

TYPES OF CHARACTERS IN HAWTHORNE'S
TALES AND ROMANCES

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INTRODUCTION

In this study, my purpose has been twofold. First, I have undertaken to show that the characters in Hawthorne's tales and romances may be divided into various definite types, and I have attempted to trace the evolution of these types through their noteworthy representatives and to indicate, wherever possible, the bearing of the notebooks on this process of development. Second, (I have tried to show that, despite the fact that most of the major characters and many of the minor ones do fall into particular types, they do not fail to be individuals.)

Because of the author's method of collecting and using his material, the principal personages of his romances are few in number, but for the same reason they are all the more fruitful a source of pleasure for the reader and profit for the student of literature and of character. Selecting any one of the major characters from any one of his four romances, noting each appearance, and combining all into a continuous record; studying this detached personality in its physical and mental characteristics, both natural and acquired, its words and actions, its effect upon itself and surrounding persons and things, together with their effects upon it; studying, also, the author's method of expressing all this both directly, in his own words, and indirectly, in the words

and deeds of the personage itself and those of the almost chemically attracted or repelled other characters,--one such study, fully carried out, marks an epoch in any student's mental life.

All of the principal characters of the romances and many of the minor ones reward such study of their own nature and its presentation, yet they appear, perhaps, even more interesting and valuable when considered as expressions of their author's personality. For in his selected types of character and action Hawthorne presented, perhaps unconsciously, the results of his experience and the solution attained by his contemplations,--not merely a picture of life, but an interpretation, "the breath and finer spirit of his knowledge,"¹ a contribution to life as well as letters.

The characters that appear in The Blithedale Romance, The Scarlet Letter, and The House of the Seven Gables, like those of George Eliot, are plainly the results of intimate observation and long contemplation in a comparatively limited field: that of the first two-thirds of the author's life, extending nearly to the richer European years. In The Marble Faun he has transported his Puritan characters from Salem and Boston to Rome. The Marble Faun is indeed laid in a city more romantic than Salem, but the characters are the same New Englanders in different surroundings, little affected by the change. Al-

¹Lloyd Morris, The Rebellious Puritan, p. 26.

though The Marble Faun serves as an excellent traveller's guide to Italy,² the characters are New Englanders in new surroundings. It is said of Hawthorne that "he knew no Italians and that he made no attempt to become acquainted with Italian life."³

The author's attitude toward his characters, sometimes definitely expressed, but oftener indirectly revealed, is one of sufficient breadth of interest and creative detachment to allow him to contemplate and to record even that of which he disapproves. Yet he is never so severe with his creations as George Eliot. Hawthorne's psychological analysis of mental structure, phase, process, and experience is as penetrative and as delicate as that of George Eliot. However, it penetrates a region all its own,--studying latent mental states, the subconscious effect of concrete things, the chemistry of moods, and the significance of the unconscious mental play of dreams. Approaching in this the world of Poe, Hawthorne yet preserves the balance that makes him able, in another direction, to study movements of the social mind and of mob psychology.

Nor does Hawthorne hesitate to analyze as well as generalize. Inductively going from particular facts of general human experience to more general truths to which his method gives

²George Edward Woodberry, Hawthorne, p. 93.

³Herbert Gorman, Hawthorne, p. 95.

the force of demonstration, his comments on life have a scientific basis and a philosophic truth that make them worthy rules for faith and practice. Sometimes their phrasing makes them proverbs for quotation. Picturing life is with Hawthorne merely one method of interpreting it. As his comments express, so his characters embody the results of his observation and contemplation, combining for the reader in a few personages truths that the author gleaned from many.

CHAPTER I

THE THEMES IN HAWTHORNE'S TALES AND ROMANCES

That Hawthorne was primarily concerned with moral and psychological problems and not characters from real life is obvious in all his works. Professor Henry A. Beers observed:

Hawthorne's fiction is almost wholly ideal. He does not copy life like Thackeray, whose procedure is inductive, does not start with observed characters, but with an imagined problem or situation of the soul, inventing characters to fit.¹

Although there is a frequent recurrence of certain types of characters in his works it would be unjust to assert that those that comprise a certain type were all cut from the same piece of cloth, for there is an obvious differentiation between them. But the differentiation is purely to fit them to the exigencies of the particular theme which Hawthorne had in mind. For instance, Hilda of The Marble Faun is a type of New England maiden, pure and trusting, already made familiar to his readers in Phoebe of The House of the Seven Gables and Priscilla of The Blithedale Romance. Hilda is drawn to greater purpose than either of her previous sisters, but she is still a type. This is true of all of Hawthorne's characters except those smaller subsidiary vignettes, such as Uncle Venner or

¹See his "Fifty Years of Hawthorne," Four Americans, p. 223.

Old Moodie, which were the result of observation retouched to magic by imagination.² He was concerned with these figures only while they were serving his specific purpose.³ It is obvious that Hawthorne is not a realist when he is viewed from this angle. But at the same time, his habitual observation of human life wrought an inclination for naturalism in him, and, therefore, these personages created on so unreal a basis were developed with some degree of reality.⁴

A subject which finds repeated treatment in Hawthorne's works is the isolation of the individual from his associates. It is certain that this theme bears a closer relation than any other to the author's own life.⁵ His attitude had been one of

²Herbert Gorman, Hawthorne: A Study in Solitude, p. 100.

³Henry James, Jr., Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 111.

⁴Lloyd Morris, A Rebellious Puritan, p. 252.

⁵Randall Stewart, editor, The American Notebooks by Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. lxi.

The pagination for all references to Hawthorne's writings, except The Passages from the American Notebooks, X, is that of The Complete Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, with Introductory Notes by George Lathrop (Riverside ed., Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1888). Individual volumes are referred to by obvious abbreviations. Instead of using The Passages from the American Notebooks, vol. X, of the complete edition, I have used The Passages from the American Notebooks by Nathaniel Hawthorne, edited by Professor Randall Stewart of Yale University. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1932). The references I have made to Professor Stewart's own opinions and criticisms of Hawthorne's works may be distinguished from the references made to The Passages from the American Notebooks by the page numbering. The pages of the introduction are numbered with Roman numerals and the Passages with arabic. This book will be referred to by the name of the editor alone, without the title.

isolation from the first, and because of this his work revealed an essential uniqueness that was not duplicated by any of his contemporaries.⁶ He had explored the consequences of sin, ignoring the causes, and in doing this he had expressed better the essential New England spirit than any of the moralists who surrounded him.⁷ He knew that conscience was a terrible and hidden thing, and he made of conscience a protagonist that is without parallel in the letters of the Republic. And he clothed his creations in an atmosphere that was peculiarly his own. He was an Ethan Brand of the soul searching not for the Unforgivable Sin but for the inmitigable consequence of sin.

Hawthorne's isolated life during the twelve years following his graduation from Bowdoin College is well known. Writing to Longfellow from Salem on June 4, 1837, he said:

I have secluded myself from society; and yet I never meant any such thing, nor dreamed what sort of life I was going to lead. I have made a captive of myself and put me into a dungeon; and now I cannot find the key to let myself out--and if the door were open, I should be almost afraid to come out . . . there is not any fate in this world so horrible as to have no share in either its joys or sorrows. For the last ten years, I have not lived, but only dreamed of living.⁸

This kind of isolation, which seems to Hawthorne from his own life to be the result of a drifting process, fortuitous and

⁶Herbert Gorman, op. cit., p. 151.

⁷Lloyd Morris, op. cit., p. 263.

⁸This letter is quoted from Stewart, p. lxix. He states that the letter is now in the possession of Mr. H. W. L. Dana.

involuntary, yet inevitable, is represented often and in various forms in his fiction.

One of the most forceful examples of the isolation which results from an exceptional nature is in Beatrice, who appears in "Rappaccini's Daughter." Beatrice has been nurtured on the poison of the flowers in her father's garden so long that it has become a necessary food for her body. Possessing immunity from this poison, she experiences great pleasure in handling the rich plants. To those whose bodies have not been so impregnated, her touch is poisonous: her fingers leave a purple mark on Giovanni's hand.⁹ A person filled with a poison of this kind would indeed be isolated from his fellow creatures by virtue of an exceptional nature, and this was the tragedy of Beatrice. Baglioni's antidote does not succeed in "bringing back this miserable child within the limits of ordinary nature."¹⁰

Wakefield, in the story of that name, is another example. "He had contrived, or rather he had happened, to dis sever himself from the world--to vanish--to give up his place and privileges with living men"¹¹ The moral which the story sets forth is that "by stepping aside for a moment, a man exposes himself to a fearful risk of losing his place for-

⁹ "Rappaccini's Daughter," Mosses from an Old Manse, II, 118. Hereafter this book will be referred to as Mosses.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 133. ¹¹ Ibid., p. 135.

ever."¹² Similarly, Oberon, in "The Devil in Manuscript" says:

I am surrounding myself with shadows . . . they have drawn me aside from the path of the world, and led me into a strange solitude,--a solitude in the midst of many people, where nobody wishes for what I do nor thinks nor . . .¹³

Again, the village uncle, in the tale of that title, is described as "a man who had wandered out of the real world and got into its shadow, where his troubles, joys, and vicissitudes were of such slight stuff that he hardly knew whether he lived, or only dreamed of living."¹⁴ It is at once apparent that in these descriptions of Oberon, Wakefield, and the village uncle, Hawthorne used language similar to that which he used in the letter to Longfellow two years later to describe his own life during the period from 1824 to 1837.

In "The Procession of Life," one large classification of humanity includes "all mortals, who, from whatever cause, have lost, or never found, their proper places in the world."¹⁵ Likewise, the anonymous person in "The Intelligence Office" who is seeking a place exclaims: "I want my place! I want my true place in the world!"¹⁶ Similarly, "Feathertop: a Moralized Legend" repeats the theme of isolation. Feathertop seeing himself as wretched, ragged, empty, simply ceased to exist.

¹²"Wakefield," Twice Told Tales, I, 23.

¹³Tales, Sketches, and Biography, XII, 83. Hereafter this book will be referred to as Sketches.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 40. ¹⁵Mosses, II, 249.

¹⁶Twice Told Tales, I, 366.

Gervayse Hastings in "The Christmas Banquet," with his cold hand and cold heart, explains the tragedy of his life in these words: "It is a want of earnestness--a feeling as if what should have been a thing of vapor--a haunting perception of unreality."¹⁷

Although the Wandering Jew in "A Virtuoso's Collection" enjoys the gift of earthly immortality he is "cut off from natural sympathies and blasted with a doom . . . inflicted on no other human being."¹⁸ Furthermore, it was fortunate for Septimius Felton that he was prevented from drinking the elixir of life and thereby "severing . . . the link that connected him with his race, and making for himself an exceptional destiny."¹⁹

The idea of isolation is so pervasive in Hawthorne's works that the consideration of all possible examples would include almost all of his characters, for very few are not exceptional in some sense. In The Scarlet Letter, Hester, betrayed by the birth of her illegitimate child, has stood on the pillory with the terrible letter on her breast and has nothing more to face than the slow years of ridicule and isolation from society in all its forms. Likewise, Pearl was deprived of association with the other children of the village and became aware of it at a very early age when the children on the streets hurled

¹⁷Mosses, II, 328.

¹⁸"A Virtuoso's Collection," Mosses, II, 539.

¹⁹Septimius Felton, XI, 233.

rocks at her and her mother and jeered at them as they passed. To name the other important characters in the novels that were victims of isolation in one way or another would include Dimmesdale and Chillingworth in The Scarlet Letter; Miriam, Dontello, and Kenyon in The Marble Faun; Hepzibah, Clifford, and Judge Pyncheon in The House of the Seven Gables; and Zenobia in The Blithedale Romance. This estrangement of the individual was a major theme with Hawthorne.

The problem of sin is an equally apparent theme in the works of Hawthorne. Adultery exists in The Scarlet Letter. The sin has been committed before the story begins, and Hawthorne is concerned only with the results of the sin, with its mark--growing more and more terrible as time passes--on the two men. Hawthorne is not concerned with the sin as a sin. He is interested only in the effect of the hidden and festering sense of guilt which is slowly consuming Dimmesdale. The Puritan consciousness of sin, evidenced before in some of Hawthorne's short tales, is the dark thread that the reader follows through the labyrinth of The Scarlet Letter. It is commonplace to say that his insistent consciousness of sin was an inheritance from his Puritan ancestors. Hawthorne himself acknowledged an inescapable connection between his "grave, bearded, sable-cloaked and steeple-crowned" progenitors and the "writer of story books."²⁰ The French critic M. Montegut says,

²⁰The Scarlet Letter, V, 23-24.

This habit of seeing sin everywhere, and hell always gaping open; this dusky gaze bent always upon a damned world, and nature draped in mourning; these lonely conversations of the imagination with the conscience; this pitiless analysis resulting from a perpetual examination of one's self, and from the tortures of a heart closed before man and open to God—all these elements of the Puritan character have passed into Mr. Hawthorne, or to speak more justly, have filtered into him, through a long succession of generations.²¹

But Montegut also adds,

. . . Hawthorne, of course, had genius to help him. Nothing is more curious and interesting than this almost exclusively imported character of the sense of sin in Hawthorne's mind; it seems to exist there merely for an artistic or literary purpose.²²

The charm of Hawthorne's study of sin is that it is a glimpse of a great field, of the whole deep mystery of man's soul and conscience. It is moral and its interest is moral; it deals with something more than the mere accidents and conventionalities, the surface occurrences of life. Furthermore, he cared for the deeper psychology, and he tried to become familiar with it.²³

With external, overt acts of a sinful or criminal nature, Hawthorne has very little to do. The vagueness of Miriam's guilt is characteristic of Hawthorne's method. Randall Stewart says that the vagueness of the evil deeds of Hawthorne's characters may be attributed to two causes: first, his lack of experience with the world of evil; and, second, the focusing

²¹As quoted by Henry James, op. cit., p. 59.

²²Ibid., p. 57. ²³Newton Arvin, Hawthorne, p. 178.

of his interest on the psychological effects of the deed rather than on the deed itself.²⁴

Of the many sins treated in Hawthorne's fiction, there is one sin which is more reprehensible than the others and which the author names in "Ethan Brand" the unpardonable sin. This sin, which appears in various forms in the tales and novels, consists essentially in the violation of the sanctity of a human heart. This is the sin of Chillingworth. When Dimmesdale has been informed of the purpose of revenge of the physician, he exclaims to Hester:

We are not, Hester, the worst sinners in the world. There is one worse than even the polluted priest! That old man's revenge has been blacker than my sin. He has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of the human heart. Thou and I, Hester, never did so.²⁵

The theme of this speech in Hawthorne's fiction occurs with an insistent emphasis. The violation of the sanctity of the human heart presupposes one person's possession of a special power over another. Thus Chillingworth inflicts upon his victim a persecution from which there is no escape except by death. Hawthorne pointed out repeatedly the penalty imposed upon the master through the exercise of his power: Ethan Brand's heart turned to marble; Chillingworth withered and died. Hawthorne also made use of the idea of an experiment in several stories: in "Rappaccini's Daughter," the physician conducts an experiment upon his daughter and Giovanni.

²⁴Stewart, p. lxxiii. ²⁵The Scarlet Letter, V, 282.

The exercise of power by one personality over another was associated in Hawthorne's mind with mesmeric phenomena as well as scientific experiment. The principle of mesmerism is applied in The House of the Seven Gables, where Matthew Maule attempts to attain through Alice Pyncheon, who is in a state of mesmeric sleep, information regarding the whereabouts of a lost document, the discovery of which would place in the possession of the Pyncheons a vast estate. Although the attempt is unsuccessful, Maule, having once established his ascendancy over Alice, continues to exploit her weakness and finally brings her to her death. Again, in The Blithedale Romance, Westervelt uses his mesmeric power over Priscilla.

Hawthorne's interest in mesmerism reflects the vogue of mesmeric phenomena in Boston in the 1830's and 1840's, both in theatrical exhibitions and as a means of effecting cures. When Sophia Peabody, who suffered from severe headaches, proposed to Hawthorne the possibility of mesmerism as a curative measure, he, in a letter written from Brook Farm on October 18, 1841 protested with unusual vehemence:

. . . my spirit is moved to talk to thee today about these magnetic miracles, and to beseech thee to take no part in them. I am unwilling that a power should be exercised on them of which we know neither the origin nor the consequence, and the phenomena of which seem rather calculated to bewilder us, than to teach us any truths about the present or future state of being. If I possessed such a power over thee, I should not dare to exercise it; nor can I consent to its being exercised by another. Supposing that this power arises from the transfusion of one spirit into another, it seems to me that the sacredness of an individual is

violated by it; there would be an intrusion into thy holy of holies²⁶

In similar language Hawthorne applauds Holgrave's abstention from the exercise upon Phoebe of mesmeric power which he obviously possessed.

To a disposition like Holgrave's, at once speculative and active, there is no temptation so great as the opportunity of acquiring empire over the human spirit. Let us, therefore . . . concede to the daguerreotypist the rare high quality of reverence for another individuality.²⁷

It is evident that Chillingworth, Rappaccini, Maule, and Westervelt committed the unpardonable sin, the doctrine of which Hawthorne had inserted in the journal as early as 1844.

The unpardonable sin might consist in want of love and reverence for the Human Soul; in consequences of which the investigator pried into its dark depths, not with a hope or purpose of making it better, but from a cold philosophical curiosity, content that it should be wicked in whatever kind or degree, and only desiring to study it out. Would not this, in other words, be the separation of the intellect from the heart?²⁸

Thus it is seen that Hawthorne had an interest in the situation in which one person possesses a dominating power over another. Hawthorne believed the exercise of such a power was fundamentally wrong because it violated the sacredness of personality. Only a person utterly lacking in love and reverence for the human soul, one in whom the intellect had been

²⁶The Love Letters of Nathaniel Hawthorne, II, 62. Hereafter this book will be referred to as Love Letters.

²⁷The House of the Seven Gables, III, 273. Hereafter this book will be referred to as Seven Gables.

²⁸The Scarlet Letter, V, 106.

overdeveloped and the emotional nature had undergone atrophy, would be capable of thus preying upon a susceptible nature. In this separation of the intellect from the heart and the consequent drying up of human sympathies, Hawthorne found the unpardonable sin. So to meet the exigencies of this particular theme which he had in mind, Hawthorne invented characters to fit.

The decay of proud old families is another of Hawthorne's themes that is projected from a long background of thinking. This is evident by the repeated entries in the notebooks of the decline of family fortunes, the frustration of the attempt of a progenitor to secure an estate to his posterity, and the decadence of the descendants whose sustenance is pride of ancestry. In 1837 he recorded the following instance of a sudden decline in the prosperity of a family:

In 1621, a Mr. Copinger left a certain charity, an almshouse, of which poor persons are to partake, after the death of the eldest son and his wife At the time specified, however, all but one of his sons were dead; and he was in such poor circumstances that he obtained the benefit of charity for himself, as one of the four.²⁹

Again, after visiting General Knox's estate in the same year, Hawthorne wrote:

The house and its vicinity, and the whole tract covered by Knox's patent, may be taken as an illustration of what must be the result of American schemes of aristocracy. It is not forty years, since this house was built, and Knox was in his glory; but now the house is all in decay, while, within a stone's

²⁹Stewart, p. 293.

throw of it, is a street of neat, smart, white edifices of one and two stories, occupied chiefly by thriving mechanics The descendants are all poor; and the inheritance was merely sufficient to make a dissipated drunken fellow of the old General's sons who survived middle age.³⁰

After studying, in 1837, some old portraits in the cabinet of Essex Historical Society, Hawthorne observed:

Nothing gives a stronger idea of old worm-eaten aristocracy, of a family being crazy with age, and of its being time that it was extinct--than these black, dusty, faded, antique-dressed portraits . . .³¹

Another passage in the notebooks dealing with the decay of families is recorded in the journal in 1842. Concerning the family, he wrote:

Sir William had built an elegant house for his son and his intended wife; but after the death of the former, he never entered it Very anxious to secure his property to his descendants, by the provision of his will, which was drawn up by Judge Sewell, then a young lawyer. Yet the Judge lived to see two of Sir William's grandchildren so reduced, that they were to have been numbered among the town's poor, and were only rescued from this fate by private charity.³²

The interest with which Hawthorne contemplated physical evidence of the decline of the artistocratic families is revealed again in his account, written in 1847, of the remains of a mansion on Brown's Hill. He contrasts the surviving traces of the old house, consisting of two cellars, with the former splendor of the edifice, particularly when its owner celebrated the King's birthday, and remarks that the struc-

³⁰Ibid., p. 286. ³¹Stewart, pp. 88-89.

³²Ibid., p. 127.

ture "has perpetuated an imputation of folly upon the poor man who erected it, which still keeps his memory disagreeably alive, after a hundred years."³³

The theme of The House of the Seven Gables is projected from a long background in Hawthorne's thinking. The evil machinery of the drama is first set in motion by the heartless greed and unscrupulous pride of the earliest Pyncheon, who sticks at no cruelty or fraud in his design of founding a great family, and who on the very threshold of achieving it, is visited by so ironic a fate. Upon one generation after another of his descendants falls the curse of the man he has injured. Even the beautiful Alice Pyncheon is made to suffer deep humiliation for this one taint of pride. Of the three Pyncheons in the direct line--the Judge, Hepzibah, and Clifford--no one is a normally developed human being, living in right and genial relations with his fellow-men. Judge Pyncheon is the coldest and the falsest of the three. Dominated by a narrow, self-seeking purpose, devoted to his own aggrandizement through wealth and worldly power, the Judge allows his own greed to triumph over every human consideration, and even over the limited loyalty of blood relationship. The human beings nearest to him, his wife and his son, go down before the hardness and harshness of his will. In the end, as if he had not already done Hepzibah and Clifford enough injury, the Judge is

³³Ibid., pp. 119-120.

willing to destroy what little peace is left to them in order to satisfy his grotesque and abstract greed. The wreck of the personality that is Clifford Pyncheon is the product of the effects of his long and hideous isolation from humanity within the prison walls. Clifford loses, in his prison years, all capacities except his sense of the beautiful, and retains only the tremulous vestige of this. On no such basis could his normal status as a man be re-established. Hepzibah, as a result of an old empty pride of family, has fallen quite out of pace with the ordinary march of existence. Her punishment is that when a great human need is forced upon her she has no longer the power to deal with it. The Pyncheons have contrived to continue their residence in the ancestral mansion for a longer period of time than had the families mentioned in the notebooks; nevertheless, gradual decay and final extinction are qualities brought over from the notebooks to the romance. At the end of the romance, the old house is abandoned.

So strongly antiaristocratic were Hawthorne's social views that he ascribes to Holgrave views somewhat similar to his own; Holgrave says to Phoebe:

But we shall live to see the day, I trust . . . when no man shall build his house for posterity If each generation were allowed and expected to build its own houses, that single change, comparatively unimportant in itself, would imply almost every reform which society is now suffering for.³⁴

³⁴Seven Gables, III, 20.

Hawthorne demonstrates repeatedly the folly of seeking in ancestral arcana the clue to success. Both "The Ancestral Footstep" and "Dr. Grimshawe's Secret" portray this philosophy. The theme of both is an attempt of an American to regain an ancestral heritage in England. In "Grimshawe" the people do not believe in themselves. Even Redclyffe, the leading character in "Grimshawe," never decides what he intends to do with his prospects in England; and his indecision destroys him. The book ends with that mocking scene in which Redclyffe, at the end of a long quest obtains the mysterious coffer. He discovers that its contents consists of luxurious golden ringlets, beautiful but worthless.

In "The Ancestral Footstep," Hawthorne states the moral to be drawn from Middleton's attempt to regain his ancestral heritage in England:

Let the past alone: do not seek to renew it; press on to higher and better things; and be assured that the right can never be that which leads you back to the identical shapes that you long ago left behind. Onward, onward, onward!³⁵

Thus from the foregoing citations we see that Hawthorne recorded in the notebooks, again and again, instances of the decline of aristocratic families and that this conception had its fruition in the central situation of The House of the Seven Gables; however, he returned to this theme of the past in "Dr. Grimshawe's Secret" and "The Ancestral Footstep." Here again

³⁵"The Ancestral Footstep," The Dolliver Romance, Fanshawe, and Septimius Felton, XI, 435.

he emphasizes the folly of seeking aid or guidance from by-gone times. So with the interest Hawthorne had in producing stories with this theme of the baneful influence of the past as represented by family traditions and by old houses, such individuals as Clifford, Hepzibah, Middleton, and Redclyffe were necessary creations to further the development of the theme.

Another theme in which Hawthorne showed a prolonged and intense interest is that of earthly immortality made possible by the elixir of life. Early references to the subject in the notebooks point out undesirable effects which an earthly immortality would have on human life. The abolition of death would result in serious complication in human society. In 1836 the following entry was made in the notebook:

Curious to imagine what murmurings and discontent would be excited if any of the great so-called calamities of human beings were to be abolished,-- as, for instance, death.³⁶

Again Hawthorne points out a definite effect upon the prolongation of life: "The love of posterity is a consequence of the necessity of death. If a man were sure of living forever here, he would not care about his offspring."³⁷

In "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" Hawthorne attempted to answer the question, whether it would be worth while to grow young again. His conclusion in this story is that no real advantage would be achieved by regaining one's youth. Dr.

³⁶Stewart, p. 36. ³⁷Ibid., p. 212.

Heidegger's decrepit guests: Mr. Melbourne, Colonel Killigrew, Mr. Gascoigne, and the Widow Wycherly, with all their sad knowledge of what folly brings, drink the rejuvenating potion which he had offered them, and when they find their youth apparently restored, relapse into the same follies that had made them the bad examples they were. Dr. Heidegger concludes:

. . . if the fountain of youth gushed at my very doorstep, I would not stoop to bathe my lips in it--no, though its delirium were for many years instead of moments. Such is the lesson you have taught me.³⁸

Again, in "A Virtuoso's Collection," Hawthorne shows his disapproval of the elixir. When the virtuoso offers a draught of the cordial, the writer says:

No, I desire not an earthly immortality
Were man to live longer on earth, the spiritual would die out of him. The spark of ethereal fire would be choked by the material, the sensual. There is a celestial something within us that requires, after a certain time, the atmosphere of heaven to preserve it from decay and ruin. I will have none of this liquid.³⁹

In "The Birthmark," Aylmer considers the application of the elixir to human life. Hawthorne says of him:

He more than intimated that it was at his option to concoct a liquid that should prolong life for years, perhaps interminably; but that it would produce a discord in Nature which all the world and chiefly the quaffer of the immortal nostrum, would find cause to cure.⁴⁰

³⁸"Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," Twice Told Tales, I, 269.

³⁹"The Virtuoso's Collection," Mosses, I, 540.

⁴⁰"The Birthmark," Ibid., p. 557.

Thus, in Hawthorne's meditation on the subject of the elixir he had formed various objections to the indefinite extension of human life: the application of such a principle would destroy parental affection; it would not result in the betterment of character; on the contrary, it would eventually annihilate the life of the spirit, and finally, it would produce a discord in Nature.

The themes discussed--the isolation of the individual, the unpardonable sin, the influence of the past, and the elixir of life make it evident that a long period of thinking and writing preceded the works that are embodiments of these themes. It is also apparent that Hawthorne was concerned in his characters only while they were serving his purpose. With a theme in mind, he then cast about seeking characters to fulfill his purpose at hand. As one finds comparatively few themes treated in Hawthorne's romances and tales, likewise one finds comparatively few types of characters. Although his characters comprise certain types, they do not fail to be individuals, and his technique in representing character yields great reward to an appreciative student of his work. The development of the characters, the increasing fulness with which Hawthorne causes their natures to appear, the way in which their outward aspects are made to correspond with what we discover in their natures, make each character worthy of careful study.

CHAPTER II

THE NORMAL NEW ENGLAND GIRL

Hawthorne's heroines may be classified, for the convenience of our discussion, according to two general types: first, the normal New England girl that I shall discuss in this chapter; and second, the woman of a special and peculiar character with an exotic richness in her nature. The first type may be subdivided into two groups; first, the wholesome, bright, sensible, and self-reliant girl; and second, the frail, sylph-like creature, easily swayed by a stronger personality. Although these two groups have many contrasting characteristics, they have enough in common, I believe, to classify them under one general heading, for both groups are representative of the normal New England girl of Hawthorne's time.

Whether the description of Ellen Langton in Fanshawe is that of an actual girl whom Hawthorne knew and perhaps loved or merely an imaginary portrait it is difficult to say. But it is significant of Hawthorne's preferences in these matters that Ellen is the prototype of several heroines in later stories, including Phoebe in The House of the Seven Gables and Hilda in The Marble Faun, and that in many qualities she is an anticipation of Sophia Peabody. In Ellen's dark eyes one may

read "pure and pleasant thoughts."¹ She has "the gayety and simple happiness, because the innocence, of a child."² After she became a member of Dr. Melmoth's household, "the sunny days seemed brighter and the cloudy ones less gloomy."³ She possessed both "a large fund of plain sense,"⁴ and an aesthetic faculty which was expressed in the daily decoration of her room with wild flowers.⁵ Differing, however, from Mrs. Hawthorne, whose linguistic knowledge was considerable,⁶ Ellen prefers reading an old romance to pursuing a course of instruction in the learned languages,⁷ proffered by Dr. Melmoth. Susan in "The Village Uncle" has an interesting place in the development of this type. She is a "frank, simple, kind-hearted, sensible, and mirthful girl,"⁸ scattering sunshine upon gloomy spirits. She keeps shop where "gingerbred men and horses, picture-books and ballads, small fish-hooks, pins, needles, sugar-plums, and brass thimbles"⁹ are offered for sale, thus anticipating the role of Phoebe. There is reason for believing that the sketch of Susan was based upon an ac-

¹Fanshawe, XI, 134. ²Ibid., p. 134.

³Ibid., p. 134.

⁴Ibid., p. 135.

⁵Ibid., p. 135.

⁶Julian Hawthorne says that Mrs. Hawthorne read Latin, Greek, and Hebrew (Hawthorne and His Wife, I, 40). In her journal at the Old Manse (August 29, 30, 1843) Mrs. Hawthorne mentions reading Les Memoires de Luther and Tasso. She was studying German with her mother and sisters as early as 1838 (Hawthorne and His Wife, I, 185).

⁷Fanshawe, XI, 164.

⁸Twice Told Tales, I, 356.

⁹Ibid., 360.

tual person. Hawthorne's sister, Elizabeth, wrote Julian Hawthorne:

About the year of 1833, your father, after a sojourn of two or three weeks at Swampscott, came home captivated, in his fanciful way, with a "mermaid," as he called her. He would not tell us her name, but said she was of the aristocracy of the village, the keeper of a little shop. You will find her, I suspect, in "The Village Uncle." He said she had a great deal of what the French call *espeiglerie*.¹⁰

The notebooks afford abundant evidence that Hawthorne continued to observe pretty girls with interest and to record his observations. In the Augusta journal, one finds lively sketches of Nancy, "a pretty, black-eyed," intelligent servant-girl with a "piquant countenance,"¹¹ and of the "frank, free, mirthful daughter of the landlady"¹² with whom Hawthorne carried on a flirtation.¹³ The quality of "*espeiglerie*," particularly admired in Susan, is the salient characteristic of "our table-waiter, Eliza Chaseboro,"¹⁴ whom Hawthorne observed at North Adams.

Although such characters as Eve in "The New Adam and Eve," the nameless girl in "David Swan," Faith Egerton in "The Threefold Destiny," and Faith Brown in "Young Goodman Brown" are very lightly sketched, it is obvious that these women, like Susan and Ellen, possess cheerfulness, prettiness, and a simple-minded domesticity.

¹⁰Julian Hawthorne, Hawthorne and His Wife, I, 127-128.

¹¹Stewart, pp. 18-19. ¹²Ibid., pp. 18-19.

¹³Ibid., pp. 34-35. ¹⁴Ibid., p. 55.

Phoebe is the typical "good little maid," full of sunlight and cheeriness, that Hawthorne uses again and again to set off the darker hues of his more somber women. She stands to Hepzibah as Priscilla stands to Zenobia in The Blithedale Romance or as Hilda stands to Miriam in The Marble Faun. These girls are all young women who are made unusual through remarkable traits. The character of Phoebe is of special interest because of its derivation from several prototypes. Just as Ellen Langton promptly assumes a large share of the domestic duties in Mrs. Melmoth's household,¹⁵ so Phoebe "by the magnetism of innate fitness"¹⁶ takes Hepzibah's place in the kitchen. Phoebe and Ellen are alike, also, in their lack of bookishness: the educational qualifications of the former do not extend beyond those of the mistress of the village school.¹⁷ Phoebe also recalls Susan in certain definite respects: they are alike not only in their vocation of shop-keeping but in an engaging detail of personal appearance; both have a few freckles which are becoming rather than otherwise.¹⁸ Phoebe, however, owes more to Mrs. Hawthorne than to either Ellen Langton or Susan. The name itself was one which Hawthorne had used as a pet name in writing to his wife.¹⁹

¹⁵Fanshawe, XI, 143. ¹⁶Seven Gables, III, 99.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 103.

¹⁸"The Village Uncle," Twice Told Tales, I, 355; Seven Gables, III, 103.

¹⁹See Love Letters, II, 113, 117, 120, 124, 129, 137, 153. These letters were written in 1840-1845.

Phoebe's nose, "slightly piquant,"²⁰ is modeled after Sophia's, which Hawthorne refers to in a letter as "that whimsical little nose of thine."²¹ More important, Phoebe and Sophia are alike in certain spiritual qualities. Hawthorne says that his wife is "birdlike in many things."²² Similarly, Phoebe is "as graceful as a bird."²³ Hawthorne compares his wife to "bright sunshine in a dismal place."²⁴ And just as Mrs. Hawthorne with happy skill transformed the Old Manse, a musty edifice, into a "comfortable, modern residence,"²⁵ so Phoebe by a "kind of natural magic"²⁶ effected an equally remarkable transformation in the interior arrangements of the house of the seven gables. Finally, both are of a religious nature: Mrs. Hawthorne goes to church, leaving her husband at home;²⁷ Phoebe, likewise, has "a church-going conscience."²⁸ From these comparisons, it is clear that Phoebe is a composite character whose traits are drawn partly from the fictional characters, Ellen and Susan, and partly from the author's wife.

The last character in this series of wholesome New Eng-

²⁰Seven Gables, III, 103. ²¹Love Letters, II, 7.

²²Stewart, p. 200. ²³Seven Gables, III, 103.

²⁴Ibid., p. 98.

²⁵Stewart, p. 252; Love Letters, I, 236, 237.

²⁶Seven Gables, III, 90. ²⁷Stewart, 257.

²⁸Seven Gables, III, 176.

land girls is Hilda, in The Marble Faun. She is described as "pretty at all times, in our native New England style."²⁹ Hilda is set forth as the very apotheosis of the virginal, there in the tower with her doves, "the symbol of the human soul, with its choice of Innocence or Evil close at hand."³⁰ She instinctively revolts at the mere knowledge of evil, and refuses it in the incident of the confessional, where she frees herself from the pollution and dismay that the knowledge has been to her. Hilda, with all her sensitiveness to the shock within her own nature, shows a hardness of virtue. Would she, under any circumstances, have been capable of seeing Donatello with Miriam's eyes? As little as of winning his love, one thinks. The two women are extremely different. In Hilda's religious orthodoxy and in her moral purity symbolized by the doves which circle about her tower,³¹ she derives from both Phoebe and Mrs. Hawthorne herself. It appears that in this heroine, however, Hawthorne incorporated even more of his wife than in the portrait of Phoebe.³² The latter is the blending of the lively village girl, such as Hawthorne often met on his adventurous journeys through rural New Eng-

²⁹The Marble Faun, VI, 81. ³⁰Stewart, p. 280.

³¹This symbolism is anticipated in The Blithedale Romance (p. 501) in which a dove perches above Priscilla's window. Hereafter this book will be referred to as Blithedale.

³²Moncure D. Conway states that Una, Hawthorne's youngest daughter, is the prototype of Hilda (Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 166) and bases his assertion on the fact that while Hawthorne was writing about Hilda in her tower, Una occupied this same tower.

land and described in the notebooks, and Sophia in her capacity as a home maker. In The Marble Faun, Hawthorne has apparently forgotten those earlier feminine models of his youth, and the character of Hilda becomes little more than an ideal portrait of the author's wife. This identity is particularly obvious in the account of Hilda's artistic career:

Even in her school days she had produced sketches that were seized upon by men of taste, and hoarded as among the choicest treasure of their portfolios; scenes delicately imagined, lacking, perhaps, the reality which comes only from a close acquaintance with life, but so softly touched with feeling and fancy, that you seemed to be looking at humanity with angel's eyes.³³

Washington Allston had encouraged Sophia in her painting;³⁴ and Hawthorne may have had in mind her drawing of Ibrahim, the gentle boy,³⁵ in the phrase, "looking at humanity with angel's eyes." Although the crushing blow inflicted upon Hilda by the mere knowledge of the guilt of Miriam and Donatello finds no parallel in Sophia's life, the experience, nevertheless, is conceived in harmony with the almost too moral character of Mrs. Hawthorne, of whom her sister, Elizabeth Peabody wrote: ". . . there was one kind of thing she could not bear, and that was moral evil."³⁶

Hilda, in spite of the cool colors in which she is painted, has a little spark of true vitality that makes one remember her longer than the others: Roman as her setting

³³The Marble Faun, VI, 72.

³⁴Hawthorne and His Wife, I, 64. ³⁵Ibid., p. 66.

³⁶Ibid., p. 248.

is, she herself is New England in one of its genuine incorporations, and Hawthorne could not fail to impart some reality to her character. However, she is real rather by contrast than because of her personal qualities; early in the book, one feels it to be an ominous fact that Hilda is a copyist rather than an original painter, and something of the spuriousness of her occupation clings about her to the end; her disappearance from the scene for several chapters is rather an evaporation than an exit. This pure and somewhat rigid New England girl, following the vocation of a copyist of pictures in Rome, unacquainted with evil and untouched by impurity, has been accidentally the witness, unknown and unsuspected, of the dark deed by which her friends, Miriam and Donatello, are knit together. This is her revelation of evil, her loss of perfect innocence. She has done no wrong, and yet wrong-doing has become a part of her experience, and she carries the weight of her detested knowledge upon her heart. She carries it a long time saddened and oppressed by it, till at last she can bear it no longer; and one day, at the end of the long, lonely summer in Rome, finding herself in St. Peter's, she enters a confessional, strenuous daughter of the Puritans as she is, and pours out her dark knowledge into the bosom of the church--then comes away with her conscience lightened, not a whit the less a Puritan than before.

Phoebe remains, perhaps, the most satisfactory heroine of the two. With a personality more varied and more real

than Hilda's, she is closer to the New England village life which Hawthorne had observed and recorded in the tales and notebooks. Hilda is the product of a later period when the author has been almost completely deracinated from the New England soil and when his wife has become too exclusively his pattern of pure womanhood.

To trace the lineage of Alice Pyncheon and Priscilla, who are representatives of the frail sylph-like maidens, one must go back to three fragile maidens who are but slightly sketched in the earlier tales: Sylph Etherege in the story of that name; Alice Vane in "Edward Randolph's Portrait"; and Lillias Fay in "The Lily's Quest." Sylph Etherege was a "shy, sensitive, and fanciful girl with a "slender and sylph-like figure,"³⁷ and a nervous organization so delicate that "every vibration of her spirit was visible in her frame."³⁸ Being too pure and spiritual for the earth she was translated to the spirit world and thereby escaped her diabolical antagonist. Alice Vane is described as "a pale, ethereal creature, who, though a native of New England, had been educated abroad, and seemed not merely a stranger from another clime, but almost a being from another world."³⁹ Lillias Fay, like her two precursors, was a being so delicate that "she looked as if the summer breeze should snatch her up and waft her heavenward."⁴⁰

³⁷Snow Image, III, 509.

³⁸Ibid., p. 508.

³⁹Ibid., p. 514.

⁴⁰Twice Told Tales, I, 498.

Her death, like that of Sylph Etherege, results not from an external cause, but from mere inanition. The true development of the story is the enforcement of a moral--that all joy is attended by sorrow. It may not be fantastic to suggest that the snow image in the story of that title properly belongs in this group of sylph-like maidens. Such is the ethereal grace of the image that the mother of the children supposes her to be an angel; and the gradual drooping of the snow maiden when she is brought into the warm parlor is not unlike the waning of Sylph Etherege and Lillias Fay.

Alice Pyncheon, like Alice Vane, was educated abroad. Like Sylph Etherege, she escapes her persecutor by death, which follows a wasting away of her frail form. Two elements, however, are added to the type in the portrait of Alice Pyncheon: her sin of pride, which was brought out before in "Lady Eleanor's Mantle"; and her faculty as a medium, a role which is elaborated in The Blithedale Romance.

A study of the character of Priscilla affords further illustration of Hawthorne's method of mixing ingredients derived from various sources. Arriving at Blithedale in the midst of a snowstorm, Priscilla recalls to the author an earlier creation, the snow image:

The fantasy occurred to me that she was some desolate kind of creature, doomed to wander in snow-storms; and that though the ruddiness of our window panes had tempted her into a human dwelling, she would not remain long enough to melt the icicles out of her hair.⁴¹

⁴¹Blithedale, V, 458.

And, again, she is described, fantastically, as "this shadowy snow-maiden, who, precisely at the stroke of midnight, shall melt away . . . in a pool of ice-cold water."⁴² If in her ethereality Priscilla recalls the snow maiden, in her physical frailty, particularly upon her arrival at Blithedale, she resembles the heroines from Sylph Etherege to Alice Pyncheon. Her kinship with the latter is especially significant in that, like Alice, Priscilla is a medium. But Priscilla's character has elements of strength as well as of weakness; and here she parts company with this group of her precursors. Like Ellen Langton and Phoebe she is of a cheerful disposition. Her simple, careless, childish flow of spirits made her seem like "a butterfly at play in a flickering bit of sunshine."⁴³ Again, like Ellen and Phoebe, she came to be quite at home among the people of her new abode,⁴⁴ but unlike them she was not efficient in assuming duties of the household:

She met with terrible mishaps in her efforts to milk a cow; she let the poultry into the garden; she generally spoilt whatever part of the dinner she took in charge; she broke crockery; she dropt the largest pitcher into the well; and except with her needle, there was no other efficiency about her.⁴⁵

Priscilla has another easily recognizable prototype--the young seamstress who stayed at Brook Farm for a short time

⁴²Ibid., V, 458. ⁴³Ibid., V, 483.

⁴⁴Ibid., V, 482. ⁴⁵Ibid., V, 482.

while Hawthorne was there.⁴⁶ The two women have had the same background which Hawthorne learned or surmised the seamstress at Roxbury had had. Each has been a seamstress in the city,⁴⁷ and shows clearly the effects of her confining work.⁴⁸ Both are exceedingly slight of stature and are on the "outer limit of girlhood."⁴⁹ They are both extremely vivacious; they bound and dance instead of walking, laugh continually, run races with the boys,⁵⁰ and cheer those about them by their gaiety and playful spirit.⁵¹ Both are liked by all their associates, even though neither can do her part of the work.⁵²

Two incidents evolving from the playfulness and pranks of

⁴⁶Lindsay Swift's judgment (Brook Farm, Its Members, Scholars, and Visitors, p. 169) that there is a "faint" hint of Priscilla in the little seamstress seems considerably understated. On October 9, 1841, Hawthorne had sent to Sophia a full description of the seamstress: See Stewart, pp. 207-210.

⁴⁷Stewart, p. 297; Blithedale, V, 43-44.

⁴⁸Blithedale, V, 34, 69, 265; Stewart, p. 327. It is noteworthy that each is compared to a wild flower, and each wears wild flowers in her bonnet. See Blithedale, V, 271; Stewart, p. 290.

⁴⁹Stewart, p. 297-299; Blithedale, V, 281.

⁵⁰The mere statement in Hawthorne's letter to Sophia that the seamstress played and ran races with the boys is developed into a full paragraph in Blithedale (V, p. 308) on the races of Priscilla and on races between boys and girls.

⁵¹Blithedale, V, 484; Stewart, p. 217.

⁵²Blithedale, V, 421; Stewart, p. 180.

Priscilla--her riding the ox and her climbing upon a load of hay--are so close to similar incidents described in Hawthorne's letters about the seamstress as to make it appear almost certain that the author wrote with the original before him. On October 9, 1841, he had written to Sophia of the seamstress:

She asks William Allen to place her "on top of that horse," whereupon he puts his large brown hands about her waist, and, swinging to and fro, finally depositing (sic.) her on one side of the oxen, to take her first lessons in riding.⁵³

The sentence in Hawthorne's letter, "William threatens to rivet two horseshoes round her neck, for having clambered, with the other girls and boys, upon a load of hay, whereby the said load lost its balance and slid off the cart,"⁵⁴ appears also in The Blithedale Romance:

For example, I once heard Silas Foster, in a very gruff voice, threatening to rivet three horseshoes round Priscilla's neck and chain her to a post, because she, with some other young people, had clambered upon a load of hay, and caused it to slide off the cart.⁵⁵

To sum up, Priscilla blends qualities taken from sources both ideal and real: her fragility, her ethereality, her faculty as a medium, and her cheerful spirit were carried over from her fictional precursors; her fund of health and good humor and her tenacious hold on life were suggested by actual persons--the seamstress and Sophia Hawthorne.

⁵³Stewart, p. 230. ⁵⁴Ibid., p. 230.

⁵⁵Blithedale, V, 428.

CHAPTER III

THE HEROINES OF A RICH, EXOTIC NATURE AND A ROBUST PHYSIQUE

The second type of Hawthorne's women that I shall discuss, those whose nature is marked by a certain richness, includes Beatrice in "Rappaccini's Daughter," Hester in The Scarlet Letter, Zenobia in The Blithedale Romance, and Miriam in The Marble Faun. A richer nature, a more robust physique, that something "oriental," as it is described, characterized these women in general, and set them over against the normal New England type, previously discussed. The line between the two types is almost racial, so definite is the contrast of opposites. It is singular to observe that this stronger, richer, more generous physical type seems the more human. There is great definiteness of outline in characters of this type; and yet, it is strange how little one knows about them.

Beatrice is a beautiful young girl, "arrayed with as much richness of taste as the most splendid of the flowers"¹ in her father's garden. She looked redundant with life, health, and energy, and "she was more beautiful than the richest of flowers . . . with bright and loving eyes."² She had a "rich,

¹"Rappaccini's Daughter," Mosses, II, 114.

²Ibid., p. 114.

sweet voice . . . as rich as a tropical sunset."³ She is capable on occasion of "a queen-like haughtiness."⁴ Beatrice's erudition is such that "she is already qualified to fill a professor's chair."⁵ She is imbued with a physical poison, the evil wrought by her father,⁶ which estranges her, as she says, from all society of her kind. Her breath itself is deadly to ordinary plants and even insects. Her father shuts her away from the world, immuring her in a garden where her only companions are the luxuriant noxious growths he has gathered there, so that by imbibing only unwholesome airs, she will herself become a kind of poisonous human flower.

Hester Prynne "had in her nature a rich, voluptuous, oriental characteristic,"⁷ which is symbolized by the elaborate embroidery on the scarlet letter. She, too, is often haughty in her demeanor. She is tall, "with a figure of perfect elegance on a larger scale."⁸ Hester, in the solitude of her cottage, enjoyed "a freedom of speculation,"⁹ entering heterodox thoughts which, had they been known would have been regarded by the community as more culpable than the sin symbolized by the scarlet letter. With the future improvement of

³Ibid., p. 133. ⁴Ibid., p. 117. ⁵Ibid., p. 117.

⁶Dr. Rappaccini, the father of Beatrice, is so absorbed in his study of science that he is willing to sacrifice his daughter's life in order to perform an experiment. Hence, he subjects her to the poison of the flowers in his garden.

⁷The Scarlet Letter, V, 180-182.

⁸Ibid., p. 183. ⁹Ibid., p. 193.

the world, Hester was hopeful that the whole relationship between man and woman "would be established on a surer ground of mutual happiness."¹⁰

Hester seems a greater character than belonged to that little world of the Puritan colony, and her womanly nature is never given its range. Hester transcends the narrow dogmatism of the Puritan commonwealth. "The world's law was no law of her mind."¹¹ A feminist in advance of the season, she considered the injustice of the "double standard," and passing in survey the whole of womankind questioned whether existence was "worth accepting, even to the happiest among them."¹² Yet, at the end of her life, she came to the conclusion that her sin had left its permanent mark upon her. "Earlier in her life, Hester had vainly imagined that she herself might be the destined prophetess of the new relations between the sexes, but since had long recognized the impossibility that any mission of divine and mysterious truth should be confided to a woman stained with sin, bowed down with shame, or even burdened with a life-long sorrow."¹³

It is a curious fact that no heroine of American fiction has so captured the minds of the world as Hawthorne's portrait of Hester Prynne, tall, dark, imperious, sinned against and sinning. He has given the world the vision of a full-blooded woman, a prey to her emotion, and yet with a will like iron

¹⁰Ibid., p. 197. ¹¹Ibid., p. 180. ¹²Ibid., p. 116.

¹³Ibid., p. 86.

when it came to facing the jeers of the Puritan community in which she lived, and with the determination to keep the secret of her partner in shame in the face of all persuasion and of all disdain. Why is it that in spite of her sin, in spite of the scarlet "A" she wore on her bosom, we admire this woman of old Puritan New England, loved and betrayed by Dimmesdale, the serious young minister of Salem?

She loved too strongly, yet when her sin is discovered and she is punished, she in no way breaks under it. She does not join the company of those who continue to sin, nor does she cry out or complain. She goes calmly ahead living quietly, ministering to the sick, caring for her child, and protecting by her dignity and her silence the man who has wronged her. Few People have the strength or the purpose to meet the consequences of sin.

The Scarlet Letter is one of the greatest studies of sin and its effect on the human heart ever written. It does not matter how one feels about the harshness of the Puritan laws. It does not matter how great or how small one may consider Hester's fault. She had sinned against the social code and against the laws of her God and her church. What was the effect of this sin upon the people most closely involved: herself, Dimmesdale, Chillingworth, her former husband, and her child?

To Dimmesdale his sin becomes a horror by day and by night. He could face neither man nor God. He saw from time to

time the woman of his betraying, and he saw her calm and humble, still graced with an almost superhuman beauty; and when he knew that she was willing to make the final sacrifice and flee with him, his true character came to the fore and he found peace in confession and an inspiration which, in the hour of his disgrace, almost made him seem the martyr.

To Chillingworth his wife's sin became a canker in his soul. He did not know the healing power of forgiveness: He became a fiend in his pursuit of Dimmesdale, in his professed friendship for him, in his determination never for an instant to let him escape his clutches. At the end of the story, he alone remains evil, crying out to Dimmesdale as the latter mounts the scaffold in the public square to confess, that there and there only, could he escape him. It is the cry of a man disappointed in revenge, and so ugly does Hawthorne make revenge seem that the sins of the flesh, repented and in a measure atoned for, fade before it.

To the child, her mother's sin brings a curious and unnatural rearing, an intelligence beyond her years, an elfin quality which seems to the grim Puritans of that day to have something of the work of the devil in it. Yet in his closing paragraphs, Hawthorne gives us to understand that Hester's sacrifice and care had not been wasted, and that Pearl grew to happy and useful womanhood.

One of the greatest passages in the book is the one where Hawthorne shows Hester's own idealism being broken down by the

consciousness as she looks into the eyes of the mob around her, that there is a secret sympathy for her, that in every heart there is a secret lust, a secret sin. At first, feeling her own shame, keenly feeling that she is a lonely sinner in the midst of the righteous, she comes to see more and more of man's hypocrisies, to know that there are few who could with justice cast the first stone.

From the first to the last The Scarlet Letter is a dramatic sermon. It proves two things, and to me it is Hester and not Dimmesdale who illustrated them. It shows first of all that the laws of morality cannot be broken down with impunity by men and women of high ideals. It shows, in the second place, that no matter how great the sorrow involved, a certain measure of peace may be achieved by dignity, repentance, humility, and love. Hester Prynne stands out as one of the most dramatic characters, not only in early American fiction, but in all American fiction, because she had courage, and faith, and forbearance, and most of all dignity. And as you close The Scarlet Letter with its extraordinary atmosphere of tragedy and its stark, unmitigated portrait of two sinners, you are forced to realize that, while you pity Dimmesdale, hypocrite turned honest, you cannot help respecting this dark-eyed, tall, quiet woman in her Puritan garb, with the fateful letter embroidered on her breast for all the world to see.

Zenobia is another of Hawthorne's characters that illustrate the use of his mixing process. Although she is similar

to her predecessors, Beatrice and Hester Prynne, she also may be identified in many ways with Margaret Fuller. Moncure D. Conway says of their identity with each other, "Of course it was Margaret Fuller's fate to be Zenobia, although she was homely and Zenobia beautiful, and without the warm voluptuous 'aura' of Zenobia."¹⁴ Beyond a doubt Margaret Fuller was the woman among those most devoted to literature and to reform whom Hawthorne knew best;¹⁵ although she was never outwardly connected with the community at Roxbury, her name was, even in her own time, closely associated with it.¹⁶

A striking parallel between Zenobia and Miss Fuller lies in their backgrounds. Each was precocious as a child, and each suffered from being brought up by a man; both were driven by unsatisfactory early lives to devote themselves to futile attempts to improve the position of women. The two resemble each other, furthermore, in their natures. Miss Fuller was

¹⁴See his Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 76.

¹⁵Through the Peabodys, at whose book store the first conversations were held, Hawthorne was certain to have learned of Miss Fuller, and he is said to have come to know her there. For notes on Hawthorne's contacts with Miss Fuller at Concord see Stewart, 284, 386-389, 423, 430; also Montegut, Emile, "Un Roman Socialiste en Amerique," Revue des Deux Mondes, XVI, 812 (December 1, 1852).

¹⁶In her famous conversations in Boston she had come into contact with many of those who later moved to Brook Farm. The Transcendental Club and her friendship with the Ripleys had interested her in the plans for the proposed community; and writings by various members of the community reveal that she had visited Brook Farm frequently, and at times for extended periods of time; see Swift, pp. 207-217; an anonymous article entitled "Home Life of the Brook Farm Association," in The Atlantic Monthly for October, 1878 (XLII, 464); and Stewart, p. 217.

famous for her personality, as well as for her oratorical and conversational powers; and Hawthorne's account of Zenobia gives her the same traits.¹⁷ The closest parallel, however, between Zenobia and her apparent prototype lies in their purposes and work. Like Margaret Fuller,¹⁸ Zenobia had written stories and tracts "in defense of her sex"¹⁹ and had made lectures on the stage, and she was determined to continue advocating women's rights.²⁰ Beyond any doubt Hawthorne disapproved of Margaret Fuller's attempts to gain greater freedom for women; and his rejoicing at being able to escape a dinner with her at Bancroft's in 1840²¹ has been taken to mean that he disliked her personally.²² When we consider that Margaret

¹⁷ See Blithedale, V, 360.

¹⁸ See for example, Margaret Fuller's unsigned article on woman's rights entitled, "The Great Lawsuit," in The Dial, July, 1843, (IV, 1-47).

¹⁹ Blithedale, V, 367.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 495, 526.

Lindsay Swift suggests (pp. 127-128) that the physical beauty and charm of Zenobia may have been derived from Mrs. Almira Barlow, formerly a Miss Penniman, "A famous beauty in Brooklin," who lived at Brook Farm and was a friend to the Curtis brothers at Concord.

The tragic failure of Miss Fuller's life, which culminated in her drowning, together with her family, just off the coast of New York in 1850, corresponds to the failure of Zenobia's schemes. Zenobia also died by drowning.

²¹ See Stewart, p. 284.

²² William Dean Howells, Heroines of Fiction, I, 178; Love Letters, I, 247.

Fuller was the only lady of eminence whom there is any sign of Hawthorne's having known, that she was proud, passionate, and eloquent, that she was much connected with the little world of Transcendentalism out of which the experiment of Brook Farm sprung, and that she had a miserable end and a watery grave, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that Margaret Fuller suggested to Hawthorne a good many of the traits in Zenobia's character.²³

Unlike Margaret Fuller, however, the beautiful and sumptuous Zenobia, with her rich and picturesque temperament and physical perfection, offers many points of divergence from the plain and strenuous invalid who represented feminine culture in the suburbs of the New England metropolis. This picturesqueness of Zenobia is very happily indicated and maintained; she is a woman in all the force of the term, and there is something very vivid and powerful in her large expression of womanly gifts and weaknesses.

Like ~~Hester Prynne~~, Zenobia is presented as a woman singularly endowed with personal and intellectual brightness: a bold and independent thinker, a writer, an actress of genuine

²³There are, to be sure, some striking differences between the two women. Still, we might expect such differences, assuming that they are to be connected. Furthermore, Hawthorne openly declared that the characters in The Blithedale Romance were creatures of his imagination, and his son, Julian, stated that Hawthorne laughed at those who believed that Zenobia had Margaret Fuller for an original. (See Julian Hawthorne, "The Salem of Hawthorne," The Century Magazine, XXVIII, May 8, 1884, p. 172).

power, and a great beauty.²⁴ Again like her predecessor, Zenobia is a woman of "bloom, health, and vigor, with a spacious plan"²⁵ of physical development. Furthermore, like both Hester and Beatrice, Zenobia had a "soft, mellow voice."²⁶ Her exotic beauty is symbolized by the hothouse flower which she wears daily in her hair. More even than Hester Prynne, she should, with such gifts, have accomplished some fine triumph of human capacity. Like Hester and like Margaret Fuller she was particularly interested in the subject of the relations between the sexes; but unlike Hester, she was ready to take an active part "in behalf of woman's wider liberty."²⁷ While it is true that Zenobia's zealous advocacy of woman's rights must have been suggested by Margaret Fuller on the subject, it is obvious, nevertheless, that this aspect of her character may also be regarded as an extension and development of a similar trait in her precursor, Hester Prynne.

Zenobia was possessed of "noble courage, conscious of no harm, and scorned the petty restraints which take the life and color out of other women's conversation"²⁸ Hawthorne says of her also: "We seldom meet with women nowadays and in this country, who impress us as being women at all,--their sex fades away, and goes for nothing. Not so with Zenobia. One

²⁴Blithedale, V, 420-454. ²⁵Ibid., p. 456.

²⁶Ibid., p. 455.

²⁷Ibid., p. 464.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 403-404.

felt an influence breathing out of her such as we might suppose to come from Eve when she was just made"29

Again, with Zenobia, as with Hester Prynne, it is pride that substitutes defeat for victory. Early in his acquaintance with her, Coverdale discovers this radical defect in her personality--a defect of which he chooses to see a symbol in the exotic flower which Zenobia habitually wears in her hair. "So beautiful, so brilliant, so rare, so costly, as it must have been, and yet enduring only for a day, it was more indicative of the pride and pomp which had a luxuriant growth in Zenobia's character than if a diamond had sparkled among her hair."³⁰

Furthermore, there is a special pride of a woman who takes satisfaction not in her peculiar powers as a woman, but in powers with which she makes herself a competitor with men. If a man can err as Ethan Brand did, Hawthorne seems to say, so much the more terrible is it when a woman, whose intellect is not her finest faculty, lays claim to superiority on intellectual grounds. Once more, then, in Zenobia's tragedy we have the old story of estrangement and its penalty. On the verge of suicide, she herself perceives this, and says as much to Coverdale in that mocking, unhappy colloquy which they hold together in the woods: if he seeks a moral in her story, she says, he can find it in this:

that the whole universe, her own sex and yours, and Providence, or Destiny to boot, make common cause

²⁹Ibid., p. 403. ³⁰Ibid., p. 404.

against the woman who swerves one hair's breadth out of the beaten track. Yes; and add (for I may as well own it, now) that, with one hair's breath, she goes all astray and never sees the world in its true aspect afterwards.³¹

In the confrontation of Hollingsworth and Zenobia, two various embodiments of selfishness are pitted against each other. Not only do they sacrifice their own power of happiness, but the power and happiness of the one other person, Priscilla, who is made to depend wholly on their love. Hollingsworth seeks to exploit Zenobia's passion for him in the interest of his own selfish purpose, and of any such self-surrender Zenobia is incapable. She, on her part, is willing to interpose herself between Hollingsworth and Priscilla, in the full knowledge that their happiness can be insured by their being brought together, and in spite of the obligations of an older sister to Priscilla. In the sequel, Zenobia is completely frustrated; and, as if to make the perfect happiness of the other two impossible, she punishes them, as well as herself, by committing suicide. Intellectually she was further advanced than Hester; morally she had left her heart behind, and her sympathy for those about her had gone with it.

Miriam is Hawthorne's final attempt to create that strong, dark type of rebellious woman first put forward in Beatrice, then in Hester Prynne, and then modernized to a certain extent

³¹Blithedale, V, 580.

in Zenobia. These women have been sophisticated by sin, but it is never the sin itself that holds the author's interest. He is intent only on the spiritual results of that sin. Miriam's past is a matter of tragic hints flung out carelessly. Miriam's crime and the influence the sinister monk had on her are secrets that the author never reveals. Miriam is a curious creation in so far as the reality of characterization goes. She is romance incarnate, romance dwelt upon by an essentially repressed nature. Miriam belongs to a specific and peculiar type of womanhood that Hawthorne was particularly interested in and that he repeatedly tried to present,--the same type as Hester and Zenobia.

Miriam's beauty, finally, is remarkable for "a certain rich oriental character in her face."³² Although Hester and Zenobia are older and of a more ample physical development than Beatrice and Miriam, there is, nevertheless, an obvious similarity in appearance among the four members of this group.

Miriam is like a visitor from another world, without origin or destiny. She is from her entrance infinitely more mature than Donatello, and she continues to give this impression of a being out of his sphere, even to the end, by virtue of her experience; their partnership in crime does not really unite them as equal mates. Miriam is that large, dark, handsome woman, with a secret past, who charmed the imagination of Hawthorne. It was in such types as this that Hawthorne's

³²The Marble Faun, VI, 54.

innate romanticism was given full vent. He gives a very beautiful picture of the unequal complicity of guilt between Donatello, the immature, dimly-puzzled hero, with his clinging, unquestioning, exacting devotion, and the dark, powerful, more widely-seeing feminine unexpected nature of Miriam. Deeply touching is the representation of the manner in which these two essentially different persons--the woman intelligent, passionate, acquainted with life, and with a tragic element in her own career; the youth ignorant, gentle, unworldly, brightly and harmlessly natural--are equalized and bound together by their common secret, which insulates them, morally, from the rest of mankind. Miriam, after the avenging of her nameless wrong, doubts whether there be any guilt in such avengement; but having before her eyes the effect of this murder upon the hitherto sinless Faun, she is allowed to speculate on the career of Donatello, who by sinning has become a man, "sadder but wiser." Yet even Miriam, drawn as she is to this conclusion, confesses, "I tremble at my own thoughts."³³ Yet she must "probe them to their depths Was the crime a blessing in that strange disguise? Was it a means of education, bringing a simple and imperfect nature to a point of feeling and intelligence which it could have reached under no discipline?"³⁴ Miriam says,

At least . . . that sin which man chose instead of

³³Ibid., p. 260. ³⁴Ibid., p. 262.

good--has been so beneficently handled by omniscience and omnipotence, that whereas our dark enemy sought to destroy us by it, it has really become an instrument most effective in the education of intellect and soul.³⁵

Yet Hawthorne himself has the last word in the chapter. Tomorrow Miriam and Donatello "are remorseful man and woman, linked by a marriage-bond of crime, to set forth towards an inevitable goal."³⁶

Miriam, like Hester and Zenobia, is a woman of independent and subversive thought, which is contrasted with simply trusting orthodoxy of Hilda.³⁷ These women are unique in Hawthorne's fiction, not only for their physical appearance, but for their mental traits; they are the only women of marked intellectual ability in Hawthorne's stories.

It is interesting of his moral judgments that Hawthorne should ascribe sin, either explicit or suggested, to these women of exotic beauty and speculative mind. Hester's sin alone is stated. We do not know whether Beatrice is angel or demon. The answer is not clear. The author himself did not know.³⁸ But one suspects that Hawthorne intended that the physical poison should symbolize spiritual poison. It is vaguely hinted that in Zenobia's past life there was some culpable relationship with Westervelt which placed her in his power. Miriam's sin is concealed by the deliberate obscurity

³⁵Ibid., p. 263. ³⁶Ibid., p. 501. ³⁷Ibid., p. 270.

³⁸Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, I, 360.

of the author's method. In one passage, however, Hawthorne assigns to Miriam conduct similar to that of Chillingworth and perhaps indicates thereby that she was under diabolical domination: ". . . fancying herself wholly unseen, the beautiful Miriam began to gesticulate extravagantly, gnashing her teeth, flinging her arms wildly abroad, stamping with her foot."³⁹ Here again we see Hawthorne's method of developing his characters by drawing source material from earlier characters of his own as well as from his observations and reflections from the notebooks.

³⁹The Marble Faun, VI, 199.

CHAPTER IV

THE DETACHED OBSERVER

I propose to consider six additional groups of Hawthorne's characters that occur in his tales and romances: (1) the detached observer, best represented by Coverdale in The Blithedale Romance, Holgrave in The House of the Seven Gables, and Kenyon in The Marble Faun; (2) the reformer, embodied pre-eminently in Hollingsworth in The Blithedale Romance; (3) the scholar-idealist, represented by Fanshawe in the story of that name and by Dimmesdale in The Scarlet Letter; (4) the old decrepit man, as seen especially in Uncle Venner of The House of the Seven Gables, and Old Moodie of The Blithedale Romance; (5) the villains, portrayed most definitely in Chillingworth in The Scarlet Letter, and Ethan Brand in the story of that name, and Judge Pyncheon of The House of the Seven Gables; (6) the innocent creatures made victims of evil, which include Pearl of The Scarlet Letter, Hepzibah of The House of the Seven Gables, and Donatello of The Marble Faun.

The rôle of the detached observer of life was particularly congenial to Hawthorne. In "Sights from a Steeple" (1831), he wrote:

The most desirable mode of existence might be that of a spiritualized Paul Pry, hovering invisible into

their hearts, borrowing brightness from their felicity and shade from their sorrow, and retaining no emotion peculiar to himself.¹

As an observer of the actual life around him, Hawthorne is seen to the best advantage in the journal kept at North Adams in 1838.² Lawyer Haynes, himself an acute observer, recognized in Hawthorne "something of the hawk-eye."³ So accurate are his accounts of the various characters in North Adams that when Professor Bliss Perry visited the town in 1893, he found that a mere line from the notebook would serve with the older citizens to identify the person described.⁴ That this faculty did not diminish with the passing of time is shown by his remarkably shrewd description of Lincoln, written in 1862.⁵

If Hawthorne were given to direct self-portraiture in his fiction, we should expect to find many characters whose sole function is to observe and comment on the progress of action. But he is not, as he tells us in "The Old Manse," "one of those supremely hospitable people who serve up their own hearts, delicately fried, with brain sauce, as a tidbit for their beloved public."⁶

¹Twice Told Tales, I, 224. ²Stewart, pp. 30-71.

³Ibid., p. 312.

⁴See Bliss Perry, "Hawthorne at North Adams," Atlantic Monthly, LXXI (May, 1893), pp. 675-692.

⁵"Chiefly about War Matters," Sketches, XII, 309-312.

⁶Mosses, II, 44.

There are, I think, only four notable characters whose role may be regarded as corresponding to that of a "spiritualized Paul Pry" or of Hawthorne himself: the artist of "The Prophetic Pictures" (1837), Coverdale, Holgrave, and Kenyon. However, the roster of Hawthorne's characters yields a whole procession of persons, with an immense variety of outward attributes and circumstances, who present much the same combination of coolness and aloofness as the observer type of character with much outward charm, brilliance, sensitiveness to impressions, and intellectual curiosity to discover the secret of life; and in addition to these characteristics "they know absolutely nothing, except in a single direction."⁷ One story, "The Christmas Banquet" (1848), presents the figure of Gervaise Hastings, a perennial guest at the banquet arranged each year for the most unhappy of all the earth.

He looks like a man--and, perchance, like a better specimen of man than you ordinarily meet. You might esteem him wise; he is capable of cultivation and refinement, and has at least an external conscience, but the demands that spirit makes upon spirit are precisely those to which he can not respond. When at last you come close to him you find him chill and unsubstantial--a mere vapor.⁸

The other wretched guests, a company which includes the murderer, the idiot, the sick, the bereaved, the unfortunate, the misanthropist, believe he has no business at the banquet, for he is rich, well-dressed, fortunate, and apparently always

⁷Blithedale, V, 382-383. ⁸Mosses, II, 328.

smiling. At last he explains--though he has no idea they will understand--that his misfortune is

a chilliness--a want of earnestness--a feeling as if what should be my heart were a thing of vapor--a haunting perception of unreality. Thus seeming to possess all that other men have, I have really possessed nothing, neither joys nor griefs. All things, all persons . . . have been like shadows flickering on the wall. It was so with my wife and children--with those who seemed my friends; it is so with yourselves, whom I see now before me. Neither have I myself any real existence, but am a shadow like the rest.⁹

In his tales Hawthorne is constantly composing variations on this same theme, the temperament set apart from others by its own defective sympathy, or its greater intelligence, or both, unable to participate in life as a whole and making only shadowy contacts. Feathertop, the man without a heart, ceases to exist when he realizes the cause of his isolation. In "The Artist of the Beautiful," a living butterfly is killed because it is misunderstood by the world, and this failure is as much the artist's as the world's. In "The Snow Image," the same story is retold in children's terms. In "The Birthmark," the scientist, a man of fine character and noble purpose, forgets the claims of love and the consideration due to human weakness in the eagerness of the intellectual quest. He uses life for the purpose of experiment--that is, coldly, scientifically, impersonally--and destroys the very life he hopes to perfect.

The artist in "The Prophetic Pictures" looks beneath the

⁹Ibid., p. 330.

exterior and sees the inmost soul. Through the detection of latent traits, he is able to anticipate a surprising development of character. While the artist is not malevolent, neither is he benevolent towards his subjects:

though gentle in manner, and upright in intent, and action he did not possess kindly feelings; his heart was cold; no living creature could be brought near enough to keep him warm.¹⁰

Similarly, Coverdale has a penetrating eye. Zenobia's remark to him recalls the author's "hawk-eye:"

I have been exposed to a great deal of eye-shot in the few years of my mixing in the world, but never, I think, to precisely such glances as you are in the habit of favoring me with--What are you seeking to discover?¹¹

And like the artist, furthermore, Coverdale feels no affection for the human beings whom he studies--unless we except Priscilla.

He recognizes this condition when he says

That cold tendency, between instinct and intellect, which made me pry with speculative interest into people's passions and impulses, appeared to have gone far towards unhumanizing my heart.¹²

It is this cool aloofness, quite as much as any theoretical opposition to a philanthropic project, which prevents Coverdale from making common cause with Hollingworth.¹³

The autobiographical method of presenting The Blithedale Romance makes Coverdale the spokesman of the author through-

¹⁰Twice Told Tales, I, 194. ¹¹Blithedale, V, 399.

¹²Ibid., p. 480.

¹³Stewart, pp. 73, 199, 200, 257, 300.

out, and hence he is the one responsible for the authorial comment; but in addition, many of his experiences and attitudes correspond very closely to those of Hawthorne. To begin with, Coverdale and Hawthorne obviously occupied similar positions in the world. Both were bachelors somewhat advanced in age, and both had spent some time in a socialistic community, making occasional visits to the city. Both were men of letters. Likewise, Coverdale's relation to the world--that of a spectator who studies the souls of his associates--is identical with what Hawthorne recognized as his own, and frequently attributed to himself.¹⁴ Coverdale continually analyzes his friends, just as Hawthorne does repeatedly in his writings; moreover, both men are conscious of this trait and mention it often.¹⁵ The same attitude is looked upon by Coverdale and his associates in the same unfavorable light as Hawthorne looked upon his position as observer and intruder into human souls. Coverdale is a sort of recluse who, on account of his attitude, cannot be happy; his study of souls is often contrary to his own interests, and at times it is dangerous.¹⁶

On the whole, Coverdale's views on Blithedale and the project undertaken by its members coincide with Hawthorne's

¹⁴Stewart, pp. 73, 199, 200, 257, 300.

¹⁵Blithedale, V, 118, 224, 228, 229, 395.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 182.

conception of Brook Farm. Each joined the community expecting to make his permanent home there.¹⁷ But Hawthorne attributes to Coverdale at the beginning the doubts and misgivings as to the success of the socialistic community which he himself did not admit until he had been at Brook Farm some weeks, and his enthusiasm had been dampened by such experiences as Coverdale's also had--the monotonous and depressing wood-cutting, laboring in the "gold-mine," and working in the hay;¹⁸ together with his inability to do literary work.¹⁹ Coverdale never commits himself wholeheartedly to the Utopian schemes, just as Hawthorne had not done, or rather wished he had not, and such expressions as "a task we had in hand for the reformation of the world,"²⁰ and "our apostolic society whose mission was to bless mankind,"²¹ evidence the reflection of the author upon the whole matter as a fruitless and foolish attempt at reform. One should not be surprised to find the irony even more piquant.

Another of Hawthorne's attitudes that recur in The Blithedale Romance is his disapproval of any extended effort toward reform and philanthropy, an attitude which is plainly mirrored

¹⁷Ibid., p. 182.

¹⁸Stewart, pp. 296-298; Love Letters, II, 90.

¹⁹Stewart, pp. 296-297; Blithedale, V, 400, 515.

²⁰Ibid., p. 399. ²¹Ibid., p. 345.

in Coverdale's lack of sympathy with Hollingsworth. Coverdale and Zenobia embody the author's views that philanthropists in general are "an obviously disagreeable set of mortals";²² and both are strong in the belief that Hollingsworth is setting about a hopeless task in his plans for reforming criminals.²³ In the long interview in which Coverdale refuses to join Hollingsworth in his philanthropic scheme, Hawthorne appears unmistakably, in the guise of Coverdale, in his arguing against any similar efforts at reform. Coverdale also represents Hawthorne when, later on, he comes to believe that Hollingsworth's obsession with the one idea of philanthropy has driven him almost to insanity.²⁴

Coverdale's work at Blithedale tallies very closely with what Hawthorne wrote Sophia about his own employment at Brook Farm: cutting wood and carrying it into the house, harvesting hay, milking cows, feeding the stock, and cultivating beans.²⁵ Likewise Coverdale voices the attitude toward work which Hawthorne habitually took. Coverdale regrets that the members at Blithedale "had thrown off that sweet, bewitching, enervating indolence, which is better, after all than most of the enjoyments within mortal grasp,"²⁶ and Hawthorne frequently wrote to Sophia bemoaning the necessity for continual work on the

²²Ibid., p. 545. ²³Ibid., p. 568. ²⁴Ibid., pp. 110-111.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 97, 111, 112, 276; Love Letters, II, 70.

²⁶Blithedale, V, 90.

farm.²⁷ On the other hand, Coverdale echoes Hawthorne's delight in his work during his first days at Brook Farm,²⁸ when he speaks of the "sweet weariness that follows accustomed toil."²⁹

So, too, Coverdale's views on women's rights are autobiographical. Though he almost always speaks favorably of Zenobia, he naturally opposes her efforts at reform, and, in a manner characteristic of Hawthorne, he suggests that a woman is worse as a reformer than is a man.³⁰ And Coverdale speaks for Hawthorne further when he objects to Zenobia's work as an orator and author.³¹

Still another of Hawthorne's traits that reappear in Coverdale is his love of seclusion. The author is plainly echoed in Coverdale's statement: "Though fond of society, I was so constituted as to need these occasional retirements;³² and Coverdale goes on, Hawthorne-like, to explain that with-

²⁷Love Letters, II, 111. ²⁸Blithedale, V, 36.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 40-41.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 383-384, 496, 499-500.

³¹For Hawthorne's views on women as authors see Howard M. Ticknor, "Hawthorne as seen by His Publishers," The Critic, XLV, p. 53 (July, 1904); and Love Letters, II, 247, where Hawthorne wrote to his wife about a woman's discussing in a magazine her own child; he thanked God his wife had not so "prostituted herself to the public." "It does seem to me," he went on to say, "to deprive a woman of all delicacy. Women are too good for authorship, and that is the reason it spoils them so."

³²Blithedale, V, 450.

out some relief from the monotonous routine of work his mind would soon cease to function."³³ Coverdale also expresses more than once the author's distrust of contact with society.³⁴ And what can be more typical of Hawthorne than Coverdale's statement, "In the midst of cheerful society, I had often the feeling of loneliness"?³⁵

Coverdale, moreover, at the very beginning of The Blithedale Romance, is surely speaking for the author when he expresses disapproval of spiritualists and mesmerists,³⁶ at the same time exemplifying enough faith in them to ask the Veiled Lady to predict the outcome of the Blithedale experiment.³⁷

Numerous personal likes and habits, furthermore, help to identify Coverdale with the author. Both are lovers of the fireplace, and both make special mention of fireplaces at the community houses.³⁸ Both smoke cigars and like to drink wine occasionally; both read Carlyle³⁹ and Fourier;⁴⁰ both speak

³³Ibid., p. 468. ³⁴Ibid., p. 422. ³⁵Ibid., p. 421.

³⁶Ibid., p. 1-2.

³⁷Ibid., pp: 333-334. Part of her prophecy proved true. Hawthorne believed in some measure in mesmerism, for he wrote to Sophia on October 18, 1841 (Love Letters, II, 63), that she might allow herself to be mesmerized enough to stop the headache.

³⁸See Love Letters, II, 5-6; Blithedale, V, 395.

³⁹Blithedale, V, 391; Stewart, p. 190.

⁴⁰Hawthorne probably did not read Fourier's works until after his marriage; see Stewart, p. 233. Sophia wrote (Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, I, 268-269) that

of having half-waking dreams.⁴¹ Coverdale's considering the probability of offering himself as a volunteer on the Exploring Expedition⁴² reminds us that efforts were made to secure Hawthorne a post in the proposed expedition of Reynolds to the South Seas in 1838.⁴³ Coverdale's admiration for Zenobia's natural beauty corresponds to Hawthorne's impatience with women's artificial make-up;⁴⁴ and Coverdale's calling himself "chamberlain to the cows"⁴⁵ recalls the same expression, occurring frequently in Hawthorne's letters to Sophia.

Miles Coverdale's function in The Blithedale Romance is distinctly that of the author-observer. Not till the last sentence in the book do we learn that he is supposed to be in love with Priscilla, a condition to which his conduct gives no clue. His cold-hearted way of staying outside the play of passions is remarked by himself and others. Even in the secluded circle of Blithedale he seeks the greater seclusion of self-communion in solitude.⁴⁶ He reproaches himself a number of times, and others rebuke him, first, for his inability to feel that any cause in the world is worth his whole-hearted

on April 6, 1845, she had read the fourth volume, and added, "My husband read the whole volume, and was thoroughly disgusted."

⁴¹Blithedale, V, 375, 533. ⁴²Ibid., p. 534.

⁴³George Edward Woodberry, Hawthorne, p. 76.

⁴⁴Blithedale, V, 379. ⁴⁵Ibid., p. 501. ⁴⁶Ibid., p. 503.

adherence, and secondly, for his habit of prying into other people's characters for no purpose except the gratification of his own curiosity.⁴⁷ This second tendency is usually unfavorably presented, as in this passage:

That cold tendency, between instinct and intellect, which made me pry with a speculative interest into people's passions and impulses, appeared to have gone far towards unhumanizing my heart.⁴⁸

Once, however, he defends it as no mere vulgar curiosity, but rather a most delicate appreciation. Zenobia, he says,

should have been able to appreciate that quality of the intellect and the heart which impelled me (often against my own will, and to the detriment of my own comforts) to live in other lives, and to endeavor--by generous sympathies, by delicate intuitions, by taking note of things too slight for record, and by bringing my human spirit into manifold accordance with the companions whom God assigned me--to learn the secret which was hidden even from themselves.⁴⁹

Such a character has much in common with the young dapperreotypist in The House of the Seven Gables. Holgrave, like Coverdale, appears to be drifting through life, looking on without taking part. Although only twenty-two years old, he has already been engaged in nine different occupations. One of his first speeches to Hepzibah is, "I find nothing so singular in life, as that everything appears to lose its substance the instant one actually grapples with it."⁵⁰ Phoebe scarcely thought him affectionate in his nature. "He was too calm and

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 392, 415, 464, 502. ⁴⁸Ibid., p. 332.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 330.

⁵⁰Seven Gables, III, 36.

cool an observer."⁵¹ "Phoebe felt his eye often; his heart, seldom or never."⁵² He studied all three members of the Pyncheon family attentively.

He was ready to do them whatever good he might; but, after all, he never exactly made common cause with them, nor gave any reliable evidence that he loved them better in proportion as he knew them more. In his relations with them, he seemed to be in quest of mental food, not heart-sustenance.⁵³

While he is described as having a certain power, we are told that he is pretty certain never to fulfill the promise of qualities. Later in the story⁵⁴ he promises Phoebe that, if opportunity offers, he will help the two unfortunates of the tale, but explains that he has no real impulse either to help or to hinder them,

but to look on, to analyze, to explain matters to myself and to comprehend the drama which, for almost two hundred years, has been dragging its slow length over the ground where you and I now tread. If permitted to witness the close, I doubt not to derive a moral satisfaction from it.⁵⁵

The sculptor, Kenyon, in The Marble Faun, has the same combination of qualities as do the other characters of this group. He is supposed to be in love with Hilda, but the story of his successful suit is so little elaborated that we almost feel it unnecessary. Far more important is his rôle of observer, confidant, and chorus. He, too, is curious to know what lies behind the events he sees; he, too, has little sym-

⁵¹Ibid., p. 100. ⁵²Ibid., p. 104. ⁵³Ibid., p. 200.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 280. ⁵⁵Seven Gables, III, 102.

pathy with the suffering he witnesses. Unlike Hilda, he does not feel contaminated by the crime of his friends. His curiosity and coolness are so at war with each other that once in a striking scene, he refuses to hear Miriam's secret for fear he may somehow be obliged to share her suffering, to which Miriam says to him with truth: "You are as cold and pitiless as your own marble."⁵⁶ In fact Kenyon hardly acts like a gentleman towards a friend in need. As Phoebe exclaimed to Holgrave, so might Miriam have said of Kenyon, "I wish you would behave more like a Christian and a human being!"⁵⁷

That these characters are fairly close to Hawthorne's own character there is little doubt. A comparison of Passages from the American Notebooks from April through October, 1841, with chapters I-IX of The Blithedale Romance would convince anyone that Miles Coverdale in the story is put through many of Hawthorne's actual experiences at Brook Farm, even to a bad cold in the head, and that he thinks many of Hawthorne's thoughts recorded in the notebooks eleven years before The Blithedale Romance was published. There is plenty of testimony that Hawthorne was absolutely taciturn in society. We can not suppose his silence due merely to shyness, at least in later years. Many of his acquaintances, such as Howells⁵⁸ and

⁵⁶The Marble Faun, VI, 400. ⁵⁷Seven Gables, III, 189.

⁵⁸William Dean Howells, My Literary Passions, p. 123.

James,⁵⁹ have written of his social charm when he chose to exert himself, and he was quite equal to the miscellaneous social demands of his consulship at Liverpool.⁶⁰ Even in the early years of his married life, he spent most of the day apart from his wife. Much as he is said to have loved her, her presence was not necessary to his happiness. He wanted little or no company. Many of his friends, including Emerson, Thoreau, and Amy Louise Alcott, called on the Hawthornes frequently when they were first married, but they soon began to make their visits less and less frequent, and Mrs. Hawthorne was always ill at ease when Hawthorne came in and found company there. Yet he went readily enough into company, whether that of the tavern or the Saturday Club, for silent observation of human nature was his keenest pleasure. An observer himself, Hawthorne, with his aversion to self-revelation, has introduced into his works these characters that have the same powers of penetrating observation that he had. In his portrayal of these characters, he has stressed their ability of observing the inner lives of actual people. One may conclude, therefore, that the characters of this group are the closest approach to self-portraiture in Hawthorne's fiction.

⁵⁹Henry James, Jr. *op. cit.*, pp. 196-200.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p. 202.

CHAPTER V

VILLAINS

Hawthorne's process of working was such that in the creation of individual characters in his fiction after about 1850 the chief source material was supplied by prototypes and precursors in his own writings.¹ This process is demonstrated especially with his villains, from which one observes the repetition of certain fundamental traits, as may be seen in the following discussion.

In Fanshawe, the villain, Butler, is vaguely described as a mysterious stranger with a dark countenance and foreign manners. "The glow of many a hotter sun than ours has darkened his brow; and his step and hair have something foreign in them."² His face reveals traces of "hardship, peril, and dissipation."³ His eye is "bold"⁴ and his smile "derisive"⁵ or "ironical."⁶ On occasion his look becomes "wilder and fiercer"⁷ or "dark and fiend-like,"⁸ or is marked by a "wild earnestness."⁹ In his attempt to seduce the heroine, Ellen Langton, Butler cites scriptures for his purpose. Hawthorne

¹Stewart, p. liii.

²Fanshawe, XI, 230.

³Ibid., p. 132.

⁴Ibid., p. 100.

⁵Ibid., p. 145.

⁶Ibid., p. 196.

⁷Ibid., p. 105.

⁸Ibid., p. 197.

⁹Ibid., p. 186.

very probably had before him no more definite prototype than the Satan of the Bible and Paradise Lost.

Walter Brome, the seducer of Alice in "Alice Doane's Appeal" (1835), is described with a vagueness characteristic of Hawthorne's portrayals of his villains. We are told only that he had been educated in the cities of the old world, that his life abroad had been reckless and ungoverned, and that he had been guilty of "many varieties of wickedness."¹⁰ Edgar Vaughn, who has evil designs upon Sylph Etherege in the story of that title (1838), was likewise educated in Europe. His more noteworthy characteristics are: his "dark features, the polish of his manners," and a smile which was an "expression of mockery and malice."¹¹ When Sylph dies, Vaughn's look of "anguish"¹² betrays his keen disappointment at the escape of his victim.

In the notebook, in 1837, Hawthorne recorded the observation that "men of cold passions have quick eyes."¹³ This entry reminds one of Matthew Maule, whose evil eye possessed powers of witchcraft. Like Butler and Vaughn, Maule has as a distinctive facial expression, a "dark smile" which makes a "riddle of his countenance."¹⁴ By means of the mesmeric faculty he completely subjects Alice Pyncheon to his will. Upon

¹⁰Sketches, XII, 285. ¹¹Snow Image, III, 511.

¹²Ibid., p. 517. ¹³Stewart, p. 110.

¹⁴Seven Gables, III, 238.

her death, Maule walks in the funeral procession, "gnashing his teeth"¹⁵ in bitter regret because his victim has escaped the further operation of his diabolical powers.

Westervelt in The Blithedale Romance (1852) conforms to the pattern the general outlines of which have been indicated in the characters already considered. The notable points of characterization are: eyes which "sparkled . . . as if the Devil were peeping out of them";¹⁶ "the wicked expression of his grin";¹⁷ his polished manners and foppish dress;¹⁸ his "stick with a wooden head, carved in vivid imitation of that of a serpent";¹⁹ and his subjection of Priscilla by mesmeric influence.²⁰ Upon the death of Zenobia, who also was in some unexplained manner within his power, Westervelt, like Vaughn and Maule under similar conditions, betrays, in the remark, "She is now beyond my reach,"²¹ chagrin at the escape of a victim. Westervelt may have been suggested to Hawthorne by an entry made in the notebook in 1838: "Character of a man who, in himself and his external circumstances, shall be equally and totally false . . ." ²² This quality of falseness in Westervelt is symbolized by a "gold band around the upper part of his teeth, thereby making it apparent that every

¹⁵Ibid., p. 250.

¹⁶Blithedale, V, 426, 427.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 428.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 592.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 428.

²⁰Ibid., p. 427.

²¹Ibid., p. 427.

²²Stewart, p. 205.

one of his brilliant grinders and incisors was a sham."²³
 It was indeed rumored in the neighborhood that he was a wizard whose physical appearance was merely assumed and that in reality he was "a wizened little elf, gray and decrepit."²⁴

The kinship of the villains thus far considered, Butler, Brome, Vaughn, Maule, and Westervelt, is evidenced by similarities of personal appearance and by the common practice of evil designs against innocent girls. Rappaccini, Ethan Brand, and Chillingworth are clearly derived from the devils and wizards of the earlier tales. In "The Gentle Boy" (1832), there is an allusion to the devil as "a lame man of low stature and gravely apparelled, with a dark and twisted countenance, and a bright and downcast eye."²⁵ In "Alice Doane's Appeal" (1835), a wizard, who is described as a "small, gray, withered man, with a fiendish ingenuity in devising evil, and superhuman power to execute it,"²⁶ contrives through his machinations to bring about incest and murder. The devil in "Young Goodman Brown" (1835) appears as a man about fifty years old, dressed in "grave decent attire"²⁷ and carrying a "staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake."²⁸

Ethan Brand appears to have educated his mind by specula-

²³Blithedale, V, 427.

²⁴Ibid., p. 428.

²⁵Twice Told Tales, I, 88.

²⁶Sketches, XII, 284.

²⁷Mosses, II, 90.

²⁸Ibid., p. 91.

tion. His curiosity had early been aroused by that mysterious and awful phrase which has haunted many an introspective New Englander--the unpardonable sin. And he discovers it--not in crime or lust, but in pride of intellect.

"I have looked," said he, "into many a human heart that was seven times hotter with sinful passions than yonder furnace is with fire. But I found not there what I sought. No, not the Unpardonable Sin."²⁹

Ethan Brand's personal appearance recalls that of Hawthorne's devils and wizards: he possessed an "indescribable something in that thin, rugged, thoughtful visage, with the grizzled hair hanging about it, and those deeply sunken eyes which gleamed like fires" ³⁰ "He is said to have conversed with Satan himself."³¹ Laughing without mirth he takes pride in having committed

a sin that grew nowhere else--the only sin that deserves a recompense of immortal agony--the sin of an intellect triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man and reverence for God!³²

He has spent his life hunting for the evil in men's hearts, making men and women the subjects of psychological experiment.

Ethan

was no longer a brother-man, opening the chambers or the dungeons of our common nature by the key of holy sympathy, which gave him a right to share in all its secrets; he was now a cold observer, at length converting men and women to be his puppets, and pulling the wires that moved them.³³

²⁹"Ethan Brand," The Snow Image and Other Tales, III, 481.

³⁰Ibid., p. 477.

³¹Ibid., p. 479.

³²Ibid., III, 493.

³³Ibid., p. 487.

Ethan Brand's primary interest may have been speculative, but it led him to merciless psychology. He lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity. Separation, division, and the starvation of his spiritual life is the fate that overtakes him. His mental powers had been developed so highly that he at last stood quite alone in his eminence:

but where was his heart? That, indeed, had withered,--had contracted,--had hardened,--had perished! It had ceased to partake of the universal throb. He had lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity.³⁴

He became a fiend: which means simply that "his moral nature had ceased to keep pace of improvement with his intellect."³⁵

Dr. Rappaccini's physical appearance also recalls that of Hawthorne's devils and wizards: he is past middle age, with gray hair and a thin, gray beard;³⁶ he wears the scholar's garb of black; he moves feebly in a stooping position; and his face, though sickly and sallow, is "pervaded with an expression of piercing and active intellect."³⁷

Chillingworth, likewise, resembles, in a general way, the two characters mentioned above: he "went stooping away along the earth."³⁸ His beard almost touched the ground, as he crept onward.³⁹ His eyes had a "strange penetrating power."⁴⁰ Two entries in the notebooks doubtless contributed

³⁴Ibid., p. 487. ³⁵Ibid., p. 497. ³⁶Mosses, II, 109.

³⁷Ibid., p. 124. ³⁸The Scarlet Letter, V, 211.

³⁹Ibid., p. 80. ⁴⁰Ibid., p. 89.

to the development of the character of Chillingworth. In 1842 Hawthorne recorded in the journal the following suggestion: "To symbolize moral or spiritual disease by disease of the body . . ." ⁴¹ This idea finds its application not in disease but in the physical deformity of Chillingworth--a deformity which, with symbolism, increases as his moral nature becomes more degraded. It is a trait of Hawthorne's work of creation that his characters show little substantial change in nature, however much their situations alter, and Chillingworth is the only villain in Hawthorne's works whose character undergoes a change during the course of the narrative; all the other villains are in substantially the same moral state at the end of the story as at the beginning. But Chillingworth, Hawthorne tells us, "was a striking evidence of man's faculty of transforming himself into a devil, if he will only, for a reasonable space of time, undertake the devil's office." ⁴² At the beginning of the romance, he is only "slightly deformed, with the left shoulder a trifle higher than the right;" ⁴³ but as the story progresses he becomes "misshapen" ⁴⁴ and "hump-shouldered." ⁴⁵ Another entry in the notebooks which has a significant bearing on the character of Chillingworth was made in 1847: "A story of the effects of

⁴¹Stewart, p. 89.

⁴²The Scarlet Letter, V, 205.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 204-205.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 139.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 291.

revenge, in diabolizing him who indulges in it."⁴⁶ This diabolical transformation of the leech's character was evidenced not only by an increasing physical deformity but by "an eager, searching, almost fierce, yet carefully guarded look," and by "a glare of red light," which was emitted, on occasion, from his eyes."⁴⁷ This pursuit of revenge left its physical tokens of degeneracy on him in his face and appearance. Punishment of a sort he received for his part, both willing and unwilling, in the tangled fates of the little group, where he was the hater, and thought himself the avenger.

Neither Hester Prynne nor Dimmesdale is represented as the greatest sinner of the drama, and their punishments are less terrible than that of Chillingworth. The pride of the detached intellect is Roger Chillingworth's sin, and it is this, not the wayward passion of the other two, that lies at the root of the whole tragedy. The initial wrong was committed by the aging man of science who tried to bring warmth into his own benumbed existence by attaching to himself the radiance and vigor of Hester's youth. Her weakness was but the less culpable product of his folly. "I have greatly wronged thee,"⁴⁸ murmurs Hester in her first interview with her husband. "We have wronged each other,"⁴⁹ he has the justice to

⁴⁶Stewart, p. 121.

⁴⁷The Scarlet Letter, V, 204-205.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 56.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 57.

answer. When Hester Prynne tries later to overcome her hatred for the old man by recalling their early life together, she cannot find it in her heart to forgive him: "it seemed a fouler offence committed by Roger Chillingworth, than any which had since been done him, that, in the time when her heart knew him no better, he had persuaded her to fancy herself happy by his side."⁵⁰ And Chillingworth does not rest content with having brought so much wrong to pass; he applies his great intellectual powers and his vast learning to the task of discovering Hester's partner in the guilt, and of then wreaking a subtle revenge upon him. As he does so he ceases to be a man and becomes a moral monster.

In a word, old Roger Chillingworth was a striking evidence of man's faculty of transforming himself into a devil . . . this unhappy person had effected such a transformation, by devoting himself, for seven years, to the constant analysis of a heart full of torture, and deriving his enjoyment thence, and adding fuel to those fiery tortures which he analyzed and gloated over.⁵¹

No trespass committed in passion can vie with this icy and ingenious iniquity. Of all the spiritual ruin symbolized by the scarlet letter, no part is more awful than the destruction of Roger Chillingworth. There is no end to his problem, for his attempted revenge, circumvented at the very last, by Dimmesdale's safety on the pillory from the stings and arrows of men, turns like a ravenous and disappointed

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 101. ⁵¹Ibid., p. 213.

hound and rends him apart,¹ for in the beginning Chillingworth had asked Hester: "Even if I imagine a scheme of vengeance, what could I do better for my object than to let thee live, so that this burning shame may still blaze upon thy bosom."⁵² The attitude of Chillingworth toward the tormented young Puritan minister is to obtain satisfaction for the wrong he has suffered; therefore, he devises the infernally ingenious plan of conjoining himself with his wronger, living with him, living upon him; and while he pretends to minister to Dimmesdale's hidden ailment and to sympathize with his pain, Chillingworth revels in the minister's unsuspected knowledge of these things, and stimulates them by malignant arts. When Dimmesdale approaches the scaffold to confess his sin to the world,⁵³ the old physician is pictured as a complete fiend, not because he desired revenge, but because of the nature of that revenge:

"Hadst thou sought the whole earth over," cried Chillingworth, looking darkly at the clergyman, "there was no one place so secret, no high place nor lowly place, where thou couldst have escaped me."

"May God forgive thee," says the dying minister upon the scaffold to Chillingworth, "Thou, too, hast greatly sinned."⁵⁴

If Chillingworth had denounced the minister, or had wished to drive him to confession, his action would have commanded our sympathy. But Chillingworth tells us plainly

⁵²Ibid., p. 70. ⁵³Ibid., pp. 70-86.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 72.

that such is not his purpose. Having sworn Hester to keep the secret of his identity even from her lover, he smiles mysteriously at her, and the troubled Hester cries, "Hast thou enticed me into a bond that will prove the ruin of my soul?"⁵⁵ "Not thy soul," he answers, "no, not thine."⁵⁶ The response has the double edge of irony; for in truth, two souls are involved in his revenge, that of his tortured victim and his own. When Dimmesdale discovers at last who Chillingworth is, his resentment is not for the discovery of his sin so much as for "the shame--the indelicacy--the horrible ugliness of this exposure of a sick and guilty heart to the very eye that would gloat over it."⁵⁷

"We are not, Hester," says Dimmesdale, "the worst sinners in the world. There is one worse than even the polluted priest! That old man's sin has been blacker than my sin. He has violated in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart. Thou and I, Hester, never did so."⁵⁸

Derived from the devil and wizard of the early tales and from abstract ideas recorded in the notebooks, the character of Chillingworth possesses at best only a galvanic vitality. Obviously Chillingworth has no points of contact with real life or with Hawthorne's actual observations and experiences.

Another villain to be considered in this same line of development is Miriam's persecutor, the model in The Marble Faun. He is described very vaguely: "wild visage was indis-

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 72. ⁵⁶Ibid., p. 72. ⁵⁷Ibid., p. 380.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 382.

tinctly seen, floating away, as it were, into a dusky wilderness of mustache and beard."⁵⁹ In several respects--his bearded face, his inconspicuousness, and his inexorable pursuit of his victim--the model recalls Chillingworth. As a persecutor of women he resembles Westervelt and others. Moreover, in the treatment of the character and his relation to his victim, Hawthorne, curiously enough, has drawn upon his first work, Fanshawe. The model, like Butler, shrouds his face in his cloak.⁶⁰ His victim, Miriam, like Ellen Langton, kneels before her enemy supplicating release.⁶¹ And, again, a precipice serves in both stories as a means of disposing of the villain.⁶² The crime of Miriam and the model--probably incest--had been used once before by Hawthorne, though very slightly, in "Alice Doane's Appeal." In one respect, however, the villain in The Marble Faun is different from his predecessors in Hawthorne's stories: the author suggests that he has lived and perhaps sinned for centuries.⁶³ In ascribing this trait to the model, Hawthorne probably had in mind the Wandering Jew, a character in whom he repeatedly evinced an interest. The following entry may possibly be related to the mystery in The Marble Faun as he conceived it:

⁵⁹ See Fanshawe, XI, 188; The Marble Faun, VI, 136.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 202, 208. ⁶¹ Stewart, p. xciv.

⁶² See Fanshawe, XI, 218-219; The Marble Faun, VI, 165-178.

⁶³ The Marble Faun, VI, 165-168.

A disquisition . . . on the manner in which the Wandering Jew has spent his life. One period, perhaps, in wild carnal debauchery; then trying, over and over again, to grasp domestic happiness.⁶⁴

The villain of The Marble Faun while possessing the familiar characteristics of Hawthorne's villains, becomes, through the addition of the prerogative of the Wandering Jew, at once more ominous and more unreal than any of his predecessors.

The character of Judge Pyncheon is composed of elements derived from various sources. He is somewhat like Peter Hovenden in "The Artist of the Beautiful." Peter Hovenden is "cold, unimaginative sagacity,"⁶⁵ an epitome of the "hard, coarse world;"⁶⁶ and the artist feels a repulsion for him similar to that which overwhelms Clifford in the presence of the judge. One small detail of description is borrowed from The Scarlet Letter: "a red fire"⁶⁷ in his eyes recalls the "glare of red light"⁶⁸ in the eyes of Chillingworth. Some of Judge Pyncheon's traits were undoubtedly suggested by the Reverend Mr. Upham.⁶⁹ Elizabeth Hawthorne wrote her brother after reading The House of the Seven Gables:

⁶⁴Stewart, p. 117; Mosses, II, 76, 559.

⁶⁵Mosses, II, 514.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 515.

⁶⁷Seven Gables, III, 159.

⁶⁸The Scarlet Letter, V, 205.

⁶⁹Upham was a leader in the movement in 1840 to expel Hawthorne from his office as surveyor in the Salem Custom House. Henry James emphatically states (Hawthorne, p. 194) that Judge Pyncheon is purely fanciful, that he is unlike Mr. Upham in every respect and unlike any one else of Hawthorne's acquaintance.

Louisa says that Judge Pyncheon is supposed to be Mr. Upham, I do not know Mr. Upham, but I imagine him to be a more insignificant person,--less mighty in every sense. There may be some points of resemblance, such as the warm smiles, and the incident of the daguerreotype bringing out the evil traits of his character, and his boast of the great influence he had exerted for Clifford's release.⁷⁰

And Julian Hawthorne praises the character as a masterpiece of personal satire:

There he stands for all time,--subtle, smooth, cruel, unscrupulous; perfectly recognizable to all who knew his real character, but so modified as to outward guise that no one who had met him merely as an acquaintance would ever suspect his identity.⁷¹

The notebooks contributed only slightly to the development of the character of Judge Pyncheon. The following entry, however, made in 1847, seems to anticipate the kind of hypocrisy exemplified in Judge Pyncheon:

Some men have no right to perform great deeds, or think high thoughts--and when they do so, it is a kind of humbug.⁷² They had better keep within their own propriety.

In The House of the Seven Gables, the moonbeams, rather than the sunlight, reveal the dead body of Judge Pyncheon--a change made, perhaps, in order to introduce the ghosts of Judge Pyncheon's ancestors at midnight.⁷³

Judge Pyncheon is Hawthorne's only elaborate study of the hypocrite, and it is instructive to see how light and shade

⁷⁰Hawthorne and His Wife, I, pp. 438, 439.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 339, 340. ⁷²Stewart, p. 118.

⁷³Seven Gables, p. 94.

are disposed. Dominated by a narrow, self-seeking purpose, devoted to his own aggrandizement through wealth and worldly power, the Judge allows this to triumph over every human consideration, and even over the limited loyalty of blood relationship; and he does not scruple to take upon his conscience an inactive falsehood that brings about the ruin of his cousin's life. The human beings closest to him, his wife and his son, go down before the hardness and harshness of his will, the one to an early death, the other to disinheritance and exile. In the end, as if he had not already done Hepzibah and Clifford enough injury the Judge is willing to destroy what little peace is left to them in order to satisfy a grotesque and abstract greed. Yet all the while, so false is the very principle of his existence, the Judge is an honored and distinguished citizen, marked out by the warm benevolence of his manner, and the munificence of his public charities. At the moment when he is making his cruellest attack upon his cousins, he is about to be nominated by his party for the highest office in the commonwealth. It is at this point, when the unreality of his whole life is most atrociously exaggerated, that the Judge is stricken by the ancestral death blow, sitting alone in the parlor of the house of the seven gables.

In the composite character of Judge Pyncheon it is doubtless true that the author drew details from Upham, from the

earlier characters, Hovenden and Chillingworth, and from the notebooks. Thus, from a detailed study of Hawthorne's villains it is plainly seen that a repetition of many characteristics occurs. They are all, except Ethan Brand, persecutors of women (Butler, Brome, Vaughn, Maule, Westervelt, Rappaccini, the model) or of men of feminine weakness (Hovenden, Chillingworth, Pyncheon). Hawthorne often hints, through various details, that his villains are incarnated devils; for example, the red fire in the eyes of Chillingworth and Judge Pyncheon, and the age of the model, who has lived many hundred years, are details which have a diabolical implication. Details of personal appearance recur with regularity, and all of them show utter disgust and disappointment when their victim dies.

CHAPTER VI

THE REFORMER

Another type of character in which Hawthorne manifested a keen interest is the reformer. His opposition to active reform was based upon the view that whatever is, has a reason for its existence and that when an institution has ceased to serve a needful purpose it will disappear by a process of natural elimination. The activity of the reformer, from this point of view, becomes impertinent and supererogatory. Apropos of Holgrave's proposed warfare on antiquated institutions, Hawthorne says:

His error lay in supposing that this age, more than any past or future one, is destined to see the tattered garments of Antiquity exchanged for a new suit, instead of gradually renewing themselves by patchwork; in applying his own little life-span as the measure of an interminable achievement; and, more than all, in fancying that it mattered anything to the great end in view whether he himself should contend for it or against it.¹

Aggressive, organized movements of reform seemed futile to Hawthorne. With reference to the antislavery movement, he wrote in "Chiefly about War Matters:" "No human effort, on a grand scale, has ever yet resulted according to the purpose of its projectors."² According to Miss Elizabeth Peabody, Hawthorne "looked at all anti-slavery literature as

¹Seven Gables, III, 216. ²Sketches, XII, 232.

beneath the consideration of a reasonable man."³ In like manner he opposed all current issues related to reform.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the treatment of reformers in the tales and romances is sharply critical. In "The Hall of Fantasy" (1843), various groups of men are introduced and described: writers, business men, inventors, and reformers. Among the last group, "many . . . had not got possession of some crystal fragment of truth, the brightness of which so dazzled them that they could see nothing else in the wide universe."⁴ Again in "The Procession of Life" (1843), humanity is classified according to various principles: those afflicted with like physical diseases, those united by the bond of sorrow, those joined in a brotherhood of crime, and, finally, those associated by the principle of love. Hawthorne observes that in the last group, where one would expect to find harmony, discord prevails, and that this discord may be attributed in part to those people whose minds are "exclusively filled up with one idea." "When a good man," Hawthorne explains, "has long devoted himself to a particular kind of beneficence--to one species of reform--he is apt to become narrowed into the limits of the path wherein he treads, and to fancy that there is no other good to be done on earth but that

³This quotation is taken from Stewart, p. lxiii. Stewart says in a note on page xciv that it is from an unpublished letter to Horatio Bridge, June 4, 1887, and that this letter is said to be in the possession of Miss Marian Bridge Maurice.

⁴Mosses, II, 205.

selfsame good to which he has put his hand"⁵ In "A Select Party" (1844) the list of guests includes the following imaginary persons: "an incorruptable patriot; a scholar without pedantry; a priest without worldly ambition; a Beautiful Woman without pride or coquetry; . . . a Reformer untrammelled by his theory"⁶

Hollingsworth, the philanthropist in The Blithedale Romance, is guilty of the same unscrupulous behavior towards his friend Coverdale and towards the two women who love him; and he, too, fails to accomplish the social benefit he intends for mankind. The sketches of the anonymous and abstract figures that occur in the characters previously mentioned in this discussion of the reformer give the theoretical basis of the character of Hollingsworth. Like his precursors, Hollingsworth "knew absolutely nothing, except in a single direction."⁷ Hawthorne deprecates "such prolonged fiddling upon one string,-- such multiform presentation of one idea."⁸ When Hollingsworth implores Coverdale to join with him in his philanthropic schemes for the reformation of criminals, Coverdale refuses: ". . . cannot you conceive that a man may wish well to the world, and struggle for its good, on some other plan than precisely that which you have laid down?"⁹ The besetting sin of

⁵Ibid., pp. 246, 247.

⁶Sketches, XII, 292.

⁷Blithedale, V, 382-383.

⁸Ibid., p. 383.

⁹Ibid., p. 474.

Hollingsworth, therefore, like that of the characters previously mentioned, is a narrowness of mind growing out of an obsession with a single idea. Coverdale represents Hawthorne when, later on, he comes to believe that Hollingsworth's obsession with the one idea of philanthropy has driven him almost to insanity.¹⁰

Although the character of Hollingsworth is an embodiment of the traits distinctly indicated, though not incarnated, in the earlier tales, he appears also to embody traits taken from various philanthropists of Hawthorne's acquaintance, but chiefly from three: William B. Pike, the author's close friend from his early days in Salem,¹¹ Orestes Augustus Brownson,¹² and George Ripley.¹³

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 77, 110-111. This idea of insanity as the cause or result of an exaggerated devotion to one idea occurs more than once with Hawthorne. In September of 1835 he had recorded in his journal (Stewart, 10-11) some notes for a sketch in which a reformer who is about to make many converts to his extreme opinions is found to be an escaped inmate of a mad-house.

¹¹The suggestion that Pike was one of the originals of Hollingsworth was first made by Julian Hawthorne (Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, I, 444), who states that Pike had "something of the softer side of Hollingsworth in him."

¹²The implication that Brownson afforded in a measure "the fierce, almost tiresome earnestness" of Hollingsworth was first made by Lindsay Swift (p. 173); see also Swift, pp. 341-251.

¹³Swift also suggested (p. 128-129) that the "pathetic zeal of Ripley" reappears in the character of Hollingsworth. It is interesting to note that "The New Adam and Eve," 1843, contains (II, 291-293), the gist of Hollingsworth's philosophy in the author's suggestion that if an effort were made "to cure sin by love, there would be no need for prisons."

One feels in reading the book that the prime objective of The Blithedale Romance was to present the self-destruction of a typical New England reformer through his selfish fanaticism toward his own theory of philanthropy. There is much reality in the conception of the type to which Hollingsworth belongs--the strong-willed, narrow-hearted apostle of a special form of redemption for society, but one senses only a half-interested author behind his creation. Hollingsworth was not a characterization which could engage Hawthorne's imaginative sympathies with any high degree of sympathy or emotional reaction. One feels that the generally fantastic qualities of the story probably appealed much more to Hawthorne than the social experiment of Brook Farm or the philanthropic fanaticism of Hollingsworth.

Hollingsworth and Zenobia are not a selfish man and a selfish woman, but embodied selfishness in two forms; they are, in the strictest sense, opposing forces, not opponents; and their real life as characters is extraordinarily abstract. It is pride and selfishness, in their obvious and in their obscurer forms, that play such tragic havoc with the lives of Zenobia and Hollingsworth, and make a victim of Priscilla, and render Coverdale's own life so hollow and unprofitable. It is not easy to say which of the first two is, in this respect, the more culpable; but it is upon Hollingsworth, the real antagonist of the romance, that the weight of analytical emphasis falls. With all his innate capacity for tenderness and affec-

tion, Hollingsworth's actual relations with humanity are as narrow and hard as if he were a simple egoist; and this because he has allowed himself to be dominated by a fixed and special philanthropic purpose to which he is willing to sacrifice every other duty and every other human demand. The result is that he is more terribly egoistic than sheer selfishness could make him. His very membership in the socialistic community is but a perfunctory one, and a means to his own, not the collective, end. Coverdale says of him early in the book:

Hollingsworth scarcely said a word, unless when repeatedly and pertinaciously addressed. Then, indeed, he would glare upon us from the thick shrubbery of his meditations, like a tiger out of a jungle, make the briefest reply possible, and betake himself back into the solitude of his heart and mind His heart, I imagine, was never really interested in our social scheme, but was for ever busy with his strange and, as most people thought, impracticable plan for the reformation of criminals through an appeal to the higher instincts.¹⁴

Shortly after the scene in which the two men are at work together in the field piling stones on a dyke and Hollingsworth gives it to his companion to choose whether he will be with him or against him, Coverdale comments:

I began to discern that he had come among us actuated by no real sympathy with our feelings and hopes, but chiefly because we were estranging ourselves from the world, with which his lonely and exclusive object in life had already put him at odds.¹⁵

Astigmatism of the moral vision is the inevitable penalty for all this; and Coverdale discovers early, what Zenobia discovers

¹⁴Blithedale, V, 333. ¹⁵Ibid., pp. 394-395.

in the end, that Hollingsworth must be dealt with rather as a maniac than as a man.

This was a result exceedingly sad to contemplate . . . Sad indeed, but by no means unusual. He had taught his benevolence to pour its warm tide exclusively through one channel; so that there was nothing to spare for other great manifestations of love to man, nor scarcely for the nutriment of individual attachments, unless they could minister, in some way, to the terrible egotism which he mistook for an angel of God . . . He knew absolutely nothing, except in a single direction, where he had thought so energetically, and felt to such a depth, that, no doubt, the entire reason and justice of the universe appeared to be concentrated thitherward.¹⁶

Of such selfishness as Hollingsworth's there can be but one result; yet Hollingsworth is not solely responsible for the series of defeats with which this story ends. His particular species of egotism is met and matched by the richer and warmer but no less fatal pride of which Zenobia is the prey.

In the confrontation of Hollingsworth and Zenobia, two various embodiments of selfishness are pitted against each other; and between them they destroy not only their own power and happiness, but the power and happiness of the one other person, Priscilla, who is made to depend wholly on their love. Hollingsworth seeks to exploit Zenobia's passion for him in the interests of his own selfish purpose, and of any such self-surrender Zenobia is incapable.

Hollingsworth was Hawthorne's study of the social reformer, a man whose goal was worthy enough, but who, in bury-

¹⁶Ibid., 425.

ing himself completely in one concern to the exclusion of his spiritual growth, had withdrawn into an isolation as barren as that of Ethan Brand, of Rappaccini, or even of Chillingworth. Hollingsworth ought, Hawthorne observed, "to have commenced his investigation of the subject by perpetrating some huge sin in his proper person, and examined the condition of his higher instinct afterwards."¹⁷ The character of Hollingsworth is merely an embodiment of the traits distinctly indicated, though not incarnated, in the earlier tales.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 433.

CHAPTER VII

THE SCHOLAR-IDEALIST

Perhaps one of the most interesting single types of character in Hawthorne's works is the one which may be designated as the scholar-idealist. The first example is Fanshawe, the hero of his earliest work (1828), in the story by that name. In the characterization of Fanshawe, the author had in mind as a prototype Nathaniel Mather, whom Fanshawe resembled "in his almost insane eagerness for knowledge, and in his early death."¹ Mather's epitaph, "The ashes of an hard student, a good scholar, and a great Christian,"² with the omission of the last qualification, was inscribed on Fanshawe's tomb.³ In 1838 Hawthorne visited the grave of Nathaniel Mather in the burial ground adjoining Dr. Peabody's house and recorded in the journal his thoughts on this occasion: "It affected me deeply, when I had cleared away the grass from the half-buried stone, and read the name. An apple-tree or two hang over these old graves, and throw down the blighted fruit on Nathaniel Mather's grave--he blighted too."⁴ The entry may be taken as indicating Hawthorne's con-

¹Fanshawe, XI, 78.

²Barnet Windell, Cotton Mather, p. 178.

³Fanshawe, p. 78. ⁴Stewart, p. 151.

tinued interest in the historical figure whom he had used as a model for the character of Fanshawe.

The following description of Fanshawe gives us Hawthorne's fundamental conception of the scholar-idealist:

There was a nobleness of his high forehead, which time would have deepened into majesty; and all his features were formed with a strength and boldness, of which the paleness, produced by study and confinement could not deprive them. The expression of his countenance was not a melancholy one: on the contrary, it was proud and high, perhaps triumphant, like one who was a ruler in a world of his own, and independent of the beings that surrounded him. But a blight of which his thin pale cheek, and the brightness of his eye were like proofs, seemed to have come over him ere his maturity.⁵

Fanshawe, then, is the indefatigable scholar whose health has been undermined by a too close application to his studies. He leads a solitary life, confining himself to his chamber except for an hour at sunset, when as was Hawthorne's practice not only when he wrote the novel but during the entire period of his residence in Salem, he goes for a walk.⁶ But Fanshawe is not the ineffectual person whom one expects to find in this role. His strong, bold features and the expression of triumphant pride on his countenance indicate the presence of a power which is likely to prove formidable in his relations with less ideal characters. And the events of the

⁵Fanshawe, XI, 88-89.

⁶During the twelve years following his graduation from Bowdoin College (1825-1837), Hawthorne lived in great seclusion in Salem, "seldom going out except at twilight," as he wrote in the autobiographical sketch which he prepared for Stoddard (Hawthorne and His Wife, I, 97).

story amply demonstrate this force of personality. Fanshawe wins, only to refuse, Ellen Langton's love. He saw that his love for Ellen "was the yearning of a soul, formed by Nature in a peculiar mould, for communion with those to whom it bore a resemblance, yet of whom it was not."⁷ Once in his short life Fanshawe is moved by a purely human emotion, and it incites him to uncharacteristic energy in the search for the abducted Ellen and the rescue of her from her captor; but he is punished for his pride in holding himself aloof from other men by the knowledge that she really loves the entirely normal Edward Walcott, and for her own sake he rejects the hand that, more out of gratitude than affection, she offers him. An early grave is Fanshawe's reward for cherishing solitary ambition. Moreover, he triumphs over Butler, the villain, by sheer intellectual power:

Fanshawe, turned calmly and fixed his eyes on the stranger, "Retire, Sir," was all he said.

Ellen almost shuddered as if there were a mysterious and unearthly power in Fanshawe's voice; for she saw that the stranger endeavored in vain, borne down by the influence of a superior mind, to maintain the boldness of look and bearing that seemed natural to him. He at first made a step forward, then muttered a few half-audible words; but, quailing at length beneath the young man's bright and steady eye, he turned and slowly withdrew.⁸

The next representative of the scholar-idealist type to appear in Hawthorne's writings is the anonymous wayfarer in "The Ambitious Guest" (1835). Hawthorne had doubtless heard

⁷Fanshawe, XI, 106. ⁸Ibid., p. 200.

the legend upon which he based his story in September, 1832, when he stopped at Ethan Crawford's inn⁹ during the course of his travels in the White Mountains. Although the character is very slightly sketched, the few descriptive phrases place him undoubtedly in the category under discussion. He is "high-browed" and high souled," a "refined and educated youth," of "a proud yet gentle spirit."¹⁰ He leads a solitary life devoted to "a high and abstracted ambition."¹¹

Aylmer, who appears in "The Birthmark" (1843) may also be included in this group. He is a "pale philosopher"¹² who has devoted his life to scientific research in the laboratory. In order to emphasize the purely ideal qualities in this character, Hawthorne, in contrast, has introduced the very mundane figure, Aminadab. The antithesis is put with great explicit-

⁹Horatio Bridge and Hawthorne were fellow passengers in the stagecoach between Boston and Brunswick in 1821. The trip was undertaken in accordance with Hawthorne's annual practice of going on a journey. In certain notes which he gave to Stoddard in 1852 to be used in a biographical sketch for the National Magazine (II, 19, January, 1853), Hawthorne wrote: "Once a year, or thereabouts, I used to make an excursion of a few weeks, in which I enjoyed as much of life as other people do in the whole year's round" (Hawthorne and His Wife, I, p. 97). In a letter which Lathrop places in 1830, Hawthorne describes an excursion through Connecticut (Study of Hawthorne, pp. 143, 144). A letter written in 1831 gives an account of a visit to Shaker Village in New Hampshire (Ibid., pp. 144, 145). In a letter to his mother dated Burlington, September 16, 1832, Hawthorne wrote: ". . . I passed through the White Hills and stayed two nights and part of three days in Ethan Crawford's house . . ." (Stewart, p. 283).

¹⁰Twice Told Tales, II, 368. ¹¹Ibid., p. 369.

¹²"The Ambitious Guest," Twice Told Tales, II, 368.

ness in the following passage:

With his vast strength, his shaggy hair, his smoky aspect, and the indescribable earthiness that incrustated him, he seemed to represent man's physical nature; while Aylmer's slender figure, and pale intellectual face, were no less apt a type of the spiritual element.¹³

The tragic discovery of Aylmer is that even the purest of intellectual aspirations, the aspiration toward perfection, so far as it tends to lead one away from imperfect humanity has the deadliest consequences. Aylmer is a man of science, whose noble dissatisfaction with earthly imperfection is challenged by the tiny birthmark on the cheek of Georgiana, his otherwise perfectly beautiful wife. He attempts to eradicate it by his subtlest arts, and at first seems to succeed. The mark disappeared, but simultaneously with its disappearance, Georgiana died. As life fades out of Georgiana's body, Aminadab, Aylmer's brutish servant, is heard to chuckle hoarsely:

Thus ever does the gross fatality of earth exult in its invariable triumph over the immortal essence which, in this dim sphere of half-development, demands the completeness of a higher state. Yet, had Aylmer reached a profounder wisdom, he need not thus have flung away the happiness which would have woven his mortal life of the self-same texture with the celestial. The momentary circumstance was too strong for him; he failed to look beyond the shadowy scope of time, and, living once for all eternity, to find the perfect future in the present.¹⁴

Aylmer's error, then, is his desire to attain concretely a

¹³ Mosses, II, 48.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 52.

purity above the human level--a desire in which, despite its dire consequences, there is no admixture of guilt.

Owen Warland in "The Artist of the Beautiful" (1844) is another example of Hawthorne's conception of the idealist. Like his precursors, he is physically frail; he is often seized with "a fluttering of the nerves."¹⁵ Here, too, we meet with the recurrent "pale face."¹⁶ As in "The Birthmark," the ideality of the central character is accentuated by a contrasting figure--in this instance, Robert Danforth, the blacksmith. To Danforth, Owen Warland says: "Strength is an earthly monster. I make no pretensions to it. My force, whatever there may be of it, is altogether spiritual."¹⁷ But whereas the antithetical characters in "The Birthmark" work together toward the end in view, Aminadab executing the commands of Aylmer, Warland is seriously disturbed by the presence of Danforth. Warland says of his opposite: "He would drive me mad were I to meet him often. His hard, brute force darkens and confuses the spiritual element within me"¹⁸ The explanation, however, is perhaps obvious: Aylmer, though an idealist, must use material means to accomplish the result desired; Warland, on the other hand, is attempting completely to transcend the material realm. In this attempt, moreover, he meets his chief obstacle, not in the earthiness of the blacksmith, as unfavorable as this may

¹⁵Mosses, II, 506. ¹⁶Ibid., p. 506. ¹⁷Ibid., p. 512.

¹⁸Ibid., 518.

be, but in the "cold, unimaginative sagacity"¹⁹ of Peter Hovenden, who represents the "hard, coarse world."²⁰ Much long experience lay behind the narration of Owen Warland's long labors at his repeatedly frustrated task of devising the perfect butterfly: a task frustrated by the cold inquiring skepticism of Peter Hovenden and the failure of the well-intentioned Annie to understand his aims. From all these symbolic defeats Owen manages to recover, and at length achieves the end of his creative travails--an exquisite artificial butterfly--only to have it utterly destroyed in the sturdy grasp of Robert's and Annie's very earthly child. And when the infant crushes the mechanical butterfly, the curious symbol of the artist's realization of the idea of beauty, the "sharp and shrewd expression"²¹ of Peter Hovenden, his grand-sire, is strongly marked on his face.

And as for Owen Warland, he looked placidly at what seemed the ruin of his life's labor, and which was yet no ruin. He had caught a far other butterfly than this. When the artist rose high enough to achieve the beautiful, the symbol by which he made it perceptible to mortal senses became of little value in his eyes while his spirit possessed itself in the enjoyment of reality.²²

Nothing in The Mosses from an Old Manse is more notable than the dark recurrence of the old theme of isolation and its allied theme of guilt. With Owen Warland there is no suggestion

¹⁹Ibid., p. 507. ²⁰Ibid., p. 507. ²¹Ibid., p. 508.

²²Ibid., p. 511.

that his alienation from ordinary life was the cause of any criminality; but it is suggested that another consequence might have ensued.

The townspeople had one comprehensive explanation of these singularities. Owen Warland--that contrast between him and his neighbors which took away the restraint of example--was enough to make him so.²³

It is for this kind of reason that the narrator of "A Virtuoso's Collection" is horrified to discover that his guide, the Virtuoso himself, is none other than the Wandering Jew--whose voice has the bitter tone of "one cut off from natural sympathies and blasted with a doom that had been inflicted on no other human being, and by the results of which he had ceased to be human."²⁴

Because he is an idealist, Clifford, in The House of the Seven Gables (1851), although not devoted to scholarship or scientific experimentation, belongs, nevertheless, in this group of characters. His nature, like Owen Warland's, is guided by a "love and necessity for the Beautiful."²⁵ He has the "thin delicate fingers"²⁶ of the artist. His aversion to the ugly is expressed in the instinctive turning of his eyes from the ungainly Hepzibah²⁷ or in the shedding of tears upon viewing the horrible ugliness, "spiritual as well as physical," of a monkey which accompanies a hand organ.²⁸ He is an

²³Ibid., p. 511.

²⁴Ibid., p. 517.

²⁵Seven Gables, III, 56.

²⁶Ibid., p. 75.

²⁷Ibid., p. 128.

²⁸Ibid., p. 223.

amiable bachelor, of an epicurean temperament and an enfeebled intellect, who has passed twenty years of his life in penal confinement for a crime of which he was unjustly pronounced guilty. Clifford is another example of Hawthorne's theme of isolation, of the alienation of the character from ordinary life. Clifford says to Hepzibah after they have decided to go to church and are already out in the street:

"It cannot be Hepzibah!--it is too late! We are ghosts! We have no right among human beings,--no right anywhere but in this old house, which has a curse on it, and which, therefore, we are doomed to haunt! And besides," he continued with a fastidious sensibility, inalienably characteristic of the man, "it would not be fit nor beautiful to go! It is an ugly thought that I should be frightful to my fellow beings, and that children would cling to their mothers' gowns at sight of me!"²⁹

Clifford's antipathy to Judge Pyncheon recalls Owen Warland's hostility to both Hovenden and Danforth. "Even had there been no bitter recollections . . . ," says Hawthorne, "the mere natural repugnance of the more sensitive system of the massive, weighty, and unimpressible one, must in itself, have been disastrous to the former."³⁰ If Clifford is the most beautiful, he is also the least effectual, of Hawthorne's idealists.³¹

²⁹Ibid., p. 337. ³⁰Ibid., p. 340.

³¹Lathrop has this to say of Clifford: "Clifford Pyncheon is Poe himself, deprived of the ability to act: in both are found the same consummate fastidiousness, the same abnormal egotism. And it is worth attention that when Clifford is aroused to sudden action by Judge Pyncheon's death, the coruscating play of his intellect is almost precisely that brilliant but defective kind of ratiocination which Poe so delights to display. It is crazy wildness, with a surface appearance of accurate and refined logic. (A Study of Hawthorne, p. 311).

The character of Arthur Dimmesdale in The Scarlet Letter (1850) represents, in some respects, the culmination of the type of scholar-idealist; but this figure is also derived, in part, from another sequence of characters--those who are tortured by a secret guilt. Therefore, before studying Dimmesdale, it will be necessary to trace this supplementary line of descent, which includes: Reuben Bourne in "Roger Malvin's Burial" (1832), the Reverend Mr. Hooper in "The Minister's Black Veil" (1836), and Roderick Elliston in "Egotism; or, The Bosom Serpent" (1843). Reuben Bourne, who after an Indian battle leaves Roger Malvin, at his own injunction, to die of his mortal wounds in the wilderness, is made to suffer out of all proportion to that quite venial wrong because he lacks the moral courage to tell Malvin's daughter, his betrothed, what he has done.³² Reuben Bourne's life with Dorcas is poisoned at its very center by Malvin's secret: something like penance is exacted, in the end, by Reuben's accidental murder of their son on the spot where, years before, Roger Malvin had died in solitude. Hawthorne analyzes Reuben's mental state in the following characteristic manner:

There was now in the breast of Reuben Bourne an incommunicable thought--something which he was to conceal most heedfully from her whom he most loved and trusted . . . concealment had imparted to a justifiable act much of the secret effect of guilt;

³²Reuben and Roger were both wounded on the battlefield. Roger could not walk, and had Reuben not left him, they both would have died of starvation.

and Reuben . . . experienced . . . the mental horrors which punish the perpetrator of undiscovered crime His one secret thought became³³ . . like a serpent gnawing into his heart.

Reuben's sin, therefore, consisted not in the original deed itself, but in the concealment of the deed through a disingenuousness tantamount to dishonesty.

A second character who symbolized the sin of concealment is the Reverend Mr. Hooper. On the Sunday when the minister first wore the black veil over his face, he preached, significantly, on "secret sin, and those sad mysteries which we hide from our nearest and dearest."³⁴ The black veil, Hawthorne tells us, became "the symbol of a fearful secret"³⁵ between the minister and his parishioners. The mysterious veil had the effect of rendering more powerful the minister's influence, which reached its apogee on the occasion of the election sermon.³⁶ But Mr. Hooper had committed no peculiar sin; the black veil symbolizes a degree of concealment, or a lack of complete openness of heart, common to all mankind.³⁷ As he lies on his deathbed Mr. Hooper, still grimly clutching the folds of crape to his features, gasps out the terrible truth:

When the friend shows his inmost heart to his friend;

³³"Roger Malvin's Burial," Mosses, II, 382:

³⁴"The Minister's Black Veil," Twice Told Tales, I, 60.

³⁵Ibid., p. 61. ³⁶Ibid., p. 62. ³⁷Ibid., pp. 62-64.

the lover to his best beloved; when man does not vainly shrink from the eye of his Creator, loathesomely treasuring up the secret of his sin; then deem me a monster, for the symbol beneath which I have lived, and died. I look around me, and lo! on every visage a black veil!³⁸

A third character who is emblematical of secret sin is Roderick Elliston in "Egotism; or, The Bosom Serpent." He "prided himself on being marked out from the ordinary experience of mankind by the possession of a double nature, and a life within a life";³⁹ and yearning, in other moods, for fellowship, he finds that he can achieve only a horrid counterfeit of it--an insight into the festering places of other bosoms, where he detects the coiled monsters of hatred and lust or the diminutive, writhing snakes of spite and envy. "By Roderick's theory, every mortal bosom harbored either a brood of small serpents or one overgrown monster that had devoured all the rest."⁴⁰ His liberation from his own unrelenting tormentor comes only when, on the reappearance of his wife; driven from him by his engrossing egotism, he has a single moment of self-forgetfulness in the idea of another. He is afflicted with a snake in his bosom which becomes "the type of each man's fatal error, or hoarded sin, or unquiet conscience."⁴¹ In 1836 Hawthorne had recorded in his notebook the following suggestion:

³⁸Ibid., p. 69.

³⁹"Egotism; or, The Bosom Serpent," Mosses, II, 304.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 311. ⁴¹Ibid., p. 312.

A snake taken into a man's stomach and nourished there from fifteen years to thirty-five, tormenting him most pitifully. A type of envy or some other evil passion.⁴²

Again in 1842 the idea recurs in the journal:

A man to swallow a small snake--and it to be a symbol of a cherished sin.⁴³

The story of "Egotism; or, The Bosom Serpent" must have been written a short time after this entry was made.

The kinship of Dimmesdale with the characters who have just been considered is sufficiently obvious. Although the minister's deed, unlike Reuben Bourne's, may not be justifiable, Hawthorne, so far from dwelling upon its wickedness, suggests extenuation in the words of Hester: "What we did had a consecration of its own."⁴⁴ Dimmesdale's sin, like Bourne's, consists in concealment and hypocrisy. The actual conduct of Dimmesdale before his parishioners has a striking resemblance to that of the Reverend Mr. Hooper. The assumption of sinfulness in a general way, without reference to specific acts, in both instances, adds power to the spiritual appeals which are made from the pulpit. Finally, Dimmesdale's habit of holding his hand over his heart⁴⁵ recalls Elliston's gesture by which he "clutched both hands upon his breast as if an intolerable sting or torture impelled him to rend it open and let out the living mischief."⁴⁶

⁴²Stewart, p. 34.

⁴³Ibid., p. 93.

⁴⁴The Scarlet Letter, V, 221. ⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 79, 96, 20.

⁴⁶"Egotism; or, The Bosom Serpent," Mosses, II, 307.

But Dimmesdale must be considered as belonging, fundamentally, with the scholar-idealists whose genealogy I have traced from Fanshawe as a progenitor. His "white, lofty, and impelling brow,"⁴⁷ his "careworn and emaciated"⁴⁸ countenance, his voice "sweet, tremulous, but powerful,"⁴⁹ his formidable scholarship, his solitude--all are qualities which recall Fanshawe. Whereas Fanshawe fails because of a physical collapse, Dimmesdale fails because of a moral weakness, which in turn reacts on his physical nature. His aspiration is as exalted as that of the ambitious guest. His intellectual application in theology is as strenuous as Aylmer's in natural science. His nature is as free from worldliness and as sensitive to beauty as Owen Warland's. It is clear, therefore, that the two separate lines of character development culminate and unite in the character of Dimmesdale.

Frustration like that which falls to the lot of Hester Prynne is the punishment of the man who shared her guilt; and Dimmesdale is made to suffer even more atrociously than she because he has deepened his original wrongdoing by the secrecy with which he has invested it. This cut him off still more effectively from the redemptive force of normal human relations. "There was an air about this young minister," we are told when he first appears, "as of a being who felt himself

⁴⁷The Scarlet Letter, V, 90. ⁴⁸Ibid., p. 90.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 98.

quite astray and at a loss in the pathway of human existence, and could only be at ease in some seclusion of his own."⁵⁰ His noblest faculties and highest purposes seem engaged in the concealment of what he has done; the reverence in which he is held by his parishioners, and the pure spiritual influence he exercises upon them, are specious voices pleading against confession. But in all this there is too large an element of the unpardonable sin, too abject a surrender to spiritual pride; and the minister gradually discovers how deadly are its effects upon his moral world.

It is the unspeakable misery of a life so false as his, that it steals the pith and substance out of whatever realities there are around us, and which were meant by heaven to be the spirit's joy and nutriment. To the untrue man, the whole universe is false,--it is impalpable,--it shrinks to nothing within his grasp.⁵¹

In such a world, the fruits of personal character cannot ripen; and Dimmesdale's nature, like Hester's, is finally perverted and vitiated by the central falsity of his life. His refined spirituality becomes the instrument for a diseased self-persecution; his spiritual insight turns into a loathsome apprehension of the evil in other men's breasts. As he returns through the town after his interview with Hester in the forest, Dimmesdale is tempted at every step to perpetrate some monstrous impropriety of speech or act--the symbol of a moral sense gone hopelessly awry. Of this disastrous process

⁵⁰The Scarlet Letter, V, 172.

⁵¹Ibid., V, 301.

there can be but one culmination, and that is reached and realized by the minister's public self-exposure and death. His own breast has been seared by the scarlet letter. Dimmesdale's problem, one feels, is solved when, at the last, he makes public confession upon that very pillory where Hester once stood with her child in her arms and endured the mockery of the populace. Even though this confession is the herald of his death it is borne in upon the reader that the much-tormented minister enters that other world with peace in his heart.

The type of the idealist was a favorite one with Hawthorne. It is likely that he put a good deal of himself into the various representatives of this type.⁵² An inference concerning his opinion as to the effectiveness of the idealist in practical life may be warranted. In his youthful production his hero is an individual of surprising strength in dealing with more worldly natures. Fanshawe's spectacular triumph over Butler may be taken as the expression of a young man's faith in the potency of ideal qualities. But Owen Warland, Dimmesdale,

⁵²It is interesting to note that Hawthorne portrays Dimmesdale in language very similar to that used to describe himself. He wrote Sophia Peabody from Salem on October 4, 1840: "But living in solitude till the fulness of time was come, I still kept the dew of my youth and the freshness of my heart . . ." (Love Letters, I, p. 225).

Of Dimmesdale, Hawthorne says: ". . . he trod in the shadowy by-paths, and thus kept himself simple and child-like; coming forth when occasion was, with a freshness, and fragrance, and dewy purity of thought . . ." (The Scarlet Letter, V, p. 52).

and Clifford are not matches for their antagonists, Peter Hovenden, Chillingworth, and Judge Pyncheon. The frail, sensitive nature is destroyed by the superior force of unfeeling intelligence or worldly power. In the following statement, which was written to apply to Owen Warland's plight, one detects the disillusionment of Hawthorne's maturity with reference to his own relation with the world: "It is requisite for the ideal artist to possess a force of character that seems hardly comparable with its delicacy"⁵³

⁵³"The Artist of the Beautiful," Mosses, II, 503.

CHAPTER VIII

OLD DECREPIT MEN

The last type of character which I propose to consider is of minor importance and yet one which had a particular appeal for Hawthorne. The notebooks afford abundant evidence of his interest in elderly men who are feeble in mind and body, and impoverished in material possessions. While walking among the hills near North Adams in 1838, Hawthorne met "an underwitted old man" who talked about his children's desertion of him to join a circus.¹ At another time, Hawthorne saw and described in detail one Captain Gavett, an elderly man who was selling butternuts at the hotel in North Adams. Another aged man at North Adams who attracted Hawthorne's attention was the Revolutionary pensioner, "Uncle John," who drank a glass of gin in the barroom and "grew the younger for it."² The old apple dealer at the railroad station in Salem was another specimen of this type who appealed to Hawthorne's love of "the moral picturesque." This character was described in great detail in the journal. Lastly, the "elderly ragamuffin" in Parker's grogshop at Boston evoked the sympathetic and imaginative interest of Hawthorne, who discovered in his appearance vestiges of a former respectability.³ Thus, between 1838

¹Stewart, p. 35. ²Ibid., pp. 90-92. ³Ibid., p. 90.

and 1850, Hawthorne studied and described in the notebooks various specimens of this type of character.

These entries in the notebooks came to light in the tales and romances. The "underwitted old man" who has been deserted by his children reappears in "Ethan Brand" (1850) as the father of Esther, the victim of Brand's psychological experiment.⁴ In the notebook Hawthorne wrote:

He was an underwitted old man He was an old, gray, bald-headed, wrinkled-visaged figure, decently dressed, with cow-hide shoes, a coat on one arm, and an umbrella in the other He spoke of his children, who are proprietors of a circus establishment While this old man is wandering among the hills, his children are in the gaze of the multitudes He gave me a message to give them in case we meet.⁵

In the story he wrote:

He pointed to an old man, shabbily dressed, with long hair, thin visage, and unsteady eyes. For some years past this aged person had been wandering about among the hills, inquiring of all travellers whom he met for his daughter. The girl, it seemed, had gone off with a company of circus-performers The white-haired father now approached Ethan Brand, and gazed unsteadily into his eyes. "You must have seen my daughter, for she makes a grand figure in the world, and everybody goes to see her. Did she send any word to her old father, or say when she was coming back?"⁶

The sketch of the apple dealer, after careful revision, was published as an independent character study in the story

⁴"Ethan Brand," The Snow Image and Other Twice Told Tales, III, 482.

⁵Stewart, p. 46.

⁶"Ethan Brand," The Snow Image and Other Twice Told Tales, III, 480.

of "The Old Apple Dealer." In the notebook he made the following entry, January 23, 1842:

An old man in the rail-road station-house at Salem, selling nuts, gingerbread, etc. It is his permanent place of business, which I have seen him occupy for many months past. He is clad in an old frock coat, or surtout, of Scottish snuff-color, and gray pantaloons. His face, thin, withered, furrowed, looks frost-bitten;--it seems as if he was in a very cold atmosphere, externally, and had not inward vital warmth enough to keep himself comfortable. A patient, long-suffering, quiet, hopeless shivering aspect; yet not as a man desperate, but only without hope. His whole life probably offers no spots of brightness; and so he takes his present poverty and discomfort as a matter of course;--he thinks the definition of life is to be poor, cold, and uncomfortable.⁷

In the story he wrote:

He is a small man with gray hair and gray stubble beard, and is invariably clad in a shabby surtout of snuff-colored, closely buttoned and half concealing a pair of gray pantaloons, the whole dress, though clean and entire, being evidently flimsy with much wear. His face, thin, withered, furrowed, and with features which even age has failed to render impressive, has a frost-bitten aspect. It is a moral frost which no physical warmth or comfortableness could counteract. The summer sunshine may fling its white heat upon him, but all in vain; for still the old man looks as if he were in a frosty atmosphere, with scarcely enough warmth to keep life in the region about his heart. It is a patient, long-suffering, quiet, hopeless, shivering aspect. He is not desperate--that, though its etymology implies no more, would be too positive an expression--but merely devoid of hope. As all his life, probably, offers no spots of brightness to his memory so he takes his present poverty and discomfort as entirely a matter of course; he thinks it the definition of existence, so far as himself is concerned to be poor, cold, and uncomfortable.⁸

⁷Stewart, p. 90.

⁸"The Old Apple Dealer," Mosses, III, 495.

Furthermore, the two old men have the same method of salesmanship. Both stand with arms folded never speaking a word to any passerby. They look steadfastly at their small stock of nuts, apples, and gingerbread, with only an occasional glance out the window. They show no signs of disappointment when throngs of people pass them by without making a purchase. They both are very careful that every nut, apple, and cake stays exactly in its place. Although the articles they have for sale are rarely ever touched by a purchaser or prospective purchaser, they both arrange and rearrange each article at brief intervals just as if it had been moved or knocked down by some of the hurrying crowds. They each have a competitor, a boy of nine or ten years of age--very smart and well-dressed, who does not sit down, but moves briskly about, asking in a pert voice, "any cake, Sir, any candy?"⁹ Hawthorne wrote of the character of the old man in an entry in the notebook, January 23, 1842:

It requires a very delicate pencil to depict a portrait which has so much of negative in it--where every touch must be kept down, or else you destroy the subdued tone, which is most essential to the character.¹⁰

Of the old apple dealer in the story by that name he wrote:

It is not the easiest matter in the world to define and individualize a character like this which we are now handling. The portrait must be so generally

⁹Stewart, p. 92; "The Old Apple Dealer," Mosses, II, 497.

¹⁰Stewart, p. 91.

negative that the most delicate pencil is likely to spoil it by introducing some too positive tint. Every touch must be kept down, or else you destroy the subdued tone which is absolutely essential to the whole effect.¹¹

Uncle Venner in The House of the Seven Gables recalls two of the aged men whom Hawthorne observed at North Adams. Like the old man who appears in "Ethan Brand" "he was regarded as rather deficient, than otherwise, in his wits."¹² Like Captain Gavett, Uncle Venner "made pretensions to wisdom, and really enjoyed the credit of it."¹³ He particularly resembles Captain Gavett in his contentment with old age and in his feeble excursions into the realm of religion and metaphysics. In the entry in the notebook Hawthorne wrote:

An old man selling meats and butternuts under the stoop. He makes that his station during part of the season Talked with one man about whether it would be worth while to grow young again, and the duty of being contented with old age;--about predestination and freewill, and other metaphysics.¹⁴

If Captain Gavett as an observer of life enjoyed the vantage point of the stoop of the hotel, Uncle Venner had "seen a great deal of the world, not only in people's kitchens and backyards, but at the street-corners, and on the wharves, and at other posts equally well adapted for just observation, and was as ready to give out his wisdom as a town-pump to give

¹¹"The Old Apple Dealer," Mosses, II, 498.

¹²"Ethan Brand," The Snow Image and Other Twice Told Tales, III, 83.

¹³Ibid., p. 85. ¹⁴Stewart, p. 188.

water."¹⁵ Uncle Venner doubted whether he had ever been as comfortable as he meant to be at his farm, "which most folk call the workhouse."¹⁶ Uncle Venner was one of those people who thought that "infinity was big enough for all of us,-- and eternity long enough!"¹⁷ One critic has pointed out the significant fact that Uncle Venner is the only character in Hawthorne's works who speaks a distinctive language.¹⁸ That the author did for this character what he attempted to do for no other may perhaps be accounted for by an intimate knowledge growing out of a protracted study of actual specimens of that type.

A prototype for Old Moodie, who appears in The Blithedale Romance, is to be found in the entry for May 7, 1850, describing an "elderly ragamuffin" who haunted Parker's grogshop. The character described in the notebooks is greatly expanded in the novel, Old Moodie's past being dwelt on at length. Physically, the two men are very similar: each has a pale, thin face, a patch over one eye, and a slight body, stooped and poorly kept. Both are exceedingly shy and look no one in the face; both are compared to ghosts, in their slinking efforts to avoid notice. With each the fondness for drink is evidenced by a red nose, though neither is a con-

¹⁵Seven Gables, III, 84. ¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 90.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁸L. Dhaleine, N. Hawthorne, sa vie et son oeuvre, p. 444.

firmed drunkard. The "sort of shadow or delusion of respectability" of the old man at Parker's, "a sobriety too, and a kind of decency in his groggy and red-nosed destitution,"¹⁹ are explained in The Blithedale Romance as being an adumbration of Old Moodie's past, a respectable past, spent in the South.²⁰ But Old Moodie owes something also to other precursors. Both Moodie and the old man wandering in the hills near North Adams live in loneliness while their children are in the public gaze: the children of the former perform in a circus; Priscilla appears on the stage as "the Veiled Lady." The daughter of the nameless old man in "Ethan Brand" has been made the subject of psychological experiment by Brand, and, similarly, Priscilla has been used as a medium by Westervelt. Like Captain Gavett and the apple dealer, Moodie has something to sell--silk purses made by Priscilla. Again, just as Orrin Smith gives the Revolutionary pensioner, "Uncle John," a glass of gin, so Coverdale hopes to thaw the frost in Moodie's blood by means of a glass of wine.²¹ And in representing the negative qualities indicated by such adjectives as "lifeless," "colorless," "torpid"--Hawthorne must have drawn largely upon his sketch on the apple dealer. Thus, it is seen that Old Moodie, like so many of Hawthorne's characters, was the result of an evolutionary process, and that

¹⁹Stewart, p. 90. ²⁰Blithedale, V, 370.

²¹Ibid., p. 379.

several characters previously sketched in the notebooks and tales contributed to this development.

CHAPTER IX

INNOCENT CREATURES MADE VICTIMS OF EVIL

To omit from the discussion the characters that may not be included in any of the groups previously discussed would be doing a gross injustice to Hawthorne's creative genius, for three of his major characters, namely: Pearl, who appears in The Scarlet Letter; Hepzibah, who appears in The House of the Seven Gables; and Donatello, who appears in The Marble Faun, cannot be said to be representative of any type of character that Hawthorne has portrayed elsewhere. Although they are all innocent creatures made victims of the consequences of evil that has been committed by persons other than themselves, they are so entirely different in their natures that a comparative study is impossible. Despite the fact that Hawthorne was interested primarily in the idea and not in the persons of the particular tale, the quality of human sympathy--the sympathy of an author for his own creations--is manifest especially in his treatment and development of these three characters.

To begin with, Pearl is a character of great importance in The Scarlet Letter. Julian Hawthorne has this to say of Pearl's importance in the story:

The outstanding personage in the story of The Scarlet Letter is not Hester Prynne, nor her lover

Dimmesdale, nor the avenger Roger Chillingworth. All these are, in their several ways and degrees, guilty of the committed sin. But among this group stands one who is innocent--the infant, the little girl--the daughter of the lovers, Pearl. Hawthorne yields to Pearl the leading role in the drama. In the beginning, the mere fact of her existence had betrayed the lovers' secret; thenceforward, from an involuntary agent, she becomes predominant. She manifests a will and soul of her own, scorns social rebuffs, "I am!--who gainsays my right to be?"¹

The character of Pearl had its foundation in Hawthorne's observation of his own daughter, Una. Julian Hawthorne asks this question, "Where should Hawthorne look for a prototype for Pearl, that innocent consequence of Hester's surrender to Dimmesdale?"² Then he answers it thus:

Una his first-born, had inherited much of her father's nature, though not of the faculty to express itself in art. And it happened that the child's reactions to the scene in the guest chamber, where her grandmother's life was ebbing away, shed new light upon her character.

Two children could hardly differ from each other more than did Hawthorne's daughter from Pearl, the child of his imagination. But he, adventuring into the inner chambers of Being, might discover there interweaving threads which the future might unite.³

Pearl is never depicted as, in herself, hateful; but only as brimming over with lawless impulse, which may have a beauty of its own. She has no regrets, no compunction; a sinless infant, she is yet Sin's very self walking the earth in her own right. As such, in dark moments, she is seen by her own mother; more terrible than the scarlet symbol fixed on Hester's

¹Julian Hawthorne, The Memoirs of Julian Hawthorne, p. 24.

²Ibid., p. 25. ³Ibid., 26.

garment, the roots of Pearl are in her soul. Hawthorne says of Pearl:

Man had marked her mother by a scarlet letter, alienating her from human sympathy. God, as a direct consequence of the sin, had given her a lovely child, connecting her forever with mortals. But Hester discerned in her a depth of elements, which though beautiful and brilliant, were in disorder--or with an order peculiar to themselves. The mother's impassioned existence had transmitted to the unborn infant the rays of its mortal life--the crimson stains, the fiery luster, the black shadow, the untempered light--the whole warfare of the mother's spirit--in her wild, defiant mood--were perpetuated in Pearl. In her fancy it might be the morning radiance of a child's disposition; but, hereafter, become perhaps prolific of storm and whirlwind. Singularly, she created never a friend, but sowed broadcast the Dragon's teeth, against which she rushed to battle--as recognizing an adverse world and training fierce energies to make good her cause.⁴

The physical perfection of Pearl, her native grace, the flightiness of her temper, her dramatic impersonations, her isolation from other children--all are qualities suggested by Hawthorne's observation of Una.⁵ Hester sometimes doubted "whether Pearl were a human child. She seemed rather an airy sprite, which, after playing its fantastic sports for a little while upon the cottage floor, would flit away with a mocking smile."⁶ Similarly, Hawthorne had written concerning his own daughter: "I now and then catch an aspect of her, in which I cannot believe

⁴The Scarlet Letter, V, 103.

⁵Stewart, pp. 326, 327, 328; The Scarlet Letter, V, 112, 116.

⁶The Scarlet Letter, V, 102.

her to be my own human child, but a spirit strangely mingled with good and evil, haunting the house where I dwell."⁷

Pearl is not only a character but a symbol. Having sprung "out of the rank of the luxuriance of a guilty passion,"⁸ she must typify a disordered nature torn by a malignant conflict between the forces of good and evil. Various changes and additions are made in order to accentuate this symbolical motif in her character. Pearl becomes darkly inscrutable. A substitution in similes is significant of the general transformation: Una's whimsical alterations in mind and facial expression are compared to "the changes of the aspect caused by the atmosphere in mountain scenery,"⁹ Pearl's to "the phantasmagoric play of the northern lights."¹⁰ The relation of Una and the children of the Salem neighborhood was one of mutual curiosity and wonder. In an entry in the notebooks, Hawthorne writes: "Una is infinitely adventurous--apt, without warning to take flight through the street; and is found surrounded by a knot of children who gaze at her with wonder, recognizing that she is not like themselves."¹¹ Between Pearl and the little Puritans there existed bitter enmity. "If children gathered around her, as they sometimes did, Pearl would grow positively terrible in her puny wrath.

⁷Stewart, p. 327. ⁸The Scarlet Letter, V, 92.

⁹Stewart, p. 328.

¹⁰The Scarlet Letter, V, 101. ¹¹Stewart, p. 301.

Pearl saw and gazed intently, but never sought to make an acquaintance."¹² And out of the observation that Una rushed "from corner to corner of the room . . . as if the devil were in her," Hawthorne evolved the suggestion that the laughing image of a fiend could be seen peeping out of little Pearl's eye.¹³ Thus in adapting a real character to his novel, Hawthorne made such changes as seemed necessary to fit the need of his plot; and in accentuating the enigmatic and sinister qualities in Pearl, he subordinated reality to symbolism.

Hepzibah Pyncheon is a triumph of portraiture. She is the withered and retired old maid blinking furiously in the light of day and long ago diverted from the practical problem of living. It would be a gross exaggeration to insist upon a likeness between Hepzibah and Madame Hawthorne, and yet it is possible that the author could better plumb the depths of Hepzibah because of his knowledge of his own mother. No one knew better than Hawthorne the curious fright of solitary people suddenly thrust into the maelstrom of contemporary existence, for he possessed three women in his own family who were somewhat tempered by a drastic abnegation of the world.¹⁴

¹²The Scarlet Letter, V, 104.

¹³Stewart, p. 296; The Scarlet Letter, V, 211.

¹⁴Hawthorne's father died in 1808 and left his widow stricken with a lifelong grief and his three children suddenly overwhelmed with sorrow and solitude. (Lathrop, p. 60). Madame Hawthorne, still in her early thirties, sat, her life having passed away beneath the hot sun of Surinam. In another chamber Hawthorne lingered, growing more and more like the owl that loves darkness best of all. (Gorman, p. 25).

In Hepzibah the old empty pride of the family has developed into a dry and sterile gentility, and through long years of seclusion she falls quite out of pace with the ordinary march of existence, losing all the vitality and suppleness that may have been latent in her, until at last she forgets the secret of easy personal intercourse. Her punishment is that when a great human need is forced upon her she has no longer the power to deal with it; all the rigor and angularity of her character come between her and the services she yearns to render to Clifford. "In her grief and wounded pride, Hepzibah had spent her life in divesting herself of friends; she had wilfully cast off the support which God has ordained his creatures to need from one another; and it was her punishment that Clifford and herself would fall the easier victims to their kindred enemy."¹⁵ Certainly Hepzibah is drawn with a confident strength of characterization that is not to be found in any of the other people who circle the house of the seven gables. (She is a grotesque old spinster, simple, childish, penniless, very humble at heart, but rigidly conscious of her pedigree.) Hepzibah, dragging out a disappointed life in her paternal dwelling, finds it necessary in her old age to open a little shop for the sale of penny toys and gingerbread. This is the central incident of the tale, and, as Hawthorne relates it, it is an incident of the most impressive magnitude and most touching inter-

¹⁵Seven Gables, III, 211.

est. Her dishonoured and vague-minded brother is released from prison at the same moment, and returns to the ancestral roof to deepen her perplexities. But, on the other hand, to alleviate them, and to introduce a breath of air of the outer world into this long unventilated interior, the little country cousin, Phoebe, also arrives, and proves the good angel of the feebly distracted household. Very noticeable is the delicate veneration and tenderness for Phoebe with which the author seems to inspire us, notwithstanding the fact that he has almost nothing definite to say of her except what tends to throw a light of ridicule. Hephzibah is continually contrasted with the exquisite freshness, ready grace, and beauty of Phoebe, and subjected to unfavorable comparisons in the mind of Clifford, whose half-obliterated but still exact aesthetic perception casts silent reproach upon her. In the grace, and agreeableness too, with which Hawthorne manages to surround this un-gifted spinster, we find a unit of measure for the beauty with which he has invested the more frightful and tragic elements of the story. Hawthorne introduces her into the story thus:

Our miserable old Hephzibah! It is a heavy annoyance to a writer, who endeavors to represent nature, its various attitudes and circumstances, in a reasonably correct outline and true coloring, that so much of the mean and ludicrous should be hopelessly mixed up with the purest pathos which life anywhere supplies him.

How can we elevate our history of retribution for the sin of long ago, when, as one of our most prominent figures, we are compelled to introduce--not a young and lovely woman, nor even the stately remains of beauty, storm-shattered by affliction--but a gaunt, sallow, rusty-jointed maiden, in a long-waisted silk gown, and with the strange horror of a turban on her head! Her

visage is not even ugly. It is redeemed from insignificance only by the contraction of her eyebrows into a near-sighted scowl! And finally, her great life-trial seems to be, that, after sixty years of idleness, she finds it convenient to earn a comfortable bread by setting up a shop in a small way.¹⁶

Hepzibah Pyncheon is a masterly picture. We see her with her near-sighted scowl, her rusty-joints, her antique turban, her map of a great territory to the eastward which ought to have belonged to her family, her vain terror, and scruples and resentments, the inaptitude and repugnance of an ancient gentlewoman to the vulgar little commerce which a cruel fate has compelled her to engage in. She is described so subtly that we enter into her virginal old heart and stand with her behind her abominable little counter. Lathrop says of her, "She is a painting on ivory, yet with all the warmth of a real being."¹⁷ If her life ends in a kind of victory, it is because she has, after all, been moved most strongly by human love, no matter how restricted its scope.

Just as the influence of New England produced the theme of The House of the Seven Gables, so was it that Florence called forth The Marble Faun. It was during his sojourn in Italy that Hawthorne conceived the idea of the humanization of the faun of classic legend. The Marble Faun, upon which he labored a few hours each day, had received its original inception in April,

¹⁶Seven Gables, III, 52.

¹⁷A Study of Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 296.

1858, when Hawthorne had visited the sculpture gallery in the Capitol at Rome. "We went afterwards into the sculpture gallery," he noted in his journal, April 22, 1858,

where I looked at the Faun of Praxiteles, and was sensible of a peculiar charm in it; a sylvan beauty and homeliness, friendly, and wild at once. The lengthened but not preposterous ears, and the little tail which we infer, have an exquisite effect, and make the spectator smile in his very heart. This race of fauns was the most delightful of all that antiquity imagined. It seems to me that a story with all sorts of fun and pathos in it, might be contrived on the idea of their species having become intermingled with the human race; a family with the faun blood in them having prolonged itself from the classic era till our own days. The tail might have disappeared, by dint of constant intermarriage with ordinary mortals, but the pretty hairy ears should occasionally reappear in members of the family; and the moral instincts and intellectual characteristics of the faun might be most picturesquely brought out, without detriment to the human interest of the story.¹⁸ Fancy this combination in the person of a young lady!

However, Hawthorne, brooding over the idea, did not "fancy" this combination so far as a young lady was concerned. Various elements entered into the theme as he studied it over in his mind; a handsome young Jewess whom he had seen at a dinner in England,¹⁹ the artistic young count of Montatuo who had rented him the villa in which he made his residence,²⁰ the villa itself with its haunted tower,²¹ the scores of descriptive pas-

¹⁸ The French and Italian Notebooks, X, 119.

¹⁹ English Notebooks, XI, 269.

²⁰ The French and Italian Notebooks, X, 132.

²¹ Ibid., p. 147.

sages of Rome he had set down in his notebooks, a tower in the Via Portoghesea with an everlasting light burning before the Virgin's shrine,²² the blessed consolation of the Roman Catholic confessional,²³ artistic jargon he had picked up in the studios, the tragic story of Beatrice Cenci,²⁴ a dead monk from whose nostrils streamed blood in the church of Capuchins,²⁵ and the Carnival with its masks and mummeries.²⁶ All these things that he had made notation of in his notebooks began to assume a coherent ensemble.

The theme about which these colored particles of a Latin world evolved was not to be a mere tale with "all sort of fun and pathos in it." Hawthorne's ancient Puritan obsession came to the front, and The Marble Faun became another study of sin and conscience. The idea of a happy innocent creature without a human soul committing a crime and through self-torture evolving a soul with all the divine obligations of spiritual essence eventually became the basis of his novel.

But for one antique statue in Rome, and for one painting, he felt unstinted admiration. In both cases, however, the thoughts and feelings they aroused in his mind rather than the work of the artists, moved him. The painting ascribed to Guido was the head of a girl, supposed to be Beatrice Cenci, on her way to execution; the statue was the figure of the Faun by Praxiteles. They touched Hawthorne profoundly; he made the statue his symbol in the story, and imagined a sisterhood between Beatrice and his Miriam.

Hawthorne often visited the Capitoline Museum,

²²Ibid., p. 147. ²³Ibid., p. 317. ²⁴Ibid., p. 325.

²⁵Ibid., p. 326. ²⁶Ibid., p. 351.

and the Barberini, and pondered upon the statue and the painting. The problem of evil has been before him in all his stories from the first: Beatrice and the faun represented two sides of the mystery. In the legend, the girl had committed patriicide, but for a cause that seemed to justify the act. The faun, on the other hand, was incapable of sin, because he was an animal not yet become human. Could the girl be forgiven? And could the faun become a man? Might not a story be written in which these two should be chief actors? The theme grew and put forth branches.

Except for the faun's pointed ear and tail, he was physically nearer man than animal. But he had never come under the rule of conscience; he was unable to discriminate between right and wrong; he was kindly and affectionate, but entirely unmoral. Hawthorne assumed (for the end he had in view) that the beautiful creature, though it had no soul, yet might undergo experiences that would beget one in him. He might fall in love with a woman; but would love, as a faun loves, be enough? Of course, if the faun were mere animal, the quest would end there; but on Hawthorne's assumption of the germ in him of a soul, the outlook was better. And it was here that the thought of Beatrice came upon the stage.²⁷

Donatello is a type of natural innocence, brought in contact with Miriam by his love and so led to an impulsive crime in her behalf; his crime, felt to be a sin, results in such spiritual development that it can only be described by saying his soul was born thereby. The birth of the soul through sin is the moral theme of the story.

The faun for love of his mistress and to save her from the source of her trouble, a being who is associated with her as artist's model, commits murder. Sin and love combine to create manhood in him--to give him a soul. As the pressure of immensities dissolves rock into vapor, so the passion of that moment kindled the faun into a man.²⁸

²⁷Julian Hawthorne, The Memoirs of Julian Hawthorne, p. 212.

²⁸Ibid., p. 213.

A relic of Hawthorne's history of the soul in sin remains in the pointed ears of the Faun, hesitatingly ascribed to Donatello, as the sign and symbol of his ancestral heritage of a state of nature which his mortal sin disturbed. The intent of the story is a meditation on the effects of sin on a state of nature, on simple innocence.

Donatello is an inhabitant, "a strayed reveller," from a paradisiacal region. He is snared in the earthly curse; and the tale is his transformation into a different being, a spiritual being, whose experience of sin had made him human by developing in him the sorrowful intelligent soul that is characteristic of humanity. This is a higher state, in the hierarchy of being, it would appear, than the primeval mountain innocence he had known in his youth. But the matter is perplexing. For one thing, clearly this new Fall of Man is substantially a rise in spiritual grade. The conception of sin as a means of grace is, in a sense, paradoxical. Donatello is the fresh, free, sylvan man untouched by sin or crime. He seems to rank with a class of poetic reactions which has almost become extinct among modern writers: he belongs to the world of Caliban, Puck, and Ariel. He is a simple, joyous, sensuous young Italian who is not so much a man as a child, and not so much a child as a charming, innocent animal, who is brought to self-knowledge, and to a miserable conscious manhood by the commission of a crime. Of course, to make the interest complete, there is a woman in the affair; and Hawthorne has done

few things more beautiful than the picture of the unequal complicity of guilt between his immature hero, with his clinging, unquestioning, unexacting devotion, and the dark, powerful, more widely-seeing feminine nature of Miriam. Deeply touching is the representation of the manner in which these two essentially different person--the woman intelligent, passionate, acquainted with life, and with a tragic element in her own career; the youth ignorant, gentle, unworldly, brightly and harmlessly natural--are equalized and bound together by their common secret which insulates them, morally, from the rest of mankind. At the same time, remarking that Providence has infinitely varied ways of dealing with any deed, Hawthorne leaves a possibility of happiness for the two penitents, which may become theirs as "a wayside flower, springing along a path that leads to the higher ends."²⁹ The center of the book is the humanizing of Donatello through his very sin and the suffering that follows it. The crime that he commits is the fruit of angry and justifiable impulse, not of something radically vicious in his make-up; and how guilty Miriam may be, in her silent complicity, we do not know, since we know virtually nothing of her history. It is disengaged, isolated, pictorial guilt we are prone to take seriously. The consequences of the crime are not unfolded before us; in the hundreds of pages that follow the great scene of guilt, we learn much about wine-making and the Carnival, but extraordinarily little, in proportion, about

²⁹The Marble Faun, VI, 72.

the Faun. The act which is central and capital in the plot is the least of an act possible, in the circumstances; though it is nothing less than a murder, it occupies but a brief space, a moment, of the tale, and though it was the climax of Miriam's former and darker life, it is substantially unexplained. The impulse which led Donatello to do the deed by a sudden seizure of the emotion, seems disconnected with any facts of that interior tragedy, whatever its nature. The act, once done, appears wholly severed from its circumstances; it is not a particular crime, with a history and explanation of its own, but a sin,--sin in the abstract. Any other crime would have served the purpose; what was essential to the story was the destruction of Donatello's innocence. Along toward the end of the story Kenyon says to Hilda regarding their mutual friend, Donatello, "Sin has educated Donatello, and elevated him."³⁰

Perhaps the most vivid moment, the most condensed form of the transformation of Donatello, occurs when he and Kenyon are in the wood near the castle of Monte Beni and Donatello makes the trial of his boyhood power of confident converse with the creatures of the wood, and finds that the old spell that made him a friend of the wild and innocent world is gone.³¹ He

³⁰The Marble Faun, VI, 501.

³¹Moncure D. Conway states that the characteristic of the faun that enables him to talk with nature and call the animals of the wood to him is suggested to Hawthorne by the character of Henry D. Thoreau. (Hawthorne, p. 90)

says to Kenyon:

I used to make many strange acquaintances; for, from earliest childhood, I was familiar with whatever creatures that haunted the woods. You would have laughed to see the friends I had among them; yes, among the wild, nimble things, that reckon many of their deadliest enemy! How it was first taught me, I cannot tell; but there was a charm--a voice, a murmur, a kind of chant--by which I called the woodland inhabitants, the furry people, and the feathered people, in a language that they seemed to understand I doubt whether they will remember my voice now. It changes, you know, as the boy grows toward manhood.³²

Kenyon urged him to try the charm, and "as the young Count's good-nature and easy persuasibility were among his best characteristics, he set about complying with Kenyon's request."³³

Kenyon hid himself among some shrubs so that his presence would not hinder "the furry and feathered inhabitants" from coming forward. "Donatello tried it, over and over again, with many breaks, and pauses of uncertainty; then with more confidence, and a fuller swell Then the sculptor heard a wild, sorrowful cry, and through the crevices of the thicket beheld Donatello fling himself on the ground."³⁴

Donatello's grief that he cannot call the squirrels, and other "nimble creatures," is a fable of the rift that conscience discloses between innocence and experience; something is lost with the passing years besides "the splendor in the grass" and "the glory in the flower";³⁵ and it is this inner mystic loss,

³²The Marble Faun, VI, 376.

³³Ibid., p. 377.

³⁴Ibid., p. 377.

³⁵Ibid., p. 460.

this bereavement, that is shadowed forth in Donatello's cry. If the faun in Donatello received his death-wound in the murder scene, it was there in the wood that he died. Here the "early world" passed out of Donatello's life, as it passes out of the life of all men whom life matures; and the truth is well enough set forth imaginatively by this simple and beautiful Arcadian fable of Donatello's call.

In The Marble Faun Hawthorne strove to circumscribe a foreign scene, to animate that scene with impulses kindred to it, but there is nothing of Europe in The Marble Faun except the setting. None of the four personages, not even Donatello, belongs to the Roman scene. Donatello is a faun, but he is not the faun of Praxiteles. He is rather a quaint New England faun who would be more at home peering out through the thin trunks of white birch trees, and when a soul is vouchsafed him, he attains it through suffering, and the soul is colored with the moralistic passions of Puritan conceptions.

Donatello is a lovable creature whose fascination is wholly human. He is kind, gentle, joyous, and a devoted lover with the light spirit of youth. His crime is so swiftly accomplished, so vaguely motivated, so unreflecting, that it does not alienate him, in the least, from the natural affection which he has already elicited from the reader. It is hard to believe that it is a real crime that has been seen. The crime is not sufficiently rooted in evil to have the effect attributed to it, one thinks, in remorse and in revelation of the

spiritual nature. Donatello's youth is frozen into the marble of Praxiteles and his future is whatever the reader desires to make of it. He is rather vague and impalpable; he says very little and shows himself very little in the book. But he is enough of a creation to make us enter into the situation and the whole history of his rise, or fall, whichever one chooses to call it--his tasting of the Tree of Knowledge, and finding existence complicated with a regret--is unfolded with many ingenious and exquisite touches.

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing analysis, I have been able to show that Hawthorne's leading characters, for the most part, can be divided into a comparatively few large groups and that within each group can be traced a process of development which is both repetitive and culminative. Furthermore, I have traced the gradual growth of certain ideas over considerable periods of time. The themes discussed--the isolation of the individual, the unpardonable sin, the influence of the past, and the elixir of life--are embodied in the greater part of Hawthorne's fiction. The examples discussed in this study are sufficiently representative to establish the principle that rightly to interpret the major characters in Hawthorne's fiction, one must consider the creation and development of the characters in relation to the process and development of the theme, for it is certain that Hawthorne created his characters to fit the theme he had in mind.

I have shown that the complexities of Hawthorne's heroines may be traced to a variety of origins. The character of Phoebe is a composite of elements suggested by girls described in the notebooks, by Ellen and Susan, the heroines of earlier stories, and by the author's wife. Priscilla derives fragility from the heroines of the early tales (Sylph Etherege, Alice Vane, Liliac Fae), a certain fantastic grace from the snow image, the powers

of a medium from Alice Pyncheon, an occupation and a tendency to playfulness from the seamstress at Brook Farm, and wifely virtues from Sophia Peabody. The members of the second group of Hawthorne's heroines, unlike those of the first group, do not represent a development based upon the early tales and the notebooks, but here we see Hawthorne's tendency to repetition in characterization both in the general similarity of the four women in the group and in the close resemblance of Zenobia and Hester and Miriam and Beatrice.

In my study of the origins of Dimmesdale I have shown that Hawthorne constructed the character largely out of materials drawn from his earlier works. Dimmesdale has the frail body and the pale face of all of the "scholar-idealists." His character comprehends the scholarly instincts of Fanshawe and Aylmer and the sensitivity of Owen Warland. Moreover, Hawthorne has drawn from Reuben Bourne the idea of concealment, from the Reverend Mr. Hooper certain concomitants of the role of clergyman, and from Roderick Elliston a characteristic gesture.

Again, Hawthorne's villains represent an evolutionary process by which the later characters are compounded of ingredients drawn from earlier ones. Westervelt, for example, is a composite of preceding villains: his bold eye and evil smile are reminiscent of Butler, Vaughn, and Maule; his foppish manners are taken from Vaughn and his mesmeric powers from Maule. The character differs from these precursors however, in that Hawthorne has added a suggestion of the supernatural: he implies

that Westervelt may be the incarnation of a fiend; and in accordance with this implication, Westervelt has a stick similar to that carried by the devil in "Young Goodman Brown." In the creation of Chillingworth, Hawthorne has drawn hints from the devils and wizards of the early tales, and from two entries in the notebooks. In the creation of Judge Pyncheon, Hawthorne made use of traits suggested by an actual person, by two preceding villains, Hovenden and Chillingworth, and by two entries in the journal.

I have also traced the evolution of three minor types of characters: the observer, the reformer, and the feeble and indigent old man. The artist in "The Prophetic Pictures," Coverdale, Holgrave, and Kenyon form a sequence of development in which the chief source of materials is the author's own character. Hollingsworth is an embodiment of abstract principles set forth in three tales. Uncle Venner and Old Moodie represent in large measure a combining of characteristics drawn from sketches in the journals.

In the discussion of Pearl, Donatello, and Hepzibah, I have shown that they may not be included in a group with any of the other characters, but that they stand as individuals foreign to any of the others. They have no precursors in the earlier stories. Hawthorne got the idea of Donatello from the Faun of Praxiteles, the idea for Pearl from observations he made of his own daughter, Una, and the idea for Hepzibah from the solitude he knew in his own family. He added to these

ideas the triumph of imagination, which characterizes and crowns Hawthorne's genius.

From this study, it may be seen that there are three chief sources of Hawthorne's characters: his reading, the notebooks, and his own fiction. The contribution made by his reading was apparently small. The contribution of the notebooks, which was considerable, included sketches of actual people and abstract principles of characterization. But by far the greatest contribution to the development of the various types was made by the characters themselves. The characters of the early works became a source of traits for characters in the later works. To trace the sequence of development in the various groups is to see how an early character of comparative simplicity becomes gradually more complex through the addition of traits contributed by successive characters. It is clear that Hawthorne reperused his published tales and novels as assiduously as the notebooks in search for materials. The minuteness of this reperusal becomes at once evident when one considers such deraciations of minutiae as Dimmesdale's gesture from "Egotism; or, The Bosom Serpent," or Phoebe's freckles from "The Village Uncle," or Westervelt's stick from "Young Goodman Brown." The chief source of the characters of the novels is to be found in the corresponding characters of the tales. Through this evolution they become richer in character, and each has his enlargement of singular traits that makes him an individual worthy of careful study.

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