaffrey, and Phoebe harbor varying degress of dislike for Clifford because they see in him the worst part of their inheritance of the Pyncheon family traits. But Zenobia, I think, does _not_ recognize herself in Priscilla, nor does she realize that she and her sister are more alike than different. Even without understanding what she sees, seeing her own situation magnified and distorted in Priscilla makes Zenobia hate her all the more.

[10]"Toward _The Waste Land_: The Theme of _The Blithedale Romance_," _College English_, 16 (Feb. 1955), 281.

In addition to her natural repugnance, or perhaps because of it, Zenobia's antipathy for her sister becomes an instrument of the men in the manipulation and continued suppression of Priscilla. As we have already seen, Coverdale employs the natural contrast between the two to make his narrative more interesting. Old Moodie also influences the lives of both because he controls the family inheritance. He affects Zenobia's life more greatly because she depends on money more than Priscilla does. Westervelt recognizes better than any one of them that no one hates women who readily accept masculine dominance as much as a woman who has only recently escaped it, and no one is more eager to dominate such a woman than one who is trying to assert her own masculinity and independence. Hollingsworth, too, has power over Zenobia, for it seems that he knows she would accept a more traditionally feminine role and trade her feminism for a lifetime with the reformer. This point is demonstrated during the incident at Eliot's pulpit when Zenobia is confronted by Hollingsworth's uncompromising position against women. Instead of attacking Hollingsworth as Coverdale fully expects her to, she "only looked humbled":

> "Well; be it so," was all she said. "I, at least, have deep cause to think you right. Let man but be manly and godlike, and woman is only too ready to become to him what you say!" (p. 124)

Because of the obscure relationship between the two women, it is impossible to know whether Zenobia knows Priscilla is her sister before their meeting at Blithedale. Even more unclear are the relations of Westervelt to Zenobia and Westervelt to Priscilla. The only certainty is that he does have power over the older woman and uses her to influence and regain control over the younger, perhaps through some form of blackmail. Westervelt, "the symbol of everything that Priscilla is not,"[11] is insidiously evil, and Baym shows that his use of the girl as the Veiled Lady is "an act of ritual violation of [the] very ideal [of sexless purity]."[12] Much of the knowledge the reader has of the previous association of the two sisters (and their relationship, in turn, with Westervelt) is rendered allegorically in Zenobia's legend of the Silvery Veil. At the end of that tale the storyteller throws the gauze over her sister's head, symbolizing that she will soon betray the girl. The wizard of the story does not immediately appear but comes later to claim his prize. One critic points to Westervelt as the representative of "male-dominated society in general, and in particular that

[11] Frederick C. Crews, "A New Reading of The Blithedale Romance," American Literature, 29 (May 1957), 168, n. 18.

[12] Baym, p. 565.

society's attitude to women and their place in the world,"[13] and from a similar premise another pair of critics have suggested that the mesmerist exploits Priscilla as a prostitute.[14] But Westervelt's power over the girl is much more demonic and hideous than a mere control over her body. For, as Judith Fryer maintains, "It makes little difference whether or not Priscilla was actually a prostitute . . . [for] if [her] association with prostitution is deliberate on Hawthorne's part, then it probably is intended as a symbol for her prostituted soul."[15]

Westervelt, with his active manipulation and isolation of Priscilla, appears to have more power over her than any of the other characters in the novel. But while it is true that he has some control over all of them,[16] he actually does not hold the most sway over Priscilla. In

[13]Terence J. Matheson, "Feminism and Femininity in The Blithedale Romance," Nathaniel Hawthorne Journal (1976), p. 221.

[14]Allen and Barbara Lefcowitz, "Some Rents in the Veil: New Light on Priscilla and Zenobia in The Blithedale Romance," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 21 (Dec. 1966), 263-75.

[15]The Faces of Eve: Women in the Nineteenth-Century American Novel (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 92.

[16]Crews, "A New Reading," p. 159. "It should be added that Westervelt . . . is conspicuously linked with references to the Devil. In the romance, he tempts Zenobia into marriage and later tempts Hollingsworth, through Zenobia, to betray Priscilla into his power." Therefore it can be seen that Westervelt has power over all three.

spite of the girl's adoration of her, even Zenobia has little effect on Priscilla's actions. The one person who influences the young girl and actually controls her actions is Hollingsworth. When Old Moodie turns her over to the philanthropist, she becomes his in every sense of the word: "Hollingsworth . . . acts . . . as Moodie's surrogate."[17] Not until Chapter 25, "The Three Together," does he behave as anything other than a father-figure, and "perhaps because he had been the means of introducing Priscilla to her new abode [he] appeared to recognize her as his own especial charge" (p. 74). Their relationship is never emphasized by Coverdale, though he does mention her love for the man and her willingness to obey him in everything. She often assumes an attitude of a weak child when she is near the philanthropist: "Her air, while perfectly modest, delicate, and virginlike, denoted her as swayed by Hollingsworth, attracted to him, and unconsciously seeking to rest upon his strength" (p. 77).

Both women love Hollingsworth, and the rivalry between them for the philanthropist's attentions is "no child's play" (p. 72). Priscilla is torn between her love for her sister, which has been embroidered over the years by her fantasies, and her grateful attraction to the man who alone symbolizes security. But Coverdale rightly

[17]Baym, p. 561.

questions Hollingsworth's inability or unwillingness to make a choice to settle the matter:

> It often amazed me, however, that Hollingsworth should show himself so recklessly tender towards Priscilla, and never once seem to think of the effect which it might have upon her heart . . . I used to see, or fancy, indications that he was not altogether obtuse to Zenobia's influence as a woman. No doubt, however, he had still a more exquisite enjoyment of Priscilla's silent sympathy with his purposes . . . . (p. 78)

Perhaps Hollingsworth does not intend to involve the young girl's heart but only to encourage her to gain strength and independence. But he is only a man, and his weakness is an egotism which feeds on other people's approbation, and since Priscilla's acceptance of him is unbounded it is quite natural that he should love her. Matheson addresses this point, observing that because Priscilla is "an embodiment of an ideally feminine woman, in the conventional, selfishly masculine sense at least, . . . she is both sexually desirable and, in her weakness, capable of blind uncritical love and devotion as well."[18] Therefore, it is not hard to understand why Hollingsworth rejects the sexually threatening Zenobia in favor of the more soothing Priscilla, an action which contributes to Zenobia's suicide.

Hollingsworth's relationship with Priscilla evolves during the course of the narrative, and as it does the

[18]Matheson, p. 219.

reformer becomes increasingly important in the delineation of the pivot. At the beginning he is like a father, and in this role he treats Priscilla as a parent would a child. An example of this occurs early in the narrative. Coverdale describes Priscilla's childlike playfulness at Blithedale but makes fun of her awkwardness, and he relates Hollingsworth's reaction to her frequent tumbles:

> "Priscilla, Priscilla!" cried Hollingsworth, who was sitting on the door-step. "You had better not run any more to-night. You will weary yourself too much. And do not sit down out of doors; for there is a heavy dew beginning to fall!" (p. 76)

Later, though, the father-figure takes on more sinister connotations, especially because it is shrouded. For reasons unknown, Hollingsworth apparently orders Priscilla to obey Westervelt and Zenobia and to follow them to the city. He cannot have been unaware that the two plan to use her as the Veiled Lady. Coverdale tries three times to discover the real motive behind their move to the city and Hollingsworth's part in it. Once Coverdale interrogates Priscilla in Zenobia's town apartment, hoping to find the truth:

> "Priscilla," I inquired, lowering my voice, "when do you go back to Blithedale?"
> "Whenever they please to take me," said she.
> "Did you come of your own free-will?" I asked.
> "I am blown about like a leaf," she replied. I never have any free-will."
> "Does Hollingsworth know that you are here?" said I.
> "He bade me come," answered Priscilla.

> She looked at me, I thought, with an air of surprise, as if the idea were incomprehensible, that she should have taken this step without his agency.
> "What a gripe this man has laid upon her whole being!" muttered I, between my teeth. (p. 171)

Hollingsworth, when queried by Coverdale, refuses to answer, but "gave a convulsive start, as if [Coverdale] had thrust a knife into him, writhed himself round on his seat, glared fiercely into [the poet's] eyes, but answered not a word" (p. 200). The third attempt to discover the truth occurs at Eliot's pulpit, but Coverdale only manages to "come upon a battle-friend, before the smoke was as yet cleared away" (p. 215). We never learn what has actually happened, but it is during this scene that Hollingsworth sheds his paternal role for that of a lover, and Priscilla's function as the pivot is delineated more clearly.

When Hollingsworth declares his love for Priscilla to Zenobia, he exerts his rights as a lover and as a potential husband. But he had given Zenobia the same promises, and, true to her character, she reacts rather violently. So Hollingsworth's declaration of love for Priscilla affects the pivot in two ways: first, it contributes to Zenobia's suicide, which helps to remove an external source of conflict; second, his love for the feminine Priscilla affirms her status as a traditional woman. Therefore, Hollingsworth helps Priscilla to step

into her natural role as wife. He also disbands the contrived utopia of Blithedale and saves her from her artificial life in the city as the Veiled Lady. Coverdale's conclusion seems to indicate, however, that the pivot's return to a more normal society is not fulfilled in The Blithedale Romance, for when he returns to visit the couple later, he finds the two "inhabit[ing] a small cottage, . . . their way of life exceedingly retired" (p. 242). But to Priscilla this life *is* normal; the place of a traditionally feminine woman is at the side of her husband.

As the pivot, Priscilla must play no part in her movement from passive acceptance of manipulation to a more mature interdependence--that is, to a more normal place in society. The other characters must provide this. Old Moodie blesses her with a fortune, which presumably contributes to Hollingsworth's decision to choose the young girl over her sister. Zenobia--for the love of Hollingsworth, for the money she loses, or perhaps remorse[19]--commits suicide, which both removes her from the conflict and drives Hollingsworth to Priscilla. Finally, though, it is Hollingsworth's marriage to the girl which fulfills the final requirement of her role as the pivot. Allen Flint

[19]Justus, p. 28. "That remorse over her betrayal of Priscilla for her own gain . . . might have impelled [Zenobia] to take her own life never occurs to Coverdale."

amplifies this point in his article, "The Saving Grace of Marriage in Hawthorne's Fiction":

> The clearest demonstration of the power of conventional marriage is the condition of the characters at the end of The Blithedale Romance. Zenobia commits suicide, Coverdale continues his discontented bachelorhood, Hollingsworth is unhappy at his failure, but Priscilla, married and saving Hollingsworth from the life of a reformer, is truly contented. Unlike Zenobia, she can accept a submissive role and, through marriage, turn it into a protective one.[20]

Where all the others fail because of their destructive characteristics, Priscilla is able to survive. She is the cause of the central conflict in the tale--the antagonism between the polarized societies of Blithedale and the city, and on another level between aggression and passivity--and, at the same time, her extremely obscure background fuels the flames of that discord. By remaining passive, she allows the others to shape her life, and eventually--unexpectedly--they bring her to a better state of affairs. One hesitates to make the generalization that Hawthorne meant to sanction Priscilla's passivity as being the right way to endure adversity. Rather, I think he means to contrast Miles Coverdale's subsequent life with Priscilla's. What she has learned from her experience at Blithedale--and what he most certainly has not learned--is to support and be supported by another person, to

[20]"The Saving Grace of Marriage in Hawthorne's Fiction," Emerson Society Quarterly, NS 19 (II Quarter 1973), 116.

provide love while receiving it, and to turn life outward away from herself.

CHAPTER VII

THE MARBLE FAUN: OR, THE ROMANCE OF MONTE BENI

> "And the only consolation is," remarked Kenyon, "that the blurred and imperfect image may still make a very respectable appearance in the eyes of those who have not seen the original."[1]

The Marble Faun does not have a comprehensive pivot. That is, no single character fulfills all of the requirements of the pivot as set forth in the preceding chapters of this thesis. There is one important reason for this altered pattern: Hawthorne's changing concept of the romance, a change which is strikingly manifested in the opposition of Miriam and Hilda. In the two romances immediately before *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne uses the conflict between the light and dark heroines to illustrate or represent the basic conflict of the pivot. In *The House of the Seven Gables*, for example, Hepzibah and Phoebe are antipodes of age and youth, ugliness and beauty, isolation and integration. The two women are symbols of Clifford's dilemma--whether he will accept life over death and truth over falsity. *The Marble Faun*, however, presents no clear division. Superficially, Hilda and Miriam do conform to the stereotypes of the dark woman and the snow maiden, as

[1] *The Marble Faun: Or, the Romance of Monte Beni* (Centenary Edition, Vol. IV), p. 379.

Priscilla and Zenobia do in The Blithedale Romance. Like Priscilla, Hilda is physically frail, pure, innocent, and naïve. Miriam, like Zenobia, is sexually dynamic, earthy, and experienced. But in the intervening years between the two romances, Hawthorne changed his mind about the traditional treatment of light and dark heroines. Hilda, much like Zenobia, is hard, relentless, and unforgiving, ruled more by her head than her heart. And Miriam, resembling Priscilla, begs for acceptance, forgiveness, and love. Paul John Eakin writes,

> Not only does [Hawthorne] expose the innocent Hilda to a knowledge of evil but he involves the sinful Miriam, for all her speculations which proceed beyond the bounds of received moral law, in the orthodox drama of Donatello's salvation. In doing so, he has given to the dark heroine, with her superior capacity for action, the redemptive role usually assigned to the passive innocence of the fair heroine. . . . [2]

Hand in hand with the blurring of the distinction between the light and dark heroines is a widening and obscuring of the pivotal function. Instead of a pivot in the center between two well-defined poles, there is in The Marble Faun a sharing of the role of pivot among Hilda, Miriam, and Donatello, all of whom undergo the movement from isolation to interdependence as the previous pivots have done.

[2] The New England Girl: Cultural Ideals in Hawthorne, Stowe, Howells and James (Athens: Georgia University Press, 1976), p. 79.

Because of the complexity of the problems in Hawthorne's last romance, no single pivot would have been sufficient.

One other obstacle stands in the way of a clear interpretation of the pivot in *The Marble Faun*. Heretofore, the characters in the romances have been set apart in clearly defined communities within which they were isolated. In *The Scarlet Letter*, the four principals live in Boston and are, in effect, insulated from the society they originally came from--Europe; within Boston, they are isolated for various reasons from the society there. The Pyncheon family's isolation within the House of the Seven Gables is quite apparent, but it can be further stressed that the house itself is set away from the mainstream of life in the town. Nor does Hawthorne break the pattern in his third romance. The characters in *The Blithedale Romance* all begin in Boston, work their separate ways to the Blithedale commune, and then insulate themselves there from the rest of the transcendentalists. As I have shown, the conflict in *Blithedale* exists between Priscilla and the three other characters who stand in the way of Priscilla's attempts to be integrated into a society in which she can function normally. The conflicts in these novels are more easily discerned because they are played out against the backgrounds of societies which the reader can understand. The background of *The Marble Faun*, on the other hand, is

multifaceted, and its different levels affect the reader's perception of the pivot. Therefore, a clear understanding of the setting is important.

Obviously, the primary setting of the romance is Rome, which, as Gary J. Scrimgeour has shown, is more effective than Hawthorne's usual New England setting would have been. Here the artists "have complete freedom of movement . . . given to them by residence in the artists' colony of Rome."[3] Inside the colony are Hilda, Miriam, Kenyon, and Donatello; among them, "a sort of intimacy subsequently grew up" (p. 22), a circle of friendship which excludes all others. Moreover, the three artists have a personal reserve which makes it difficult for even their closest friends--one another--to be admitted into the inner sphere of their affections. Miriam, who appears friendly enough, has yet "some subtile quality [that] . . . kept people at a distance, without so much as letting them know that they were excluded from her inner circle" (p. 21). Hilda, similarly, has "a certain simplicity that made every one her friend, but it was combined with a subtle attribute of reserve, that insensibly kept those at a distance who were not suited to her sphere" (p. 63). And Kenyon, as Miriam

[3]"The Marble Faun: Hawthorne's Faery Land," American Literature, 36 (Nov. 1964), 271-87. Rpt. in The Merrill Studies in The Marble Faun, ed. David B. Kesterson (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1971), p. 21.

tells him in despair, is "'as cold and pitiless as . . . marble'" (p. 129). They are all unable to give freely of their emotions and are therefore isolated from the warmth of love and friendship. Donatello especially suffers from their selfishness, for his natural, childlike impulse is to love and be loved. On this level, the romance presents no problem in interpretation. The conflict is social. When Miriam and Donatello commit murder, the isolation of the characters from the outside world and from each other deepens. Each character seeks to protect or prove his independence from the others by secluding himself.

The introduction of Donatello into the circle of friends puts the romance against another, more intangible background--that of the past. Although the action of the story line occurs in the present, the true meaning of the romance lies on this second level of time. As F. O. Matthiessen shows, "Thus perpetually for Hawthorne the shimmer of the now [is] merely the surface of the deep pool of history."[4] Donatello has a special link to the past because of his "very close, and very strange" resemblance to the Marble Faun of Praxiteles (p. 7): "In truth, allowing for the difference of costume . . . Donatello might have figured perfectly as the mythical Faun, miraculously softened into flesh and blood" (p. 8). Donatello's

[4] American Renaissance, p. 355.

connection to the past is twofold. First, he is an antique Faun of the mythical past, more animal than man. It is here in the Dionysian past--a time which is fecund and creative--that he must win Miriam from the Model. Her nemesis resembles a Satyr by way of his unusual dress: "and, in truth, the Spectre of the Catacomb might have represented the last survivor of that vanished race . . . " (p. 30). The conflict with the Model brings out "a trait of savageness" in the otherwise gentle Donatello (p. 18), which "resembled not so much a human dislike or hatred, as one of those instinctive, unreasoning antipathies which the lower animals display . . . " (p. 36). Donatello, as Faun, must kill the Satyr in order to move away from instinct and unreason and toward a fulfilled, mature love for Miriam. On a second level, Donatello is associated with the inflexible marble of the classical, or Apollonian, past, which is cold, sterile, and intellectual. Here in the frozen world of art is Hilda, who remains isolated from reality. Donatello's conflict on this level is to challenge Hilda's static Christianity which has allowed her no growth or intellectual speculation. Very significant and ironic is the Model's connection with the Capuchin monks, for on this plane he represents, in opposition to Hilda, a godless, egocentric religion. Donatello at one point comes dangerously close to succumbing to the

Model's self-serving kind of Catholicism when, after the murder, he turns to morbid introspection and morose ritual. Therefore, Donatello must reconcile somehow the rigid, unforgiving faith of Hilda and the Capuchin monks' filthy, animalistic religion. To become caught up in either is to deny that God wishes man to have the warmth and love of others. All four of the major characters are living in the past, isolated from one another, and they must throw off the weight of the past before they can be fully integrated into the present.

Claudia D. Johnson observes that, at the beginning of the romance

> each of the four characters is in a state of withdrawal from the active, time-affected world, out of touch with society, and out of sympathy with other people: Donatello in his Arcadia is too animalistic to be called fully human; Hilda lives in an angel's untouchable world; Miriam broods in the dark cave of bitterness; and Kenyon lives in the cold marble world of art. Each must, if he is to reach a higher form of being, first enter a period of self-scrutiny, become fully aware of his own ignominy, and, as Donatello finally does, emerge from inwardness to commit himself in love to other mortals.[5]

Indeed, the romance is structured around three cyclical movements involving Miriam, Donaello, and Hilda as each moves from isolation to reunion. While Kenyon (the

[5]"Hawthorne and Nineteenth-Century Perfectionism," American Literature, 44 (Jan. 1973), 593.

protagonist) remains static,[6] for all practical purposes an integrated member of society, the three others develop toward a reintegration into that society.

The first character to undergo the transformation is Miriam Schaefer.[7] As I have stated, she has certain pivotal characteristics. First is her mysterious background which spawns a constant speculation among all the artists in Rome. Many believe her to be the "heiress of a great Jewish banker," or "a German princess," or "the offspring of a Southern American planter, . . . [with] one burning drop of African blood in her veins" (pp. 22-23). Her unknown past is all the more scandalous because of her seemingly unnatural relationship to the Model. Miriam herself sheds little light on the truth, making up fantastic stories about the Model, whom she claims is her "evil genius" (p. 95). Whatever the truth, Miriam feels tainted by that association and hopelessly alienated from normal human intercourse. Her isolation is another pivotal attribute, one which takes a heavy toll on her. The paintings in her studio, depicting

[6] Nina Baym, _The Shape of Hawthorne's Career_, pp. 231-32. Kenyon abandons his ambitions in Rome to return to America to live a safer life with Hilda.

[7] In his article, "The Structure of _The Marble Faun_," _American Literature_, 28 (Nov. 1956), 302-13, Merle E. Brown explains that "the design of _The Marble Faun_ is rather curious; it is a single idea, the transformation from innocence to experience, repeated with no major deviations, four times." Although I have not used Brown's divisions, his article made clear the recurring pattern of transformation in the novel.

herself alternately as murderess and victim, early in the narrative hint at what she later confesses to Kenyon:

> "I am lonely, lonely, lonely! There is a secret in my heart that burns me!--that tortures me! Sometimes, I fear to go mad of it! Sometimes, I hope to die of it! But neither of the two happens. Ah, if I could but whisper it to only one human soul!" (p. 128)

Miriam's mysterious background and consequent isolation are connected somehow, as I have said, with the strange man she meets in the catacombs. He openly asserts his power over her, ominously telling Kenyon that "'henceforth, I am nothing but a shadow behind her footsteps'" (p. 31). True to his word, he appears almost everywhere that Miriam does, and soon his presence becomes an entrapment to the artist. The Model believes their fates to be forever linked together, and he warns her that there can be only one end to their relationship. She must come away with him. Miriam thinks him mad; "But, alas! such was her evil fortune, that, whether mad or no, his power over her remained the same, and was likely to be used only the more tyrannously if exercised by a lunatic" (p. 96). As she becomes more and more oppressed by this thraldom, Miriam seeks to reveal her secret to Kenyon or to Hilda but is turned away by their cold hearts and their fear of her. Miriam's isolation deepens. In a way, Donatello's perseverance is a manipulation of Miriam, too, because his constant begging for her to be cheerful and happy only reminds

her of her horrible reasons not to be. Finally, however, Miriam decides that the Faun is her last hope, but the very night she plans to confide in him, the Model is flung to his death.

Miriam's growth from isolation and manipulation toward independence and interdependence depends upon her ability to escape from that which oppresses her; therefore, her great need to be out from under the influence of the Model's poisonous strength gives her enough power to will his death. Even then, she has not fully escaped him--not until she confronts his corpse at the monastery, defying it and vowing to meet its soul on Judgment Day: "'I fear not to meet thee there,'" she says (p. 191). The pivotal function of Miriam ends here. At this point, she becomes free and independent, but her new power, derived from that freedom, is a threat to Donatello and Hilda. After the murder, her relationship to these two changes radically. Donatello seems crushed by the weight of his new knowledge of sin, a knowledge which is inextricably bound up with Miriam. He withdraws to his ancestral home in order to be away from that smothering influence. Hilda too finds it necessary to withdraw so that she can completely shut out and deny the existence of evil, in spite of what she has seen. Miriam has no pivotal function from the moment of the murder onward, for although she did not throw the Model

over the edge herself, she willed Donatello do to it for her.[8] This act--which violates the requirement that the pivot remain passive--puts Miriam in control; she is no longer a victim or a pivot.

Hilda remains unchanged until she witnesses the murder, after which she begins a cycle of growth. During the second half of the romance she moves into a pivotal position. In her tower above Rome she is isolated from all but her doves. At first the isolation is self-imposed. Hilda wishes to exclude all that does not please her (almost everything). Later, in the days after the murder, the isolation is reinforced from the outside. Instead of insulating herself so that she will not be dirtied, she now hides from those who she thinks might notice her stain. She is manipulated, though rather passively, and none but Hilda is aware of it. For example, Donatello's resemblance to the Faun and, later, his apparent maturation after committing the murder challenge her perception of her religion. When Miriam makes an effort to renew their friendship after the crime, the young girl feels threatened. The only way to save herself is to sacrifice Miriam, and indeed, Hilda considers their relationship as completely severed as if

[8]Not all critics consider Donatello blameless; among them is Joseph C. Pattison, "The Guilt of the Innocent Donatello," Emerson Society Quarterly, 31 (II Quarter 1963), 66-68. Rpt. in The Merrill Studies in The Marble Faun, ed. David B. Kesterson (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1971), pp. 89-93.

death has come between them: "It was as if Hilda or Miriam were dead, and could no longer hold intercourse without violating a spiritual law" (p. 207). At the same time, Kenyon's love for her stirs up unfamiliar thoughts, upsetting her plans to remain pure. Twice later he tests her faith as well, first when he berates her for entering the confessional, and much later when he asks her to consider the idea of the fortunate fall.

Hilda's only foundation--purity--has been cracked, and the only way for her to shore it up is to protect it from further pressure. She withdraws completely and refuses to see anyone. In her occupation as copyist, Hilda has learned to go "straight to the central point" of pictures (p. 57), copying "some high, noble, and delicate portion of it" (p. 58), and she has taken her religion the same way--accepting only those parts which suit her and rejecting all others. Therefore, it is important that when Hilda visits the picture galleries in Rome she finds her once flawless perception of the Old Masters ruined; she no longer has "the faculty of appreciating those great works of art, which heretofore had made so large a portion of her happiness" (p. 335). It is essential that Hilda should fail to find solace in the paintings because she must learn that art offers a cold isolation from nature, which offers love and warmth. Just as important, she

must see her religion for what it is, cold and sterile. Visiting the confessional booth gives her a glimpse of a religion in which people seek other people for comfort, relying on saints and priests to intercede between them and God. She goes because she has lost her ability to meet God herself--she "groped for Him in the darkness . . . and found Him not" (p. 359). She "finds herself," as Bernard J. Paris writes, "for the first time, in need of human aid."[9]

The trial Hilda has begun in the picture gallery and in St. Peter's is brought to a head during her imprisonment in the Cenci palace. Hawthorne gives us an enigmatic vision of Hilda in "a Land of Picture," where she visits with her former friends, "the departed Masters of the pencil" (p. 452). The unreal palace scene may be a symbolic recapitulation of Hilda's earlier entrancement with art, and her reappearance on the balcony signals her return to the actual. Hilda has changed, however. She has learned to distinguish reality (love) from appearance--the painted veneer of art which she had mistaken for reality. Her union with Kenyon (and her return to the world of convention and Puritan mores) is represented by the single rosebud

[9]"Optimism and Pessimism in The Marble Faun," Boston University Studies in English, 2 (1956), 95-112. Rpt. in The Merrill Studies in The Marble Faun, ed. David B. Kesterson (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1971), p. 71.

which she throws off the balcony, striking Kenyon on the lips. Hilda's severity toward Miriam and Donatello has been lessened by her new knowledge of life and her love for Kenyon. However, she will never freely give her heart to the two sinners. The interdependence which she might have had is incomplete.

Hilda is a complete pivot, albeit the weakest since Ellen Langton in Fanshawe. Hilda's growth parallels Donatello's in many ways, dominating the second half of The Marble Faun. Like Dimmesdale and the scholar Fanshawe, Hilda commits the sin of self-imposed isolation. However, Hilda's separation is not so much the result of her desire to be quit of the world as it is the direct product of her upbringing as "a daughter of the Puritans" (p. 466). The fact that Hilda returns to America, to the very society which had restricted her before, weakens the notion that the pivot signals a return at the end of the novel to a happier state of affairs. Hawthorne seems to be endorsing the idea that Hilda can only be happy "as a household Saint" (p. 461) and that she is lucky to have survived her narrow scrape with intelligence. Hilda receives her ideas; they are not original. Because she is no free thinker, unlike Dimmesdale or Fanshawe, she is able to re-establish herself in the community she knows best. Hilda has learned little, and feels less.

Finally, it is Donatello whom we must look to as the pivot of The Marble Faun. Whereas Hilda and Miriam have had pivotal functions in only half of the novel, Donatello's presence dominates throughout and perpetuates the tension in the relationships among all the characters. As he travels through the cycle from isolation to integration, Donatello grows away from his childlike association with the Faun of Arcady into a more mature existence as a human being, although he has not reached full maturity at the end of the romance.[10] His growth unsettles the other characters, causing them to rethink their own comprehension of life. A reevaluation becomes especially important to the others at the moment that Donatello tosses the Model over the Tarpeian Rock, for they have to determine their own place among the world's sinners. Hawthorne intimates that because all life is tainted with sin, a knowledge of sin is essential for an understanding of life. Donatello's crime, whether committed of his own volition or by Miriam's, is the central idea of the novel, and it is his function as the pivot to embody the conflict surrounding that idea.

[10]Arne Axelsson, The Links in the Chain: Isolation and Interdependence in Nathaniel Hawthorne's Characters, Studia Upsaliensia Series No. 17 (Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 1974), pp. 93-94. Axelsson divides Donatello's growth into "three phases which might be termed Donatello the Faun, Donatello the Fallen Man, and Donatello the Fulfilled Man" (p. 93). However, I do not agree that Donatello becomes (in Axelsson's sense) a Fulfilled Man.

During the first part of the romance, Donatello has a strong resemblance to the Faun. He finds his greatest enjoyment when he is outside Rome on the grounds of the Villa Borghese. It seems as if he really were a Faun--the animals there "recognized him . . . as something akin to themselves" (p. 74). In this he resembles Pearl, who enjoys a strange rapport with the wild creatures of the woods. Like Pearl, again, Donatello is lawless, completely outside the rules of society (p. 14). Because he is intellectually undeveloped, he is morally incomplete and not responsible for what he does. Without the higher faculty of reasoning, he can be considered no more than a child or a pet. His friends have a "kindly and half-contemptuous regard" for him (p. 22), and Miriam especially dismisses him as a fool, a simpleton, a child. When she tires of playing with him, she takes her leave, saying, "'you grow a little wearisome'" (p. 50). Before and up to the murder, Donatello is an unreasoning Faun, innocent, but not to be completely regarded as harmless. In fact, his uncomprehending nature makes him easily manipulated by the others. Miriam uses his complete trust in her to her advantage, ordering him about as she would a small child; Hilda fears him; Kenyon studies him. Not one considers him a true friend. The three isolate him, not by commission but by omission; when they withdraw into their own seclusions, they leave him behind.

In this stage of his development Donatello is easily controlled. The most overt manipulation of the Faun occurs when Miriam allows him to throw the Model over the edge of the precipice. Twice earlier he had begged for her permission to kill the hated Capuchin. The first time, in a fit of animal rage, he threatens to strangle the very life out of him:

> "Shall I clutch him by the throat?" whispered Donatello with a savage scowl. "Bid me do so, and we are rid of him forever." (p. 91)

At the Fountain of Trevi, with "tiger-like fury gleaming from his wild eyes," he threatens again:

> "Bid me drown him!" whispered he, shuddering between rage and horrible disgust. "You shall hear his death gurgle in an instant!" (p. 148)

Both times Miriam calls him back in mock amusement, as she would a comically enraged pet dog, making light of his fury. At the Tarpeian Rock there is no restraint. Her eyes give Donatello permission, and at her acquiescence, "Donatello flung his victim off the cliff" (p. 173). The question of will is important here because of the requirement that the pivot take no active part in the development of the plot. Donatello unmistakeably violates that condition. The action is his, but the responsibility is Miriam's. It was as if he were part of her, with as much control over his actions as if he were her hands.

After the murder Donatello enters a new stage of development, what Arne Axelsson calls "Donatello the Fallen

Man."[11] At the Medici Gardens, burdened with a guilt greater than he can comprehend, Donatello begins to lose his resemblance to the Faun (p. 201). However, he is still sufficiently animal-like to be unable to make his own decisions. He cannot commit himself wholeheartedly to Miriam, and when she leaves him he is not forceful enough to make her stay. This can be seen as a token, though, that he has indeed grown; he does not follow her out of the garden as he would have when he was her spaniel.

She leaves him, and he returns to his ancestral home. There, he "starts a process of mental growth and moral maturity,"[12] a journey which parallels Hilda's in some ways. As it was her first impulse to retreat into the world of art, which had been so comforting to her before, it is Donatello's desire to return to the woods to be reunited with the "wild, nimble things" who had been his friends in happier times (p. 247). He summons them, only to find that no animal, "save a brown lizard," will respond to his voice: "To all present appearance, this venomous reptile was the only creature that had responded to the young Count's efforts to renew his intercourse with the lower orders of Nature" (p. 249). Donatello takes this as a sign that "no innocent creature can come near [him]" (p. 249) and his despondency is like Hilda's when she discovers

[11]Axelsson, p. 93. [12]Axelsson, p. 94.

that the Old Masters have deserted her. Similarly, Donatello's religion changes as Hilda's does. They both look to Catholicism, although in different degrees. For Donatello, the Catholic trappings in his room begin to take on a new meaning--"Several ugly prints . . . [a] crucifix. . . . an image of the sacred Bambino, in the guise of a little waxen boy. . . . a small vase of precious marble . . . full of holy water. . . . [and] a human skull. . . . carved in gray alabaster" (p. 255). All these things stand between him and God, but Donatello is not quite mature enough to realize this. Kenyon recognizes the danger, and he warns the young man:

> "Believe me . . . you know not what is requisite for your spiritual growth, seeking as you do to keep your soul perpetually in the unwholesome region of remorse. It was needful for you to pass through that dark valley, but it is infinitely dangerous to linger there too long; there is poison in the atmosphere, when you sit down and brood in it. . . . Not despondency, not slothful anguish, is what you now require--but effort!" (p. 273)

In the same manner that Hilda finds herself without the solace of the Old Masters, Donatello fails to find comfort in his childhood home. For him to have found refuge either in his tower or in the forest would have meant a longer isolation from mankind. In order for him to be fully integrated into society, he has to make a complete break from Monte Beni and the past. Kenyon believes that Miriam can develop the "germs of faculties" (p. 208)

that have sprung up in Donatello, and he devises a plan whereby they might be reunited. He suggests to Donatello that they take a ramble throughout the Italian countryside. It should be noticed that Donatello has no strength of will to resist Kenyon's suggestion, but when the two meet up with Miriam in the marketplace in Perugia, the young man willingly places his hand in hers and makes a mature commitment to live out his life with her. Somewhere along the way, visiting shrine after shrine of painted Madonnas, he has learned that his true place belongs among the living, even though it means an unbreakable tie to the coauthor of his sin, a connection which "never--except by heaven's own act--should be rent asunder" (p. 321).

Donatello's link to Miriam does not indicate his happiness or a final integration into society, but it does give him a brief respite from his recent gloom. In the time between the scene in the marketplace and their arrest during the carnival, Donatello and Miriam live a joyful life reminiscent of his earlier days as a Faun. This corresponds to Hilda's bittersweet imprisonment in the Cenci palace; as she has been taught by experience to perceive the Old Masters in a new, duskier light, Donatello's life in the interim before arrest has a tinge of sadness to it: "A playfulness came out of his heart, and glimmered like firelight on his actions, alternating, or even closely

intermingled, with profound sympathy and serious thought" (p. 434). Before Donatello can take his place among mankind, however, he has to go to prison to pay for the murder he has committed, and, according to Arne Axelsson, it is a mark of his maturity that he gives himself up, "as a necessary prelude to finding a lasting peace with God and men."[13]

From isolation, manipulation, and passivity, Donatello moves toward the necessary pivotal role of symbolizing the return of the characters at the end of the novel to a more normal society. The return is begun when he kills the Model, for until that time he was content to remain the same. This act frees Miriam, and impels Hilda and Kenyon to reevaluate their lives. All benefit from the death of Miriam's oppressor, although only Miriam is willing to accept such an unorthodox idea. Another step in the journey back to reintegration is made at the statue of the Bronze Pontiff, when Donatello accepts Miriam and stops running from his responsibility for the murder. The last step that we see, though most certainly not Donatello's final one, occurs when he turns himself over to the authorities. He has not reached a full maturity, but we know that he will. The most important thing to be noticed about all of this is that Donatello is instrumental in bringing about his own return to integration, unlike the other pivots--Pearl,

[13]Axelsson, p. 94.

Clifford, Priscilla, and Hilda (and to a certain extent Miriam)--who relied on others to clear the way for them.

The Marble Faun, Nina Baym observes, is Hawthorne's "most technically complex [work] and the most difficult to understand."[14] Although some would have it that the romance is the product of Hawthorne's disintegration, I believe that it is an innovation in American literature as important as Moby Dick. The wider use of the pivot, a character which Hawthorne had used throughout his career, is an indication that he was growing toward a new conception of romance. The old answers were no longer good enough. He invented Donatello to challenge the traditional romantic ideas. Unfortunately, he could not abandon entirely the old formula. Hilda and Kenyon, not Miriam and Donatello, epitomize Hawthorne's recurring theme of happy marriage; Hilda, like Ellen Langton, Priscilla, and Phoebe Pyncheon, is the household Saint by the fireside. What makes The Marble Faun so unique among Hawthorne's novels is that the author no longer saw the pivot as a separate character, complete in and of himself, but as one whose actions are repeated, with variations, among the other characters. The growth that each experiences illustrates different views of Hawthorne's major theme: isolation and escape from it.

[14] Baym, p. 248.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters I have tried to show that each of Hawthorne's four mature romances has a completely developed pivotal character.[1] Each of the pivots has a strikingly similar role: Pearl, Clifford, Priscilla, and Donatello are isolated from the world of reality and are manipulated by other characters who either seek to discover or to preserve the pivot's secret. That secret usually involves a myserious background, which, if revealed, would affect the lives of others. The pivot's secret, in effect, is what keeps him under the control of other people, and once the secret is revealed or becomes no longer important, the pivotal character is freed from his isolation. Throughout the narrative the pivot remains passive, and although he experiences a growth toward maturity, he never gains enough strength to bring about his own release. He is eventually integrated into society. The other characters who are also able to return are those who have grown with

[1]This conclusion concerns only the four completed romances, for they fit the pattern more perfectly than do Fanshawe and the tales.

the pivot into maturity or who, in the course of the novel, have come to sympathize with him.

The recurring pivot in Hawthorne's works is puzzling. That Hawthorne had some concept of the pivot seems obvious, for it is too well worked out to have been a coincidence. On the other hand, it is impossible to tell just how conscious the author was of the character while he was writing the romances. First, the pivot does not in any way seem contrived or overwritten as it might have been had Hawthorne been struggling with it. The character might have been made wooden--static--or too obviously repetitive throughout Hawthorne's career as we sometimes notice in the character types Randall Stewart outlined. For example, the snow-maiden, seen in many of Hawthorne's works from the early tales to The Marble Faun, never changes from its original conception, and as a result the type becomes less and less satisfactory as the novels become more and more complex. The pivot, however, is somewhat more flexible. The pivotal role is filled by characters from the various categories delineated by Stewart. Therefore, as the demands of the novels evolved, the pivot was able to take on various guises while retaining the same function. Second, I believe the pivot, or something nearly like it, is a part of traditional romance. This is not to say that Hawthorne was a slave to his own form; rather, the contrary

is true. Hawthorne took the conventional form of romance, especially those parts concerning the movement of the hero or the heroine in the plot, and transformed it by transferring certain functions of the hero to the pivot.

Northrop Frye, in his essay The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance, proposes that the protagonist of a romance proceeds from isolation to integration. The hero descends to the underworld and fights his loss of identity there. He is hindered in the underworld by human or supernatural figures who try to control and immobilize him. The hero precipitates, through great strength or cunning, this ascent from the underworld, and he is thereby able to return to his previous state of existence or to a higher world, such as Heaven.[2]

Frye's treatment of the themes of descent and ascent as they concern the protagonists of romance can be applied neatly to the journey the pivot makes in a Hawthorne romance. The descent to the underworld--marked in romance by a complete break with the real world[3]--is begun when the pivot emerges from a kind of prison into a society only slightly less restricting. The first sight we have

[2] The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 54.

[3] Frye, p. 102.

of Pearl occurs when she and Hester Prynne emerge from the Boston prison. Pearl is

> A baby of some three months old, who winked and turned aside its little face from the too vivid light of day; because its existence, heretofore, had brought it acquainted only with the gray twilight of a dungeon, or other darksome apartment of the prison. (SL, p. 52)[4]

Clifford, similarly, has been imprisoned before the opening of the narrative, and his first movements are as feeble as a child's. In The Blithedale Romance Hawthorne only hints that Priscilla has come from a kind of prison, but Coverdale observes that

> her face was of a wan, almost sickly hue, betokening habitual seclusion from the sun and free atmosphere . . . (BR, p. 27)

Coverdale also recalls Hollingsworth's work to reform criminals, and "deemed it possible that he might have brought one of his guilty patients" to Blithedale (BR, p. 27). By the time Hawthorne wrote The Marble Faun, his prison imagery had become quite refined. Donatello's is a strange prison, the marble of the Faun of Praxiteles. Encouraged by his friends at the Capitol Gallery, Donatello "threw himself into the position in which the statue had been standing for two or three thousand years" (MF, p. 8)--he seems to become the statue. The narrator remarks that

[4]The following abbreviations for the novels will be used in subsequent references to Hawthorne's works in this chapter: The Scarlet Letter, SL; The House of the Seven Gables, HSG; The Blithedale Romance, BR; The Marble Faun, MF.

> only a sculptor of the finest imagination . . . could first have dreamed of a Faun in this guise, and then have succeeded in imprisoning the sportive and frisky thing in marble. (MF, p. 10)

As each of the pivots steps from prison, he enters a restricted society which acts to insulate him from the larger world. Pearl contends with Boston and the attempts of the magistrates to force her to conform to their mores. Within the Puritan community, Pearl is isolated still further in the cottage where Hester Prynne has retreated. For Clifford, the Salem community is a hostile world. The citizens are willing to believe Jaffrey a kindly benefactor, but worse, are content to ignore completely the old couple in the House of the Seven Gables. Priscilla lives her entire life in various seclusions, and when she joins the Blithedale community, she is effectively cut off from all the world outside. Donatello, as I have shown, is isolated within the different levels of Rome. For each of these characters the isolation is more than physical, for there is little or no memory of the past. Hawthorne reveals almost nothing of what came before the opening of the narrative.

While in the underworld the romantic hero fights adversaries who threaten him with a loss of identity. The danger to the pivot, as has been seen in the preceding chapters, is the same, but the response is different. The pivot's true identity is a mystery--Pearl's connection with

the scarlet letter, Clifford's culpability in his uncle's death, Priscilla's role as the Veiled Lady and her relationship to Zenobia, and Donatello's resemblance to the extinct Faun. That identity is what the other characters are the most essentially interested in controlling. However, the pivot remains almost entirely passive. Pearl and Donatello chafe against their manipulation and isolation, but they are fairly powerless to do anything about it. The child can only attack weeds and pretend they are her Puritan enemies. Donatello's will remains passive even when he kills his nemesis because he is under the control of the stronger-minded Miriam. Priscilla and Clifford, on the other hand, use passivity to greater advantage. In fact each of these two pivots seems to welcome control, for that means that neither has to contend with the outside world. As a result, these two are the least integrated of the four pivots when the novels end.

The romantic hero relies on force and cunning to win his way out of the underworld. The pivots, as has been seen, are by no means responsible for their release from control and isolation. Instead, two factors come together during the climax of the novel so that the pivot is freed without violating his passivity. These two factors are death and discovery. In _The Scarlet Letter_, _The House of the Seven Gables_, and _The Blithedale Romance_, the pattern

is nearly the same. Pearl is released by the death of Dimmesdale, who reveals on the scaffold that he is her father. The mysterious death of Jaffrey in _The House of the Seven Gables_ is closely attended by Holgrave's announcement that Clifford has had nothing to do with the murders of either of the two Jaffreys. Similarly, Zenobia's death, which leaves Hollingsworth and Priscilla the opportunity to marry, comes swiftly after the reader learns the two women are sisters and that Priscilla is actually the Veiled Lady.

In each of the first three novels, the death of the strongest (or in the case of Dimmesdale, the most intense) adversary comes at the end of the novel, and the pivot, no longer hindered, can return to the safe arms of society. However, in the last of Hawthorne's completed novels, _The Marble Faun_, this pattern is broken. The death of the Model divides the romance into two halves; and, in fact, Donatello does not end his journey with his adversary's death, but begins in a different direction. Hawthorne changed the structure to accommodate the unique character of Donatello, who begins that journey not as a child but as a subhuman animal. Donatello must spend the first half of the romance slowly evolving out of his association with the pagan past, but Hawthorne knew the character demanded some kind of violent shock to force him to grapple

with higher, spiritual questions. Hawthorne, as narrator, points out that

> Death has probably a peculiar horror and ugliness, when forced upon the contemplation of a person so naturally joyous as Donatello, who lived with completeness in the present moment, and was able to form but vague images of the future. (MF, p. 185)

Donatello breaks with Hawthorne's pattern in one other respect. The three earlier pivots all return to a normal society at the end of the novel, but only Donatello has the potential to ascend to a higher plane. He begins his journey imprisoned in the Faun and near the middle of the novel has matured to a more human, although childlike state. The murder of the Model throws Donatello into a deep despair, but it must be asserted that he could not have experienced such an overwhelming human emotion if he had not already attained some growth in that direction. Therefore, it is significant that Donatello returns to prison at the end of The Marble Faun. I believe that Hawthorne means to indicate that a fully human Donatello, complete with divine spark, will emerge from the Roman prison sometime after the novel closes to enter a fulfilled life with Miriam.

The prefaces to Hawthorne's novels reveal that he was deadly serious about the romance, and a study of the pivot opens a new understanding of Hawthorne's use of the traditional forms. When he transferred some of the hero's

functions to the pivot, he altered the meaning of romance. Primarily, the hero who travels to the underworld is closer to the mythical origins of literature, but a pivot who makes the same trip is a refinement of literature away from myth. Through the pivot, the Hawthorne hero makes a psychological rather than a physical journey. At the same time, the pivot's placement at the center of the tale puts him in the best position to interact with other characters. While a hero can only impel the forward movement of the plot, the pivot, who is controlled and examined minutely by other characters, encourages the development of a psychological plot on two separate levels: the characters are forced to examine their own motives and the reader is allowed to see into the characters' minds as they work things out.

One last point of correspondence among the pivots concerns their suffering at the hands of others. Hawthorne makes it clear that the pivots' troubles come necessarily from the outside, and this is perhaps the most important reason that the pivot cannot be the protagonist. Hawthorne conceives the pivotal character as an emotionally immature person and insists that he be educated through his emotions. The character's position in the center of all the relationships in the novel makes it easy for Hawthorne to

show the gradual growth of the pivot--both as it is impelled by and perceived by the other characters.

Hester Prynne, ever watching her imp-like daughter for new perverse characteristics, laments that the child "wanted--what some people want throughout life--a grief that should deeply touch her, and thus humanize and make her capable of sympathy" (SL, p. 184). Indeed, Pearl suffers but she does not fully comprehend the meaning of her suffering until the minister acknowledges her on the scaffold:

> Pearl kissed his lips. A spell was broken. The great scene of grief in which the wild infant bore a part, had developed all her sympathies; and as her tears fell upon her father's cheek, they were the pledge that she would grow up amid human joy and sorrow, nor forever do battle with the world, but be a woman in it. (SL, p. 256)

Clifford, who would have allowed his love of the beautiful to separate him completely from human love and warmth, has also needed sorrow to strengthen his ties with other humans. The thirty years' imprisonment has taught him dependency on others, and the narrator questions, "Shall we venture to pronounce, therefore, that his long and black calamity may not have had a redeeming drop of mercy at the bottom?" (HSG, p. 112). Clifford's growth is slight, but evident nonetheless:

> He never, it is true, attained to nearly the full measure of what might have been his faculties. But he recovered enough of them partially to light up his character, to display some outline of the

> marvellous grace that was abortive in it, and to make him the object of no less deep, although less melancholy interest than heretofore. He was evidently happy. (HSG, p. 314)

Priscilla gains very little from her experience. During the first weeks of Priscilla's stay at Blithedale, the poet Coverdale wonders at her childish ignorance (or denial) of sorrow; and "beneficently seeking to overshadow her with [his] own sombre humor" (BR, p. 75), he tries to make her see how shallow and fleeting her gaiety is. Strangely enough, for all her remoteness, Priscilla is so easily brought to tears by insignificant commands and gestures that Coverdale believes her emotions have no connection with reality. This assumption seems to be confirmed at Zenobia's funeral when Priscilla is not "wholly overcome with grief" (BR, p. 241), but Hawthorne allows her an underlying promise of maturity:

> Thus, while we see that such a being responds to every breeze, with tremulous vibration, and imagine that she must be shattered by the first rude blast, we find her retaining her equilibrium amid shocks that might have overthrown many a sturdier frame. (BR, pp. 241-42)

Finally, Donatello needs "the dark element" (MF, p. 79). He lives only for joy, only for the present, and in Hawthorne's scheme of things, he is wrong to ignore the future. At the end of The Marble Faun, Donatello has undergone a transformation so wonderful that Miriam cannot help exclaiming, "'Is he not beautiful?'" (MF, p. 434):

> "So changed, yet still, in a deeper sense, so much the same! He has travelled in a circle, as all things heavenly and earthly do, and now comes back to his original self, with an inestimable treasure of improvement won from an experience of pain. . . . Was the crime--in which he and I were wedded--was it a blessing in that strange disguise? Was it a means of education, bringing a simple and imperfect nature to a point of feeling and intelligence, which it could have reached under no other discipline?" (MF, p. 434)

The pivotal character holds a central place in Hawthorne's fiction as an important change in the traditional romance form. The growth of the pivot rather than that of the hero is significant to Hawthorne, for it suited his purpose to write psychological novels. When we consider the presence of the pivot, we see that the idea of *felix culpa* in *The Marble Faun*, like so many other elements, is a culmination of a long process of the refinement of the romance which began with the tales and continued throughout Hawthorne's career.

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