MASK-VEIL IMAGERY IN HAWTHORNE'S FICTION

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A principal reason for the critical acclaim accorded Nathaniel Hawthorne is that his works are masterpieces of the allegorical technique. In his novels as well as short stories, Hawthorne employs numerous symbolic representations to dramatize and illuminate themes. One of the most notable is mask-veil imagery.

The purpose of this study is to determine, by a chronological review, the evolution of the mask-veil symbol as a device in Hawthorne's fiction and to ascertain its relevancy as a concrete manifestation of the abstract idea it betokens. In "The Minister's Black Veil" (1836), for example, the veil is the central symbol. Likewise, the masks in "The Maypole of Merry Mount" (1836) and "Howe's Masquerade" (1838), the curtain before the portrait in "Edward Randolph's Portrait" (1838), and the richly embroidered mantle in "Lady Eleanore's Mantle" (1838) exemplify Hawthorne's use of mask-veil symbolism. The Blithedale Romance employs not only the white veil of the "Veiled Lady" but also variant emblems, such as Zenobia's flower and Old Moodie's eyepatch, which function
as mask imagery to obscure the appearance of individuals yet symbolically to indicate their inner nature.

Literary critics are discovering rich new interpretations of Hawthorne's stories by exploring his symbols. Several scholars have noted the significance of mask-veil imagery in single stories and in specific situations. Robert H. Fossum notes in "Time and the Artist in 'Legends of the Province House'" that

... Hawthorne makes the masquerade parallel to his own fictional mode, in itself a pageant of veiled figures which mixes fact with fancy and arrests time's flow so that we may return temporarily to the past. But with a difference. For Howe's maskers, the usable past is never used, their sense of the past never sensible, because it is confined to the frivolous and the absurd. ¹

Hawthorne, on the other hand, uses the masquerade also to convey the passing of time, the past flowing into the future—to unveil his message for mankind. In "Toward a Re-evaluation of The Blithedale Romance," Frank Davidson urges the reader to approach the romance by considering the veil as the central reflection of the theme:

The veil is as central to Blithedale as either of these phenomena [the scarlet letter of The Scarlet Letter or the house of The House of the Seven Gables], to its respective story. Almost everything in the

romance except "the naked exposure" in Westervelt "of something that ought not to be left prominent" is partially hidden or totally obscured by a veiling medium or mask.\(^{(A)}\)

Many reviewers have been intrigued by the mystery of the black veil, but no clear-cut resolution to the question has been found. Upon examining the evidence, Thomas M. Walsh concludes that Hawthorne "... intended the black veil to symbolize the secret sin which all men 'loathsomely treasure up' in their hearts."\(^{(A)}\) H. Alan Wycherly reasons that Hooper assumes the black veil because he is responsible for the girl's death, either by an act of commission or omission. He believes that the shudder of the corpse when the clergyman's features were disclosed refers to an ancient belief that dead persons will give a sign in the presence of the one responsible for their death.\(^{(A)}\) According to Richard H. Fogle, there are two interpretations of the veil imagery in the story: (1) that of the "veil as the visible symbol of secret


\(^{(B)}\) Thomas F. Walsh, "Hawthorne: Mr. Hooper's 'Affable Weakness,'" Modern Language Notes, LXXIV (May, 1959), 404.

in the veil as "less representative of mankind than of the eccentricity of the minister himself, who severs himself from men either through perverse pride or through some other obscure and tragic compulsion." Fogle thinks that the reader should accept both explanations, and he also suggests that the message of the veil is the universal plight of man in isolation. Mark Van Doren believes that the veil, "Reverend Mr. Hooper's 'type and symbol' of the truth that each man lives alone and shrinks from looking straight into the 'sunshine of eternity,' . . . is one of the most famous things in Hawthorne, and it deserves its fame." He admits that the mystery of the veil is obscure.

In the critical material available for this study, only Norris Yates in "Ritual and Reality: Mask and Dance Motifs in Hawthorne's Fiction" examines the recurrence of the mask metaphor, which he associates with the dance motif. He states that, "Such images [of the mask and dance] occur and recur in the works of Hawthorne, assuming various forms and interrelationships until they become thoroughly encrusted with

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Ibid., p. 34.

meaning. 

Yates has noted that the masquerade usually suggests "dismay and despair": "Whenever the mask and the dance are associated in Hawthorne's work they are likely to stand for unreality, unnaturalness, and the concern for mere appearances rather than the substance of life."

There are no studies, however, tracing the development of the mask-veil imagery in Hawthorne's fiction and relating these symbols to each other. Until the reader interprets Hawthorne's figurative clues, he cannot properly evaluate his works because, without the allegorical constituents, the stories and the themes provide only the outline for great literature; allegory supplies the basis for unity and perspicacity. In "Toward a Re-evaluation of The Blithedale Romance," Frank Davidson states that the reader needs to comprehend Hawthorne's symbolic artistry to properly evaluate his works:

Perhaps a critical re-evaluation of Blithedale that takes into account what the author was actually attempting to do will give the work a truer rating among Hawthorne's romances than it has had and be attended with less divergence of opinion than we have known to the present.10

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Ibid., p. 57-59.

10 Davidson, p. 383.
As Coverdale, in *The Blithedale Romance*, tries to find the best way to analyze the individuals of the Blithedale experiment, so the reader of Hawthorne is also concerned with mastering the signs which relate the spiritual bent of Hawthorne's characters to the themes and total import. The approach that Coverdale values may perhaps be relevant to an understanding of Hawthorne's symbols:

It is not, I apprehend, a healthy kind of mental occupation, to devote ourselves too exclusively to the study of individual men and women. If the person under examination be one's self, the result is pretty certain to be diseased action of the heart, almost before we can snatch a second glance. Or, if we take the freedom to put a friend under our microscope, we thereby insulate him from many of his true relations, magnify his peculiarities, inevitably tear him into parts, and, of course, patch him very clumsily together again. What wonder, then, should we be frightened by the aspect of a monster, which, after all,—though we can point to every feature of his deformity in the real personage,—may be said to have been created mainly by ourselves.\(^\text{11}\)

In scrutinizing Hawthorne's works, the reader must avoid misinterpretation by viewing any character apart from his relations to other characters or symbols.

An awareness of Hawthorne's allegorical nature may guide the reader in the way he perceives the stories. Hawthorne indicates the attitude necessary to an understanding of his

books by distinguishing them from realistic novels. In his preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*, signifying that his romances lie in a more imaginative realm, he writes, "When a writer calls his work a Romance, it needs hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume had he professed to be writing a Novel."\(^{12}\) The visible world of the novel does not encompass the total complexity of life; therefore, Hawthorne chooses the romance and symbolism to reveal the finer shades of both the physical and psychological worlds of man. The writer of romance, says Hawthorne, may not "swerve aside from the truth of the human heart," but he may "so manage his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights and deepen and enrich the shadows of the picture."\(^{13}\)

To create an atmosphere of romance, Hawthorne adopts the organic metaphor, for he values art that "suggests far more than it shows."\(^{14}\) He thinks, like Melville, that the organic metaphor expresses the intrinsic idea and the total

\(^{12}\) Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, edited by Norman Holmes Pearson (New York, 1937), p. xiii. Further citations will be shortened to *Complete Novels*.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 243.

\(^{14}\) *Hawthorne's Works*, X, 98.
meaning. A suggestive image can relate a person to another person, a person to an idea, an idea to another idea, a person or an object to a theme; unify themes within a story; or contrast one story with another. Since Hawthorne applies the allegorical technique to the writing of romance, a study of his symbols is indispensable to an evaluation of Hawthorne as a writer.

Allegory enhances all of Hawthorne's short and long fiction with the exception of Fanshawe (1828). Beginning with the Twice-Told Tales (1837), mask-veil imagery is evident in Hawthorne's works. Austin Warren believes Hawthorne's love of allegory, imagery, and symbolism was determined by his early reading:

... the founts and origins of Hawthorne's symbolism are Spenser and Bunyan. At six, the boy used to read Pilgrim's Progress by the hour. The early impression was ineffaceable: Pilgrim's Progress is the one book to which the unallusive Hawthorne constantly alludes in his own writing; and in conversation its "Slough of Despond," "Doubting Castle," and the like seem to have served himself and his family as their private communal language. Without doubt, it was Bunyan who begot and nurtured that moral allegory which became Hawthorne's mode of vision in his most characteristic tales. For the Faerie Queene, the first book purchased with his own money, he cherished, too, a lifelong affection.16

Hawthorne's preference for the veil allusion may well relate to his attitude toward life; the veil is a favorite image because his own view is not a direct one. The autobiographical note at the end of *The Old Manse* (1846) tells of Hawthorne's need for privacy, which dictates his portrayal of truth by allegory.

How little have I told! and of that little, how almost nothing is even tinctured with any quality that makes it exclusively my own! . . . So far as I am a man of really individual attributes, I veil my face; nor am I, nor have I ever been, one of those supremely hospitable people who serve up their own hearts, delicately fried, with brain sauce, as a tidbit for their beloved public.17

He recognizes his desire to withhold his individual characteristics from the eyes of his public. In a letter to Sophia Peabody, Hawthorne notes that, "A cloudy veil stretches over the abyss of my nature. . . ."18 Examiners of Hawthorne's style find a connection between his nature and his affinity for the veil image in his works. In reference to Hawthorne's temperament, Van Wyck Brooks says,

> Years before, In Hawthorne's youth, in Salem, when he had written his tales in the little chamber, there had always seemed to be a driving snowstorm on the other side of the casement, or a cloud of dust in

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summer, a film, a veil. When he had stood at the window . . . he had always stood behind the curtain. To see the world with a sidelong glance, "by a certain indirection," was second nature with him; and this was the mood his romances conveyed, as if, in spite of all their air of daylight, he had never looked straight at Boston or Salem, as if he had always seen them over his shoulder.  

Though Hawthorne expresses a preference for a more realistic type of writing and even considers his own allegorical method a disadvantage, he regards the allegorical presentation essential to his imagination. Matthiessen explains that,

This was not owing to any love of mystery for itself, since he declared emphatically that he "abhorred" it, that he dreaded any "unintelligible expression" as a clouding veil "between the soul and the truth which it seeks." But his haunted mind made him write not as he would, but as he must.

His haunted mind does not accept appearance as an explanation: he looks behind the appearance or mask to find truth. He sees in nature the universal exemplification of the spiritual world. Arlin Turner says,

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Starting with the supposition that things may not be what they seem, he habitually looked below the surface, searched out the meaning behind the mask; and irony furnished him a means of accenting the divergence he found between the apparent and the real.22

Most often he made the revelations through hints and external signs, for thus he could remain comfortably within his symbolic approach and also gain the interest which lies in the concrete, suggestive manifestations of inward qualities and inward conflicts.23

The veil represents a barrier to knowledge of truth. Man, in isolation, sees only one side of the veil, yet he continues to seek the ideal or real that is hidden by the veil. As Matthiessen explains, "The ideal that Hawthorne wanted to project in art was the 'real'; not actuality transformed into an impossible perfection, but actuality disengaged from appearance."24 The mask-veil image is not significant in itself but only in its symbolism. By probing the spiritual reality behind the concrete image, Hawthorne hopes to disclose new meaning.25 He presents a situation in a literal sense, then suggests ambiguously a number of possible interpretations by the introduction of symbols.

23 Ibid., p. 122.
24 Matthiessen, p. 264.
25 Ibid., p. 205.
Through his imaginative powers, Hawthorne seeks to dramatize good and evil in man's nature. Since the effect of sin and guilt holds man in isolation, as if a veil surrounds him physically, Hawthorne recommends a moral course of action to restore balance to man's sinful nature. Though his Puritan ancestors had focused on the sins and guilt of mankind, Hawthorne stresses hope for redemption through the regenerative effect of sin as the central moral in his stories. Arlin Turner says, "While he might recognize [his ancestors'] virtues or their achievements recorded in history, his focus would be on the reverse of the medal, the negative which balanced the positive, the portion normally ignored but, to his mind, inescapable nevertheless."\(^26\) Chester E. Eisinger describes Hawthorne as an advocate of balance, a "champion of the middle way which was for him the norm."\(^27\) Hawthorne is interested in sin because he accepts the innate depravity of man and recognizes man's desire for perfection. Eisinger, however, believes that Hawthorne's emphasis is not on sin itself but its effect upon human character.\(^28\)

\(^{26}\) Turner, p. 4.


\(^{28}\) Ibid., p. 28.
reader carefully considers the full expression of Hawthorne's writings, he may neglect the individual details which unify the story elements. In discussing Hawthorne's ability to contrast and balance the forces of good and evil in his writings, Matthiessen explains,

"Tragedy does not pose the situation of a faultless individual (or class) overwhelmed by an evil world, for it is built on the experienced realization that man is radically imperfect. Confronting this fact, tragedy must likewise contain a recognition that man, pitiful as he may be in finite weakness, is still capable of apprehending perfection, and of becoming transfigured by that vision. But not only must the author of tragedy have accepted the inevitable co-existence of good and evil in man's nature, he must also possess the power to envisage some reconciliation between such opposites, and the control to hold an inexorable balance. He must be as far from the chaos of despair as he is from ill-founded optimism."

Perhaps critics have overlooked the veil emblem and its relationship to Hawthorne's other symbols because many of these symbolic associations are natural and ordinary. Arlin Turner finds that, "Hawthorne looked for his symbols close at home and more often than not found them in the countenances, the clothes, or the gestures of his characters, in the commonplace objects of life and nature." In folklore, the veil commonly denotes the isolation of the individual from

30Turner, p. 125.
By using such well-known tokens of isolation, Hawthorne establishes the motif without elaborating upon the emblem itself; the symbols illuminate the truth of the story without being obtrusive. Hawthorne so skillfully interweaves fanciful setting, character portrayal, and harmonious balance of the visible and the imaginative as to distract the reader from the artifices of design. Norman Holmes Pearson thinks, "Hawthorne's use of symbols is like Wagner's use of leitmotif to recall what has come before, and to bring the mind a greater consciousness than the ear alone can comprehend."32

The mask, the veil, and the mantle are unique articles of clothing which wholly or partially cover the face of a person; each conceals a hidden meaning that corroborates the thematic elements of a story. Hawthorne appears to use the various veil images—mask, veil, mantle, and curtain—in the same way; hence, they will be considered as one type of symbol. In addition, several characters in The Blithedale Romance wear small accessories which have a mask-veil connotation because they stand for the dissociation of each individual; they also symbolize their personal attributes.

31 Ray B. Browne, "The Oft-Told Twice-Told Tales: Their Folklore Motifs," Southern Folklore Quarterly, XXII (June, 1958), 75.

32 Complete Novels, p. xiii.
Except for Priscilla, the "Veiled Lady," who represents an ideal, the characters in the stories considered in this thesis intentionally put on the mask, veil, or mantle in a conscious act of withdrawal from humanity.

In Hawthorne's allegories, mask-veil imagery stands for isolation, which is associated with the effects of Puritan beliefs concerning sin and guilt. A man's awareness of sin and subsequent guilt prevents his communication with others and sometimes leads him to violate the sanctity of another's soul. Considering this element in Hawthorne's works, Hyatt H. Waggoner states that "Alienation is perhaps the theme he handles with greatest power. 'Insulation,' he sometimes called it—which suggests not only isolation but imperviousness."33

Hawthorne's most potent veil symbolism in "The Minister's Black Veil" completely insulates Mr. Hooper: "All through life that piece of crape had hung between him and the world: it had separated him from cheerful brotherhood and woman's love, and kept him in the saddest of all prisons, his own heart..."34 In this parable, the isolating effect of the

33 Hyatt H. Waggoner, Nathaniel Hawthorne (Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1962), p. 15.

34 Hawthorne's Works, I, 78.
veil points to the sins of all men, the resultant guilt, and each man's withdrawal beneath his own black veil.

(Other short stories follow a similar pattern of insulation and withdrawal; and furthermore, these characters fail to learn lessons from the historical past.) In both "The Maypole of Merry Mount" and "Howe's Masquerade," the scene of action is a masquerade; by disguising themselves and changing the appearance of reality, the maskers hope to alter reality. In the "Maypole," a throng arrayed like Gothic monsters wildly pursue pleasure, avoiding life's responsibilities in voluntary seclusion about the Maypole until the Puritans capture and discipline the merry-makers. During the Revolutionary War, Sir William Howe of "Howe's Masquerade" seeks "... to hide the distress and dangers of the period"\textsuperscript{35} from the British sympathizers by inviting them to a masquerade, thus isolating them from the present as well as from the lessons of the past represented by masked allegorical figures, dressed as the ancient governors, who slowly descend the staircase to attend the funeral of British rule in New England—the last figure resembling Sir William Howe—as a messenger announces the advance of Washington's soldiers. Whereas a sense of the past is related to the mask in "Howe's

\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., pp. 276-277.
Masquerade," it is linked to the dark curtain in "Edward Randolph's Portrait." When Alice Vane snatches the sable curtain from the painting, Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson, who has insulated himself from the people, sees in Randolph's countenance the awful effect that the people's curse has wrought upon a man who had trampled on the people's rights, but he refuses to accept this lesson from the past and signs away the people's freedom. In "Lady Eleanore's Mantle," the richly embroidered mantle worn by Lady Eleanore indicates her withdrawal. An emblem of hereditary pride, her mantle separates Lady Eleanore from the chain of humanity, causing her to violate the sanctity of Jervase's soul.

Several characters in Blithedale wear small objects about the face which represent mask-veil imagery, for they signify intrinsic qualities while modifying the external appearance of each character. These tokens signal a retreat from society at large to an isolation at Blithedale farm or, in the case of Westervelt, a discrepancy between ostensible behavior and underlying proclivity. As the "Veiled Lady" concealed in the white, silvery veil, Priscilla is symbolic of the ideal which is isolated and unattainable.

In this chapter, some of the fundamental facts requisite to an investigation of mask-veil imagery in Hawthorne's work
have been delineated. Chapter II considers in detail the short story "The Minister's Black Veil" (1836), which illustrates Hawthorne's most extensive use of a single veil image to convey his thought. From the day that Mr. Hooper voluntarily places the black crape over his features, he is isolated from the fellowship of his congregation, Elizabeth, and all men. On his deathbed, he rises to announce that his veil symbolizes the black veil all men wear.

Four other short stories in which some form of the mask-veil imagery is a central symbol are discussed in Chapter III. In "The Maypole of Merry Mount" and in "Howe's Masquerade," the maskers seek to escape the realities of life by denying their existence. The sable curtain over the picture in "Edward Randolph's Portrait" is the pre-eminent veil image linking the past to the present; whereas, the richly embroidered mantle is symbolic of mask-veil imagery in "Lady Eleanore's Mantle," in that it indicates that hereditary pride is the cause of her isolation. Chapter IV examines in a book-length work, The Blithedale Romance, Hawthorne's use of mask-veil imagery, illustrated in the white veil of the "Veiled Lady" and the appurtenances of Zenobia, Old Moodie, and Westervelt.

Although several critics have explored mask or veil imagery in individual stories, no single study has considered
the recurrence of this imagery throughout Hawthorne's writing or noted the similarities in certain of his stories which employ such symbolism. This inquiry examines the development of Hawthorne's usage of the mask-veil image and its relationship to the idea it represents.

For this study The Standard Library Edition of The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne (1882), especially Twice-Told Tales, Vol. I, and The Blithedale Romance, Vol. V, are primary references. Since the exact order in which Hawthorne conceived or wrote the short stories is not always known, original publication dates are used to indicate an approximate chronology of these works.
CHAPTER II

"THE MINISTER'S BLACK VEIL"

Of all the stories that Hawthorne has written employing mask-veil imagery, "The Minister's Black Veil" has the most intensive concentration on one symbol. From the moment that Mr. Hooper covers his face, the veil completely alters the minister's course in life. The consequences of donning the veil--on Mr. Hooper; on his fiancee, Elizabeth, and on his parishioners--are the focal points of the succeeding action, and the key to Hawthorne's moral is the symbolism of the veil.

"The Minister's Black Veil" dramatically presents one of the principal tenets of Hawthorne's philosophy--man's need for social regeneration. To emphasize the necessity for brotherhood, Hawthorne awakens the reader to the utter horror and confusion of man's isolation. Employing an allegorical technique to present a moral dilemma, Hawthorne uses a concrete image--the veil--to illustrate an abstract idea of alienation. Mr. Hooper's black veil is effective as a symbol of separation because it truly isolates him, both physically and psychologically.
At the beginning of "The Minister's Black Veil," Hawthorne provides two clues to aid the reader in interpreting this symbol: (1) the subtitle, "A Parable," and (2) an explanatory footnote. The subtitle, "A Parable," reveals his intention to express a moral truth in symbolic figures and actions. The explanatory note tells of a case somewhat similar to that in Hawthorne's tale: Mr. Joseph Moody, having accidentally killed a friend, thereafter hides his face from men by wearing a dark veil. Hawthorne adds, "In his case, however, the symbol had a different import." From these two hints, the reader perceives that a literal interpretation of the veil as standing for Mr. Hooper's sin alone is not Hawthorne's intention. A careful study of the veil usage brings to light allegorical connotations.

From the moment that Mr. Hooper appears in the black veil, it isolates him physically. The veil darkens the minister's vision, and it obstructs the people's view of him:

Swathed about his forehead, and hanging down over his face, so low as to be shaken by his breath, Mr. Hooper had on a black veil. On a nearer view it seemed to consist of two folds of crape, which entirely concealed his features, except the mouth and chin, but probably did not intercept his sight, further than to give a darkened aspect for all living and inanimate things.

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7Hawthorne's Works, I, 52.  8Ibid., p. 53.
The veil also creates a psychological alienation. When Mr. Hooper comes into view on Sunday morning, the reaction of the congregation is fear, and "... perhaps the pale-faced congregation was almost as fearful a sight to the minister, as his black veil to them."  

While secluding the minister from the worshippers, the veil also hinders him from knowledge of God's word and communion with God: "... it threw its obscurity between him and the holy page as he read the Scripture; and while he prayed, the veil lay heavily on his uplifted countenance."  

Hawthorne suggests that perhaps Mr. Hooper even seeks an isolation from God, asking "Did he seek to hide it from the dread Being whom he was addressing?"  

Although otherwise Mr. Hooper's behavior is normal, the people are amazed, questioning in whispers whether this veiled man is their minister. The black veil hangs between Reverend Hooper and his congregation throughout the service. The sermon is much the same as those he has previously delivered, but it has a strange power this day. Pertaining to the negative aspect of brotherhood, it touches on the cause of isolation: "The subject had reference to secret sin, and those sad mysteries

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3 Ibid., p. 54.  
4 Ibid.  
5 Ibid.
which we hide from our nearest and dearest, and would fair conceal from our own consciousness, even forgetting that the Omniscient can detect them." The force of Mr. Hooper's oratory, which leads each listener to think his sin discovered by the minister, lies "... either in the sentiment of the discourse itself, or in the imagination of the auditors. ..." By dwelling on the awfulness of secret sin, the sermon heightens the effect of the veil. After the service, the members of the congregation eagerly attempt to escape their fear by avoiding the sight of the veil.

The reason for the people's immediate fear of the minister may lie in the connotation of the black cloth. The evil portent of the veil leads the congregation to question his good character. The sexton sets the tenor of comment by remarking, "I can't really feel as if good Mr. Hooper's face was behind that piece of crape," although he has previously assured Goodman Gray that it is "good Mr. Hooper." An old woman says that Mr. Hooper has become awful by hiding his face, whereas Goodman Gray believes that the parson has gone mad. Driven by their suspicions about the black veil, the people can no longer feel comfortable with Reverend Hooper.

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6Ibid., p. 55.  
7Ibid.  
8Ibid., p. 53.
To point out the universality of man's isolation, Hawthorne casts the minister in the role of Everyman. By the reiteration of *good* before Mr. Hooper's name, the author hints of a parallel between *good* Mr. Hooper and Goodman Gray. Hooper may represent all good men—who, like Goodman Gray, are neither completely evil, symbolized by black, nor altogether good, symbolized by white, but a combination of the two. Yet every man feels guilty for his hidden sins, thus estranging himself from society.

Later in the day, the black veil is an appropriate garment at the funeral of a young lady. But, at the wedding of the couple at Milford, it casts a dismal spell. The veil is the topic of conversation throughout the village; each person accounts for its presence in his own way, but no one will ask Mr. Hooper why he wears it. Formerly, the parishioners have advised the Reverend, but now the deputation sent to inquire the meaning of the veil are speechless: "Were the veil but cast aside, they might speak freely of it, but not till then."9

The veil produces a reciprocal action—the minister withdraws behind the veil and the people shrink from his presence: "Thus, from beneath the black veil, there rolled

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a cloud into the sunshine, an ambiguity of sin or sorrow, which enveloped the poor minister, so that love or sympathy could never reach him.\textsuperscript{10} If a person secludes himself by raising a barrier to intercommunication, the world about him mirrors his retreat; therefore, the degree of isolation increases. The horrors of the veil extend even to the minister, for he, too, is afraid. When one woman wonders aloud that the minister is not afraid to be alone with himself, her husband replies, "Men sometimes are so,"\textsuperscript{11} suggesting that a man may fear his own nature. Hawthorne again illustrates Mr. Hooper's fear of the veil in a scene after the wedding ceremony: catching a glimpse of himself in the mirror, the minister spills the untasted wine, a symbol of communion with God and man, and rushes out into darkness. His own antipathy for the veil is believed to be so great that thereafter he never willingly passes before a mirror or drinks at a fountain wherein he may see his reflection.

Only one, Mr. Hooper's betrothed, dares speak of it to him. Believing that it should be her privilege to know its meaning, Elizabeth directly asks him to remove the veil. The minister replies that he must wear it until all men cast aside their veils: "No mortal eye will see it withdrawn.

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., p. 65.  
\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 57.
This dismal shade must separate me from the world: even you, Elizabeth, can never come behind it!"\textsuperscript{12} Replying that people will believe the black veil stands not for an innocent sorrow but for a real sin in the minister's life, she sorrowfully inquires what affliction has befallen him. Elizabeth then suddenly experiences a new feeling: "... its terrors fell around her. She arose, and stood trembling before him."\textsuperscript{13} Though he repeats that he cannot remove the veil and asks Elizabeth to have patience, she bids him farewell and departs.

From that time on, the people accept the black veil and make no attempt to find out the secret it stands for. But the veil has one beneficial result: it makes Reverend Hooper a more effective clergyman. Though it isolates him, it also enables him to sympathize with the dark sins of mankind. By the aid of the veil, he can comfort dying sinners: "In this manner Mr. Hooper spent a long life, irreproachable in outward act, yet shrouded in dismal suspicions; kind and loving, though unloved, and dimly feared; a man apart from men, shunned in their health and joy, but ever summoned to their aid in mortal anguish."\textsuperscript{14}

( After many years, while the Reverend Mr. Clark and Elizabeth wait by his side, Father Hooper approaches death.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 62.  \textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 63.  \textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 66.}
Even as the minister tosses feverishly in bed, he reaches to the veil from time to time to make sure that it does not slip from before his eyes. When Reverend Clark questions whether a minister of his venerable character should leave one blot upon his reputation by hiding behind a black veil, Father Hooper raises himself to say:

What, but the mystery which it obscurely typifies, has made this piece of crape so awful? When the friend shows his inmost heart to his friend; the lover to his best beloved; when man does not vainly shrink from the eye of his Creator, loathsomely treasuring up the secret of his sin; then deem me a monster, for the symbol beneath which I have lived, and die! I look around me, and, lo! on every visage a Black Veil!\(^ {15}\)

Falling back on his pillow with a smile upon his lips, he expires. Buried as a veiled corpse, he moulders beneath the black veil, beneath the grass covering his grave, beneath the moss-veiled tombstone: "The grass of many years has sprung up and withered on that grave, the burial stone is moss-grown, and good Mr. Hooper's face is dust...\(^ {16}\)

It becomes increasingly evident that Mr. Hooper's smile forms part of the masked appearance which he presents to the world. While the upper half of his countenance is darkened by the veil, the lower portion is lighted by the enigmatic smile. When the congregation hurries from Mr. Hooper after

\(^ {15}\text{Ibid., p. 69.}\)  
\(^ {16}\text{Ibid.}\)
the sermon, he looks upon the people, and "A sad smile gleamed faintly from beneath the black veil, and flickered about his mouth, glimmering as he disappeared."\textsuperscript{17} It seems incongruous that Mr. Hooper should smile when his church members shun him. If the veil reflects the minister's pride in isolating himself as a living sermon, the smile may further manifest a sense of self-righteous superiority. On the other hand, the smile may point to his good nature: as a true Christian minister, he returns good for evil. Later, when Elizabeth urges Mr. Hooper to avoid scandal, he "even smiled again—that same sad smile, which always appeared like a faint glimmering of light, proceeding from the obscurity beneath the veil."\textsuperscript{18}

Even at his death, the black veil hangs above the smile: "And yet the faint, sad smile, so often there, now seemed to glimmer from its obscurity, and linger on Father Hooper's lips."\textsuperscript{19} Because his smile hardly seems appropriate at any of these times, it appears relevant to consider it in conjunction with the veil as a symbol. If the veil symbolizes Mr. Hooper's fear that he and his congregation are doomed by their dark sins, this melancholy smile may perhaps suggest that man has some reassurance even in the blackness of his despair.

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 56. \textsuperscript{18}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 62. \textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 69.
The recurrent contrast between the dark veil and the light smile throughout the story suggests that reading the parable as an ironic statement may shed some light upon its symbolism. Incongruity is evident in the sorrow and suffering brought on by the veiled minister's isolation and the hope indicated by the faint smile which plays upon his lips. Richard Fogle says, "And the smile itself, shining dimly from beneath the black cloth, emphasizes in its self-irony the ambiguity of the minister's character."  

E. Earle Stibitz believes that most critics have subscribed to one of three points of view: that the veil (1) stands for a specific crime committed by the minister, (2) dramatizes the sins of mankind, or (3) signifies Mr. Hooper's unbalanced mind. He believes, however, that only the ironic level of interpretation "yields an unambiguous meaning," as indicated by the following explication. Although Mr. Hooper has previously been receptive to advice from church members, the deputation, when sent to inquire of the veil, cannot speak—thus initiating a new isolation. Here then the veil is not only a symbol but also the instrument of isolation. It is ironic that by donning the veil and

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21 E. Earle Stibitz, "Ironic Unity in Hawthorne's 'The Minister's Black Veil,'" American Literature, XXXIII (May, 1962), 182.
making a living sermon of himself, the minister, through secret pride alienates himself from man and God as much as do those who conceal their secret sin. Noting the ironic discrepancy between the minister's helpful intent and the result of his veiled appearance at the wedding and the funeral, Stibitz feels that such details reveal the unnatur-alness of Mr. Hooper's action. Moreover, when Elizabeth pleads with the minister to lay aside the veil, and he says that the veil must be worn as a type and a symbol on earth, though not in eternity, "... his reaction to Elizabeth's tears reveals the sharp irony of his attitude, for it is not the hidden-sin meaning of the veil that causes her grief and terror, as he egocentrically thinks, but the rejection of her love and the irredeemable alienation demonstrated by his refusal, even for a moment, to lift the veil."\textsuperscript{22}

Stibitz's view is that Mr. Hooper has become obsessed with his vow to wear the veil; a monomania has unbalanced his mind so that the veil is his sole concern. Even his good results pertain to the terrors which lie behind the veil; ironically, by insisting upon the mechanics of the veil, he largely destroys his potential for good. And the veil is still upon Mr. Hooper's face as he dies--a symbol of his lack of repentance.\textsuperscript{23}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[22]Ibid., p. 188.
\item[23]Ibid., p. 189.
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Fogle notes another aspect of its ambiguity:

If, however, the veil is emblematic of the common plight of man, why should it isolate its wearer with a poignancy unfelt by other men and leave him lonely and alone?

Or, on the other hand, is it possible that we can go further afield, and determine that the message of the veil is representative and universal: that the failure to recognize it is simply the last and most chilling proof of man's imprisonment within himself? 24

Though Hawthorne suggests a number of reasons for Mr. Hooper's isolating himself behind the veil, whatever the cause, the veil has set him apart:

All through life that piece of crape had hung between him and the world: it had separated him from cheerful brotherhood and woman's love, and kept him in that saddest of all prisons, his own heart; and still it lay upon his face, as if to deepen the gloom of his darksome chamber, and shade him from the sunshine of eternity. 25

After Reverend Hooper veils his face, he can no longer associate familiarly with other mortals: "None, as on former occasions, aspired to the honor of walking by their pastor's side." 26 But in his prayer at the young lady's funeral, Reverend Hooper "... prayed that they, and himself, and all of mortal race, might be ready, as he trusted this young

26 Ibid., p. 56.
maiden had been, for the dreadful hour that should snatch the veil from their faces." Thus in "The Minister's Black Veil," Hawthorne shows how completely one may be insulated within his own subjective viewpoint. So long as any man estranges himself from society—as Father Hooper has done by retiring behind the veil—humanity will shun his companionship. On the other hand, Hawthorne suggests that by acknowledging the universality of sin, one may recognize his common bond with other men. For, though the veil secludes Mr. Hooper from his parishioners, it also paradoxically enables him to identify with all sinners: "His converts always regarded him with a dread peculiar to themselves, affirming, though but figuratively, that, before he brought them to celestial light, they had been with him behind the black veil. Its gloom, indeed, enabled him to sympathize with all dark affections."  

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27 Ibid., p. 58.  
28 Ibid., p. 65.
CHAPTER III

OTHER SHORT STORIES

"The Maypole of Merry Mount"

As in "The Minister's Black Veil," so in other stories Hawthorne uses various forms of mask-veil imagery to illustrate and dramatize his themes. In "The Maypole of Merry Mount," the masks of monsters worn by the Maypole worshipers and the iron armor burdening the Puritans denote the isolation of two groups of people who have withdrawn from the world to pursue extreme goals. The "Legends of the Province House" contains three tales which utilize mask-veil images to manifest man's alienation from reality and his need to communicate with other men. In the first legend, "Howe's Masquerade," masks betoken the guests' illusionary dissociation from the impending defeat of the British army; in "Edward Randolph's Portrait," the double veil of gauze and grime suggests the concealment from men of a lesson from the past implicit in the portrait; and in "Lady Eleanore's Mantle," a richly embroidered cloak signifies Lady Eleanore's pride and voluntary withdrawal from others.

In his philosophic romance, "The Maypole of Merry Mount," Hawthorne dramatizes his moral point by using masks to note
the alienation and to define the intrinsic qualities of each group: monster masks indicate the animalistic nature of the Merry Mounters, whereas iron armor symbolizes the stern, rigorous proclivity of the Puritans. As Father Hooper's veil indicates his alienation from the congregation, so these masks portray each group's withdrawal from the world. By contrasting the wild revelry of the "gay sinners" with the sombre existence of the "grizzly saints," Hawthorne exemplifies two views of life in conflict: "Jollity and gloom were contending for an empire." On their wedding day Edith and Edgar, the Lord and Lady of the May, awakened by love for each other, pensively note the unreality of the company's mirth. After the Puritan raid, the young couple, in love and "mutual support," assume the mature responsibilities of the Puritan way to find happiness in a balanced view of life as a state of "troubled joy."

For their revelry, the votaries of the Maypole wear masks in animal shapes: one appearing in the antlers of a stag, a second disguised with the grim visage of a wolf, a third showing the beard and horns of a he-goat above the trunk and limbs of a man, and a fourth dressed as a bear.

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1 Hawthorne's Works, I, 78.  
2 Ibid., p. 70.  
3 Ibid., p. 82.  
4 Ibid., p. 75.
except for his hind legs in pink stockings. The masks show forth the inner nature of the Merry Mounters, for, Hawthorne suggests, by disguising themselves and sporting about the Maypole, these men are following their animal, carnal impulses. Of the real bear in the circle of masked dancers, he says, "His inferior nature rose half way, to meet his companions as they stooped." Later when Governor Endicott kills the bear, he figuratively destroys a representative of man's lower nature, which must be suppressed for man to be civilized. Although several of the colonists do not appear in the guise of monsters, their apparel is suited to the wild forest, and their faces are distorted in laughter. Some are dressed as savage men and Indian hunters, signifying those half way between animals and civilized men; others, though in sober garments, have expressions full of animal spirits.

The original colonists of Merry Mount came to New England bringing their philosophy of pleasure--some in the first gayety of youth, others, maddened into despair by previous misfortunes, but all were gay. Hawthorne calls them "blinded sinners" as he portrays these colonists sporting about their Maypole "... masquerading in the skins of deer and wolves..." Through the use of the mask symbol, he shows

5Ibid., pp. 71-72.  6Ibid., p. 78.  7Ibid.
their mirth also to be counterfeit; from the beginning, it has been an illusion. When they should have been revealing the unnaturalness of the colonists' frivolity, "Erring Thought and perverted Wisdom were made to put on masques and play the fool," he says. Because revelry only seems to bring joy, men delude themselves when they gratify their animalistic nature and neglect their intellectual and spiritual attributes: "Sworn triflers of a lifetime, they would not venture among the sober truths of life not even to be truly blest." The English priest, who is to marry Edith and Edgar, though unmasked, is

... canonically dressed, yet decked with flowers, in heathen fashion, and wearing a chaplet of the native vine leaves. By the riot of his rolling eye, and the pagan decorations of his holy garb, he seemed the wildest monster there, and the very Comus of the Crew.

Although brilliantly dressed, Edith and Edgar do not wear masks or the distorted expressions of revelry. Amid the gayety, Edith grows sad, for she suddenly realizes that life at Merry Mount is a travesty. Even though Edgar asks her to lay aside her pensive mood, both young people perceive the inadequacy and insubstantiality of their former life. Love renders them more sensitive and serious than the other colonists: "From the moment that they truly loved, they had

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8Ibid., p. 75. 9Ibid., p. 76. 10Ibid., p. 73.
subjected themselves to earth's doom of care and sorrow, and troubled joy, and had no more a home at Merry Mount."\textsuperscript{11} Recognizing that love should encompass responsibility as well as gayety, they can no longer live in frivolity.

Approaching Merry Mount, a troop of Puritans toil through the woods "... each with a horseload of armor to burden his footsteps..."\textsuperscript{12} Their iron clothing physically sets them apart from others and psychologically separates them from a benign approach to life. Using their armor as a symbol of their inner nature, Hawthorne depicts the unbending, disciplined character of "the men of iron."\textsuperscript{13} Endicott, for example, has typically Puritan attributes: "So stern was the energy of his aspect, that the whole man, visage, frame, and soul, seemed wrought of iron, gifted with life and thought, yet all of one substance with his headpiece and breastplate."\textsuperscript{14} That the Puritans meet "... to proclaim bounties on the heads of wolves and the scalps of Indians..."\textsuperscript{15} suggests their desire to pursue and put to death the animal impulses of man, here exemplified by the merry makers, whose masks resemble wolves and Indians.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 75. \textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 77. \textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 78. \textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 79. \textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 77.
Monsters cower about Endicott as he assaults the hallowed Maypole, figuratively ending the exaltation of sensual pleasure. After the Puritans overcome the Merry Mounters, Endicott orders punishment for the masqueraders, but he sees exceptional qualities in Edith and Edgar. Hawthorne signals this change within Endicott by his expression, another mask image: "Yet the deepening twilight could not altogether conceal that the iron man was softened..."16 Feeling that the young couple can be taught the Puritan way of life, Endicott explains his hope for them: "Nor think ye, young ones, that they are the happiest, even in our lifetime of a moment, who misspend it in dancing round a Maypole!"17 Although Hawthorne condemns both bands, in showing the triumph of the Puritans over the Merry Mounters, he suggests that their view is closer to a right conception of reality. Turner believes that, "He could protest against the narrowness and the harshness of the early Puritans, but he could not ignore the profits which accrued along with the losses in their way of life."18

The raiment of Edith and Edgar likewise functions as mask-veil imagery; first, it symbolizes their isolation,

16 Ibid., p. 83.  
17 Ibid.  
and later, it signifies their union with the Puritans. Their clothing changes from colorful apparel to soberer garments, denoting their mental and emotional maturation. Endicott instructs the Puritans: "If, among the spoil, there be garments of a more decent fashion, let them be put upon this May Lord and his Lady, instead of their glistening vanities."\(^{19}\)

Golden Taylor thinks that, "... Hawthorne is saying symbolically that they are to put on a decent expression of human emotion, a serious, responsible kind of love that recognizes that life is fraught with pain and problems."\(^{20}\) In their act of donning decent clothing, Hawthorne seems to suggest that love and joy must be united with the pain and sorrow of reality—or that the better part of both mores should be embraced. Neither the animal mask of the Merry Mounters nor the iron-armor mask of the Puritans is adopted, but "soberer garments"—masks which indicate that a compromise has been effected—are put on.

It is through Edith and Edgar, who represent the youthful potential of the human race, that Hawthorne presents his hope for social progress, for instead of reveling in sensual

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\(^{19}\) Hawthorne's Works, I, 83.

\(^{20}\) J. Golden Taylor, Hawthorne's Ambivalence Toward Puritanism (Logan, 1965), p. 27.
pleasure or adopting solely the Puritan way of life, Edith and Edgar assimilate the merits of both cultures. As Taylor explains, "This is Hawthorne's way of defining and dramatizing his ideal for human life as a balanced blending of the emotional with the moral and intellectual side of human nature." Endicott's throwing the wreath of roses over them was a deed of prophecy:

As the moral gloom of the world overpowers all systematic gayety, even so was their home of wild mirth made desolate amid the sad forest. They returned to it no more. But as their flowery garland was wreathed of the brightest roses that had grown there, so, in the tie that united them, were intertwined all the purest and best of their early joys. They went heavenward, supporting each other along the difficult path which it was their lot to tread, and never wasted one regretful thought on the vanities of Merry Mount.

Throughout "The Maypole of Merry Mount," mask imagery extends the implications of the allegory. It defines the intrinsic qualities of both the Merry Mounters and the Puritans, and it elucidates the resolution of conflict in relation to the moral. The animal and iron-armor masks dramatize the blindness and limitations of both groups. By using these particular masks, Hawthorne also indicates the sensual, animalistic nature of the Merry Mounters and the rigid, unbending quality of the Puritans. Edith and Edgar reject both narrow-minded beliefs and adopt a balanced way.
"Howe's Masquerade"

"Howe's Masquerade" is the first of the "Legends of the Province House" to employ mask-veil imagery—in this case, the masks and disguises worn by the three groups attending the governor's ball, which in its gayety is itself intended to mask the seriousness of the military situation. Appearing in costume are loyalists dressed as historic and romantic figures, while another cluster of masqueraders in tattered, regimental clothing, some resembling American officers and soldiers, join the festivity. Later, a third masked group, composing the pageant of ancient governors, illustrates present political reality—recently the royal governors of Massachusetts have had difficulty controlling the people, whereas earlier Puritan governors had ruled the province with authority.

Hawthorne introduces the reader to Province House as it appears—with its historical significance disguised from the ordinary observer. The Province House also wears a mask, for it has a coat of light-colored paint, its steps are fenced in by wrought iron, and it is cast into deep shadow by the brick buildings nearby: Hawthorne's narrator remarks as he views the building, "Now, the old aristocratic edifice hides its time-worn visage behind an upstart modern
building..."23 At Province House, he listens to Bela Tiffany, who serves as a personified "veil" or doorman to the past, according to Fossum.24

When the story begins, Sir William Howe has invited a number of prominent citizens and officers of the British Army to a masked ball, "...for it was the policy of Sir William Howe to hide the distress and danger of the period, and the desperate aspect of the siege, under an ostentation of festivity."25 Like the disguises of the colonists at Merry Mount, the masks of the guests separate from reality a whole group of people, rather than just individuals. Though worn for jollity, the masks symbolize the revelers' desire to ignore the true circumstances of the siege of Boston. As figures resembling personages from history and romance throng through the apartments, their masks highlight the festivity of the occasion, contrasting with the actual crisis. Hawthorne hints that their gayety but briefly masks the real situation, soon to be revealed, when he compares it to "...the flickering brilliancy of a lamp which has but a little while to burn."26

23 Hawthorne's Works, I, 275; italics mine.
24 Fossum, p. 338.
25 Hawthorne, pp. 276-277; italics mine. 26 Ibid., p. 278.
Colonel Joliffe, known for his Whig sympathies, has come with his granddaughter to the ball. Once a famous soldier but now too old for fighting, Joliffe looks scornfully upon the entertainment. He wears a black Puritanical scowl—an expression which designates him as "... the best sustained character in the masquerade, because so well representing the antique spirit of his native land." Though he lives in the present, Joliffe fully comprehends the past; therefore, he can prophesy forthcoming events. Angered by the taunts against New England, Miss Joliffe says, "... perhaps we are to have a mask of allegorical figures ..."—a reply which seems to indicate some foreknowledge of the procession which follows.

As a funeral march sounds from outside the house, members of the first masked group in the pageant, men of apparent dignity and authority, descend the staircase with an air of triumph presumably to join the funeral procession outside. Colonel Joliffe identifies them as former Puritan governors who favored democratic principles of liberty during their terms of office. When Lord Percy suggests that there may be a plot in this mummery, Sir William thinks it better to laugh it off. When another more sorrowful group appears, Miss Joliffe comments that if she were a rebel, she "... might fancy that

27 Ibid.
28 Ibid., p. 279.
the ghosts of these ancient governors had been summoned to form the funeral procession of royal authority in New England." The third group to descend represents the fearful governors harassed by the people and the legislature in recent times. These figures now appear as shadows of real personages of the past and disappear into the night with gestures of woe.

When a figure resembling Howe arrives to further confuse appearance with reality, the guests look to Sir William, wondering whether he is present and questioning if this masked shape is real or imagined. Angered, Howe draws his sword and commands the shrouded figure to unmuffle himself; whereupon, the apparition partially lowers the cape so that only Sir William can see his face, then stamps his foot, shakes his clinched hands in the air, and leaves the house, as Howe is later reported to have done when he left Province House for the last time. Struck with horror, Howe recoils from the figure as he perceives that he is to follow the former governors to ruin because he has not learned from their experiences. Now he knows the funeral dirge is sounding for the end of British power.

To depict the history of government from early colonial times when the Puritan governors had authority in the province,

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29 Ibid., p. 284.
through succeeding days of anguish when the governors gradually lost their power over the populace, to the present when the governors are distressed by the insurrection of the people, Hawthorne disguises each advancing figure in the procession as a historic personage. Robert H. Fossum believes that the "... masks are means by which a dying regime hopes to arrest time's flow and maintain the artificial splendor of the past." He continues, "Although the pageant warns the maskers that their attempt to stop time is futile and that those who attempt it are as unsubstantial as the dead, it also shows them that the past contains lessons which must be heeded." The cape enshrouding the figure resembling Howe serves as a mask-veil image to suggest Howe's isolation. It is a prophetic symbol which conceals, then discloses, the future of Howe. The whole scene epitomizes the reality which Howe hopes to disguise—the impending British defeat.

The psychological isolation of the British sympathizers is symbolized by the masquerade ball itself. The festivity is a mask which insulates the guests from knowledge of approaching armies. With the pageant satirically illuminating the present state of affairs and aptly marking the falsity of loyalist illusion, the true circumstances of the siege of

\textsuperscript{30} Fossum, p. 339. \textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p. 340.
Boston are revealed. Colonel Joliffe, as an American of the earlier Puritan era, recognizes these personages from the past, interprets the meaning of the procession of governors, and predicts the downfall of the British. He serves to elucidate reality, whereas Howe attempts to disguise the desperate situation. As in "The Maypole of Merry Mount," Hawthorne associates the mask imagery with the masquerade to illustrate the unreality of a life isolated from truth.

"Edward Randolph's Portrait"

In "Edward Randolph's Portrait" Hawthorne employs a veil image to illustrate the psychological barrier between Governor Hutchinson's understanding and the lesson of the past implicit in the picture of Edward Randolph—the folly of disregarding the people's rights. To symbolize the invisible barrier which prevents Hutchinson from comprehending the dilemma of Edward Randolph, Hawthorne has chosen two tangible veil images. Originally a piece of black silk had concealed the painting, then time veiled the canvas with "age, damp, and smoke,"\(^{32}\) but now, as Hutchinson assembles the council to determine whether British soldiers should be allowed to put down the insubordination of the people, a sable curtain once again covers the portrait. Each of the

\(^{32}\)Hawthorne's Works, I, 293.
veils obscures for a time the moral inherent in the picture and serves to exemplify the insularity of all men within their own age. In Alice Vane's act of snatching the curtain away from the portrait, Hawthorne indicates that by tearing away the veil of time, one may grasp the lessons of the past. Unlike Hutchinson, men may recognize the consequences of disregarding the wishes and rights of the people.

Using the veil as a symbolic device, Hawthorne manifests in a concrete image the impenetrability of the painting and its enigma. Commenting on the black silk that had initially covered the canvas, Hawthorne writes, "... it was remarkable that over the top of the frame there were some ragged remnants of black silk, indicating that a veil had formerly hung down before the picture, until the duskiness of time had so effectually concealed it." The second veil of the now blackened representation has been wrought by the years: "Time had thrown an impenetrable veil over it, and left to tradition and fable and conjecture to say what had once been here portrayed." According to popular belief, the painting is an authentic portrait of the Evil One or a demon who has shown himself to the early governors at crucial moments in history. A third veil, which is in a sense the first veil

33Ibid., p. 296.  
34Ibid., p. 293.
restored, is perceived hanging before the portrait as Hutchinson starts to sign the paper permitting British troops to quell the near rebellion of the people: he sees "... that a black silk curtain was suspended before the mysterious picture, so as completely to conceal it." By presenting the veil image in two visible forms, Hawthorne emphasizes the invisible barrier preventing men of the present from apprehending the lessons of the past. Like the governors before him who have scrutinized the canvas, Hutchinson appears "... to search through the mist of years to discover the subject of the picture. ..."

Suggesting that the painting contains a moral lesson, Hawthorne then divulges that it portrays Edward Randolph, founder of the house, who had been heartily detested for obtaining the repeal of the provincial charter and destroying the people's liberties. The annals state that the curse of the people had descended upon Edward Randolph, and his inward anguish had been reflected upon his countenance. Perhaps the frenzied look of Edward Randolph had been so terrible that former governors preferred to hide the portrait and ignore its message. When Hutchinson rejects the popular fantasies, his niece Alice Vane whispers,

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... may not such fables have a moral? And, methinks, if the visage of his portrait be so dreadful, it is not without a cause that it has hung so long in a chamber of the Province House. When the rulers feel themselves irresponsible, it were well that they should be reminded of the awful weight of a people’s curse.37

Like Alice, Captain Lincoln suspects that the painting forebodes evil to those who deny the people’s rights. When Hutchinson harshly cries out that the wishes of a king are more important than the clamor of misguided multitudes, Lincoln pleads with him to trust in the people, "... nor teach them that they can ever be on other terms with British soldiers than those of brotherhood. . . ."38

Having reviewed the historical background of the portrait, Hawthorne prepares the reader for its unveiling. As Alice speculates upon what the picture once represented, Francis Lincoln, Provincial Captain of Castle William, inquires if it would be possible to restore the original hue of the painting. Alice’s reply that such arts are known in Italy foreshadows the restoration of Randolph’s portrait.

At the council meeting Alice snatches away the curtain, disclosing the wretched countenance of Edward Randolph—his expression one of guilt and anguish as the people’s curse wrought its effect. She urges her uncle to learn from the

37 Ibid., p. 298. 38 Ibid.
example of Randolph, but Hutchinson rejects the warning. Then, signing away the people's rights, he initiates his own alienation from the people and brings their curse upon himself. As he pens his name, Hutchinson shudders "... as if that signature had granted away his salvation." 39

In this legend, then, Hawthorne uses the black silk curtain to reaffirm that the insulation of men within the present may be such that they cannot utilize lessons their forebears learned in the past. Many may know the facts of history--like Hutchinson, who states: "... my antiquarian researches have long since made me acquainted with the subject of the picture," 40--but they do not relate them to their own experiences. Alice, on the other hand, studies the past for information which may be of value in the present: Captain Lincoln fancies her to be like the spirits "... of a more antique mythology--who sometimes mingled their agency with mortal affairs, half in caprice, yet with a sensibility to human weal or woe." 41

Hawthorne uses the double veil which conceals the portrait as a token of man's insularity just as he employs Mr. Hooper's veil to denote the isolation of men. As the

39 Ibid., p. 304. 40 Ibid., p. 297. 41 Ibid., p. 299.
masks in "Howe's Masquerade" betoken the British sympathizers' failure to recognize the impending defeat of British forces, so the veil image signifies Hutchinson's failure to see and to accept the warning implicit in Edward Randolph's portrait. The veil as a symbol of isolation dramatizes man's need to learn from the historical past that he may avoid the errors of his predecessors.

"Lady Eleanore's Mantle"

Austin Warren believes that Hawthorne's notebooks contain the clue to his allegorical intent in "Lady Eleanore's Mantle": "To symbolize moral or spiritual disease by disease of the body:—thus, when a person committed anything, it might cause a sore to appear on the body."\(^2\) Hawthorne uses smallpox to dramatize the effects of Lady Eleanore's spiritual disease, pride. The source of this contagion is her richly embroidered mantle, a mask-veil image which symbolizes haughty pride, for she sets herself above common humanity. "Pride," says Randall Stewart," in Hawthorne's analysis, is the root evil, for pride is a voluntary separation."\(^3\) Lady Eleanore's aristocratic hauteur is a monomania which precludes her from the sympathy and brotherhood of mankind.

\(^2\)Warren, p. 93.

\(^3\)Randall Stewart, Nathaniel Hawthorne (New Haven, 1948), p. 255.
When Jervase Helwyse, a young man driven mad by Lady Eleanore's scorn, prostrates himself upon the ground to be her footstool, she hesitates a moment, only to consider whether he is worthy of supporting her, as she remarks to the Governor that men who desire to be trampled upon deserve to have their wish granted. Then she steps upon Jervase's cowering form, "... and never surely, was there an apter emblem of aristocracy and hereditary pride trampling on human sympathies and the kindred of nature, than these two figures presented at that moment."\(^44\) The scenic tableau, in addition to establishing Lady Eleanore's pride, contains also a suggestion that her act will bring retribution. Dr. Clarke expresses his belief that Heaven will punish her sin, for "She seeks to place herself above the sympathies of our common nature, which envelops all human souls. See, if that nature do not assert its claim over her in some mode that shall bring her level with the lowest!"\(^45\)

At the Governor's ball honoring her, Lady Eleanore wears a richly embroidered mantle of exquisite artistry, with, perhaps, even magical charms interwoven, the creation of a dying woman in delirium. Lending a certain grace to her figure when drawn about her shoulders, the mantle partially conceals

\(^{44}\textit{Hawthorne's Works, I, 312.}\quad ^{45}\textit{Ibid., p. 313.}\)
Lady Eleanore's face. The mantle symbolizes her pride and voluntary isolation, which are revealed during the opening ceremonies, when "... Lady Eleanor Rochliffe stood apart from the mob of guests, insulating herself within a small and distinguished circle, to whom she accorded a more cordial favor than to the general throng." She looks upon the festivity with the deep scorn of one too high to enjoy the pleasure of the masses. As symptoms of smallpox—a feverish flush and a wild, unnatural look—indicate physical disease, so, Hawthorne implies, her arrogance and pride suggest spiritual disease.

While Lady Eleanore sits as if overwearied, Jervase Helwyse kneels and reverentially offers her a goblet filled with wine, begging her to sip the wine in requital of the harm she may have done him, and then, for her own welfare, to pass the goblet among the guests, "And this shall be a symbol that you have not sought to withdraw yourself from the chain of human sympathies—which whoso would shake off must keep company with fallen angels." The gentlemen about Lady Eleanore demand that Helwyse leave, and as Captain Langford seizes him by the shoulder, the wine spills. The wine, a symbol of communion with God and man, is thus rejected.

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46 Ibid., pp. 314-315.  
and cast out. By offering the wine, Jervase has asked Lady Eleanore to lay aside her pride and join the human community. Though refusing his offer, she admits her wrong: "... it would become me to weep for the mischief I have wrought," but she can only laugh at Jervase.

With an impassioned plea, Helwyse exclaims that it may not be too late to cast the mantle into the flames, meaning that Lady Eleanore may still give up her pride. By ridding herself of the mantle, she may avoid smallpox just as she may avoid social alienation by renouncing her pride. Haughtily drawing the richly embroidered garment even more closely about her—half concealing her face to give a mysterious aspect to her beauty, she states, "Keep my image in your remembrance, as you behold it now." But Helwyse replies, "We must meet shortly, when your face may wear another aspect—and that shall be the image that must abide within me."

Immediately following the ball an epidemic of smallpox appears, curiously confining itself at first to high society. Those who were distinguished guests at the Governor's ball are its first victims, but soon the plague spreads to all classes. The pestilence is traced back to Lady Eleanore and her infected mantle.

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48 Ibid. 49 Ibid., p. 318. 50 Ibid.
One day as the plague rages, Jervase enters the Province House with a red banner, the emblem of contagion, and seeks out Lady Eleanore. While hiding her disease-marked face from him, she cries out:

... lock not now on the woman you once loved!
The curse of Heaven hath stricken me, because I would not call man my brother, nor woman sister. I wrapped myself in Pride as in a Mantle, and scorned the sympathies of nature; and therefore has nature made this wretched body the medium of a dreadful sympathy. You are avenged—they are all avenged—Nature is avenged—for I am Eleanore Rochcliffe!"1

Lady Eleanore's pride, symbolized by the richly embroi-
dered mantle, separated her from human fellowship. Commenting on Lady Eleanore's association with the European tradition of class distinction, Robert H. Fossum says, "... she repre-
sents those who assert the autonomy of an isolated moment of time, be it past or present; who attempt to insulate them-
seves in a temporal circle outside the magnetic chain which joins all humanity to a common past, involves them in a moving present, and carries them forward to the same inevitable future."2 Thus while signifying Lady Eleanore's proud with-
drawal from others, the plague-ridden mantle symbolizes also the dissociation of all mankind. Ironically, the mantle, which physically separates Lady Eleanore from others and indicates her spiritual alienation, transmits the pestilence

1 Ibid., p. 325.  
2 Fossum, p. 343.
to Lady Eleanore; as a consequence, smallpox brings her "level with the lowest" and unites her with the common people.
CHAPTER IV

THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE

The white drapery of the Veiled Lady and mask emblems, such as Zenobia's exotic flower, Old Moodie's eyepatch, and Westervelt's false teeth, are tangible symbols manifesting the characters' insularity and defining their intrinsic qualities in The Blithedale Romance. Other less obvious veil images, which imply a discrepancy between appearance and reality, serve to heighten the romantic atmosphere and illuminate the theme. As Frank Davidson has noted: the veil obscures almost everything in the romance; therefore, it should be considered a central image. \(^\text{(3)}\)

As the masquerade provides Hawthorne an appropriate occasion to employ masks to symbolize the isolation of a group of people in "Howe's Masquerade," so the Blithedale experiment offers him an opportunity to make use of various veil tokens to indicate the separation of this community from the world at large. In his preface, Hawthorne announces his desire to set up a theatre which will be apart from life.

\(^\text{(4)}\) Frank Davidson, p. 376.
Blithedale, as the scene of the romance, is a Faery Land in which he can reveal his ideas "... without exposing them to too close a comparison with the actual events of real lives." Using the veil image to develop his theme, Hawthorne elucidates many of the ideas he has previously explored in short stories—the discrepancy between the real world of man and the spiritual or ideal, and the isolation of man in pursuit of selfish ends versus his need to live in brotherhood.

As the story opens, a group of reformers begin the attempt to find a better way of life than their previous experience has offered. Withdrawing from city life to the Blithedale farm, they strive to establish a communal system wherein all will toil equally for economic sustenance and share in the profits of their labor. By mutual cooperation and support, they seek to divorce themselves from the competition and selfishness of the society in which they have lived.

After their separation from the struggling world, Miles Coverdale, the narrator, records his ironic observation:

... I very soon became sensible that, as regarded society at large, we stood in a position of new hostility, rather than new brotherhood. Nor could this fail to be the case, in some degree, until the bigger and better half of society should range itself on our side. Constituting so pitiful
a minority as now, we were inevitably estranged from the rest of mankind in pretty fair proportion with the strictness of our mutual bond among ourselves.

Essentially, the Blithedale experiment is a masque of real life; it begins "... to show like an illusion, a masquerade, a pastoral, a counterfeit Arcadia, in which we grown-up men and women were making a play-day of the years that were given to us to live in." When Hollingsworth asks Coverdale if he has anything to do in life, Coverdale answers that he has nothing to do but make verses and "... play a part, with Zenobia and the rest of the amateurs, in our pastoral." Near the conclusion of the story after Zenobia has been rejected by Hollingsworth, she denounces the whole system as a farce: "Of all varieties of mock-life, we have surely blundered into the very emptiest mockery in our effort to establish one true system.

Hawthorne introduces the central symbol, the silvery white veil of the Veiled Lady, in Coverdale's opening remarks concerning an exhibition of hypnotism which he attends before setting off for Blithedale farm. Coverdale's interest as a spectator is aroused—

Ibid., p. 343. Ibid., p. 344. Ibid., p. 368. Ibid., p. 576.
... by the enigma of her identity, and an absurd rumor... that a beautiful young lady, of family and fortune, was enshrouded within the misty drapery of the veil. It was white with somewhat of a subdued silver sheen, like the sunny side of a cloud; and, falling over the wearer from head to foot, was supposed to insulate her from the material world, from time and space, and to endow her with many of the privileges of a disembodied spirit.

Although all the veil imagery in Hawthorne's works suggests physical separation, this veil, in addition, may symbolize a psychological barrier between man and the elusive ideal he pursues.

Later when Zenobia narrates "The Silvery Veil," the deliverance of the Veiled Lady into the power of the magician of this legend parallels the betrayal of Priscilla into the power of Westervelt in The Blithedale Romance. In this thinly disguised story, Zenobia implies that Priscilla is the Veiled Lady: "Just at the moment, so far as can be ascertained, when the Veiled Lady vanished, a maiden, pale, and shadowy, rose up amid a knot of visionary people, who were seeking for the better life. The disappearance of the Veiled Lady coincides with the arrival of Priscilla at Blithedale.

Priscilla's ethereal nature also suggests her relationship to the Veiled Lady. Upon Priscilla's arrival at Blithedale.

Ibid., p. 326. 
Ibid., pp. 449-450.
Farm, Zenobia notes that "... as she has hardly any physique, a poet, like Mr. Miles Coverdale, may be allowed to think her spiritual." Westervelt also remarks that philosophers call this gradual lessening of the physical system a spiritual quality. Upon her trip to the city, Zenobia returns Priscilla to the mesmeric power of Westervelt. Later with the help of Hollingsworth, Priscilla, as the Veiled Lady, throws off her veil and flees to him. Zenobia's failure to secure his favor by her betrayal of Priscilla is evident in Hollingsworth's choice of Priscilla over Zenobia. Hawthorne may signify the triumph of the ideal or spiritual life, symbolized by Priscilla, over the physical life, represented by Zenobia.

Although the silvery drapery worn by Priscilla as the Veiled Lady is an obvious veil image, other tokens which serve to denote each character's identity are not as clearly defined.

In Zenobia's account of the legend, the magician warns the lady that a maiden is her enemy: "In love, in worldly fortune, in all your pursuit of happiness, she is doomed to fling a blight over your prospects." He then advises the lady to destroy the girl's evil influence by taking a veil, throwing it over the foe, and crying, "... 'Arise, Magician! Here is the Veiled Lady!' and immediately I will rise up

Ibid., p. 358.  
Ibid., p. 450.
through the earth, and seize her; and from that moment you are safe!" Saying these words, Zenobia flings the veil over Priscilla's head, an act which might suggest that Priscilla is the Veiled Lady and reveal that Zenobia intends to betray Priscilla into the power of Westervelt in order to secure her own happiness.

Zenobia's flower, as a token to symbolize her pride and her isolation from the community, functions easily as a mask-veil image— to separate her from others and to indicate her inner nature. From the beginning Zenobia's hair is adorned by an exotic flower "... of rare beauty, and as fresh as if the hot-house gardener had just clipt it from the stem:" So brilliant, so rare, so costly, as it must have been, and yet enduring only for a day, it was more indicative of the pride and pomp which had a luxuriant growth in Zenobia's character than if a great diamond had sparkled among her hair.

This is no ordinary flower; it is exceptional— rarer and richer than other flowers— as Zenobia's individualistic nature is more vibrant and radiant than that of others. Although a diamond often denotes opulence and brilliance, here the exotic flower more accurately indicates Zenobia's

\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 451. \(^{3}\) Ibid., p. 337.

\(^{1}\) Ibid.
disposition. Coverdale believes that the ornament is actually a subtile expression of Zenobia's character:

"I noticed—and wondered how Zenobia contrived it—that she had always a new flower in her hair. And still it was a hot-house flower,—an outlandish flower,—a flower of the tropics, such as appeared to have sprung passionately out of a soil the very weeds of which would be fervid and spicy. Unlike as was the flower of each successive day to the preceding one, it yet so assimilated its richness to the rich beauty of the woman, that I thought it the only flower fit to be worn; so fit, indeed, that Nature had evidently created this floral gem, in a happy exuberance, for the one purpose of worthily adorning Zenobia's head."

Zenobia changes the hot-house flower daily so that it never fades or droops. When Old Moodie inquires of Hollingsworth if Zenobia is kind to Priscilla, he adds, "I should recognize this lady, so people tell me, by a magnificent flower in her hair."

By constantly associating Zenobia with the flower, Hawthorne offers a clue to understanding Zenobia. Taken as a veil image and related to the other veil images, the flower, so rare and brilliant, symbolizes Zenobia's isolation from humanity—her nature being unlike any other. Yet Zenobia resents her separation; at Blithedale she makes a determined effort to live in harmony although her pride prevents her assimilation into the community.

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\( \text{Ibid., p. 372.} \)

\( \text{Ibid., pp. 370-371.} \)

\( \text{Ibid., p. 413.} \)
The exotic flower that Zenobia wears relates her to the Veiled Lady and Priscilla, suggesting a link between the two. Coverdale believes that Zenobia is an enchantress, saying to Hollingsworth: "She is a sister of the Veiled Lady. That flower in her hair is a talisman. If you were to snatch it away, she would vanish, or be transformed into something else." In discussing Hawthorne's dramatic irony, Robert Stanton states, "Clearly, these two characters [Zenobia and Priscilla] represent the physical and spiritual, nature and man's higher spirit, pride and shame. They are literally sisters, and after Priscilla's request of Zenobia on the first night at Blithedale—'Only that she will shelter me. . . . Only that she will let me be always near her'—Zenobia pledges herself to protect the girl, thus symbolically uniting the physical and the spiritual." Hawthorne indicates their sisterhood by referring to both Zenobia and Priscilla as flowers. After observing Zenobia's freedom of deportment, Coverdale concludes, "Zenobia is a wife; Zenobia has lived and loved! There is no folded petal, no latent

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17 Ibid., p. 371.

dew-drop, in this perfectly developed rose!" At Eliot's Pulpit after Zenobia expresses her love for Hollingsworth, Hawthorne parallels the characters' emotions in flower symbolism. Zenobia is tremulous—"... and the delicate stem of the flower which she wore in her hair was likewise responsive to her agitation." Although she does not see Zenobia's gesture, Priscilla suddenly looks pale and sorrowful. Coverdale believes that he should not pry; "... but, as she appeared to be tossed aside by her other friends, or carelessly let fall, like a flower which they had done with, I could not resist the impulse to take just one peep beneath her folded petals."

Again in the city when Priscilla appears dressed in white, Coverdale exclaims: "She is as lovely as a flower!" And after talking with Old Moodie, he says, "...--Priscilla--poor, pallid flower!--was either snatched from Zenobia's hand, or flung wilfully away!"

Hawthorne indicates by the change in Zenobia's flower the change in her nature. When Coverdale presents himself at her apartment in the city, he is surprised by her cool attitude, which is so different from the warm greeting she had extended him upon his arrival at Blithedale. The

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21Ibid., p. 463. 22Ibid., p. 514. 23Ibid., p. 539.
difference is evident in her attire: then--". . . with only
the one superb flower in her hair . . ." and now--

Even her characteristic flower, though it seemed
to be still there, had undergone a cold and bright
transfiguration; it was a flower exquisitely imitated
in jeweller's work, and imparting the last touch that
transformed Zenobia into a work of art.²²

Coverdale had earlier thought that Zenobia's passionate,
out-going nature as revealed at Blithedale Farm was her true
caracter, but now in the city, her former warmth appears to
be an illusion, so he is not sure whether the exotic green-
house flower or the jeweller's ornament truly represents her.
In using this mask-veil image, Hawthorne ambiguously suggests
the duality of Zenobia's character.

The image, in addition, symbolizes the change in Zenobia's
nature after Hollingsworth chooses Priscilla. Zenobia asks
Coverdale to give the ornament to Priscilla:

Thus saying, she took the jewelled flower out
of her hair; and it struck me as the act of a queen,
when worsted in a combat, discrowning herself, as
if she found a sort of relief in abasing all her
pride.²³

By another veil image, the black veil of the nun,
Hawthorne may signify Zenobia's disillusionment with the
world. She informs Coverdale of her plans: "I intend to
become a Catholic, for the sake of going into a nunnery.

²² Ibid., p. 506. ²³ Ibid. ²⁶ Ibid., p. 575.
When you next hear of Zenobia, her face will be behind the black veil; so look you last at it now,—for all is over. Once more, farewell!

By withdrawing from the world, Zenobia hopes to find solace and fulfillment as a nun. Her hopes may be related to the Catholic view of the Virgin Mother, which Coverdale explains:

I have never found it possible to suffer a bearded priest so near my heart and conscience as to do me any spiritual good. I blush at the very thought! Oh, in the better order of things, Heaven grant that the ministry of souls may be left in charge of women! The gates of the Blessed City will be thronged with the multitude that enter in, when that day comes! The task belongs to woman. God meant it for her. He has endowed her with the religious sentiment in its utmost depth and purity, refined from that gross, intellectual alloy with which every masculine theologian—save only One, who merely veiled himself in mortal and masculine shape, but was, in truth, divine—has been prone to mingle it. I have always envied the Catholics their faith in that sweet, sacred Virgin Mother, who stands between them and the Deity, intercepting somewhat of his awful splendor, but permitting his love to stream upon the worshipper more intelligibly to human comprehension through the medium of a woman's tenderness.

As the Virgin Mother, who separates men from God, provides a medium through which the worshipper can approach God, so a nun, as a human veil, presents abstract spirituality to mankind by permitting the divinity of God to be revealed through her humanitarian services. Although Zenobia desires the

27 Ibid., p. 577. 28 Ibid., p. 458.
fulfillment found in a religious life of self-sacrifice and humility, she cannot accept this view of womanhood; she must seek a place of equality with men. Realizing that she cannot find a nun's solace in ministering to souls, Zenobia recognizes that her life is futile: "But I am weary of this place, and sick to death of playing at philanthropy and progress." Because she cannot find hope, even after laying aside her pride, she commits suicide by drowning, lying at last beneath the dark veil of the river's murky waters.

Another mask-veil image, the patch over one eye, denotes the solitary existence of Old Moodie. Having committed a crime in his younger days, he now lives in seclusion. The eye patch symbolizes Old Moodie's desire to remain obscure in his shame—"He had no pride; it was all trodden in the dust." His face is always partially concealed: "He had a queer appearance of hiding himself behind the patch of his left eye." Before Coverdale leaves for Blithedale when Old Moodie accosts him, Coverdale sees "... something characteristic in the old fellow's way of standing under the arch of a gate, only revealing enough of himself to make me recognize him as an acquaintance." When Old Moodie visits Blithedale

\[\text{Ibid., p. 576.}\]  
\[\text{Ibid., p. 413.}\]  
\[\text{Ibid., p. 530.}\]  
\[\text{Ibid., p. 327.}\]
Farm, Coverdale sees him in an open field before he approaches behind a clump of maples partially hidden from view. Coverdale imagines Old Moodie's darkened view "... as if looking through a smoke-blackened glass at the sun. It robbed the landscape of all its life." Again, in the city, Coverdale recognizes Old Moodie by his hand and arm extending from behind a screen. His furtive, rat-like nature, Coverdale notes, is betokened by the eye patch which appears to hide him from public view.

Professor Westervelt's true character is also revealed by mask-veil imagery—a set of false teeth and a pair of spectacles. As Coverdale addresses him, Westervelt's metallic laugh exposes a gold band:

In the excess of his delight, he opened his mouth wide, and disclosed a gold band around the upper part of his teeth, thereby making it apparent that every one of his brilliant grinders and incisors was a sham. This discovery affected me very oddly. I felt as if the whole man were a moral and physical humbug; his wonderful beauty of face, for aught I knew, might be removable like a mask; and, tall and comely as his figure looked, he was perhaps but a wizened little elf, gray and decrepit, with nothing genuine about him, save the wicked expression of his grin.

Westervelt's physical artificiality suggests an equal falseness in his personality. Hawthorne indicates Westervelt's evil nature when Coverdale perceives his secret: "Every

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human being, when given over to the Devil, is sure to have the wizard mark upon him, in one form or another. I fancied that this smile, with its peculiar revelation, was the Devil's signet of the Professor."

Another emblem worn by Westervelt discloses the falsity of his position:

He offered me a card, with "Professor Westervelt" engraved on it. At the same time, as if to vindicate his claim to the professorial dignity, so often assumed on very questionable grounds, he put on a pair of spectacles, which so altered the character of his face that I hardly knew him again.

Although Coverdale wears no disguise, in his own way he joins the masquerade of communitarians by secluding himself in his private hermitage, a veiling device which allows him to meditate in seclusion: "This hermitage was my exclusive possession while I counted myself a brother of the socialists. It symbolized my individuality, and aided me in keeping it inviolate."

Hollingsworth wears no tangible token of disguise, but he too is a masquerader; his monomaniacal desire to obtain funds for a philanthropic enterprise is concealed behind an ostensible wish to support the Blithedale experiment. His pretense at brotherly love is hypocritical, for he would

\[
\text{Ibid., p. 500.} \quad 37 \text{Ibid., p. 429.} \quad 39 \text{Ibid., p. 432.}
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willingly sacrifice anyone—Coverdale, Zenobia, or Priscilla—to accomplish his scheme. After recognizing Hollingsworth's real intent, Zenobia derides him for his self-concern, "Self, self, self! You have embodied yourself in a project. You are a better masquerader than the witches and gypsies yonder; for your disguise is a self-deception."\cite{ibid, p. 567}

The characters' names also often conceal their identity yet signify their personal characteristics. Zenobia's name, which she assumes for her literary writing, is "... a sort of mask in which she comes before the world, retaining all the privileges of privacy—a contrivance, in short, like the white drapery of the Veiled Lady, only a little more transparent."\cite{ibid, p. 328} This name also indicates her pride: "She took the appellation in good part ... for [Zenobia] had as much native pride as any queen would have known what to do with."\cite{ibid, p. 335}

Old Moodie's name is a mask which hides him from those who knew him as Fauntleroy. "Moodie" also suggests "moody," meaning temperamental or marked by changes of moods. The contrasting personalities of his daughters, Zenobia and Priscilla, reveal that each has inherited one facet of his dual, changing nature. Whereas these names serve as pseudonyms, Priscilla gives only her first name, saying, "Pray do
not ask me my other name,—at least not yet,—if you will be so kind to a forlorn creature." By keeping her last name secret, Priscilla conceals her relationship to Zenobia and Old Moodie. Like Priscilla's name, Westervelt's title, "Professor," serves as a partial mask. However, because "Professor" is often used in a derogatory sense to indicate one who falsely professes, the name may also signify Westervelt's real nature. Coverdale's name reveals that he is the "cover or veil" through which the events, colored by his viewpoint, are told. Hollingsworth's name suggests that his real worth is hollow, exposing his hypocritical pretense behind the facade of philanthropy.

In addition to such veiling devices relating to individual characters of Blithedale, Hawthorne employs a number of images which have veil connotations or imply a discrepancy between appearance and reality. Nature, too, wears a mask. As Coverdale sets out for Blithedale, a drifting snow-storm covers the April day in the appearance of winter. Coverdale comments on the storm, "It seemed to have arisen for our especial behoof,—a symbol of the cold, desolate, distrustful phantoms that invariably haunt the mind, on the eve of adventurous enterprises to warn us back within the boundaries of

Ibid., p. 353.
ordinary life." The snow-storm apprises these communitarians, who seek a sunny Paradise, that chilly dreariness may also present itself. When Coverdale speaks of labor on the farm, he observes that, "There was, at such moments, a novelty, an unwonted aspect, on the face of Nature, as if she had been taken by surprise and seen at unawares, with no opportunity to put off her real look, and assume the mask with which she mysteriously hides herself from mortals." When the men search for Zenobia's body, the moon's rays shine slantwise, not falling on the river. Thus the river serves as a veil image to hide Zenobia's body: "It lapsed imperceptibly away, a broad, black inscrutable depth, keeping its own secrets from the eye of man, as impenetrably as mid-ocean could." The facade of city life likewise conceals the actualities of men's lives: the front "... is always artificial; it is meant for the world's eye, and is therefore a veil and a concealment. Realities keep in the rear, and put forward an advance-guard of show and humbug." The curtains of the city apartments insulate the city dwellers from the prying eyes of their neighbors. In recognition of Coverdale, Zenobia gestures with her head and hand, then lowers the white linen

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\[\text{Ibid.}, p. 341.\]  
\[\text{Ibid.}, p. 394.\]  
\[\text{Ibid.}, p. 583.\]  
\[\text{Ibid.}, pp. 489-490.\]
curtain "... as if such were the proper barrier to be interposed between a character like hers and a perceptive faculty like [Coverdale's]." When Coverdale calls upon Zenobia, he rebukes her for pulling the curtain, saying, "It is really impossible to hide anything, in this world, to say nothing of the next," but Zenobia claims the liberty to drop the curtain. Symbolically, perhaps Hawthorne is questioning whether any man has the right to insulate himself entirely from other men.

Frank Davidson discerns other, less conspicuous forms of the veil:

... much more delicate in texture are those woven by time, by circumstance, by imagination, by manner, by mood, by temperament. Coverdale, for instance, tells the story of Blithedale in retrospect; years have intervened between narrator and the incidents of his days of young manhood at the farm. Zenobia and Priscilla and Old Moodie are shrouded in mystery spun by time: each has an unpenetrated past. Coverdale's curiosity is aroused early in the story as to what Zenobia's life has been; and when, at her burial, he reveals some of his convictions about her to Westervelt, the latter's reply is, "You mistake the matter completely." By means of the clarifying influence of a glass of wine, Coverdale does penetrate momentarily the concealing medium of Old Moodie to learn his real name and to know that the only reality about him had been created by the circumstance of prosperity, that "it was his law to vanish into the shadow of the first intervening cloud." Zenobia, also, deserted by Hollingsworth and Priscilla, knew the power of circumstance as a veil: the woman who goes a hair's breadth astray, she asserts, "never sees the world in its true aspect afterwards."
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In "The Artist of the Beautiful," Hawthorne expresses his belief that when the artist achieves the beautiful, the symbol by which he expresses it becomes of little value, for his spirit enjoys its reality.\(^1\) The symbol assumes importance only as it reveals the allegorical meaning for which it stands. Like Emerson, who said, "We learn nothing rightly until we learn the symbolical character of life,"\(^2\) Hawthorne believes that symbolism inherent in natural phenomena signifies the spiritual meaning of life. In order to illustrate abstract truths, Hawthorne employs common tokens, such as the mask-veil image which supports the theme without calling attention to itself.

Such critics of Hawthorne's style as Edgar Allan Poe and Henry James objected to his allegorical technique, considering it a detriment rather than an aid to the reader's comprehension. But, although Hawthorne often stated that he preferred

\(^1\)Complete Novels, p. 1156.

\(^2\)Matthiessen, p. 242.
to read realistic novels, he recognized that his own approach as a writer of romance required the use of imagery to convey and enhance moral ideas. The solitude of his personal life may explain his interest in alienation as a theme. The fact that the mask-veil image suggests this solitude may explain its recurrence as the dominant symbol in four short stories and one novel, *The Blithedale Romance*.

The mask-veil image primarily serves to reflect the psychological conflict of man as he searches for a balanced view of good and evil. In "The Minister's Black Veil," Hawthorne exemplifies this conflict by using the black veil as a physical sign of man's psychological alienation caused by his own sin and guilt. Because man's inner nature is not made apparent through external description, Hawthorne employs a symbolic approach to reveal the abstract forces which motivate men. For example, in "The Maypole of Merry Mount," monster masks indicate the animalistic drives of the Merry Mounters, and the iron-armor masks betoken the moralistic restraints of the Puritans.

Serving as reflectors of a character's inner self, the variant emblems indicate specific flaws which cause men to withdraw from society. Mr. Hooper's black veil not only denotes every man's "secret sin," as he apparently intends,
but, without his awareness, it also symbolizes his voluntary isolation and secret pride in assuming the veil as a living sermon. In other stories, the veil likewise stands for inner traits: Lady Eleanore's mantle represents her aristocratic pride, and in *Blithedale*, the individual tokens suggest Zenobia's pride, Old Moodie's secrecy, and Westervelt's falseness.

Hawthorne employs mask-veil imagery to intensify the atmosphere of romance, to add dimension to characterization, and to enrich his themes. The mood in "The Minister's Black Veil" is set by the veil—"... such a terrible thing . . ." that his congregation fears him; and he, too, becomes frightened by his own image. In characterizing the Veiled Lady of *The Blithedale Romance*, Hawthorne uses the white veil to suggest an ambivalence in Hawthorne's thought by contrasting appearance with reality that lies behind the veil.

Through the use of mask-veil imagery, Hawthorne is able to illustrate his social comments more clearly and quickly; the mask, like a form of shorthand, conveys his meaning. While physically separating men from other men, the veil dramatically symbolizes the psychological alienation of those who adopt extreme viewpoints. In these negative terms,

3Hawthorne's *Works*, I, 57.
Hawthorne shows man's need for a realistic, balanced view of the antithetical forces in life, as Chester E. Eisinger has noted: jollity and gloom in "The Maypole of Merry Mount," good and evil in "The Minister's Black Veil"; appearance and reality in "Howe's Masquerade"; democracy and monarchy in "Edward Randolph's Portrait"; the aristocratic view of pride and the democratic view of humility in "Lady Eleanore's Mantle"; socialistic brotherhood and isolating individualism in The Blithedale Romance. By joining individual images so as to suggest new relationships, Hawthorne increases the depth and range of their meaning: the isolation indicated by Mr. Hooper's black veil corresponds to the withdrawal betokened by Lady Eleanore's mantle, and evidence of man's alienation suggests the need for brotherhood.

After once perceiving the functional value of the mask-veil image, the reader can then more accurately interpret Hawthorne's fiction. Understanding how Hawthorne intimates ideas ambiguously and directs the reader to certain conclusions through imagery and such other devices as allusions, metaphorical language, and analogy, enables one to know better how to apprehend his other symbols.

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Eisinger, pp. 29-30.
This inquiry makes clear that a full appreciation of the richness and variety in Hawthorne's stories is contingent upon a comprehension of his use of imagery and symbolism to explore certain abstract ideas. This study has considered new dimensions in the recognition and definition of one emblematic manifestation—the mask and veil. An analysis of Hawthorne's use of this device in selected short stories and *The Blithedale Romance* discloses that its purpose is primarily functional rather than decorative; the mask image serves to explicate and enrich his thematic material. Hawthorne uses imagery to manifest the psychological world, to enhance theme, to delineate character, to create a mood of romance, to intensify drama, and to provide social comment. An awareness of Hawthorne's use of the device provides the reader a deeper understanding and appreciation of Hawthorne's fiction.
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