FEMALE INHERITORS OF HAWTHORNE'S
NEW ENGLAND LITERARY TRADITION

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

Dana W. Adams, B.S., M.A.
Denton, Texas
August, 1994
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Nineteenth-century women were a mainstay in the New England literary tradition, both as readers and authors. Indeed, women were a large part of a growing reading public, a public that distanced itself from Puritanism and developed an appetite for novels and magazine short stories. It was a culture that survived in spite of patriarchal domination of the female in social and literary status.

This dissertation is a study of selected works from Nathaniel Hawthorne, Sarah Orne Jewett, and Mary E. Wilkins Freeman that show their fiction as a protest against a patriarchal society. The premise of this study is based on analyzing these works from a protest (not necessarily a feminist) view, which leads to these conclusions: rejection of the male suitor and of marriage was a protest against patriarchal institutions that purposely restricted females from realizing their potential. Furthermore, it is often the case that industrialism and abuses of male authority in selected works by Jewett and Freeman are symbols of male-driven forces that oppose the autonomy of the female. Thus my argument is that protest fiction of the nineteenth
century quietly promulgates an agenda of independence for
the female. It is an agenda that encourages the woman to
operate beyond standard stereotypes furthered by
patriarchal attitudes. I assert that Jewett and Freeman
are, in fact, inheritors of Hawthorne's literary tradition,
which spawned the first fully-developed, independent
American heroine: Hester Prynne.
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CHAPTER I

PATRIARCHY AND FEMALE FICTION

This study asserts that Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary E. Wilkins Freeman follow Nathaniel Hawthorne's footsteps in an artistic protest against a society dominated by patriarchal attitudes toward females. Ours is a culture that has survived in spite of patriarchal attitudes and in spite of feminist ideas that consider the division of labor according to gender and/or sex as discriminatory, as far back as in ancient Hebrew and Christian texts.

I generally use the term "patriarchy" to help define fiction that exposes an oppressive male threat to the female, which results in a denial of certain freedoms to specific literary characters. Although this study is certainly not a defense of patriarchal attitudes, perhaps patriarchy should, at least, be viewed two ways, since it is a central part of this argument. First, it may be viewed as it historically originated—as best as can be surmised—and secondly, for this dissertation, as a nineteenth-century social construct.

Patriarchy was historically a male-oriented social system borne of necessity for survival; not for the survival of the male, but for the survival of the family.
Some feminists attack the entire patriarchal system rather than understanding the reasons for its origin. It seems reasonable to me that we accept the original concept of patriarchy as workable for the times when males had to be the provider for and protector of the family. In fact, patriarchy's origins come from "necessity rather than a deliberate policy in a society where the family depended on the number of males it had" (Eve 8-9).

In hopes of bettering our society, however, we should continue to point out instances in fiction that expose "paternalistic domination," which Hawthorne, Jewett, and Freeman certainly attempted to do. Truly, the time has come and gone for the original concept of patriarchy, but it did work when survival was a day-to-day existence. That is why it is important to show the difference between a society that survived because of patriarchy and a nineteenth-century culture that survived in spite of patriarchal attitudes. Indeed, research shows that there is not a single society known where women-as-a-group have decision-making power over men or where they define the rules of sexual conduct or control marriage exchanges. . . . Those who define matriarchy as a society where women dominate over men, a sort of inversion of patriarchy, cannot cite anthropological, ethnological, or historic evidence. (Lerner, 31)
We, however, live in a society that is not based on hunting skills and food-gathering abilities, but rather in a nation that hungers for social equality between male and female.

Along these same cultural lines, perhaps as an offshoot of patriarchy, another social invention functioned in many nineteenth-century homes. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg writes of the "apprentice system" that produced and nurtured "mother-daughter relations." In conventional families, the daughter "followed the mother into a life of traditional domesticity":

... mothers and other older women carefully trained daughters in the arts of house-wifery and motherhood. Such training undoubtedly occurred throughout a girl's childhood but became more systematized, almost ritualistic, in the years following the end of her formal education and before her marriage. ("Female World" 16)

Thus the "art[s] of housewifery" combined with the well-documented system of the young male apprentice (i.e. printer, scrivener, cabin boy) to produce divisions of labor according to gender, somewhat like the original patriarchal model. Smith-Rosenberg cautiously compliments the female "apprentice system," adding that young girls benefitted from these relationships because they "tied the generations together in shared skills and emotional
interaction" (16). The same could be said of male apprenticeships. Both systems sent the young boy and girl to houses and businesses to work apart from their families.

Similarly, Gerda Lerner documents the idea of division according to sex. She maintains that for "nearly four thousand years women have . . . acted under the umbrella of . . . paternalistic dominance," which is based on "mutual obligations and reciprocal rights" such as an exchange of "submission for protection" when daughters "place themselves as wives under the dominance/protection of another man" (Patriarchy 217). I pursue the important idea of exchange, where the female is tempted to give up knowledge/power to receive the "'security' of male affirmation" in several seminal works selected for this study. This critical issue, whether or not the female actually needs "male affirmation," is certainly the crux of the power struggle in the nineteenth century.

The "American girl" in the 1800's has been described as "Dependent throughout her life, she was to reward her male protectors with affection and submission."

Furthermore, the stereotypical "American girl" must "remain a child-woman, never developing the strengths and skills of adult autonomy" ("Hysterical Woman" 656). Obviously, girls mature to womanhood sooner or later. Many daughters, however, were born into a rather restricted female environment. The female world, as secure as it may sound,
is symbolic of the restricted life for females, which may have prompted Nathaniel Hawthorne, Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary Wilkins Freeman, Kate Chopin, Rose Terry Cooke and others to speak out for female autonomy in often-coded fiction and against what Lerner terms the "paternalistic dominance" of male power.

Power and submission are the ultimate issues. In the characters and stories detailed in this dissertation, power is often abused by paternalistic males. In my view, the difference between patriarchy and paternalism is slim indeed. A patriarchal system required a dominant male; hence the roots of the term: "man" and "rule." On the other hand, Lerner's term, "paternalistic dominance," denotes a dominance for the purpose of restricting the female for reasons other than providing for the needs—food and protection—of the family. Although Lerner's term "paternalistic domination" is preferable for this dissertation, both terms will be used when illustrating male-driven forces that oppose the autonomy of the female.

In a literary tradition dating back to our earliest novels, women are oppressed by aggressive men. In the nineteenth century, women were a mainstay in the New England literary tradition, both as readers and authors. Indeed, women were a large part of a growing reading public, a public that distanced itself from Puritanism and developed an appetite for novels and magazine short
stories. America's early popular novels were sentimental works such as Maria Cummins's *The Lamplighter* (1854), Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte: A Tale of Truth* (1794), and *The Wide, Wide World* (1850) by Susan Warner, all of which followed in the footsteps of Samuel Richardson's paradigmatic *Clarissa* (1747-1748). By the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the novel and magazine short stories were well-established in America due to an increasing public readership.

I discuss selected sentimental novels mentioned above, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, and certain short works of Jewett and Freeman in terms of an often-coded message of independence for female readers. Two definitions are in order: first, "sentimentality," which incorporates religious didacticism and persecution of the heroine as in the Cinderella myth. "Sentimentality" includes stock characters and situations where an aggressive male seduces or at least persecutes an innocent female. More specifically, my view of "sentimentality" stems from Nina Baym, who explains that in "sentimentality"

... the author is asking for more of an emotional response from the reader than the literary art has earned ... or that the author's depiction of real life is heavily slanted toward the pretty and tender and hence is
not a comment on reality but an evasion of it.

(24)

Secondly, for the purposes of this study, female fiction is fiction written primarily about the female, by the female, and for the female. This study does not include the domestic novel perfected by Jane Austen, although I may refer to certain female situations as domestic.

I concur with those who acknowledge Jewett and Freeman as early writers who waged an artistic war against female repression. On the other hand, I do not agree with the idea in some feminist criticism that the sentimental novel merits a new, elevated status because the books were ignored by male critics who controlled admittance to the canon. Males spurned early female fiction, some feminists say, in order "to begin major American fiction historically with male rather than female authors" (Baym, 70). Early novels written by females were not ignored because of gender, but because they were considered sentimental, rather than true literary works. In fact, noted feminists such as Nina Baym would ask modern readers to ignore "standards of performance that have been established by earlier authors, where formal mastery and innovation are paramount" so that the domestic, sentimental novel might be more palatable to modern readers. In short, Baym begs admittance for sentimental female fiction on grounds other than those which determine all other canonical fiction.
I concur with Jane P. Tompkins who mentions "stylistic intricacy, psychological subtlety, epistemological complexity" as "familiar categories for evaluating fiction."

However, Tompkins, in an otherwise interesting essay, "Sentimental Power, Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Politics of Literary History," exceeds reasonable boundaries and sidesteps "familiar categories":

the work of the sentimental writers is complex and significant in ways other than [my emphasis] those which characterize the established masterpieces. I will ask the reader to set aside some familiar categories for evaluating fiction—stylistic intricacy, psychological subtlety, epistemological complexity—to see the sentimental novel, not as an artifice of eternity answerable to certain formal criteria and to certain psychological and philosophical concerns, but as a political enterprise, halfway between sermon and social theory, that both codifies and attempts to mold the values of its time. (85)

Tompkins may be correct to call the sentimental novel a "political enterprise," but to extol sentimentality as "complex and significant" is going too far. Perhaps Tomkins is suggesting critics "set aside some familiar categories for evaluating fiction" and consider for the
canon such non-literary efforts as Harlequin romances and western novels still available in convenience stores.

Actually, most novels by females were popular in the 1800's because of religious didacticism; many readers with a remnant of Puritanical conscience needed to be encouraged toward goodness and told how and what to think and to feel, rather than feeling and thinking for themselves. Moreover, the sentimental novel often possessed just enough sensationalism to keep the reader titillated. Sentimental novels forwarded two agendas and, in my opinion, are the only reasons they should be considered for evaluation at all. On the surface, sentimental novels in this study promoted a popular agenda: the perfection of the female. Additionally, sentimental novels often forwarded a coded agenda that attacked abuses of male authority symbolized by negative male characters. The popular agenda and the coded agenda will be elaborated later.

Two things seem obvious to me. First, sentimental novels need not be privileged above exactly what they are: inferior literature. Sentimental novels fall outside "categories for evaluating fiction" for four reasons: 1. plots are often full of coincidence; 2. outcomes are usually unrealistic; 3. characters are ordinarily stock—too good or too evil—and 4. situations are often obvious and predictable. In short, the "categories" Tompkins "ask[s] the reader to set aside"—"stylistic intricacy,
psychological subtlety, [and] epistemological complexity"—are the very reasons why sentimentality and the canon of literary masterpieces cannot mix. Secondly, part of this study is designed to show why Jewett and Freeman should be considered imaginative realists rather than writers of mere local color village sketches. An extrapolation of my argument is that we should accept Jewett and Freeman on the basis of all canonical American literature.

Curiously, Jewett and Freeman were not as popular as other authors of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. But neither were Hawthorne and Melville. One reason is that they all avoided sensationalism and sought "stylistic intricacy, psychological subtlety, epistemological complexity," certain signs of maturity. Most popular works, however, are long-forgotten and are relegated to the dusty shelves of sentimentality. Indeed, in the majority of the popular female novels beginning with Charlotte A Tale of Truth in 1794 and continuing even beyond Elizabeth S. Phelps's The Gates Ajar in 1868, sentimentality and didacticism seem to have been the primary ingredients for popular success. In fact, sentimentality still reigns in popularity today at the convenience store book rack.

On the other hand, nineteenth-century realism in female fiction reached its pinnacle with works by Jewett, Freeman, Kate Chopin and later with Edith Wharton, Ellen Glasgow, and Willa Cather. The key elements in their
literary successes are, for the most part, the absence of sentimentality, rejection of the male seducer and of the Cinderella myth, and the addition of "stylistic intricacy, psychological subtlety, [and] epistemological complexity." Jewett and Freeman made significant contributions to American literature and, for the purpose and scope of this dissertation, will be referred to as nineteenth-century realists due to their representative themes, which will be detailed later. Theirs is the kind of fiction that forged the tradition of realism that was bequeathed to such twentieth-century literary giants as Edith Wharton and Willa Cather, as well as Ellen Glasgow, Mary Austin, and later writers like Flannery O'Connor, Carson McCullers, and Eudora Welty. (New England 2)

In the nineteenth century, Southerner Kate Chopin was a "nationally famous author" (Toth, Chopin 241), although "there had been little national interest between her death in 1904 and her rediscovery in the 1960's" (403). Like Jewett and Freeman, Chopin was devoted to the writer's life. In 1894 she "wrote thirteen stories, four essays, and two Maupassant translations; she published one poem, eight stories, and also four essays" (246). Beyond this, in the fall of that same year, Chopin reviewed three books, including Crumbling Idols, a collection of essays by Hamlin Garland. "Chopin had studied Garland's work, just as she
studied Mary E. Wilkins [Freeman] and Sarah Orne Jewett"; Chopin was "not impressed" with Garland’s essays and believed he overstated his case to "tear down the past" (249).

Of Kate Chopin, Lewis Leary claims:

Among Mrs. Chopin’s American contemporaries only Henry James and perhaps Sarah Orne Jewett had produced fiction more artfully designed; there is a simpleness and a directness in The Awakening which has inevitably reminded readers of Flaubert’s Madame Bovary, and an economy and master of incident and character which seems to forecast the lucid simplicity of Willa Cather’s Death Comes for the Archbishop. . . . (xv)

Chopin’s stunning novel The Awakening is recognized as her high point of creativity; the novel’s critical reception, however, ended her career. Chopin’s major theme, similar to Jewett and Freeman, deals with the sublimation of the female personality in Adele Ratignolle, the perfect mother/wife, and Edna Pontellier, the restless wife who yearns for autonomy. Adele is so finely-crafted a character that the reader is tempted to believe that the woman’s "proper place is strictly limited to the home" (Scaggs, 88,91), which could not be farther from Chopin’s intent.

Decades ahead of her time, Chopin treats sex as one
way to achieve autonomy. Where Jewett and Freeman emphasize female relationships and reject male relationships, Chopin displays the sexually active woman—Chopin had five sons and one daughter—as fulfilled in the responses of her body. The character Calixta in the explicit short story "The Storm" is another illustration of a married woman who desires sex with a married man.

As many have pointed out, Chopin's character Edna Pontellier awakens to her own autonomy and slowly realizes her restricted, domestic life is governed by paternalistic domination. Her husband Leonce attempts to rule her, Edna's potential lover Robert fails to understand her, and Alcee, her actual lover, tries to control her even more than Leonce. All relationships involve losses of various freedoms.

As opposed to Jewett's female characters, Chopin's Edna and Calixta represent the sexual part of the entire woman. However, in Chopin, Jewett, and Freeman autonomy, not sensuality, is the issue. Indeed, the New England tradition of a conservative mind-set would never have allowed the subject of the sexually active woman to enter their stories. Thus from this geographical standpoint, I believe Jewett and Freeman are by far more influenced by Hawthorne than Chopin, who spent much of her life in New Orleans and Cloutierville. It was in the smaller town where Chopin had her own sexual awakening, perhaps even
before her husband died. Flirtatious Kate Chopin had an affair with Albert Sampite, the person on whom she apparently based the character Alcee of *The Awakening*, "At the 'Cadian Ball," and "The Storm."

Kate Chopin made a decision similar to character Edna Pontellier's. Edna, after leaving her lover Robert, returns to mother/woman Adele; Kate returns to St. Louis and to her mother after she leaves Sampite. Both return to female companionship: "friendship over passion, mother-love over romance" (Toth, 172), as with many autonomous characters in Jewett and Freeman.

These three female authors wrote feminist realism. For the purposes of this dissertation, I define feminist realism as fiction that incorporates universal themes such as female autonomy, as realism that accurately pictures life in New England, and as literature that promotes a feminine agenda, an agenda different from the sentimental novel's perfection of the female. Furthermore, this study analyzes patriarchal types in Hawthorne, as well as in Jewett's and Freeman's males who symbolize intrusion into the female sanctuary in "A White Heron" and "Old Woman Magoun." I also agree with Josephine Donovan, Margaret Roman, and Louis Renza, who assert that Jewett and Freeman, instead of being consigned to minor literature, actually promote universal female concepts of autonomy and place. Moreover, New England female fiction is emblematic of the
changes taking place at the historical crossroads of not only female literature, but of the female herself.

This study also charts the growth of the New England female literary character, which represents the nineteenth-century woman. Growth begins with Hawthorne's Hester Prynne, as she steps from the shadow of male dominance, turns, and confronts male authority; growth blossoms in such characters as Jewett's young Sylvia in "A White Heron" and in Freeman's matriarchal Sarah Penn. Emily Toth, in *Regionalism and the Female Imagination*, declares that what is most universal, most representative of 'the human condition,' is not necessarily war, or hunting, or the pursuit of a white whale. Rather, our most universal--most human--experiences happen at home. Our deepest emotions [not our surface, sentimental ones] are associated with and expressed in the private sphere--the sphere of home, women, region.

(9-10)

This "private sphere" is one of the reasons why Jewett and Freeman are important. Their "private sphere" could be described as simply New England domestic fiction, but this study will use the term "imaginative realism," because it is more accurate. In fact, it is my contention that Jewett and Freeman perfected realistic fiction of the New England "private sphere." Thus this study affirms Sarah Orne
Jewett's and Mary E. Wilkins Freeman's literary place above the genre of sentimentality and as heirs to Nathaniel Hawthorne, one of the depicters of psychological realism and of female autonomy. Moreover, differences as well as similarities to Hawthorne's theme of isolation resurface in characters and situations from Jewett and Freeman. Part of my argument focuses on Jewett's and Freeman's "universal--most human--experiences" of the "private sphere," which should be considered as representative of nineteenth-century themes as Hawthorne's themes of the wrath of New England Puritanism, the anguish of sin, and the pain of psychological isolation. It seems to me that Jewett and Freeman are as serious as Hawthorne about writing literature.

This study also analyzes the inherited suppression of the female. Suppression often results in the female's isolation and psychological distortion, evidenced early in Charlotte: A Tale of Truth and later in The Lamplighter and The Wide, Wide World. The female is still suppressed in The Scarlet Letter and in many stories by Hawthorne, Freeman, and Jewett; much of their fiction protests the stereotypes preserved by patriarchal attitudes. The premise of this study is based on analyzing these works from a protest (not a feminist) view, which leads to these conclusions: the independent female character's rejection of the male suitor and of marriage serve as protests
against patriarchal attitudes that kept females from realizing their own potential. Additionally, industrialism and abuses of male authority—especially by the clergy—are symbols of male-driven forces that oppose the autonomy of the female. Hawthorne, Jewett, and Freeman also use the power of speech as another symbol of protest. Speech is sometimes a closely-held construct of power for the male; silence is often the only avenue of protest for the female. I also point out fiction that promulgates an agenda of independence and autonomy for the female, an agenda that encourages women to operate beyond standard stereotypes furthered by patriarchal attitudes. In short, this study explains the reasons why I believe Jewett and Freeman carry on Hawthorne's artistic protest against repressive patriarchal attitudes and sentimentality.
CHAPTER II

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE
SENTIMENTAL FORMULA

Sentimentality in nineteenth-century American literature, with its successful beginnings in the enormously popular *Charlotte: A Tale of Truth* (1794), is also the major ingredient in representative works such as Susan Warner’s *The Wide, Wide World* (1850), E. D. E. N. Southworth’s *Retribution* (1847), *The Lamplighter* (1854) by Maria Cummins, and Augusta Jane Evans Wilson’s *St. Elmo* (1866). For the purpose of this study, it is important to analyze the sentimental formula and to grasp the reasons for the formula’s popularity. Essentially, the sentimental novel’s popularity indicates an acceptance of the formula’s agendas by female readers: to instruct the female in perfectibility, to convert the male to Christianity, and to quietly protest patriarchal restrictions on female social status. I believe the female authors selected for this study protested through their fiction by portraying males in negative postures and, as is often the case, by punishing male characters.

In addition to encouraging female perfectibility through religious didacticism, novels were written by women
simply to make money, just as the dime western provided a living for many male authors. For example, Southworth, deserted by her husband, was forced into writing to support her two children, while hard times compelled Susan Warner to support her irresponsible father, who squandered not only his fortune, but the money Susan and sister Anne made from writing as well. Fortunately for many female authors, works sold in the $100,000's, as Hawthorne dryly pointed out. Finally, the sentimental novel was popular because it possessed enough sensationalism to keep the reader interested.

The sentimental novel was aimed at women, and women enjoyed what little sensationalism stemmed from their own ordinary world. Sentimental novels are, in my view, different from domestic novels and from dime western novels. Because of the wit and satire involved, domestic fiction is a more mature look at the homely world of manners and morals. On the other hand, sentimental fiction is filled with religiously didactic intrusions and other elements detailed later. The dime novel had more sensationalism than either the sentimental or domestic novel and was as popular with men as female fiction was with women. Various dime westerns, initially promoted by the New York firm of Beadle and Adams, sold more than four million copies by the end of the Civil War; soldiers evolved into faithful readers of stories about Indian
fighting and pioneer life. Oddly enough, feminist critics argue for a more favorable view of the female sentimental novel and conveniently overlook the dime western. As a matter of fact, Malaeska, The Indian Wife of the White Hunter (1860) by Ann S. Stephens, was the first dime novel and sold 300,000 copies its first year (Bold, 29-31). She is one of the most popular authors of the mid nineteenth century but, perhaps because of her male-dominated genre, she is ignored by feminist critics.

The sentimental novel was a mixture of paternalistic persecution of a young, innocent female, of education in moral fortitude--didacticism--leading to perfection, and of sensational, near-catastrophies. Interestingly, Susan Warner warns her young readers not to read novels or magazine articles. At first, her character Ellen Montgomery reads only the Bible. Then her "favourite book[s]" are about "hunting the elephant in India or fighting Nelson's battles" (468). Next Ellen becomes lost in other reading: "an old magazine--Blackwood's Magazine." She responds to John's questions about her time spent in story-reading; John is her authority on all matters. "Yes--I got very much interested in a curious story there; why?" He replies "What would you say, Ellie, if I ask you to leave the rest of the two piles [of magazines] unopened?" Her quick reply is "'Why, I will say that I will do it, of course,' said Ellen, with a little smothered
sigh of regret however;—'if you wish it'" (477). It is easy to assume she was enjoying a short story spiced with sensationalism, but her reading material is controlled by a male, which parallels the thinking at the time: women were too emotional and naive to read novels or sordid tales. Finally, as Ellen and John separate, his parting advice is stern and blunt: "Read no novels." Her retort is: "I never do John. I knew you did not like it, and I have taken good care to keep out of the way of them" (564). This is an example of paternalistic domination over the female; the male often felt it necessary to guard the innocent female mind. Histories of Nelson at Trafalgar and biographies of Godly men are preferred reading.

In an effort to promote the agenda of female perfectibility, Maria Cummins centers her long novel The Lamplighter upon education in moral fortitude. Emily teaches her young friend Gertrude that "Those only, my child, who have learned submission; those who, in the severest afflictions, see the hand of a loving Father, and, obedience to his will, kiss the chastening rod" (134). Furthermore, Gertrude, who later unselfishly saves her evil rival from death on a burning riverboat, supposedly suffers a tragic fate:

... just as her feet touched the cold surface of the river, the huge wheel, which was but a little distance from where she hung, gave one
sudden, expiring revolution, sounding like a
death-dirge, which came foaming and dashing up
against the side of the boat, and, as it swept
away again, bore with it the light form of
Gertrude! (412)

But no, she escapes a "watery grave" and lives to receive
a reward of marriage to her childhood sweetheart in
exchange for her long-suffering (414). Additionally, we
discover at the novel's end that Gertrude is, in fact, not
an orphan, but Philip Amory's daughter. More importantly,
Philip and Emily, innocent lovers who were separated for
many years, may have the same mother, for Philip is Mr.
Graham's stepson. This titillating bit of sensationalism
is brought out as they are reunited and engaged once again.
A hint of incest is certainly not sensational today, but in
1854 a union of this sort surely raised some eyebrows for
such a saint as Emily to marry her half-brother.
Furthermore, Gertrude, before she knew that Philip was her
father, was strangely attracted to him; she considered him
attractive and young for his age. Cummins handles both
situations with a subtlety that shows her skill in
depicting characters and in titillating the reader. In
short, sensationalism was key in keeping the female's
interest in sentimental fiction, thereby instructing
readers in perfectibility, converting the male to
Christianity, and protesting patriarchal attitudes.
Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World*, possesses the most mis-leading title of this group of novels; her character Ellen's world is provincial and small. Finally, near the end of the book, page 499 of 569, Ellen actually travels to Scotland to live with her mother's family. In addition to intense persecution from her Aunt Fortune and from her Uncle Lindsay, Ellen also endures some of Warner's sensationalism: she must ride her pony into town to find the doctor by herself. Ellen's trusted friend, Mr. Van Brunt, has fallen through the second floor trap door in the barn and has broken his leg. After finally reaching the doctor, Ellen, on her way home, is accosted by a surly young man who not only frightens her, he also whips her mild-natured pony. Moreover, he is on the verge of leading the pony, with Ellen, into the woods. The tearful, hapless Ellen is rescued by her protector, John Humphreys, but not before a nineteenth-century reader is aroused to anger because of a depraved man who has an innocent girl under his calamitous control. Author Warner places a pretty girl on a lonely road with a man lying in wait for her, which ends in a near-rape situation. Sensationalism such as this, as well as in the western dime novel, surely kept male and female readers riveted to their respective novels.

Part of the sentimental formula promotes a belief in the female's heaven-sent mission to convert to Christianity all the eligible males such as Maria Cummins's Philip Amory.
and Susan Warner's Mr. Van Brunt and Uncle Lindsay. The formula also called for punishment for many patriarchal characters, like Emily’s father in The Lamplighter and Ellen’s father and Uncle in The Wide, Wide World. An enlightened reading of the feminine political agenda as it relates to religious power over the male occurs in Jane P. Tompkins's "Sentimental Power, Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Politics of Literary History." In this essay she takes an interesting look at Harriet Beecher Stowe’s politics:

The totalizing effect of the novel’s iterative organization and its doctrine of spiritual redemption are inseparably bound to its political purpose, which is to bring in the day when the meek—that is to say, women—will inherit the earth. (94)

She goes on to assert that "The sentimental novelists make their bid for power by positing the kingdom of heaven on earth as a world over which women exercise ultimate control" (96). Gertrude Flint and Emily Graham in The Lamplighter and Ellen Montgomery and Alice Humphreys in The Wide, Wide World are certainly meek and unquestionably in control. The pious young women are symbols of earthly reward for living good lives; Charlotte Temple symbolizes something different: her reward is in heaven.

Charlotte: A Tale of Truth is an early model for didactic, sentimental tales of persecuted innocence. How
could the nineteenth-century reader's heart not go out to Charlotte: "It was one cold stormy day in the latter end of December, as Charlotte sat by a handful of fire, the low state of her finances not allowing her to replenish her stock of fuel . . ." (Three Early Novels 109). Charlotte, seduced, rejected, and jilted, is an example of the consequences involved in following the wrong path. Since the sentimental novel has been considered a transitional phase between reading scripture and reading non-clerical, popular fiction, the eighteenth and nineteenth-century reader needed a large dose of religious didacticism: parental advice, illustrations of persecuted innocence and seduction, and reward of marriage and/or heaven. Indeed, didacticism--instruction in morality and in principles of virtue--guided the sentimentalists and was the core element of sentimentality.

Didactic intrusions encourage the reader to believe that God rewards goodness and piety. In hopes of leading women to perfectibility, Rowson and others preach the evils of wandering from the straight and narrow path. Rowson warns that "The mind of youth eagerly catches at promised pleasure; pure and innocent by nature, it thinks not of the dangers lurking beneath those pleasures till too late to avoid them. . . ." (41) Perfectibility is the surface agenda promoted by female writers in their quest to convert all males to Christianity. However, the underlying
objective of much of female fiction—and one of the premises of this dissertation—is that female authors began to protest quietly against paternalistic domination, which restricted female growth and independence. Protest first occurs in sentimentality and later in the works of Jewett and Freeman, which I argue for later.

Perfectibility, the surface objective, is evident in Rowson’s description of Charlotte’s parents; they are rewarded for their piety. The mother, Lucy, is rewarded with marriage for a life of persecution as she assists her broken, semi-invalid father. Charlotte’s father, Henry, is rewarded for rightly resisting his father, the Earl, and for saying no to an unworthy, although wealthy, young woman. Finally, Lucy and Henry are rewarded with “Plenty and her handmade Prudence,” “Hospitality,” “Peace,” “Content,” and “Love and Health” (39).

Like her parents, Charlotte also spends her final years in a secluded cottage, but her attendants are Treachery, Heartbreak, Ignominy, and Penury. By Chapter XXVIII, author Rowson finds it necessary to intrude and to identify with her impatient readers:

'Bless my heart,' cries my young, volatile reader, 'I shall never have patience to get through these volumes, there are so many ahs! and ohs! so much fainting, tears, and distress, I am sick to death of the subject.’ (Three Early
Finally, as Charlotte lies dying in a servant’s hovel, her estranged father fortuitously arrives to hear her parting words as she prepares to pass on to her reward. Thus Rowson encourages her readers toward piety and illustrates the consequences of following the wrong path.

Most females in sentimental fiction are intuitively wise; The Lamplighter’s Gertrude develops into the perfect woman. Alice in The Wide, Wide World is also a perfect woman; unfortunately she dies young. Emily, in The Lamplighter, though blind, is another perfect woman in a spiritual sense:

She could not see the world without, but there was a world of love and sympathy with her, which manifested itself in abundant benevolence and charity, both of heart and deed. She lived a life of love. She loved God with her whole heart, and her neighbor as herself. (75)

Emily is presented as a model for Gertrude in The Lamplighter as Alice is a spiritual guide for Ellen in The Wide, Wide World. Emily instructs the willful Gerty and gives her books "of little girls who never told lies, boys who always obeyed their parents, or, more frequently still, of the child who knew how to keep her temper . . ." (86). Cummins relates that "simply and gradually the blind girl imparted light to the child’s dark soul" and that,
continuing the metaphor of light, Gerty "received into her heart the first beams of that immortal light that never could be quenched" (87). Finally, the author asks her readers: "Has Gerty learned religion? Has she found out God, and begun to walk patiently in that path which is lit by a holy light, and leads to rest?" (93).

Even though The Lamplighter is heavily didactic, it is, to my way of thinking, superior to the efforts of Warner and Rowson. One reason is the author's skillful handling of the issue of possible incest. Another is Cummins's depiction of windows as symbols for freedom. A third reason is that the author sustains the metaphor of light throughout her novel, an artistic device that helps hold it together. Cummins begins the metaphor with True Flint, "who lit the street-lamp in front of the house where she lived; to see the bright torch he carried flicker in the wind . . . made the whole place seem cheerful. . . . (6) Cummins also writes of the spirit of Uncle True, "looking down upon her [Gertrude] through the bright star which she so loved. . . ." (134)

In a state of "great grief," Gertrude, Cummins instructs us, "knows where to look for help." She is a "witness of His love who can turn darkness into light, and that no weight can now overshadow her whose gloom is not illumined by rays from the throne of God" (208). The metaphor continues as Gertrude and Emily talk of their
lamps being "trimmed and burning" (214). Finally, the "voice of nature and the still, small voice within" in the last paragraph of the book states that "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall by ended" (523).

Cummins maintains the metaphor in a religious aside, one of many in the novel that reveals her agenda: religious conversion to the Christian faith, which gives the female control. Cummins writes of an inward light and an outward light. Gertrude is finally converted on the inside, but she must carry on her outside zeal to evangelize her adopted father and her real father.

Cummins symbolically uses windows as openings to freedom; freedom from Gertrude's virtual incarceration at the home of malicious Nan Grant and freedom from Gerty's fears about her lack of religion. After she moves away from Nan Grant, she happens by one evening and, "picking up a stone from the side-walk, flung it at the window. There was a crash of broken glass, and an exclamation in Nan's well-known voice . . ." (66). Gertrude, in a case of sinful backsliding, destroys the symbolic window where, as a prisoner, she once watched the unknown lamplighter, now her adopted father. Cummins seems to say that the outward lights, street lamps and stars, have gained Gertrude's attention, but her inward light has yet to shine.
In a private revelation, Gerty again gazes out her window:

The sky was bright with stars; and the sight of them revived her old wonder and curiosity as to the author of such distant and brilliant lights. Now, however, as she gazed, there darted through her mind the thought, 'God lit them! O, how great he must be!' (55)

Thus Gertrude once looked through the window of her garret and wondered who lit the stars; now she knows. The metaphor of light and the windows as symbols of freedom sustain the reader’s interest, like sensationalism. All three elements help heighten the female’s interest in the sentimental formula.

On the other hand, Gertrude and Emily, Ellen and Alice symbolize a major problem with domestic and sentimental fiction: authors developed religious models that were simply unattainable and unrealistic. It is a commonly held deduction that perfect religious females were one reason the popularity of the domestic and sentimental novel eventually gave way to more realistic portrayals of failure in females and males. In short, sentimental novels suffered from their proclamation that human nature was capable of perfectibility, a liberal viewpoint compared to the Calvinist idea of total depravity. One of the outcomes from the decline of dime westerns and of sentimental
fiction was the move toward realism, seen in the works of Kate Chopin, Sarah Orne Jewett, and Mary Wilkins Freeman. Just as importantly, Nathaniel Hawthorne had risen above the popular trends of sentimental fiction and produced his masterpiece, The Scarlet Letter, in 1850.

As is widely understood, Hawthorne took a dim view of sentimental fiction for several reasons. Briefly recapitulating Hawthorne's views on the sentimental formula and on his own writing provides a necessary look at certain nineteenth-century novels. Hawthorne criticized much of female fiction for many reasons; however, Hawthorne may also have been reacting to the predictable female characters of sentimental fiction that lacked autonomy and independence, unlike Hester Prynne, Zenobia in The Blithedale Romance, The Marble Faun's Miriam, and Phebe Pyncheon as characterized in The House of the Seven Gables.

Hawthorne bitterly points out in one of several letters to publisher and friend William D. Ticknor that a major factor contributing to the popularity of the sentimental formula is readers that are ready and willing to buy inferior fiction.

... America is now wholly given over to a d___ mob of scribbling women, and I should have no chance of success while the public taste is occupied with their trash--and should be ashamed of myself if I did succeed. What is the mystery
of these innumerable editions of the Lamplighter, and other books neither better nor worse—worse they could not be, and better they need not be, when they sell by the 100,000. (Letters 75)

Unfortunately for Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter sold far fewer copies than first editions of many sentimental novels or dime novels: Hawthorne's masterpiece sold only 5,000 copies in the first six months. Conversely, forty editions of Rowson's Charlotte: A Tale of Truth were published before her death in 1824. As far as the reading public was concerned, by 1850 "there were more than six times the number of magazines published in 1825; that is 575 magazines, 372 daily newspapers and 271 weeklies, many of which printed stories, essays and verse" (Beaver, 60).

Maria Cummins's The Lamplighter, Hawthorne's famous example of "trash," sold "40,000 copies in the first eight weeks." Beyond this, Marion Harland's first novel Alone sold 100,000 copies a year for five years. Augusta Jane Evans's St. Elmo "ranks among the thirty most popular novels ever published in the United States." Susan Warner's The Wide, Wide World "was reprinted sixty-seven times, by the end of the nineteenth-century it had sold more than half a million copies." Again, it is difficult to document these figures. At any rate, the most popular of the domestic sentimentalists was Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth. Her novel Retribution reportedly sold 200,000
copies. And to Hawthorne's certain dismay, she wrote some sixty novels in all (Beaver, American Literature 61-2). Despite the popularity of these works, many characters are examples of stereotypes that pale in comparison to the independent Hester Prynne. Yet to Hawthorne's eternal disappointment, The Scarlet Letter did not sell well.

Thus Hawthorne's criticism of the "mob of scribbling women" may be justified. Several examples of his critical remarks may be found in his letters to William D. Ticknor. For example, on January 6, 1854, Hawthorne wrote that "ink-stained women are, without a single exception, detestable" (Letters 27). He goes on to condemn novels written by females:

the devil must be in the woman to publish them.
It seems to me to let out a whole history of domestic unhappiness. What a strange propensity it is in these scribbling women to make a show of their hearts, as well as their heads, upon your counter, for anybody to pry into that chooses!

(29-30)

On September 30, Hawthorne asked Ticknor to send "half a dozen good American books, which he [Monckton Milnes] has never read or heard of before." We, of course, do not know what Milnes has read, but these are the books that Hawthorne approves for Milnes:

'Walden,' 'Passion Flowers,' and 'Up-Country
Letters.' Possibly Mrs. Mowatt's Autobiography might make a fourth; and Thoreau's former volume a fifth. You [Ticknor] understand that these books must not be merely good, but must be original, with American characteristics, and not generally known in England. (63-4)

Interestingly enough, Hawthorne includes an autobiography of a female and a volume of poetry, "Passion Flowers," by Mrs. Howe.

In a letter dated January 19, 1855, Hawthorne makes his famous "damned mob of scribbling women" assertion. The next month he remembers that "In my last [letter], I recollect, I bestowed some vituperation on female authors. I have since been reading 'Ruth Hall'; and I must say I enjoyed it a good deal." Here Hawthorne explains why he enjoyed Fanny Fern's novel and uses another allusion to the devil.

The woman writes as if the devil was in her; and that is the only condition under which a woman ever writes anything worth reading. Generally women write like emasculated men, and are only to be distinguished from male authors by greater feebleness and folly; but when they throw off the restraints of decency, and come before the public stark naked, as it were—then their books are sure to possess character and value. (78)
Two years later, Hawthorne again refers to Mrs. Howe's writing. In a critique of her play, he states that "she has no genius or talent, except for making public what she ought to keep to herself—viz. her passions, emotions, and womanly weaknesses" (Letters 50).

Therefore, Hawthorne believes that only books with "character and value" are worth reading. Further, he attacks the subject matter, "domestic unhappiness," and the style, "feebleness and folly." In sum, woman's only talent is for "making public . . . her passions, her emotions, and womanly weakness."

James D. Wallace, in an interesting look at Hawthorne's attitude toward female writers, concludes that Hawthorne feared similar "trash" might appear in his own writing:

the rhetoric of Hawthorne's comments on women writers is the rhetoric of his own self-critiques, that the indecorous exposures of the personal, the familial, and the bodily that he condemned in them were preoccupations of his own art, and that the woman writer came to represent for him the bodily, the mutable, the mortal that he sought both to purge from and to embrace in his own work. (203)

Wallace further notes that Hawthorne's criticism of female writers focuses on those writers who were "especially prone to violating the decorum of privacy and parading before the
world personal problems, domestic squabbles, and medical curiosities that ought to be suppressed" (209). It was the violation of "the decorum of privacy" that Hawthorne despised in female "scribblings."

Additionally, Hawthorne expresses his ideas on writing fiction in Prefaces to his novels. In "The Custom House" essay, he states that in his writing, he must not be understood as affirming, that, in the dressing up of the tale, and imagining the motives and modes of passion that influenced the characters who figure in it, I have invariably confined myself within the limits of the old Surveyor's half dozen sheets of foolscap. On the contrary, I have allowed myself, as to such points, nearly or altogether as much license as if the facts had been entirely of my own invention. What I contend for is the authenticity of the outline. (29)

Hawthorne—revealing more of his ideas on proper fiction—was of the opinion that many years in the Custom House would produce an imagination like a "tarnished mirror" and that "characters of the narrative would not be warmed and rendered malleable." Finally, Hawthorne believed that "if a man, sitting all alone, cannot dream strange things, and make them look like truth, he need never try to write romances" (30-31).
In the Preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*, Hawthorne clearly sets out guidelines under which his work is to be judged. His fiction is not a "Novel," which "sins unpardonably." A "Romance," on the other hand, claims "a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material." Additionally, the Romance revolves around the "probable and ordinary course of man's experience" (1). Hawthorne further defines his Romance as an "attempt to connect a by-gone time with the very Present" and as a work that possesses a moral "truth": "the wrong-doing of one generation lives into the successive ones." Thus Hawthorne lauds the romance rather than the realistic novel—which previously mentioned in his letters to Ticknor—which Hawthorne apparently equated with the worst elements in sentimental novels filled with didacticism. As opposed to Hawthorne's moral "truth," the novelist "relentlessly . . . impale[s] the story with its moral, as with an iron rod . . . at once depriving it of life." Finally, Hawthorne asserts that he never intended "to describe local manners, nor in any way to meddle with the characteristics of a community" as in the domestic novels and the local color/village sketches (2-3).

To recap, Hawthorne insists on imagination, but with believability; control, but with latitudes. He condemns morality written with the harshness of an "iron rod" as in *The Lamplighter*. Hawthorne reminds his readers: "the book
The House of the Seven Gables may be read strictly as a Romance, having a great deal more to do with the clouds overhead, than with any portion of the actual soil of the County of Essex" (3). It is clear that Hawthorne criticizes the sentimental novel for its lack of imagination, because it focused on mannerly, everyday problems of predictable, unmalleable characters; he condemned the novelist's lack of control, because the characters were too emotional and simply unbelievable, and the subject matter was, at times, too personal. Many have accused Hawthorne of professional jealousy, and admittedly that has something to do with Hawthorne's attitude. However, it is entirely conceivable that Hawthorne, with his enlightened mind, discerned the domestic stereotypes and knew that the independent character Hester Prynne was not only unappreciated, but far ahead of her time.
CHAPTER III

INDEPENDENT FEMALE CHARACTERS IN
HAWTHORNE, JEWETT, AND FREEMAN

Part of this study is devoted to demonstrating that Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary Wilkins Freeman are imaginative realists. I define this term as a blend of Hawthorne's romance and of realism of the "private sphere" of "home, women, [and] region," not the "world of personal problems, domestic squabbles, and medical curiosities" that Hawthorne attacked. For this claim to be valid, Jewett's and Freeman's themes of isolation and protest in independent females and of representative males as a real threat to women's autonomy are important. In my view these themes, as well as stylistic parallels, are inherited from Hawthorne. It would seem logical that Jewett and Freeman would inherit Hawthorne's genre of short stories as well. The term that ties all three authors together is imaginative realism.

Jewett's story of Dunnet Landing appears as "neither sentimental nor unrealistic" to Anthony Hilfer. Jewett writes realism: her subject matter is the life of the common, hard-working people, and she faithfully represents them. Her stories are "accurate, sometimes brilliant
vignettes of a New England town that is well past its economic and social prime" (12). For the realistically portrayed narrator, the island is a retreat; it is also a very realistic world of isolation, a theme common in Hawthorne, Jewett, and Freeman.

Evidence that Sarah Orne Jewett wrote realism occurs in correspondence with young John Thaxter. For instance, in a letter dated June 11, 1899, she charges that his story "fails in construction" because of too many characters: "too many of them for the length of the story." Also there are "too many starts which do not come to sufficient importance," meaning that Thaxter probably could not stay focused on a single idea for his story because he "keeps making new claims upon the reader's attention and interest." His story is also "improbable, as if one saw a beautiful, quiet piece of landscape painting with its figures hastily done, and crowded and even puzzling to the eye." Thaxter should "Take a simpler history of life" and "write things that you know and have done . . . simplify . . . just tell the thing!" (Cary, Jewett Letters 119-120). Jewett's advice is to focus on a single idea, to write on the believable rather than the "improbable," and to "simplify" events "you know and have done." In short, Thaxter should write realism.

Critic Perry Westbrook has argued that some of Jewett's fiction is not realism. He alleges her fiction
lacks tragedy and that the author sentimentalized Joanna’s story of rejection and isolation on Shell-heap Island in *The Country of the Pointed Firs*. The story covers three chapters: “Poor Joanna,” “The Hermitage,” and “On Shell-heap Island.” On the contrary, I believe young Joanna’s plight—a wasted, solitary life void of hope—is tragic indeed.

Although Joanna is one of Jewett’s great New England melancholy eccentrics, the character should neither be called insane nor should she be grouped with the likes of Stowe’s Little Eva, probably one of the most sentimental characters in nineteenth-century literature. I disagree with Westbrook, who attacks Jewett for her sentimental characters: “certain neurotics and cranks.” Westbrook charges that Jewett disregarded the “fact” that Joanna was “insane.” Additionally, “Jewett ignores the dreary, the morbid, the horrible in Joanna’s diseased existence” and for that Jewett is condemned. Westbrook rightly concedes, however, that Jewett was “most realistic in her treatment of the New England villager’s reaction toward these people [eccentrics]” (Acres 63, 65). To my mind, the handling of the story is a marvelous example of Jewett’s consummate control: she did not stoop to moralistic dramatization of Joanna’s plight.

Joanna’s story connects Jewett as heir to Hawthorne’s ground-breaking psychological realism of the “inward man”
and to his theme of isolation (Kazin, 8,14). We have seen how sentimental fiction affected Hawthorne, forcing him to defend his work as "Romance," as fiction apart from sentimentality. Jewett and Freeman shunned these same elements, and it is a reasonable assumption that, having read Hawthorne's works, Jewett and Freeman agreed with his criticism of the sentimental novel and with many of his ideas on worthy fiction. I concur with Louis Renza, who comments on one of Jewett's and Hawthorne's connections: 

Jewett clearly had read Hawthorne rather carefully, as she all but admits to Annie Fields, her close friend who herself wrote a biography of Hawthorne. Thus, in an 1890 letter to Fields, Jewett says she has just 'read part of one of Hawthorne's American Journal volumes but didn't care for it as much as I used to'.

('A White Heron' 145)

In their mature works, Jewett and Freeman avoided sensationalism and didacticism, and their females' rejection of the male intruder indicates early realism and protest. For the purposes of this study, I have chosen selected chapters from The Country of the Pointed Firs and the following short stories as representative of Jewett's mature fiction: "A White Heron," "Tom's Husband," and "The King of Folly Island." There are other admirable short stories, but these amply support my arguments. For the
same reason, these stories may be grouped among Mary Wilkins Freeman's best fiction: "A Humble Romance," "A Mistaken Charity," "An Independent Thinker," "A Church Mouse," "The Revolt of 'Mother,'" and "Old Woman Magoun."

In addition to the avoidance of sentimentality, there are several other hereditary links between Hawthorne, Jewett, and Freeman. Jewett and Hawthorne, at one time or another, delineate "the probable and ordinary course of man's experience" and connect "a by-gone time with the "Present," to use Hawthorne's phrases. Also, none of the three "impale the story with its moral" as did the sentimentalists. Finally, Hawthorne, Jewett, and Freeman proclaim a common theme of isolation.

The Country of the Pointed Firs chronicles that "probable and ordinary course of . . . experience": woman's experience of the "home, women, [and] region." Dunnet Landing is Mrs. Todd's home and region; she is the island's herbalist, but her mother, Mrs. Blackett, is queen of the region, as evidenced at the Bowden Reunion. Jewett's novel, through the eyes of her narrator, follows the mother and daughter through their "probable and ordinary course of . . . experience."

The narrator, in her experience, returns to Dunnet Landing to find the unchanged shores of the pointed firs, the same quaintness of the village with its
elaborate conventionalities, all that mixture of remoteness, and childish certainty of being the centre of civilization of which her affectionate dreams are told. (47) Jewett employs the visiting narrator as a representation of the present, while Dunnet Landing symbolizes the past.

As another example of the "attempt to connect a by-gone time with the Present," the author's narrator visits Shell-heap Island where Joanna's gravesite is discovered. "I found the path; it was touching to discover that this lonely spot was not without pilgrims." As she roams the deserted area, the narrator finds birds that "fluttered up out of the grass at my feet as I walked along, so tame that I liked to think they kept some happy tradition from summer to summer. . . ." (111)

A further illustration of interlocking past and present comes when Mrs. Fosdick, another visitor, states that I see so many of these new folks nowadays, that seem to have neither past nor future. Conversation's got to have some root in the past, or else you've got to explain every remark you make, an' it wears a person out. (94)

Thus Jewett "connect[s] a by-gone time with the Present" through the narrator's visit to Shell-heap Island, the memory of Joanna, and Mrs. Fosdick's remarks about
conversation, all connections that tie Jewett to Hawthorne. Importantly, Jewett does not "relentlessly . . . impale the story with its moral, as with an iron rod . . . ." An emotional moment would be the perfect time for a sentimentalist to insert a moral and invoke strength from heaven. Rather, several incidents show Jewett’s realism as she imparts the New England way of controlling emotions and of getting to the point. For instance, the narrator and Mrs. Todd separate in a scene based in realism, which indicates, but does not fully reveal, the pain involved when ending a relationship. There are no hugs, sobs, or platitudes of endearment. Mrs. Todd’s gruffness covers up a genuine affection that the herbalist does not want to show, but the narrator detects it nonetheless. Moreover, the narrator, instead of lamenting her departure in sentimental terms, muses to herself: "So we die before our own eyes; so we see some chapters of our lives come to their natural end," a straight-forward, no-nonsense appraisal of her departure (149). Jewett describes our "end" as "natural," rather than an artificially contrived, forced happy ending as sentimentality might dictate. Her term "natural end" parallels her realistic assessment of a natural relationship between two people.

Again, as the Bowden Reunion ends, Jewett spares her readers from sentimentality: the narrator simply declares that "Clannishness is an instinct of the heart,—it is more
than a birthright, or a custom; and lesser rights were forgotten in the claim to a common heritage." Jewett will have no tears or mawkish dialogue. On the way home, the narrator reflects: "The road was new to me, as roads always are, going back." Mrs. Todd remarks to her mother that "Those that enjoyed it [the reunion] best'll want to get right home so's to think it over" (134-35). These illustrations show that Jewett avoids sentimentality at just the right moments and relies on a straight-forward style that incorporates nineteenth-century New England imaginative realism of the "inward" person. She also imparts simple but eloquent truths without the "iron rod" of morality.

The theme of isolation ties Jewett and Freeman to Nathaniel Hawthorne. As every reader of Hawthorne's biography knows, the author is complex, more so than Jewett and Freeman; his own personal isolation may relate directly to his cold, distant handling of the hot-blooded Hester. He illustrates one of his themes--isolation--in Hester, Zenobia, Miriam, Phebe, and in several females from his short fiction, which I show later. Jewett spreads the same theme over an entire island population, and Freeman selects certain characters in which she develops her theme of isolation. All three authors use isolation and silence in certain characters to protest against paternal domination. As with Hester Prynne, the cost of rebellion often results
in isolation from the community; however, Jewett's and Freeman's female is often victorious in a confrontation with dominant males.

Hawthorne's attitude toward domineering males is evident in one of the *Scarlet Letter*’s themes: isolation. Hawthorne, almost cold-heartedly, enables the unfeeling townspeople to isolate Hester. Agnes Donohue, analyzing Hawthorne's style, puts it this way: he uses a "delicate but almost indetectably omnipotent scalpel that cuts all the way through the errant hearts of his characters and readers" (3). This chapter points out many instances that confirm Hawthorne's "omnipotent scalpel," which isolates Hester Prynne and others.

Hawthorne tells the reader that the embroidered letter "had the effect of a spell, taking her out of the ordinary relations with humanity, and inclosing her in a sphere by herself" (43). The author fashions for Hester a "haughty" and cold "dignity," which lends her a certain distance that her situation requires; some isolation is necessary to survive the public humiliation "or else go mad at once" (45). Beyond this, Hawthorne isolates her with daydreams: "Reminiscences, the most trifling and immaterial, passages of infancy and school-days, sports, childish quarrels, and the little domestic traits of her maiden years" (45). It is the total transformation from sexual woman to marble statue that shows Hawthorne’s idea of isolation for Hester.
This same transformation may be seen in *The Marble Faun*. Donatello loses his passionate animal instincts: "the youth, so lately innocent" now awakens to "the ever-increasing loathsomeness of a union [with Miriam] that consists in guilt" (*Portable Hawthorne* 521-22). As with Donatello, Hawthorne coldly separates Hester from her "passionate nature"; her spirit hides behind "a stony crust of insensibility" (53). Moreover, Hawthorne allows the "tempter of souls" to penetrate the "stony crust."

Following the first pillory scene, Hawthorne isolates Hester even more. She lives on "the outskirts of the town" and "out of the sphere of that social activity," in a "lonesome," "abandoned" cottage, which is vacant because "the soil about it was too sterile for cultivation."

Hawthorne, to use a Puritan term, casts Hester into outer darkness "without a friend on earth who dared to show himself" (60). In sum, although she does deal with the community as an expert seamstress, there was nothing that made her feel as if she belonged to it. Every gesture, every word, and even the silence of those with whom she came in contact, implied, often expressed, that she was banished, and as much alone as if she inhabited another sphere. . . . (63)

Hester, as an adulterous woman, is separated from society by the outward badge of ignominy. Hawthorne is
unmistakable when discussing Hester's transformation from a hot-blooded female to the "marble coldness" of a lonely martyr:

All the light and graceful foliage of her character had been withered up by this red-hot brand, and had long ago fallen away, leaving a bare and harsh outline, which might have been repulsive, had she possessed friends or companions to be repelled by it. (118)

In short, Hawthorne portrays Hester in "marble coldness."

In addition to adultery and fornication, she now commits intellectual sin in her mind: what the author calls "speculation," "a deadlier crime than that stigmatized by the scarlet letter" (118-19). The unsympathetic author further isolates Hester by recalling her "latitude of speculation" while "estranged" in "desert places."

Hawthorne explains that "She had wandered, without rule or guidance, in a moral wilderness; as vast, as intricate and shadowy, as the untamed forest..." (143) Hawthorne allows Hester to roam "as freely as the wild Indian in his woods" with a mind full of dangerous speculations, which is reminiscent of the sensuous Miriam in The Marble Faun and of Chopin's character Edna Pontellier. As far as Puritan standards for women are concerned, Hester's speculations are blasphemous.

As the novel draws to its dramatic close, the Puritans
assemble to hear Reverend Dimmesdale's Election sermon. Hawthorne describes Hester's face as reflecting "marble quietude" and as "a mask." In his most unsympathetic delineation, Hawthorne writes that she resembles "the frozen calmness of a dead woman's features; owing this dreary resemblance to the fact that Hester was actually dead, in respect to any claim of sympathy. . . ." (161)

Thus Hester is isolated from the living.

Finally, in what should be Hester Prynne's moment of victory over seven years of isolation behind the mask of her embroidered letter, Hawthorne systematically destroys her hope. First, Chillingworth books passage on the same ship in which Hester and Dimmesdale place their precarious destiny:

Hester's strong, calm, steadfastly enduring spirit almost sank, at last, on beholding this dark and grim countenance of an inevitable doom, which--at the moment when a passage seemed to open for the minister and herself out of their labyrinth of misery--showed itself, with an unrelenting smile, right in the midst of their path. (174)

Thus Hester is isolated from her hopes.

Secondly, only three days from their profoundly emotional forest meeting, Hester wishes for a single "glance of recognition" from the clergyman, but "he seemed
so remote from her own sphere, and utterly beyond her reach." As Hester's emotions run wild, the narrator asks: "How deeply had they known each other then! And was this the man? She hardly knew him now!" As far as the crushed Hester is concerned, Dimmesdale is "unattainable in his worldly position, and still more so in that far vista of his unsympathizing thoughts, through which she now beheld him!" Hawthorne's image of Hester is suddenly as an estranged lover, a sufferer of Dimmesdale's withdrawal "from their mutual world; while she groped darkly, and stretched forth her cold hands, and found him not" (170). Beyond this, the author relates that Hester suffers a final humiliation in the "magic circle of ignominy" in the market place:

At the final hour, when she was so soon to fling aside the burning letter, it had strangely become the centre of more remark and excitement, and was thus made to sear her breast more painfully than at any time since the first day she put it on. (175)

Finally, Hester is isolated from her lover.

Hawthorne's theme of isolation is a literary inheritance passed on to Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary Wilkins Freeman. Jewett spread her theme of isolation over an entire population of islanders isolated from industrialism. Freeman and Jewett chose to use isolation in certain
characters to protest against a paternalistic society that often abuses its authority.

From Hawthorne's Hester Prynne to Freeman's Sarah Penn in "The Revolt of 'Mother,'" to Grandmother in "Old Woman Magoun," and to Jewett's Sylvia in "A White Heron," these female characters represent a growing rebellion against male authority. However, the cost of rebellion may result in isolation and rejection. In each case, the females--Hester, Sarah, Sylvia, and many others--are clearly victorious in their confrontation with dominant males.

As The Scarlet Letter is a portrayal of physical and psychological isolation for the dissident Hester Prynne, so are many of Jewett's short stories convincing portraits of characters in enforced obscurity and refuge. "The King of Folly Island" is one of Jewett's best-known short stories depicting isolation. All the inhabitants of the various islands are segregated from the mainland and from the once-heralded shipping industry, which was the life-blood of the island.

King George, as the islanders call him, made a vow never to step foot on another man's land, which "'T was a hard thing for his folks, his wife an' the girl." Folly Island was the "outer boundary of civilization"; to the stranger Frankfort, it was "as far away as he could get from city life and the busy haunts of men." Jewett describes the solitary inhabitants of the islands: "A
strange population clung to these isolated bits of the world . . ." (Best Stories 109-11).

Author Jewett is clear in her indictment of Quint for sequestering his family on Folly Island. She charges that "There was a loneliness, a remoteness, a feeling of being an infinitesimal point in such a great expanse of sea and stormy sky, that was almost too heavy to be borne" (115). Although Quint's daughter Phebe seems acclimated to her isolated existence, her actions do not go unnoticed by the visitor from civilization, Frankfort. He sees the "eagerness of his hostess to serve him" and "her wistful questioning of her father to learn whom he had seen and what he had heard that day," which indicates her heart yearns for human contact. Jewett criticizes George Quint for isolating his family:

There was no actual exile in the fisherman's lot after all; he met his old acquaintances almost daily on the fishing grounds, and it was upon the women of the household that an unmistakable burden of isolation had fallen. (114)

Clearly, Phebe pines for humanity, not unlike Hawthorne's young Phoebe Pyncheon in The House of the Seven Gables. Hepzibah's vibrant relative must move away from her restricted, lonely rural environment to live in the city with the Pyncheons. As frail Phebe Quint watches through the spy-glass at the Danforth family funeral,
Frankfort "was sure that his hostess had been wishing that she could share in the family gathering." Jewett asks "Was it possible that Quint was a tyrant, and had never let this grown woman leave his chosen isle? Freedom, indeed!" (119). Stories about isolation are realistic treatments of unresolved psychological problems and, specifically, of failed relationships.

Like George Quint, Hawthorne's character Wakefield was unquestionably guilty of "marital delinquency." After ten years of normal marriage, the husband cruelly isolates his "forlorn" wife until his serendipitous return.

The man, under pretence of going a journey [sic], took lodgings in the next street to his own house, and there, unheard of by his wife or friends, and without the shadow of a reason for such self-banishment, dwelt upwards of twenty years. (Selected Short Stories 45)

Hawthorne reveals Wakefield's "morbid vanity, therefore, lies nearest the bottom of the affair." When Wakefield slinks to his front door, then darts away, he is described as "fugitive lord and master" of "the whole household, which includes decent Mrs. Wakefield, the smart maid servant, and the dirty little footboy. . . ." Thus Wakefield choses not to return until Mrs. Wakefield is "frightened to death" (48-9). She, however, gets along admirably well in forced widowhood, and Wakefield finally
ends "the little joke that he has ever since been playing off at his wife's expense." Wakefield merely "exposes himself to a fearful risk of losing his place forever," while his wife suffers quietly; the reader never hears a word from her (52-3). Here is a case of paternal dominance in absence; his wife's faithfulness will not allow her the freedom she deserves, although she is forced to develop a certain amount of independence to survive.

One of Sarah Orne Jewett's well known examples of isolation in *Pointed Firs* is Joanna Todd's life apart from civilization. A few miles off Dunnet Landing stands Shell-heap Island, where Almira Todd's cousin has sequestered herself. Joanna is one of Jewett's celebrated eccentrics, along with peculiar characters Captain Littlepage and William Blackett.

Joanna, not unlike Mrs. Wakefield, is isolated by the actions of an absent male and forced to develop limited independence. Joanna was jilted; "crossed in love" after her fiance left "when he got bewitched with a girl 'way up the bay and married her. . . ." Like the king of Folly Island, Joanna "never stepped foot on the mainland again as long as she lived" (*Pointed Firs* 97-98). Almira Todd recalls the only visit she made to see Joanna. Almira relates how Joanna responded:

'I feel a great comfort in your kindness, but I don't deserve it. I have committed the
unpardonable sin; you don't understand,' says she humbly. 'I was in great wrath and trouble, and my thoughts was so wicked towards God that I can't expect ever to be forgiven.' (106)

Moreover, on another occasion the narrator meditates:

There was the world, and here was she [Joanna] with eternity well begun. In the life of each of us, I said to myself, there is a place remote and islanded, and given to endless regret or secret happiness; we are each the unaccompanied hermit and recluse of an hour or a day. . . . (111)

Thus Jewett's characters give meaning to her theme of isolation, and Jewett expands the theme to include her readers: we all have a place "remote and islanded." As is often the case in Hawthorne, Jewett, and Freeman, males force the female to develop a "place remote and islanded."

Mary Wilkins Freeman presents several cases of isolation and, like Jewett and Hawthorne, Freeman connects the past and present in the stories represented in this study. "A New England Nun" focuses on Louisa Ellis, who is so set in her ways she cloisters herself in her home. Louisa's past engagement of many years is connected to her present in that she has agonized over a change of heart, especially after overhearing her betrothed, to his credit, admit to his secret lover that he must remain true to his original engagement. Consequently, Louisa is like Caesar,
"a veritable hermit of a dog"; both are chained to their respective houses. She chooses isolation rather than marriage; both dog and mistress remain "a close prisoner." Louisa, "all alone in the world," follows a "path . . . so narrow that there was no room for anyone at her side" (Short Fiction 353, 355). Louisa is by choice an independent female; marriage for her is a critical loss of autonomy.

"A Village Singer" features Candace Whitcomb, another spinster who isolates herself. Candace is rightly offended after being abruptly relieved of her duties as church soprano; the choir turned her out in favor of a younger singer. Her past history as leading soprano connects with her present situation. The theme is clear: Candace, like Joanna of Shell-heap Island and Louisa, must deal with rejection, which leads to isolation. Also, the lack of love from male authority—the way men reject Candace, Betsey Dole in "A Poetess," and Hetty Fifield in "A Church Mouse"—also shows how rejection leads to isolation and even death. These female characters act out Freeman's attitude supporting the independent female and protesting against religion and male authority. It is evident that Freeman, like Jewett, wrote in protest against marriage and against persecution from paternal dominance.

The independent Hetty Fifield, who briefly endured isolation to win her point in "A Church Mouse," defies
religious paternal dominance in the same way Hester Prynne refuses to bend under Puritan pressure. Hetty obstinately rejects deacon Gale’s order not to move her stove and bed into the church after she was turned out of her meagre house. She moves in anyway; the town lacks the charity to arrange for her a private home.

Hetty as a church sexton was directly opposed to all their ideas of church decorum and propriety in general; her pitching her tent in the Lord’s house was almost sacrilege; but what could they do? (410)

Following Hawthorne’s lead to “connect a by-gone time with the very Present,” Freeman connects Hetty’s act of defying a history of male sextons with her present homeless situation. Moreover, her resistance to male authority leads to isolation: she barricades herself inside the church when the men demand that she leave.

Freeman’s characters Harriet and Charlotte Shattuck are closed off from the world due to physical blemishes like Hawthorne’s Georgiana in "The Birthmark." Harriet is partially deaf, and Charlotte is blind. In fact, Harriet’s sour attitude in "A Mistaken Charity" psychologically isolates her from those who would offer kindness. Finally, in an act by townspeople purposed to be kindness, the Shattuck sisters are isolated in a rest home to comfortably end their days. However, their "unpolished" background
further isolates them from the other old, but genteel folks (308).

Esther Gay is another of Freeman's resilient characters. Esther's blemish is being "stone deaf," which is why she refuses to attend church. For this, she is shunned by the townspeople. Esther believes it is a waste of time: "can't hear a word of the preachin', to go to meetin' an' set there, doin' nothin' two hours, instead of stayin' to home an' knittin', to airn a leetle money to give to the Lord" (329). In my view, it is a reasonable connection to link Esther's intolerant town folk with Hawthorne's Puritan backbiters. Freeman protests the narrow-mindedness of Calvinism, from which Freeman's society evolved; it was a society that "believed that earthly success signaled election while poverty implied rejection by God. Freeman's characters are invariably humiliated by their poverty and try their best to conceal it" (Blum, 75). Esther Gay, the Shattuck sisters, Hetty Fifield, Betsey Dole, Candace Whitcomb, and Louisa Ellis suffer the effects of isolation, often due to misguided male authority.

Consequently, common themes in novels and short stories make Jewett and Freeman literary inheritors of Hawthorne's themes of isolation, of protest, and of the psychological "inward man," a term that, of course, covers the female as well. It is also evident that Jewett,
Freeman, and Hawthorne parade their characters through the "ordinary course of... experience," "connect a by-gone time with the Present," and do not "impale the story with its moral." It seems apparent that these themes, as well as representative males—a threat to women's autonomy—and stylistic parallels in Jewett and Freeman are inherited from Hawthorne; all three authors develop independent females who often are capable of standing chin to chin with patriarchal males. At the very least, many women appear to be figuratively sitting down, but inside they are standing up in defiance. Their silence is a form of protest.
CHAPTER IV

HAWTHORNE'S REPRESENTATIVE

PATRIARCHAL CHARACTERS

Nathaniel Hawthorne's somber nature and his remarkable singleness of tone in a number of tales and in The Scarlet Letter have been universally acclaimed. His Puritan inheritance was the very essence of his murky, dark imagination. Hawthorne's admirer, Herman Melville, remarks on Hawthorne's dark Puritan past: "the hither side of Hawthorne's soul, the other side--like the dark half of the physical sphere--is shrouded in blackness, ten times black." Moreover, Melville states:

Certain it is, however, that this great power of blackness in him derives its force from its appeal to that Calvinistic sense of Innate Depravity and Original Sin, from whose visitations, in some shape or other, no deeply thinking mind is always and wholly free. (Norton 2060)

It is Hawthorne's "power of blackness" that nurtured his creativity to conjure many domineering patriarchs such as Judge Pyncheon, Chillingworth, and Hollingsworth. Additionally, Hawthorne created evil, domineering males in

In The Scarlet Letter, Hawthorne reveals attitudes early in the novel as he describes the Puritan on-lookers, who are ready to receive Hester from the jail: "Meagre, indeed, and cold, was the sympathy that a transgressor might look for, from such bystanders at the scaffold" (Scarlet 40). Except for a few instances throughout the novel, Hester responds to patriarchal attitudes with silence, which is her way of protesting male dominance.

The city-dwellers in "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" also show their temper early. The first person Robin meets, "a man in years, with a full periwig of gray hair, a wide-skirted coat of dark cloth, and silk stockings rolled above his knees," appears patriarchal. His words confirm the impression. He rebukes the country boy for asking about the Major: "I have authority, I have--hem, hem--authority; and if this be the respect you show for your betters, your feet shall be brought acquainted with the stocks by daylight, tomorrow morning!" (Selected Short Stories 239).

After rude encounters with, perhaps, different versions of the devil, which suggests Melville's The Confidence Man, Robin finally befriends an approachable gentleman/devil as the time nears for his meeting with
Major Molineux. He hears "a multitude of rioters . . . a thousand voices," "instruments of discord, and a wild and confused laughter." The crowd approaches, "trampling all on an old man's heart" (251, 254). The unforgiving "rioters," like the Puritans in the short story "The Gentle Boy," represent mankind's bent toward chaos and symbolize Hawthorne's criticism of evils in radical Calvinism.

Hawthorne's Puritan Dimmesdale possesses a mind already twisted and tortured because of the "painfully sensitive . . . unhealed wound" from his adulterous sin (Scarlet 143). Camille Paglia portrays him as "a drone stunned by the queen bee" (582). Adding to Dimmesdale's misery, Hester confesses her second crime, "the deep injury" of allowing Dimmesdale to live in ignorance with Chillingworth, her real husband and his "enemy" (138). In effect, Hester punishes her male counterparts with her power of silence. Consequently, even this Puritan minister is capable of Hawthorne's "blackness" following Hester's confession that Chillingworth is, indeed, her husband:

The minister looked at her, for an instant, with all that violence of passion, which . . . was, in fact, the portion of him which the Devil claimed . . . . Never was there a blacker or fiercer frown, than Hester now encountered. For the brief space that it lasted, it was a dark transformation. (139)
Her willful deceit, withholding the powerful secret identities from both men, complicates the situation to the point that Dimmesdale and Chillingworth are on a collision course that must end in death for both of them.

Dimmesdale's change following his forest meeting with Hester includes his spiritual "inner man . . . of thought and feeling" and his "moral code." The converted Reverend now yearns "to do some strange, wild, wicked thing" like "uttering certain blasphemous suggestions" (155). Hawthorne paints his patriarch even blacker: the author allots Dimmesdale five opportunities to overcome his temptations and repent, but the possessed patriarch now understands that he "had made a bargain" with Satan:

"Tempted by the dream of happiness, he had yielded himself with deliberate choice, as he had never done before, to what he knew was deadly sin" (158). Passion is one thing, but now Dimmesdale sins "with deliberate choice." It is clear that Hawthorne's idea of "blackness" shrouds many of his religious and intellectual patriarchs.

The highly intelligent "man of science," Aylmer in "The Birthmark," is also "proficient in every branch of natural philosophy" and, similar to Chillingworth, "persuaded a beautiful woman to become his wife." Moreover, in an image of Dr. Rappaccini, "mysteries of Nature seemed to open paths [to Aylmer] into the love of science to rival the love of woman [and daughter] in its
depth and absorbing energy" (84). These three domineering men attempt to control and manipulate the females closest to them.

Chillingworth, the "misshapen scholar," is demonic; "striking evidence of man's faculty of transforming himself into a devil" (123). Hawthorne writes of Chillingworth's first view of Hester in the marketplace: "A writhing horror twisted itself across his features, like a snake gliding swiftly over them. . . . (46-7) He torments Hester and Dimmesdale, but his deepest sin, as with Rappaccini and Aylmer, is robbing the female of youth and bloom. Hester laments "He betrayed me! He has done me worse wrong than I did him!" (127). Dimmesdale agrees: "That old man's revenge has been blacker than my sin. He has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart" (140). Thus Chillingworth ranks as one of Hawthorne's blackest patriarchs, a product of that which Melville called a "power of blackness."

The possessed scientist "was not long in rendering the birthmark a frightful object, causing him more trouble and horror than ever Georgiana's beauty, whether of soul or sense, had given him delight" (Selected Short Stories 86). Thus the husband, who has broken his wife by the power of his will, forces her to submit to untried experiments. With a singular fixation found only in Edgar Allan Poe's mad characters, Aylmer is consumed by the mark of imperfection and "the perfect practicability of its removal" (87). Like Wakefield, Aylmer assumes a superior attitude toward his wife; Georgiana, isolated in the library, worships him even more after reading the volumes containing Aylmer's experiments. The scientist responds "then worship me if you will. I shall deem myself hardly unworthy of it" (94).

Rappaccini also produces an "elixir of immortality," a "most precious poison" for his daughter, as Aylmer created for his wife (92). The doctor "distils these plants [from his garden] into medicines that are as potent as a charm" (114). "His figure," a picture of the misshapen scholar Chillingworth, looms "tall, emaciated, sallow, and sickly-looking." Furthermore, he "dressed in a scholar's garb of black" and "was beyond the middle term of life, with gray hair... [and] a face singularly marked with intellect and cultivation, but which could never, even in his more youthful days, have expressed much warmth of heart" (115).
The "scientific gardener" exercises absolute control over his sequestered daughter, Beatrice, who explains to Giovanni that her "father's love of science . . . [has] estranged me from all society of my kind" (136). Thus Hester, Georgiana, and Beatrice suffer from the maniacal, domineering male creations from the "hither side of Hawthorne's soul."

Hawthorne, in The Scarlet Letter, reveals a collective patriarchal attitude and exposes the male standard that represses Hester Prynne. In addition to the two main male characters, Hawthorne exposes New Englanders as a group: men with "the grim rigidity that petrified the bearded physiognomies" and "stern-browed men" (39, 43). Even the "grim and grisly" town-beadle prefigured and represented in his aspect the whole dismal severity of the Puritanic code of law, which it was his business to administer in its final and closest application to the offender. (42)

However, it is Governor Bellingham who is the head of the patriarchal body and who sets the repressive male standard. Hawthorne sketches a picture of Bellingham as a "grave old Puritan ruler." The Governor's palatial home mirrors its builder: "hard and durable" with "wooden shutters to close over them at need." The furnishings reflect their owner: "The furniture of the hall consisted of some ponderous
chairs"; the wall hangings were "portraits, representing the forefathers of the Bellingham lineage, some with armour on their breasts, and others with stately ruffs and robes of peace." All the portraits were "characterized by . . . sternness and severity" and "were gazing with harsh and intolerant criticism at the pursuits and enjoyments of living men." All in all, the mansion was a place fit for a "statesman and ruler." Moreover, the Governor's "polished mirror of . . . breast-plate" shows images in "exaggerated and gigantic proportions" like the enormous house and the monumental ego of the patriarch (76-79).

Although Hester's tarnished image among the common people improves through her good works, the patriarchal leaders in the community are the last to forgive her:

the rulers, and the wise learned men of the community, were longer in acknowledging the influence of Hester's good qualities. . . . The prejudices which they shared in common with the latter were fortified in themselves by an iron framework of reasoning, that made it far tougher labor to expel them. (117)

As the novel draws to its close, Hawthorne, just before Dimmesdale confesses his sin, pictures the parade:

the train of venerable and majestic fathers . . . seen moving through a broad pathway of the people, who drew back reverently, on either side,
as the Governor and magistrates, the old and wise men, the holy ministers, and all that were eminent and renowned, advanced into the midst of them. (176-77)

These are the ranking rulers of the town; they are led by Governor Bellingham, the reigning patriarch and the male who best represents the repressive, authoritarian Puritan. Bellingham's home, his position, and his influence combine to show Hawthorne's attitude toward patriarchy as acted out through the character of Hester, his defiant female. In sum, Hester Prynne establishes her silent autonomy like Jewett's character Sylvia in "The White Heron," Freeman's Sarah Penn in "The Revolt of 'Mother,'" and the Grandmother in "Old Woman Magoun." For this study, these four females epitomize the victorious confrontation with patriarchy; their stories will be detailed later.

Another dark patriarch is Judge Pyncheon in The House of the Seven Gables. He is an additional example of Hawthorne's idea of patriarchy as domineering and evil. Pyncheon illustrates one of Hawthorne's themes: the sins of fathers visited upon their children. This same theme can be seen in Mary Wilkins Freeman's character Adoniram Penn, who tries to pass on his patriarchal attitudes to his son and in Jewett's "In Dark New England Days," where Enoch Holt, along with "all your folks' that follow you!" has been cursed because of an alleged robbery (Best Stories
Due to greed and moral depravity, Pyncheon's accumulated guilt is handed down from generation to generation.

A revealing portrait of Judge Pyncheon in the chapter "The Scowl and Smile" shows a depraved man in the guise of a respectable patriarch: "a man of eminent respectability. The church acknowledged it; the state acknowledged it. It was denied by nobody." In other words, Pyncheon is as much of a hypocritical patriarch as Reverend Dimmesdale. Hawthorne continues to indict Pyncheon: "there was enough of splendid rubbish in his life to cover up and paralyze a more active and subtile conscience than the Judge was ever troubled with" (380-81).

Additionally, Hawthorne compares Colonel Pyncheon with the Judge. Along with greed and a clothing of "kindliness," the Colonel has an excessive appetite: a "great animal development" was kin to both men. The Colonel "had worn out three wives," and the Judge's wife "got her death-blow in the honeymoon, and never smiled again. . . ." (317) The Pyncheon men destroy their wives by the power of their will.

Hawthorne's character Holgrave tells the story of Alice Pyncheon's persecution and possession by a member of the Maule family who carries on the idea of the evil male victimizing the innocent female. Holgrave relates that "A power that she little dreamed of had laid its grasp upon
her maiden soul. A will, most unlike her own, constrained her to do its grotesque and fantastic bidding" (368). Thus Hawthorne's "power of blackness" colors many patriarchal types and extends to other males who attempt to dominate and overpower females.

In *The Blithedale Romance* the sensual and depraved patriarchal condition abounds in the characters Coverdale, Hollingsworth, and Westervelt. Coverdale possesses a depravity based on his intellectual pride and on his lack of responsibility. He reports the story inaccurately, and he lacks commitment to other people, symbolized by his "frosty" bachelorhood. His pride is revealed early in the chapter, "The Supper-Table." He regards the group, and especially himself, as "we people of superior cultivation and refinement" (*Blithedale* 23). In addition to pride, Coverdale is guilty of sensuality. When watching Priscilla knit a silk purse, Holgrave's thinking is without question sexual: the "delicacy and beauty," the secret and mysterious "aperture," which "would open as wide as charity or prodigality might wish. I wonder if it were not a symbol of Priscilla's own mystery" (33). Similarly, his musings in his hidden hermitage among the trees are often sexual: honeymoons and other "liberal and hospitable thoughts" (92).

Zenobia exudes passion and sexuality, and Coverdale, as sensual narrator, allows his lusty mind to freely
wander over her. At their first meeting, Coverdale imagines her naked in the "garb of Eden" and blames his erotic image on Zenobia. He wrongly believes that "something in her manner, irresistibly brought up a picture of that fine, perfectly developed figure, in Eve's earliest garment" (17). It is Coverdale who cannot control his own desire and attitude, rather than Zenobia's fault for "her manner."

Coverdale later comments that "Zenobia was truly a magnificent woman" and "the native glow of coloring in her cheeks, and even the flesh-warmth over her round arms, and what was visible of her full bust—in a word, her womanliness incarnated—compelled me sometimes to close my eyes. . . ." (41) Zenobia is one of Hawthorne’s brilliant creations; she, along with characters Hester and Miriam in The Marble Faun, is independent, resourceful, and free from Calvinistic sexual inhibitions. In an interesting turn of power, Dimmesdale, Coverdale, and Donatello come under the passionate control of these magnetic, ebullient women. In short, Coverdale is one of Hawthorne’s subtle, evil males who attempts to dominate the female with the imagination of his mind.

Hollingsworth is another immoral, ruthless patriarch. His love of money confirms his hollow morality. He first pursues Zenobia and her fortune, then heartlessly rejects her in favor of Priscilla, who now controls the purse
strings. In effect Hollingsworth kills Zenobia; his evil machinations rival that of Chillingworth's, Aylmer's, and Rappaccini's treatment of females.

Hawthorne's other domineering male character in *The Blithedale Romance* is Westervelt. Coverdale describes him as having "black" eyes "as if the Devil were peeping out of them," as a "spectral character," and with a face "removeable like a mask" (87-88). Westervelt mentally and physically possesses Zenobia and Priscilla; he is another of Hawthorne's evil males who victimize females.

One of Hawthorne's most revealing stories of Puritan evil tactics is his short story "The Gentle Boy," which Edwin Haviland Miller believes is not only one his "earliest tales," but is "composed of his memories of loneliness, feelings of rejection and loss . . ." (37-8). Contrary to reports of a happy childhood, Miller argues that Hawthorne's morose feelings about himself were never really altered. Hawthorne weaves in the plight of the Quakers with the Puritan community of hypocrites. Hawthorne delineates the Puritans as persecutors of Tobias Pearson and the Quakers, which culminates in the Puritan children's despicable beating of young Ilbrahim, a Quaker. Pearson discovers the boy grieving at the grave of his father, who had been hung by fanatics. Ironically, the zealots in "The Gentle Boy" turn on their own, just as Hawthorne's Puritans harass Hester Prynne for protecting
Pearl, as Goodman Brown isolates his wife Faith and questions religion itself, and as Reverend Hooper hangs a veil between himself and his parishioners. The Puritan mind-set in "The Gentle Boy" illustrates religious fanaticism passed on by patriarchal attitudes to their children, who beat the gentle Ilbrahim.

Thus Hawthorne’s "power of blackness" conjured such domineering patriarchs as Judge Pyncheon, Chillingworth, Hollingsworth, Aylmer, and Rappaccini. Their various counterparts, Hester, Hepzibah, Zenobia, Georgiana, and Beatrice, suffer quietly. Power remains in the hands of men, while women, although somewhat submissive, protest their lack of autonomy and independence by their silence.
Females in the fiction of Rowson, Warner, and Cummins, as well as of Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary Wilkins Freeman, are often dominated and/or persecuted by males. Many times these authors not only expose a male standard that represses the female, but they even punish the offending male. Warner's character Ellen Montgomery is controlled by John Humphreys, her protector, and by Mr. Lindsay, her uncle. Cummins's Gertrude Flint is, for a time, dominated by Mr. Graham, and Rowson's Charlotte Temple is emotionally tortured by Montraville.

Following Charlotte's seduction, rejection, and death, author Rowson sentences Montraville to spend the rest of his life suffering from guilt. He is rightly punished for his treatment of Charlotte by being subject to severe fits of melancholy, and while he remained at New York frequently retired to the church yard, where he would weep over the grave, and regret the untimely fate of the lovely Charlotte Temple. (Early American Novels 127)
Montraville symbolizes many eighteenth and nineteenth-century males: aggressive, self-centered, and interested in a wealthy bride. This is precisely why Montraville never intends to marry Charlotte; she is not rich. Charlotte, on the other hand, is mesmerized by his good looks, the cut of his uniform, and his aggressive attention. As Charlotte's demise shows, there is little, if any, happiness outside of marriage and no earthly reward when daughters disobey their wise parents and submit to cunning males.

In The Lamplighter, part of Maria Cummins's agenda—to expose a male standard that represses the female—is revealed in her negative attitude toward many of the males. Willie's grandfather, Mr. Cooper, is "gloomy, discontented," and cynical. He is punished with humiliating infirmity in his old age: a "state of mental imbecility, his old characteristics in an exaggerated form" (192). Cummins, in this rebuke, seems to say that Cooper's former, healthy state—"old characteristics"—was merely a less "exaggerated form" of "mental imbecility."

Additionally, Ben Bruce, a symbol for much that was wrong with young men, is a neighbor smitten with Gertrude: he "had such confidence in the power of wealth and a high station in fashionable life, that it never occurred to him to doubt that Gertrude would gladly accept his hand and fortune, if it were placed at her disposal." The independent Gertrude, however, "an orphan girl, without a
cent in the world," will have no part of him. Bruce "had money enough to purchase for a wife any woman whom he chose to select" (260). Bruce, too, is punished. His money, his domineering attitude, and his conniving ways—he misled another young girl simply to make Gertrude jealous—are precisely why Gertrude is repelled by him. Thus the cunning machinations of Montraville and the overbearing Cooper and Bruce reveal male attitudes and standards that Cummins sought to expose and to punish.

Obviously on a more polished literary level, Mary Wilkins Freeman and Sarah Orne Jewett sought to expose overbearing and authoritarian men who attempt to dominate women. In The Country of the Pointed Firs and Best Stories of Sarah Orne Jewett, Tom Wilson, George Quint, and Parson Dimmitt exemplify men who abuse their authority and victimize women. Unfortunately, the females do not fight back like Freeman's character Sarah Penn, which lends credence to the claim that Freeman writes with more conflict than Jewett. Nonetheless, many of Jewett's males contribute to a traditional, patriarchal system that represses women.

In "Tom's Husband," the male head of the house at first wisely surrenders his patriarchal place, but he foolishly wrenches his position of authority back in a desperate attempt to reclaim his traditional male role. Similarly, George Quint, in "The King of Folly Island,"
ruthlessly exiles his family to loneliness. In "Folly Island" and "Tom's Husband," all female characters are presented as victims of a male's abuse of authority.

In "Folly Island," George Quint refuses to set foot on land other than his own island. His pride, severely damaged by a political defeat, forces him to make his unfortunate vow. George Quint dominates his wife and daughter; he abuses his paternal authority by exiling his family on an island. Jewett declares that because of Quint's foolish vow, his family suffers inhuman hardships from being isolated from society. Consequently, his wife and daughter die of loneliness. The author rightly condemns abusive male authority when the traditional patriarchal figure oversteps the boundaries of decency and good sense.

Likewise, the husband victimizes the wife in "Tom's Husband." Tom Wilson initially agrees to oversee the household duties while Mary Wilson assumes the traditional male duties of guiding the family manufacturing interests. Author Jewett, in role-reversal common in her stories, characterizes Mary as fulfilled in her role of authority and leadership. However, Tom's male pride cannot handle his role of housekeeper.

"Tom's Husband" is a contrast between the frustrations of "the most ideal of situations" as opposed to "the most practical." Initially, Tom and Mary are happily engaged,
but after marriage they are not "quite so happy as they had expected." As she often does, Jewett criticizes matrimony by comparing engagement to marriage: "Satisfaction, even after one has dined well, is not so interesting and eager a feeling as the hunger." The author's food imagery and its expectations are mindful of the sensuous imagery of unfulfilled love in Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn." As a matter of fact, Jewett mentions Keats in "The Courting of Sister Wisby": "An old crow went sagging by, and gave a croak at his despised neighbor, just as a black reviewer croaked at Keats; so hard it is to be just to one's contemporaries" (128).

Additionally, the author maintains

It is not unfrequently noticed that in many marriages one of the persons who choose each other as partners for life is said to have thrown himself or herself away, and the relatives and friends look on with dismal forebodings and ill-concealed submission. In this case it was the wife who might have done so much better, according to public opinion. (69)

Jewett continues to laud her heroine; Mary had "inherited a most uncommon business talent . . . [and] her insight into the practical working of affairs was very clear and far reaching." Her father, mightily impressed with his only daughter, claims that "it had been a mistake that she was a
daughter, claims that "it had been a mistake that she was a girl instead of a boy," which reflects nineteenth-century patriarchal attitudes. In a aggressive contention for female autonomy, the author laments,

Such executive ability as hers is often wasted in the more contracted sphere of women, and is apt to be more a disadvantage than a help. She was too independent and self-reliant for a wife; it would seem at first thought that she needed a wife herself more than she did a husband. Most men like best the women whose natures cling and appeal to theirs for protection. (69)

Tom, on the other hand, "collected everything but money," had been an "invalid" in youth, is "old-womanish" as an adult, and, overall, has turned into "a good deal of an idler." In contrast to wife Mary, Tom "gave no promise of being either distinguished or great" (69). On the other hand, he was inordinately aware of his dignity and mindful of what was beneath his position.

The family mill has lain idle since Tom's father's death, which equates to less in inheritance. Because of diminished income, rebukes from his mother and sister place Tom in a very uncomfortable position, since "He was not a bit of a business man." He proposed several excuses convincing himself that the economy was not amenable for starting up the mill again. Now the time has come for Mary
to assert herself:

'Do you know, Tom,' she said, with amazing seriousness, 'that I believe I should like nothing in the world so much as to be the head of a large business? I hate house keeping,--I always did; and I never did so much of it in all my life put together as I have since I have been married. (70-71)

Tom nonchalantly allows Mary the freedom to start up the business, and he jokingly agrees to perform the household chores. However, like Freeman's character Sarah Penn, Mary makes her aggressive move. The frustrated businesswoman soon announced, with no apparent thought of being contradicted, that she had entirely made up her mind, and she meant to see those men who had been overseers of the different departments, who still lived in the village, and have the mill put in order at once. . . . (73)

In sum, Mary did "capitally well" following the start-up. By the end of the third year, with "great pride and triumph," she "was making money for herself and her friends faster than most people were" (75).

Then Tom began to create doubts. He wrongly "feared that his wife was growing successful as a business person at the risk of losing her womanliness." She was understandably fatigued at night and did not renew some of
their evening activities. It seemed to Tom that his wife valued the foreman’s business conversation over his household conversation, from which she obviously tired easily. In fact, she was acting just like a man, and he was taking on a woman’s demeanor. Several events that were "killing to his dignity" brought Tom to the realization "that his had been almost exactly the experience of most women" (78).

Jewett concludes that men, when faced with superior ability as Mary’s, should allow women to excel in that role of leadership rather than toil in a stereotypical role. In "Tom's Husband," Mary Wilson's role reversal clearly shows her potential in a position of authority and leadership. However, after Tom elevates Mary in the company, his male pride brings her back down. Tom reverts to male dominance by planning "winter in Europe." He successfully feeds his male ego while victimizing Mary by denying her a rewarding, although non-traditional, career in society as head of the family business. Sadly, Mary "caught sight of a look on his usually placid countenance that was something more than a decision, and refrained from saying anything more." She can only protest silently: ". . . in three weeks from that day they sailed" (79).

In The Country of the Pointed Firs, the male who fits the broad collective norm of patriarchy is the visiting parson. He attempts to counsel Joanna, who parallels
George Quint: she also vows to never set foot on the mainland. Parson Dimmick is similar to ministers Mr. Lang of Freeman’s "The Poetess" and Mr. Hersey in "The Revolt of 'Mother'": all are guilty of abuse of male authority. Mrs. Todd describes the Parson:

Some other minister would have been a great help to her—one that preached self-forgetfulness and doin' for others to cure our own ills; but Parson Dimmick was a vague person, well meanin', but very numb in his feelin's. (Short Fiction 100)

Furthermore, Mrs. Todd relates how ineffectual Dimmick was in his only visit to see Joanna on Shell-heap Island:

'The minister found it hard,' confessed Mrs. Todd; 'he got embarrassed, an' when he put on his authority and asked her if she felt to enjoy religion in her present situation, an' she replied that she must be excused from answerin', I thought I should fly. (104)

Mrs. Todd further criticizes Dimmick for even asking such a question:

he was kind of cold an' unfeelin' the way he inquired. I thought he might have seen the little old Bible a-layin' on the shelf close by him, an' I wished he knew enough to just lay his hand on it an' read somethin' kind an' fatherly 'stead of accusin' her, an' then given poor
Joanna his blessin' with the hope she might be led to comfort. He did offer prayer, but 't was all about hearin' the voice o' God out o' the whirlwind; and I thought while he was goin' on that anybody that had spent the long cold winter all alone out on Shell-heap Island knew a good deal more about those things than he did. I got so provoked I opened my eyes and stared right at him. (104-5)

Thus Jewett's Dimmick is another insensitive minister, adding to Freeman's men who are domineering in their attitude toward women. Most of the males are only interested in perpetuating patriarchy; some men, like Adoniram Penn, come face to face with their wife, and the man blinks first.

The independent female in search of autonomy appears in other Freeman short stories. One of Freeman's females whose death is actually attributable to paternalistic influence is Betsey Dole. Betsey has written poetry all her life and has decided, after a cruel remark by her minister denigrating the "love-letters that had passed between her and life," to end her composing (Short Fiction 385). The patriarchal male in "A Poetess" is the minister, Mr. Lang. By a circuitous route, the story finally gets to Betsey that Mr. Lang criticized her poetry: "jest as poor as it could be." Furthermore, a friend told Betsey the
"minister said that you had never wrote anything that could be called poetry, an' it was a dreadful waste of time" (383). Lang's is the voice of authority; he is the minister, but more importantly he has published poetry in a magazine. Betsey is unpublished and is now devastated at his apparent rejection.

Author Freeman comes close to confirming that Lang actually made the cruel remark when Betsey, on her deathbed, asks Lang to retrieve the sugar-bowl full of the ashes: her burned poetry. However, "He did not once suspect his own connection with the matter" (386). Since the alleged statement came to Betsey by three re-tellings, it is possible that what he originally said never possessed the cruelty that Betsey finally heard. If he did make the comment, then Freeman portrays the minister in acutely cold-hearted terms, since he is too insensitive to "suspect his own connection with the matter." The crux of the story hinges on the importance of poetry in Betsey's life and on the significance she places on her reputation in the community as a poet. At any rate, the apparent rejection by the patriarchal minister annihilates her spirit, and she dies.

Freeman's most anthologized story "The Revolt of 'Mother'" is the author's eloquent statement describing the female's subordinate position, the confrontation with a patriarch, and the resulting victory for the female.
Additionally, "The Revolt of 'Mother'" concerns the female who is expected to conform to the male standard and how that standard is passed on to the next generation of men, represented by Adoniram's son.

Sarah Penn, like Hester Prynne, symbolizes the repressed female who is forced to rebel against patriarchy. Adoniram Penn has never fulfilled his forty year promise to build a new house for the family. Instead, he decides to build another barn on the very spot intended for the house.

Like Mary Wilson, Sarah opens dialogue with her husband. Sarah tries reason, but Adoniram refuses to respond. She tries meek compliance, but the silent patriarch refuses to move from his position of authority. Finally, "Providence" provides an open door for Sarah to act. While Adoniram is away on horse business, she boldly moves the household goods and furniture into the finished barn. Here Freeman continues to expose the patriarchal attitude.

First, a visit from Mr. Hersey, the minister, who "stood awkwardly before her," indicates Sarah's superior position. Then he attempts to confront her about rebelling against the will of her husband. However, "The saintly expression of her face remained fixed, but there was an angry flush over it." When "Mother" spoke, "her eyes showed the spirit that her meek front had covered for a lifetime." As Hester Prynne rebels and refuses to turn
daughter Pearl over to Governor Bellingham, Sarah rebuffs Hersey: "'I don't doubt you mean well, Mr. Hersey,' said she, 'but there are things people hadn't ought to interfere with.'" He "retreated."

Author Freeman further analyzes Hersey's weak position. "He could expound the intricacies of every character study in the Scriptures, he was competent to grasp the Pilgrim Fathers and all historical innovators, but Sarah Penn was beyond him" (430). It is obvious that the minister is no match for "Mother."

A crowd gathers to watch for Adoniram's return. His reaction, like Hersey's, is also from a weak position, hinted at by the son and daughter before Adoniram arrives: "An inborn confidence in their mother over their father asserted itself." When Adoniram finds his family in the new barn, Sarah argues that "The house wa'n't fit for us to live in any longer, an' I made up my mind I wa'n't goin' to stay there." She has asserted her will over her husband's will, and he capitulates easily, indicating both Freeman's opinion of his overbearing, patriarchal attitude and that his attitude was only a shell, a facade that falls like a theater curtain. All he can say is "Why, Mother!"

After a hearty dinner, Mr. Penn escapes outside. "The old man's shoulders heaved: he was weeping." Like Hersey, Adoniram retreats. "I'll--put up the--partitions, an'--everything you--want, mother.' Sarah put her apron up to
her face; she was overcome by her own triumph." Freeman accuses Adoniram, like minister Lang in "The Poetess," of monumental insensitivity. "Adoniram was like a fortress whose walls had no active resistance, and went down the instant the right besieging tools were used. 'Why, mother,' he said, hoarsely, 'I hadn't no idee you was so set on't as all this comes to'" (431-32). Adoniram has no recourse but to surrender: he has refused all along to fairly acknowledge and understand Sarah's position, to respect her request for a new home, and to honor his promise of forty years.

Within the context of confrontation is Freeman's statement of female autonomy: Sarah Penn is forced into defending herself and her position. She fights for equal status with her husband and her minister. Before she subdues Adoniram, she forces Mr. Hersey to back down completely by employing intelligent, reasonable tactics he cannot refute. First, "Mother" states that "... I believe I'm doin' what's right." Secondly, "I've made it the subject of prayer, an' it's betwixt me an' the Lord an' Adoniram." Thirdly, she boldly declares that "I think it's right jest as much as I think it was right for our forefathers to come over from the old country 'cause they didn't have what belonged to 'em," said Mrs. Penn." Freeman's consummate argument for autonomy is Sarah's charge that "I've got my own mind and' my own feet, an'
nobody but the Lord is goin' to dictate to me unless I've a mind to have him" (430). Minister Hersey surrenders "helplessly."

Sarah's argument against Adoniram is equally cogent. She demands a private audience: "'Father, you come here.' Sarah Penn stood in the door like a queen; she held her head as if it bore a crown; there was that patience which makes authority royal in her voice. Adoniram went." Her argument is threefold. First, he cannot deny the physical evidence: "You see this room here, father; you look at it well. You see there ain't no carpet on the floor, an' you see the paper is all dirty, an' droppin' off the walls." Secondly, "There ain't another woman in the whole town whose husband ain't got half the means you have but what's got better"; he cannot deny that he has prospered and that he can easily afford a new house. Finally, since their daughter is engaged, Sarah states: "What would you have thought, father, if we had had our weddin' in a room no better than this? I was married in my mother's parlor, with a carpet on the floor, an' stuffed furniture, an' a mahogany card-table." She appeals to his male pride. Her brilliant summation again deals with what cannot be denied: "Now, father, I want to know if you think you're doin' right an' accordin' to what you profess." Author Freeman interjects that Sarah "had pleaded her little cause like a Webster; she had ranged from severity to pathos; but her
opponent employed that obstinate silence which makes eloquence futile with mocking echoes" (423—24). Mary Wilkins Freeman's Sarah Penn, like Hawthorne's independent females Hester, Zenobia, and Miriam, will "think" her "own thoughts" and "go" her "own ways." It is the patriarch's important "obstinate silence" that will be dealt with later.

The final illustration of female autonomy is Sarah Orne Jewett's character Sylvia in "A White Heron." Some rightly term this the story that effectively ends the Cinderella myth in female fiction; "an ironic version of the traditional fairy tale in which the handsome prince awakens the sleeping beauty" (Donovan, Jewett 71). Instead, Sylvia awakens on her own.

In "The Hysterical Woman: Sex Roles and Role Conflict in 19th-Century America," Carroll Smith-Rosenberg criticizes the female stereotypes of the period: the "ideal female" was to be "gentle and refined, sensitive and loving. She was the guardian of religion and spokeswoman for morality" (655). Furthermore, the American girl was taught at home, at school, and in the literature of the period, that aggression, independence, self-assertion and curiosity were male traits, inappropriate for the weaker sex and her limited sphere.

In short, the female was "a born follower" (656). However,
Sylvia, at the end of the story, certainly does not lack independence, self-assertion, or curiosity. In fact, she awakens to these very qualities and chooses not to follow her male protector.

Sylvia is the only autonomous female in "A White Heron." The grandmother, Mrs. Tilley, although referred to as a "good woman," falls under the spell of the male "stranger" who invades their natural female setting. Sylvia quickly matures into her independent role, rejects the stranger/suitor, and protects the heron. Interestingly, Jewett plants many parallels between Sylvia and bird-like qualities, which point to Sylvia's potentially dangerous situation—on an emotional level—of becoming part of the ornithologist's collection of rare birds. Because of her knowledge of nature, Sylvia is also the hunted, and the male intruder is the hunter.

Like Freeman's character Sarah Penn, Jewett's Sylvia is forced to defend her territory from an encroaching male. Sylvy's rebellious actions defy patriarchal norms; Louis Renza goes so far as to label Jewett's story a "latent feminist document" (74). He also points out that as a young virgin heroine, the character slipped by unnoticed, or coded, to be a subtle female voice protesting infringing paternalistic domination (78).

At age forty-eight, Jewett claimed she was always nine years old, Sylvia's age. Perhaps Jewett meant for the
young girl to represent all women. Sylvy does, in fact, mature and grow toward autonomy. She awakens to the freedom to act independently and protects the endangered heron from the aggressive hunter.

The romantic interest that Jewett lightly refers to may be cited as additional evidence of Sylvy's budding maturity. Romantic interest for Sylvia, as with Jewett, is spurned. As many have noted, there is no evidence that Jewett ever developed a romantic relationship with a male. Many of her stories, in fact, depict women who are happy without marriage.

On the other hand, a mature non-romantic friendship based on the unnamed hunter's and Sylvy's mutual interest in nature is even more apparent. Their friendship is based on an exchange: what Sylvia can offer the hunter, which is knowledge, and what he can offer her, which is ten dollars and "'securities' of male affirmation" (Orr, 55). The grandmother explains: "There ain't a foot o' ground she don't know her way over, and the wild creaturs counts her one o' themselves" (Best Stories 84). At the story's end, however, Sylvia is not a mindless extension of nature like her grandmother, but is free to reject any obligation of exchange to the ornithologist who, as the only male character, must symbolize patriarchy. Margaret Roman declares "Nearly everything Jewett wrote embodies the pattern of breaking free from patriarchal society with its
dual norms for men and for women in order that a person of any sex might grow freely" (xi). Stories like "In Dark New England Days" and "Going to Shrewsbury" confirm the "pattern of breaking free." Mrs. Peet is forced to freedom after her husband dies. Their small farm reverts to a villainous nephew: "he said 't was somethin' bout bein' responsible for the taxes," but the narrator reveals that her "heart was filled with rage at the trickery of Isaiah [a patriarchal name] Peet, who had always looked like a fox and behaved like one" (Best Stories 154). The male outsmarts and victimizes the female. Mrs. Peet's character grows toward autonomy while living with more affluent relatives who offer to buy the farm back so Mrs. Peet could "come back to live, but she would n't hear of it, and thought they would miss too many privileges. She has been going to concerts and lectures this winter, and insists that Isaiah did her a good turn" (160).

"In Dark New England Days," sisters Betsey and Hannah Knowles are released from their father, Captain Knowles, who dies from a stroke. He was a hard master; he rarely commended and often blamed. Hannah trembled before him, but Betsey faced him sturdily, being amazingly like him, with a feminine difference; as like as a ruled person can be to a ruler, for the discipline of life had taught the man to aggress, the woman
The spinsters "had been his dutiful, patient slaves. . . ."
Furthermore, after the Captain's death, "they were facing a
free future; they were their own mistresses at last, though
past sixty years of age" (166). Their reward is the
contents of their father's "great sea chest": "All their
lives they had been looking forward to this hour of
ownership" (168). However, the "guineas, dollars,
doubloons, old French and Spanish and English gold," plus
a "great roll of bank bills" are stolen by a mysterious
man. A fate similar to Mrs. Peet befalls the sisters; they
are victimized. As in "Going to Shrewsbury," rage fills
the spinsters—"their vengeance was not to be satisfied"
like the rage of the narrator on Mrs. Peet's behalf.
Although released from their father's dominance, they are
still captive to poverty.

Sylvia, in "A White Heron," awakens to her own
autonomy as a protest against paternalistic dominance. "A
White Heron" embodies the premise of this study: the
hunter/suitor and industrialism are the male-driven forces
that restrict the autonomy of the female. Jewett's short
story encourages women to operate beyond standard
stereotypes furthered by nineteenth-century male attitudes,
first openly exposed by Hester Prynne's rebellion against
male authority.

In "A White Heron" allusions to industrialism—always
identified with the male—are entirely negative. There are abrogating images of a "noisy" and "crowded manufacturing town" where Sylvia "never had been alive at all before she came to live at the farm." This image apparently contributes to Mrs. Tilley's assessment of her granddaughter's demeanor: "Afraid of folks." Additionally, the "wretched dry geranium that belonged to a town neighbor" is an unpleasant memory, as well as the "great red-faced boy who used to chase and frighten her." The dominant symbol of industrialism is the affluent stranger from town: the hunter with the gun, which has often been noted.

After painting the pastoral setting as "soft and sweet," author Jewett interrupts the solitude with "a boy's whistle, determined, and somewhat aggressive." The intruder is plainly described as "The enemy," who "carried a gun over his shoulder." Sylvia is completely taken in by the hunter's manner. However, she "would have liked him vastly better without his gun; she could not understand why he killed the very birds he seemed to like so much" (86). Jewett, in my view, deliberately portrays the young hunter in agreeable terms that entice the grandmother and Sylvia to become disarmed by his friendly presence: the "stranger" talks "kindly," laments that he had lost his way, and need[s] a friend very much."

However, as an indication of his ruthless and narrow motives for killing the heron, he asks—somewhat rudely and
without introduction—to spend the night at Sylvia's home. The young girl is rightly "alarmed." The hunter is obviously an outsider from town because the farm is a "surprise" to him; he found it "clean and comfortable." Further, "he had known the horrors of its [New England wilderness] primitive housekeeping, and the dreary squalor of that level of society which does not rebel at the companionship of hens." His attitude indicates his superior position in a more sophisticated society; his pastime of collecting rare birds seems to support this idea.

Interestingly, like the two ministers in Freeman's stories, the hunter's self-centered motives cloud his sensitivities: The guest did not notice this hint of family sorrows in his eager interest in something else. 'So Sylvy knows all about birds, does she?' he exclaimed, as he looked round at the little girl who sat, very demure but increasingly sleepy, in the moonlight. (Best Stories 84-5)

The presence of the heron indicates a forced migration to safer grounds from its original habitat, which may have been adjacent to an encroaching town. The hunter relates that "They [white herons] have never been found in this district at all" and alleges the herons "have been chased out of its own region by some bird of prey." Jewett may be saying that male-driven industrialism is the real agent of prey.
By the end of Part I, Sylvia has developed a "loving admiration" for the young man. In fact:

She had never seen anybody so charming and delightful; the woman's heart, asleep in the child, was vaguely thrilled by a dream of love. Some premonition of that great power stirred and swayed these young creatures who traversed the solemn woodlands with soft-footed care. (86)

So they both--"these young creatures"--have feelings for each other despite the difference in age. Perhaps Jewett is portraying their present relationship as indicative of all future permanent relationships: "the young man going first and Sylvia following, fascinated, a few steps behind, with her gray eyes dark with excitement," and "there was no such thing as speaking first" (86). Finally, after the hunter leaves, Sylvia muses that she could have "served and followed him and loved him as a dog loves!" (90).

Jewett seems to convey the idea that embracing heterosexual love is the opposite of freedom and female autonomy. In fact, Susan Allen Toth affirms that "Jewett hints in such tales as 'A White Heron' and 'Farmer Finch' that a single life may be more rewarding than marriage" and that Jewett "provide[s] in the history of American literature a seldom-heard voice proclaiming the occasional joys of being a single woman" ("Jewett and Friends" 241). "Martha's Lady" is another example of love apart from a
traditional heterosexual union. Martha, the new, clumsy maid, loves Helena for helping her in the fulfillment of the household duties: "All for love's sake she had been learning to do many things, and to do them exactly right; her eyes had grown quick to see the smallest chance for personal service." Unfortunately for Martha, Helena returns to her city home while the homely maid remains behind in Ashford to serve Miss Pyne. The narrator observes: "To lose out of sight the friend whom one has loved and lived to please is to lose joy out of life" (246-47).

Helena marries but Martha cannot attend the wedding; Helena "could not help understanding in that moment of her own happiness the love that was hidden in another heart" (250). Finally, the near-mythical Helena returns. At this news, Martha turns "a little pale" and notices "such a ringing in her ears": her feelings were due to "the love that had been in her heart all these years; it was half a pain and half a golden joy to keep such a secret; she could hardly bear this moment of surprise." All three women have grown old, but have not forgotten their deep feelings. As Martha begins to perform "the old unforgotten loving services," Helena cried: Oh, Martha, have you remembered like this, all these long years!" (255). Miss Pyne and Martha develop lives apart from men; servant Martha's love for Helena has given the aging maid fulfilled hope at
Helena’s return. Since the visitor is dressed in black, her return to a female world may be prolonged.

In "A White Heron," Jewett’s character Sylvia flirts with romance, which is eventually symbolized by allowing the male to go first, by the female speaking last, and by the female trailing the male like a domestic pup that faithfully trots along behind its master. Jewett’s story is important because she allows the heroine the freedom to reject the male suitor, and she presents industrialism as a symbol of male-driven forces that encroach upon the autonomy of the female.

Certain female authors expose a male standard that represses female autonomy and independence. Consequently, some male characters are punished. Nineteenth-century female authors protest male-driven attitudes that repress and stereotype females as weak and unfit for leadership. Unlike her character, Mary, who submits to her husband’s command, Jewett believes that men should allow women to excel in roles of leadership rather than stagnate in the still waters of convention. It is the George Quints of society who hold power over women and who deny the female her freedom.
CHAPTER VI

OBSERVATIONS ON SILENCE

AS PROTEST

There were few ways to politely protest against the male in the nineteenth century. One avenue, at least depicted in female fiction for this study, is silence: the secret, withheld information. In "The White Heron," Sylvia is submissive to the male hunter until she realizes the symbolic importance of her information, which exemplifies freedom from male dominance and from male "affirmation." Elaine Orr notes the exchange of knowledge for the underlying "'securities' of male affirmation," which aligns with Gerda Lerner's ideas of exchange in CHAPTER I. For Sylvia, the exchange is an unequal bargain, even with the offer of ten dollars as the surface element of the bargain. Jewett places Sylvia in a restricted "female community (grandmother, girl, and cow), [and] a pastoral setting . . .": a closed matriarchal world that the paternalistic intruder invades (Orr, 55). However, the knowledge Sylvia acquires remains a secret, and importantly, the girl's silence is one of Jewett's valuable contributions to female characterization and to autonomy in nineteenth-century female fiction. Sylvia refuses to speak about the heron's
location; her silence is indicative of protest, and she refuses to be purchased for ten dollars.

At first Sylvia is silent because she is dominated by her grandmother and the hunter. In this story, speech is adult power. But the child's secret information is also power. Thus Sylvia, like Hester Prynne, discovers that in giving the information to the male, she gives him her only power, and the exchange of knowledge for male affirmation is not worth the secret.

Sylvy's submissive silence is transformed into the silence of defiance [like Hester and Magoun], as she denies her grandmother and the hunter the knowledge she possesses. In a radical inversion of conventional order, Sylvy's denial turns the world upside down, silently declaring her independence. (Zanger, 353)

Thus representative characters Sylvia, Hester Prynne, Zenobia, Miriam, Sarah Penn, and Grandmother Magoun in this study defy the male standard of domination. In "The White Heron," the supermale—out-going, vigorous, and wealthy enough for holidays filled with hunting—is rejected. In a way Sylvia also rejects her matriarchal grandmother, who represents a restricted female past, while Sylvia symbolizes the power and freedom of the future. Although the grandmother perhaps dreams of buying another cow and Sylvia may envision a pet, the ten dollars is also
dollars is also rejected. To the male, money and speech are power.

Adoniram Penn also sees money as the power to expand his domain by building another barn. However, Sarah and Adoniram Penn have different notions of the way his money should be spent. Like Sylvy's grandmother and Grandmother Magoun, Sarah is a simple farm woman, but she eventually represents opportunity rather than restriction. In Freeman's "The Revolt of 'Mother,'" Sarah begins the bargain for exchanging the barn for a home, and Adoniram keeps silent (Orr, 56). The father has spoken to his son about the new barn, but not to his wife. She has been excluded from the men's conversation; the men keep the power of speech to themselves. Sarah and her daughter are in a position similar to Sylvia's in that the male speaks, and the females are silent. The patriarch Adoniram holds the power of speech in the family, and he keeps his power--his speech--to himself. He refuses to respond to Sarah's questions: "I ain't got nothin' to say." Obviously, "Father values building barns" to earn "more money for the sake of money itself." Mother, on the other hand, is more concerned with "keep[ing] her small, limited community together" (Cutter, 281).

Martha J. Cutter has observed one incident symbolizing Adoniram's authoritarian attitude (283). While being questioned about the "diggin' over there in the field," he
stoically busies himself "harnessing the great bay mare. He hustled the collar on to her neck with a jerk" without responding to his wife's questions (Short Fiction 418). Adoniram's obstinate silence momentarily harnesses Sarah. In the Penn household, Father is the only one who speaks. Even at dinner, he holds the power of speech: "There was never much conversation at the table in the Penn family. Adoniram asked a blessing, and they ate promptly, then rose up and went about their work" (422). The Penns live in a restricted environment dominated by paternalistic power.

Sarah believes she must extricate the power—symbolized by speech—from Adoniram if she is to live in a new home for the family. Her eloquent speech to Father sounds like a man's; author Freeman equates Mother's dramatic articulations to Webster's powerful orations. But Mother fails. The patriarch refuses to speak and retains his power. His inaction forces Mother to resort to physical action, a "speaking action... which communicates to Father..." (Cutter, 288) In short, Adoniram is finally reduced to weeping; he has lost his power of speech: "he shook his head speechlessly. He tried to take off his coat, but his arms seemed to lack the power. His wife helped him" (432). Sarah has finally won her victory.

Sarah Orne Jewett's popular "The King of Folly Island" is another example of the power of speech. Like "The White
Heron," this short story portrays the male intruder, rejection of a possible suitor, and the power of communication and of silence. Jewett is more specific about the evils of civilization, depicted in the disillusioned character of Frankfort, a highly successful banker on holiday. George Quint's daughter Phebe rejects Frankfort; she realizes she is ill and refuses to communicate her feelings for him because she believes failing health will not allow her to leave the island. Quint and Phebe both embody the power of speech: the father's vow symbolizes tragic, egotistical paternal domination, while Phebe's precious few words confirm her resolution to remain isolated because of her illness.

Frankfort represents the "stranger" from civilization. His business responsibilities have left him "hardly satisfied, and ever on the quest for entertainment." On the short boat trip to John's Island, the banker mused "with great perplexity the troublesome question [of] what he ought to do with so much money, and why he should have had it put into his careless hands at all." He is escaping "the fretful troubles of this present world" brought on him by intense commercialism (115). Even though he is highly successful, the demands and pressures of civilization have warped his character, which show in his easy way of lying to the boatman. The postmaster asks his "business": "'I am a sportsman,' responded John Frankfort, the partner in a
flourishing private bank. . . ." (Best Stories 103-6)

Jewett compares the fisherman's and the banker's occupations: "the armada of small craft [was] a parallel to the financial ventures which were made day after day in city life." Furthermore, she broadly criticizes male-centered commercialism. Specifically, Phebe's father/fisherman and friend/banker appear as male symbols of encroaching commercialism: "How degraded a man became who chose to be only a money-maker!" (118).

The power of speech is apparent in Quint's vow, which directly affects his family. He mistakenly thinks they support his decision to never set foot on another man's land. When he states that "I was some sorry my woman should be so fur from her folks when she was down with her last sickness," he never realizes that he could have broken his vow for the sake of his wife's life. But he stubbornly remained true to his decision. Jewett seems to say that men put uncommon faith in their words; they refuse to see the common sense realities connected with foolish decisions and vows based on pride.

Furthermore, Quint remarks that Phebe "don't eat no more than a chippin'-sparrer," and Frankfort suggests Quint remove her to a "more sheltered place" for her safety and health. Quint doggedly replies: "'She would n't go withouten me,' he answered, in a choked voice, 'and my vow is my vow. I shall never set foot on another man's land
while I'm alive'” (117). Again Quint refuses to break his vow for the life of a beloved family member.

Jewett, in the thoughts of the outsider, attacks Quint's paternalistic domination of his family as the unmistakable tragic element in the life of the inhabitants; this man, who should be armed and defended by his common-sense, was yet made weak by some prejudice or superstition. What could have warped him in this strange way? (117).

In a conversation regarding Frankfort's bachelorhood, Quint comes close to admitting they both may be guilty. They might be wronging other folks when you do what suits you best. Now my woman was wuth her weight in gold, an' she lays there in the little yard over in the corner of the field—she never fought me, nor argued the p'int again after she found I was sot, but it aged her, fetchin' of her away from all her folks, an' out of where she was wonted. I did n't foresee it at the time. (118)

Quint has equated her "wuth" to a cold, monetary symbol, "gold," which indicates where his heart remains. Jewett brings out the fact that he has amassed a small fortune and he owns Folly Island outright. Continuing her attack on paternalistic domination, she delineates Quint as a man "who felt himself better than his neighbors, (and) was the sacrificer of his family's comfort; he was heaping up
riches, and who would gather them?" (119).

Frankfort's response is that Quint's "withdrawal from society had been willful, and, as far as he knew, quite selfish" and that his plight had been for "undeserved liberty!" However, Jewett writes that "the King rallied his powers of eloquence to make excuses" and looked at Frankfort "with an air of triumph." In short, the "tough fisherman . . . could have no idea of the loneliness of his wife and daughter all these unvarying years on his Folly Island" (118-119).

To illustrate how cruel and heartless Quint is, Jewett inserts the way he ran off Phebe's early suitor:

She was a master pooty gal 'arlier on, an' I was dreadful set against lettin' of her go, though I call to mind there was a likely chap as found her out, an' made bold to land an' try to court her. I drove him, I tell you, an' ducked him under when I caught him afterward out a-fishin', an' he took the hint. Phebe did n't know what was to pay, though I dare say she liked to have him follerin' about. (122)

This depiction of Quint's selfish, arrogant handling of Phebe's suitor confirms Jewett's serious attack on patriarchy. Quint has done everything in his evil power to dominate his family for the sake of his words, which symbolize his paternal power.
Conversely, Phebe's silence is her quiet rejection of the male intruder and is in singular contrast to her father's strong words. Like Sylvy and the hunter, Phebe and the banker become lose friends: "They were each filled with a charming devotion to each other, a grave reverence and humoring of the mutual desire for quiet and meditation." Phebe even admires the visitor as "a pretty man" (115-16). In spite of her father's last-minute offer of marriage to Frankfort, it is too late for him to make amends. Phebe, in fact, has never said a word that would support Quint's request. She realizes her health, like her mother's earlier physical condition, cannot withstand the cold months of winter and the harsh life of solitude on Folly Island. Phebe resembles Sarah Penn; their actions are stronger than their words:

the poor girl coughed now and then with a sad insistence and hollowness. She looked ill already, so narrow-chested and bent-shouldered, while a bright spot of color flickered in her thin cheeks. She had seemed even elderly to Frankfort when he first saw her, but he discovered from something that was said that her age was much less than his own. What a dreary lifetime! (114)

Jewett, through her character Frankfort, wonders if commercialism makes a man "good for nothing but money-
making? The thought fairly haunted him; he had lost his power of enjoyment, and there might be no remedy" (120).

In conversation with Phebe, the visitor draws on the image of a frightful civilization: "You know so little, here on your island, of the way the great world beyond pushes and fights and wrangles" (120). He may be saying that he cannot, or will not, take her with him; she is better off dying on Folly Island.

Although Phebe weeps as Frankfort departs the island, Jewett is careful that nothing is spoken by Phebe to encourage Frankfort as a suitor; she is silent. Because of his city ways and means, he is callous to permanent attachment, which calls to mind Hawthorne's Coverdale, the "frosty" bachelor. He believes he is too important to help the sickly girl any further than he has, even though "a great wave of compassion poured itself over Frankfort's heart." But he ignores his heart and leaves the "frost-bitten flower," the "tough fisherman ... with his pet doctrines and angry aversions," and Folly Island forever. As the character Jabez Pennell reminisces, "'Phebe Quint was the pootiest gal on these islands some ten years ago,' he proclaimed, 'and a born lady'" (123).

Perhaps Mary Wilkins Freeman's ultimate power play that destroys the desires of local patriarchy is in her short story "Old Woman Magoun." The clandestine play is executed by her character Mrs. Magoun, whose only
worthwhile possessions are her granddaughter, her secret, and her power of speech: "she talked much. She would elbow herself into the midst of a knot of idlers and talk." Magoun freely criticizes the men who are too lazy to build an important bridge over the river. Freeman writes that "The weakness of the masculine element in Barry's Ford was laid low before such strenuous feminine assertion" (Short Fiction 485). The large grandmother "was implicitly obeyed. She had a curious authority over most people when she chose to exercise it" (492).

Magoun's negative feelings for the men of the town surface in dialogue with her delicate granddaughter Lily. As the two "crossed the new, bridge--a primitive structure built of logs in a slovenly fashion," Grandmother Magoun "pointed to a gap":

'Jest see that,' she said. 'That's the way men work.' 'Men ain't very nice, be they?' said Lily, in her sweet little voice. 'No, they ain't, take them all together,' replied her grandmother.' (496)

Local patriarchy has passed into the hands of the character Nelson Barry, whose family founded the town, Barry's Ford, by the river, Barry's River. He did not, however, obey Old Woman Magoun. As a matter of fact, author Freeman describes Nelson as "the fairly dangerous degenerate of a good old family. Nelson's father before
Nelson had been bad." Nelson is the town's leading ne'er-do-well, and the "shiftless population of Barry's Ford looked up to him as to an evil deity." Nelson had a child by Mrs. Magoun's daughter, who "married at sixteen; there had been rumors, but no one had dared openly gainsay the woman. She said that her daughter had married Nelson Barry, and he had deserted her" (486). Magoun's daughter died a week later, leaving Grandmother to raise the child.

Nelson represents paternal dominance, Old Woman Magoun symbolizes the power of speech, and the fourteen-year old granddaughter, Lily, epitomizes female submission. Magoun shelters Lily in a "prolonged childhood," partly because of the circumstances of Lily's birth and partly because Lily's intellect has not matured with her body. Lily continually "clasped her doll—a poor old rag thing—close to her childish bosom, like a little mother." Lily had "uncomprehending eyes"; she "was very small, and walked like a child, with the clap-clap of little feet of babyhood. She might have been considered, from her looks, under ten." Her grandmother pictures her as "nothin' but a baby." When she was upstairs in her room, Lily often sat "by the window in her little rocking-chair—a relic of her infancy, which she still used" (488-92).

As in Freeman's "The Revolt of 'Mother,'" the confrontation with patriarchy finally occurs when mindless male authority pushes the female too far, thereby
victimizing her. The nefarious Barry demands possession of Lily so he can repay gambling debts to Bill Willis, another degenerate who desires Lily as payment from Barry. Old Woman Magoun refuses to accept this intolerable situation. She visits the successful lawyer in town—Mr. Mason, another patriarch—who rebuffs Magoun by rejecting her appeal for adoption. The Masons had lost a child but, without even consulting his wife, he refuses to adopt Lily.

Walking home from the lawyer’s office, Magoun and Lily stop to rest by a wall “overgrown with blackberry-vines, and, an unusual thing in that vicinity, a lusty spread of deadly nightshade full of berries” (496). Lily had admired them on the way to Mr. Mason’s office, and now she says again: "They look good to eat." If Grandmother Magoun had allowed the child to play and explore with other kids, Lily might have known about the deadly berries. However, like Jewett’s character Sylvy, grandmother Magoun keeps her secret and "said nothing." After Lily’s innocent comment, Magoun "still said nothing." And Lily ate.

Old Woman Magoun withheld her power of speech to silently protest the abusive action by the local patriarchs. She saved the innocent, submissive Lily from physical and emotional abuse by remaining silent, since her words of complaint and appeal fail to reach Barry and Mason. Consequently, like Sarah Penn, her silent actions—or inactions—were her only recourse.
Silence, the withheld secret, is power. Perhaps not as active as words and language, silence is, however, effective protest against the "securities" of male "affirmation" that some men desire to exchange for secrets. For Jewett's character, Sylvia, the exchange is a bargain she refuses to strike with the hunter. Old Woman Magoun decides for her innocent granddaughter between slavery in life or freedom in death. And so it is with much of late nineteenth-century female fiction: women reject the arrogant George Quints, selfish Adoniram Penns, and sadistic Nelson Barrys.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

This study has illustrated how Mary Wilkins Freeman’s characters Sarah Penn and Mrs. Magoun, Sarah Orne Jewett’s young protagonist Sylvia, and Hawthorne’s brilliant Hester Prynne and Zenobia epitomize a female protest against patriarchy in the nineteenth century by exposing domineering male types seen in American literature as early as Rowson’s *Charlotte Temple*. Protest is one of several links between Nathaniel Hawthorne, Sarah Orne Jewett, and Mary Wilkins Freeman.

Women had many concepts and ideas to protest: a general belief in their physical frailties is one. Even Hawthorne was dismayed at the feeble health of American women, and many believed that the "secret vice" of masturbation was sweeping the nation and affecting women psychologically and physically (Wood, "Fashionable Diseases" 2-3) As a matter of fact, physicians believed in the image of "the maniacal and destructive woman."

Menstruation, nineteenth-century physicians warned, could drive some women temporarily insane; menstruating women might go berserk, destroying furniture, attacking family and
strangers alike and killing their infants.

(Smith-Rosenberg, "Puberty to Menopause" 29)

Additionally, women supposedly suffered from "menopausal disease" brought on by such diagnoses as too much education, "undue sexual indulgence," and failure to be a proper wife and mother (30). Thus women, Jewett in particular through her writing, protested the attitudes of a male-dominated society; the nineteenth century was the awakening moment for womanhood.

It was an unsettling age; Hawthorne survived a presidential election that forced him out of a job; new communities and religions were sprouting up; the Women's Rights Convention in 1848 encouraged radical females and worried conservative men; the threat of Civil War spread. Author Sacvan Bercovitch has pointed out that "It is no accident that Hawthorne would have connected the revolutions abroad with his loss of tenure at the Salem Customs House." Indeed, Hester Prynne's "wild freedom of speculation" may be a composite figure of the many "pernicious heresies" that attacked "the domestic sphere" at this time in the United States (Bercovitch, 75). Hester's "final vision of womanhood" could mean only one thing: emancipation.

Of all of Hawthorne's acquaintances only one, Margaret Fuller, continued to give her full support to the revolutionaries, and it has been
argued persuasively that she figures not only in the ill-fated Zenobia of The Blithedale Romance, but, together with her allegedly illigitimate child, ... in his portrait of the tormented radical, Hester Prynne. (85)

Consequently, even though Hawthorne was a male, and Jewett and Freeman females, they share some broad attitudes about patriarchy. Hawthorne was ahead of his time in creating such an independent character as Hester. His female inheritors, Jewett and Freeman, followed his lead in defying paternalistic domination and in nurturing female autonomy in many of their rebellious characters. Thus the New England geography and mind-set, Hawthorne's genre of the short story, and thematic similarities tie these three authors together.

The reasons for females writing fiction are many, including the stark necessity of survival. For instance, Freeman, in addition to generating needed income from writing simply to stay alive, "recognized some 'higher' (shall we call it moral?) purpose for her work"—not because of Calvinism "but because of the high calling of artistic devotion, so much more importunate and less forgiving" (Blum, 72) in a literary business dominated by males.

Freeman's voice rang of protest; she spoke out against patriarchal norms passed down from generation to
generation. Like her character Sarah Penn, as she rebukes the Reverend Mr. Hersey, Freeman will "think" her "own thoughts" and "go" her "own ways." As did many female writers and readers, Sarah Orne Jewett "strongly opposed the residual Calvinism [which had its roots in patriarchy set out in the Hebrew and Christian Biblical texts] that lingered in the New England mind-set long after the sect itself had declined" (Donovan, "Jewett and Swedenborg" 731-2). It was, indeed, an age of social unrest and of new ideas: "In particular the venerable belief that the Messiah would take the form of a woman at the Second Coming had quickened," which "engaged the attention of Hawthorne . . . ." (Eakin, 6).

I have briefly shown in selected female characters the growth of autonomy, which is accelerated when female characters are forced to defend their territory from encroaching males and male-driven forces--commercialism and marriage--that restrict female autonomy. Female authors protested against the "cult of domesticity," to borrow Nina Baym's term, that forced young girls into the marriage market after a year or so preparing for matrimony in boarding school.

The desire to marry and the belief that a woman's social status came not from the exercise of her own talents and efforts but from her ability to attract a competent male protector were as
universal among lower class and farm women as among middle and upper class urban women.

(Smith-Rosenberg, "The Hysterical Woman" 659)

Thus Hawthorne, Jewett, and Freeman affirm freedom from wedlock.

Hawthorne, Jewett, and Freeman produced fiction that incorporates the universal theme of female autonomy. Moreover, their imaginative realism accurately pictures life in New England; much of their literature promotes a feminine concept of person and place. Moreover, the fiction selected for this study, in one way or another, encourages women to operate beyond standard stereotypes furthered by restricting male attitudes. I agree with James L. Machor, who writes that the nineteenth-century reader "actively participated in the reading experience by choosing to accept or reject a particular role that a text implied for its audience" (78). This study argues that one of the roles accepted by the female was as protester.

Finally, this dissertation argues that the female's use of silence successfully renders the male's power of speech ineffective. In the stories presented, the female often is victorious not by dislodging the power of speech from the male, but by not speaking: either silently acting or silently withholding critical information. Sarah Penn finds out that words fail to win over her narrow-minded husband; she must act. Hester Prynne refuses to tell the
secrets of her past and of her passion. In "A White Heron," Sylvia rejects an exchange of information for "the 'security' of male affirmation"; in "Old Woman Magoun," the grandmother silently kills the object of exchange that would have fulfilled male lust.

There is nothing new about the struggle for female autonomy. However, the significance of this study centers around the idea of female autonomy as it relates to rejection of the male's offer of security and affirmation. The offer is made through language while the female's rejection is through silence. The offers of security are marriage and religion; the offers of affirmation are family and happiness. Hester, the dominant symbol of female independence for this study, rejects all; she is Everywoman. She does not need a male to provide security and to affirm life for her. Hester goes to her grave a fallen woman, not only in a moral sense, but also fallen from the mythical pedestal on which men once placed women. Yet Hester as Everywoman has risen; she is elevated above stereotypes and attitudes perpetuated by a male-dominated society.
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