TIME PAST AND TIME PRESENT: HAWTHORNE AND WARREN IN THE AMERICAN LITERARY CONTINUUM

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Students of American fiction have long insisted that beneath the apparent differences and contradictions among the greatest literary figures exists a continuity of ideas, a recurrence and emphasis of common themes. Although Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) and Robert Penn Warren (1905- ) belong to different periods of American literary history, the thematic parallels in their fiction indicate their close association in the American tradition of the romance and demonstrate ideological correspondences between writers of the New England Renaissance and the Southern Renaissance.

Hawthorne and Warren are appropriate subjects for comparison not only because they represent the two greatest periods of American literary production but also because they share, across the span of a century, a common view of the human condition. Both view man's life as dark and tragic and search for meaning in human existence by linking past and present, thus making of history a myth to illustrate universal, philosophical, moral, and psychological truths. A few specific themes represent the truth revealed: initiation into adult reality, original sin as an integral part of human nature, the
necessity of accepting the past to understand the present, the search for a father, the divided self or the evil of the isolated intellect, the unpardonable sin or the selfish manipulation of another person, and the fortunate fall or knowledge through suffering. The recurrence and predominance of these themes suggest that they characterize a basic part of human experience which was relevant to Hawthorne and remains meaningful to Warren.

To highlight continuities of theme and method, this study focuses on one idea or cluster of ideas in each chapter with concentration on one major fictional work by each author. Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" (1835) and Warren's "Blackberry Winter" (1946) are classic treatments of initiation. Each author utilizes archetypal patterns to dramatize the possibilities for moral, emotional, and psychological maturity. In Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) and Warren's *Band of Angels* (1955), the theme of initiation is expanded to incorporate understanding and accepting the past. Alienation becomes the dominant theme in Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance* (1852) and Warren's *At Heaven's Gate* (1943). In both novels characters separate themselves from their fellow men either through an obsession with some abstract goal or through the selfish manipulation of other people. Through the pain of self-discovery, characters in Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* (1860) and Warren's *The Cave* (1959) demonstrate man's need to penetrate the heart of his existence and the core of his
identity. In these novels, Hawthorne and Warren develop the concepts of original sin and the fortunate fall. An analysis of the parallels in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and Warren's *All the King's Men* (1946) reveals that each author wove the thematic fabric of his masterpiece out of themes dramatized in his other works and enhanced these ideas with the comprehensive theme of redemption through suffering.

The parallels in the fiction of Hawthorne and Warren contribute to a view of American literature as unified and coherent. Hawthorne and Warren are representative of American writers whose works speak across the span of time and space to acknowledge their literary kinship, thus joining past and present in a thematic continuum.
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CHAPTER I

THEMATIC CONTINUUM IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.¹

Students of American fiction have long insisted that beneath the apparent differences and contradictions among the works of the greatest American literary figures exists a continuity of ideas, a recurrence and emphasis of common themes. In his introduction to Mark Twain: A Collection of Critical Essays, Henry Nash Smith proposes a new kind of literary history based on thematic analysis to identify continuities in American literature, an approach which could "prove to be the most reliable method for placing a writer in his cultural context."² One way of carrying out Smith's suggestion is to compare two American authors, representatives of two centuries and two regions, to distinguish ideas and techniques basic to the thematic continuum of American literature.

Although Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) and Robert Penn


Warren (1905– ) belong to different periods of American literary history, the thematic parallels in their works indicate their close association in the American tradition of the romance and demonstrate ideological correspondences between writers of the New England Renaissance^3 and those of the Southern Renaissance.^4 This dissertation provides the material for one chapter in Smith's "literary history" by using thematic parallels to place the fiction of Hawthorne and that of Warren in the continuum of American literature.

Justification for an analytical comparison of the fiction of Hawthorne and that of Warren grows out of Hawthorne's comment about the relationship of authors: "We find thoughts in all great writers (and even in small ones) that strike their roots far beneath the surface and intertwine themselves with the roots of other writers' thoughts; so that when we pull up one, we stir the whole and yet those writers have had no

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^3 F. O. Matthiessen used this term to describe the literary activity in New England in the 1830s and 1840s. He focused on Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman. See American Renaissance (London: Oxford University Press, 1941).

conscious society with one another." Warren has also acknowledged this almost subconscious association with other authors' ideas in a reply to B. R. McElderry's suggestion that a statement by Walt Whitman provided the source for a passage in All the King's Men: "No, if I ever read Whitman's comment . . . I had forgotten it. That is, as far as the top of my mind was concerned. I would hate to take any oath about the bottom of my mind." These often unconscious ideological relationships described by Hawthorne and Warren have prompted numerous critical studies. Scholars have explored parallels in the works of Hawthorne and major literary figures such as Spenser, Milton, Shakespeare, George Eliot, Keats, Scott, Melville, Mark Twain, Whitman, Cooper, Conrad, Faulkner, and Wolfe. Critics have also noted similarities between Warren's works and those of other authors including Shakespeare, Melville, Conrad, Whitman, George Eliot, Faulkner, and Wolfe. Even though some of the same names appear on both lists, no detailed critical evaluation of the parallels in the fiction of Hawthorne and Warren has been published.

Only a few writers have even mentioned comparing Hawthorne and Warren. For example, Hyatt Waggoner attributes

5 Nathaniel Hawthorne in letter to Miss Delia Bacon, June 21, 1856, as quoted in Jane Lundblad, Nathaniel Hawthorne and European Literary Tradition (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1947), p. 76.

Hawthorne's modernity to his emphasis on irony, ambiguity, and paradox and links him with Warren "in an unbroken tradition in our literature." In *American Literature and Christian Doctrine*, Randall Stewart discusses Warren's *Night Rider* and "Original Sin: A Short Story" and inserts the parenthetical phrases, "reminding one of Hawthorne" and "in the manner of Hawthorne's Ethan Brand." From these statements and Terence Martin's comment that "perhaps more than any other contemporary writer, the work of Robert Penn Warren echoes themes and concerns that pervade the pages of Hawthorne's fiction" came the impetus for this examination of Hawthorne's and Warren's contribution to the thematic continuum in American literature.

Hawthorne and Warren are appropriate subjects for comparison not only because they represent what Stewart calls the two greatest periods of American literary production, but also because they share, across the span of a century, a "common view of the human condition." Both depict man's


10 Stewart, p. 20.

life as "dark and tragic," an outlook that Nicholas Joost suggests is "the reverse side of that coin the face of which is . . . loud and shallow optimism." Warren, like Hawthorne, "finds meaning in orthodoxy, in the return to and reinterpretation of tradition; . . . he presents the past and present as linked not in destructive and irreconcilable opposition, but in an interrelationship that can, by our willing it, be fruitful."\(^\text{12}\)

In their attempt to comprehend the "American present as the result of the American past,"\(^\text{13}\) Hawthorne and Warren often develop plots based on historical fact to illustrate universal philosophical, moral, and psychological truths. To dramatize the meaning of the past for the present, Hawthorne recreates incidents from Colonial history, and Warren depicts events associated with the Civil War. Each makes of history a myth through which to interpret human experience and focuses on a few specific themes to represent the truth revealed: the nature of reality, original sin as an integral part of human nature, the search for a father, the necessity of accepting the past to understand the present, the "divided self" or the evil of the isolated intellect, the "unpardonable sin" or the selfish manipulation of another person, personal


\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 284.
fulfillment through self-knowledge, alienation from the community, and the "fortunate fall" or knowledge through suffering. The recurrence and predominance of these themes suggest that they characterize a basic part of human experience which was relevant to Hawthorne and remains meaningful to Warren.

Not only do Hawthorne and Warren emphasize the same themes and literary interests, but they also frequently select similar techniques and methods. Both accept a moral purpose for literature and utilize ironic comment and tone to convey theme. Both also employ techniques of Gothic novels; psychological motivation and imagery; dialectic configuration of themes; and artistic use of history, the Bible, and mythology. The correspondences in the fiction of Hawthorne and Warren indicate that they view American experience from the same perspective and share with Eliot the belief that "all time is eternally present."  

The congruent elements in Hawthorne's and Warren's fiction and their common attitudes toward the purpose of fiction and the role of the novelist link them in the American tradition of romance. In the preface to The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne distinguishes between a "novel" and a "romance." A novel "is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience." The romance "while, as a work

14 Eliot, p. 117.
of art, it must rigidly subject itself to laws, and while it sins unpardonably so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart—has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation.\footnote{Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Preface" to The House of the Seven Gables, ed. William Charvat et al., The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1965), II, 1.} In "The Custom House" Hawthorne writes that a romancer must seek the "truth of the human heart" by viewing experience "as if through moonlight, in a familiar room . . . making every object so minutely visible, yet so unlike a morning or noon tide visibility.\footnote{Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, ed. William Charvat et al., The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1962), I, 35.} By combining the "cold spirituality of the moonbeams" with the warmer light cast by a dim coal fire or the "sensibilities of human tenderness" (I, 36), the author of romances converts his abstraction into human experience and speaks the "truth of the human heart."

Writing ninety years after Hawthorne, Warren, in an essay on Joseph Conrad, defines the function of a novelist in terms echoing Hawthorne's defense of writers of romances:

The philosophical novelist, or poet, is one for whom the documentation of the world is constantly striving to rise to the level of generalization about values, for whom images always fall into a dialectical configuration, for whom the urgency of experience, no matter how vividly and strongly experience may enchant, is the urgency to know the
meaning of experience. This is not to say that the philosophical novelist is schematic and deductive. It is to say quite the contrary, that he is willing to go naked into the pit, again and again, to make the same old struggle for truth.  

Arthur Mizener attributes the term "philosophical romance" specifically to Warren's *Flood* and by association to his other novels.  

In an unpublished dissertation, Daniel Golden relates Warren to the tradition of the romance and argues that his later novels are "rejuvenated . . . versions of the romance. The ideological abstraction of this genre is particularly suited to Warren's preoccupation with massive questions of human guilt and historical responsibility in the American South. In Warren's case, the genre of romance allows for an emphasis on the abstract and intellectual dilemmas of his central characters."  

Like Hawthorne, Warren uses moonlight as a metaphor for the perspective or angle of vision conducive to seeking truth, the appropriate setting for the imagination to change the "familiar world to make it poetry."  

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Even though Warren's novels vary somewhat from the strict definition of Hawthorne's "romance," they demonstrate the logical development of the nineteenth century romance filtered through the post-Civil War realistic and the twentieth-century naturalistic movements.

Although few critics have specifically associated Hawthorne and Warren in the American tradition of the romance, since 1950 several have reconsidered the relationship between the nineteenth-century romance and twentieth-century naturalism. All acknowledge Hawthorne's definition of the romance as a point of reference, but each study focuses on a different facet of the comparison. In *The American Novel and Its Tradition*, Richard Chase insists that the romance is the uniquely American form of fiction adapted to the "particular demands of an American imagination" responding to a "world of radical, even irreconcilable contradictions." Chase relies on Hawthorne's distinction between the "novel" and the "romance": the novel "renders reality closely and in comprehensive detail"; by contrast, the romance can "more freely veer toward mythic, allegorical and symbolistic forms." Chase agrees with William Gilmore Simms that "the modern Romance is the substitute which the people of the present day offer for the ancient epic" and acknowledges that Simms' concept influenced Southern

writers including Robert Penn Warren.22 Charles Feidelson identifies symbolism as a major link between nineteenth-century and modern literature and points out that the romanticism of Hawthorne and Melville is "closer to modern notions of symbolic reality than to romantic egoism."23 R. W. B. Lewis traces the Adamic myth or archetype as a common literary element of the nineteenth century and suggests that it is still a viable "means of grasping the special complexities, the buoyant assurance, and the encircling doubt of the still unfolding American scene."24 Both Hawthorne and Warren employ the motif of the Fall to dramatize loss of innocence and initiation into reality. In The Power of Blackness, Harry Levin emphasizes "the symbolic character of our greatest fiction and the darker wisdom of our deeper minds."25 Levin studies nineteenth-century fiction and concludes that "where the voice of the majority is by definition affirmative, the spirit of independence is likeliest to manifest itself by employing the negative: by saying no in thunder--as Melville wrote to Hawthorne--though hidden by the devil himself to say yes."26


26 Ibid., p. 17.
Hawthorne and Melville, as well as Warren and other Southern writers, are united by their deep sense of darkness in American experience.

Critics in the 1960s intensified the revaluation of the romance. In *Form and Fable in American Fiction*, Daniel Hoffman reaffirms the romance as an American tradition in fiction and finds fable to be its core; he believes that examining folklore, myth, and ritual will "expose important though neglected sources of continuity linking examples of the prose romance." 27 A comparison of Hawthorne's and Warren's use of myth supports Hoffman's contention. In 1969 Joel Porte published *The Romance in America: Studies in Cooper, Poe, Melville, and James*, an account meant to assimilate material from previous studies and to establish that "the American romance is characterized by a need self-consciously to define its own aims so that 'romance' becomes frequently . . . the theme as well as the form of the author's works." 28 Porte maintains that the experience of exploring the American continent parallels the experience of self-exploration and dominates the romance: "What began as a literal and ended as a metaphoric need to peer into and pierce through the wilderness constitutes the true burden of the romance in America and a


major strand of our literary heritage.\textsuperscript{29} This strand provides a significant link between the writers of the American Renaissance and their literary descendants, the authors of the Southern Renaissance.

As representatives of two geographical and literary regions, Hawthorne and Warren are appropriate subjects for comparison because of their affinity in the way they responded artistically to their native regions. Hawthorne could be describing Warren's link to the South when the New Englander writes of his "native place" (I, 8) in "The Custom House."

This prefatory essay to The Scarlet Letter reveals Hawthorne's ambivalent attitude toward his birthplace, Salem, Massachusetts, and the aura of Puritanism he invariably associates with it. Hawthorne attributes his affection for Salem to the "deep and aged roots which my family has struck into the soil" (I, 8). He recalls his earliest American ancestor and remarks, "I seem to have a stronger claim to a residence here on account of this grave, bearded, sable-cloaked, and steeple-crowned progenitor,—who came so early, with his Bible and his sword, and trode the unworn street with such a stately port, and made so large a figure as a man of war and peace . . . ."

(I, 9). Arlin Turner notes that William Hathorne, the first member of the Hathorne family to journey to the colonies, arrived in 1630 and served as a soldier and magistrate. In the latter capacity he won fame by condemning a Quaker woman

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., pp. 228-229.
to be whipped through the streets of Salem, Boston, and Dedham. His son, John Hathorne, presided as a judge at witch trials in Salem in 1692. Recognizing that Salem has cast a "spell" on him, Hawthorne accepts his role as representative of these ancestors and agrees to "take shame upon myself for their sakes" (I, 10). This sense of guilt and yet admiration for his forebears causes Hawthorne to direct his attention frequently in his fiction to Salem and to the Puritans who embodied the qualities he associates with his "native place."

Just as New England, specifically Salem and Boston, constitutes a major thread in the fiber of Hawthorne's life and fiction, so the South, specifically Kentucky and Tennessee, influences a great portion of Robert Penn Warren's attitudes and works. Like Hawthorne, Warren acknowledges the hold his native place exerts on him. In Segregation: The Inner Conflict of the South, Warren indicates the strong identity he feels as a Southerner and reveals his need to explain and defend the region of his birth. He records a conversation with a "subtle and learned man" who said to Warren, "There's something you can't explain, what being a Southerner is." This comment recalls the remark of a Yankee friend: "Southerners and Jews, you're exactly alike, you're so damned special."

Warren replied, "Yes, . . . we're both persecuted minorities." As an afterthought, he adds, "I had said it for a joke. But had I?" 31

Warren's apology for the South motivates three of his nonfiction works. In 1930, he reviewed the race situation and defended segregation in "The Briar Patch," published in *I'll Take My Stand.* 32 He argued that both whites and blacks had to be educated before integration would succeed. Although he later admitted a "sense of evasion" in his essay, he maintained that in 1929, the country still was not ready for integration. 33 Warren's attitude toward segregation changed during the next decades, and in 1956 he travelled throughout the South recording conversations with Southerners about segregation. One statement suggests his wish to escape his Southern heritage: "I know what the Southerner feels going out of the South, the relief, the expanding vistas. . . . It is the relief from responsibility." 34 He observed that such relief is "the flight from the reality you were born to." 35 Like Hawthorne, who explored the strengths as well

35 Ibid., p. 34.
as the weaknesses of his Puritan heritage in order to find moral strengths in the present, Warren concludes *Segregation* with a hope for the future: "If the South is really able to face up to itself and its situation, it may achieve identity, moral identity. Then in a country where moral identity is hard to come by, the South, because it has had to deal concretely with a moral problem, may offer some leadership. And we need any we can get. If we are to break out of the national rhythm, the rhythm between complacency and panic."\(^{36}\) This concern for moral identity inspires two of Warren's later works, *The Legacy of the Civil War* (1961) and *Who Speaks for the Negro?* (1965).

Although the topics of slavery and the resulting race situation do not dominate Warren's fiction, they serve as symbols of the Southern past and focal points for the guilt associated with that past. Hugh Moore believes that Warren probes the facts of history to find meaning in human experience; his method for achieving moral illumination remains "his imaginative confrontation with the historical event which he regards as the most important in American history and our society's best subject for a historical myth--the Civil War."\(^{37}\) Like Hawthorne's interest in colonial America, Warren's fascination with the history of his native region is a family matter.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., p. 115.

Charles H. Bohner describes Warren's grandfathers, who fought for the Confederacy, and Warren recalls his eagerness as a boy to listen to their reminiscences. Through concern for transmuting history into fiction, close personal bonds with the history of their native regions, and emphasis on the presentness of the past, Hawthorne and Warren exemplify the literary continuity between two centuries and two regions.

Born in 1804, Hawthorne spent most of his childhood in Salem, Massachusetts, where he attended school. Later while a student at Bowdoin College, he affirmed his desire to be a writer and asserted his personal identity by adding a "w" to his family name. After graduation in 1825, Hawthorne returned to his mother's house in Salem and began what Stewart calls "the solitary years." Although the young author was certainly not a recluse, he devoted much of his time to perfecting his craft. In 1836, Hawthorne edited the American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge. The following year he published Twice-Told Tales, a collection of thirty-six stories indicating the early development of subjects and themes which would dominate his novels. Among the tales are "The Gentle Boy," "Roger Malvin's Burial," and "Young Goodman Brown."

Stewart records that in 1839 Hawthorne accepted a post in


the Boston Custom House. Two years later he invested one thousand dollars in Brook Farm but spent only a few months there. Mosses from an Old Manse (1846) contains sketches and tales such as "The Christmas Banquet," "Earth's Holocaust," and "The Celestial Railroad," focusing on themes of isolation and guilt. In 1849 after almost three years as surveyor in the Salem Custom House, Hawthorne, like other Democrats, faced dismissal after the Whigs assumed power. In his enforced leisure, he returned to writing.

Hawthorne's novels reveal his continuing concern with a few themes developed partially or tentatively in his earlier short stories; and the prefaces to these works provide his discussion of critical standards, his definition of the romance, and his explanation of the role of the novelist. The Scarlet Letter (1850) presents a story of secret sin and public punishment, of private revenge and public expiation, and of religious narrowness and philosophic expansion. A year later in The House of the Seven Gables (1851) Hawthorne dramatized the effect of the past on the present and the necessity of accepting rather than suppressing one's personal history. An interesting and significant shift in Hawthorne's literary works occurred in 1852 with his A Wonder-Book, a retelling of classical myths for children. His publication of this book following so closely his two novels imbued with

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40 Ibid., p. 53.
New England history suggests an important facet of his fiction, the close link between history and myth. The *Blithedale Romance* (1852) provides an imaginative treatment of Hawthorne's brief stay at Brook Farm. The author explores the evil of the isolated egoist and the selfish manipulation of other people, themes he had stated explicitly in "Ethan Brand," "The Birthmark," The *Scarlet Letter*, and The *House of the Seven Gables*. Hawthorne's campaign biography of Franklin Pierce, a personal friend since college, resulted in the writer's appointment as Consul to Liverpool in 1853. Before sailing for England, Hawthorne completed *Tanglewood Tales for Girls and Boys* (1853), a continuation of his adaptation of Greek myths. During the next seven years Hawthorne fulfilled his official duties in England (1853-1857) and with his family spent two years in Italy (1857-1859), where he gathered material for *The Marble Faun* (1860). The story of an innocent young man initiated into the possibilities for violence in his own nature, *The Marble Faun* develops Hawthorne's concept of the Fortunate Fall. Upon his return home, Hawthorne resumed his literary pursuits and left four fragments of stories when he died, May 19, 1864.

A century after Hawthorne's birth, Robert Penn Warren was born in Guthrie, Kentucky, on April 24, 1904. As Bohner suggests, the South of Warren's youth was the hill country of Kentucky close to the Tennessee border, a section known as

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41 Ibid., p. 140.
the "Black Patch." After his graduation from high school in Clarksville, Tennessee, Warren enrolled in Vanderbilt University. He planned to study science, but he "got cured of that fast by bad instruction in Freshman Chemistry and good instruction in Freshman English." Among his literary associates were members of the "Fugitives": John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, Walter Clyde Curry, Merrill Moore, Allen Tate, and Ridley Willis. Bohner reports that Warren joined this literary fellowship in his junior year at a time when he was greatly influenced by their critical methods of formalistic or close textual analysis. John Lewis Longley relates that after Warren's graduation in 1925, he accepted teaching fellowships at Berkeley and then Yale. While a graduate student, Warren wrote John Brown: The Making of a Martyr (1929). By his interest in Brown, Warren reveals his continued fascination with Southern history; by his treatment of Brown, Warren introduces a theme which would dominate his fiction: the need for self-knowledge.

Warren's talents produced a variety of works which earned him recognition not only as a biographer, but also as a historian, novelist, poet, dramatist, and critic. His

42 Bohner, p. 21.
43 Cowley, p. 186.
44 Bohner, p. 27.
fiction published from 1939 to 1977 creates what Bohner calls a "panorama of the usable past covering more than one hundred and fifty years of Southern history." Night Rider (1939) recreates the violent times in Kentucky during Warren's boyhood when tobacco growers formed associations to resist the price fixing of tobacco trusts and sent out "night riders" to coerce reluctant members. In At Heaven's Gates (1943), Warren turned to the 1920s for his story of the dominating and corrupting influence of a powerful businessman. Warren's masterpiece, All the King's Men (1946), describes the career of a Southern demagogue and the effect of his political philosophy on the lives he touched. Based loosely on the life of Huey Long of Louisiana, All the King's Men probes the mechanics of democracy and the relation of the Southern past to the present. In "Blackberry Winter" (1946), Warren creates a classic story of initiation on a Southern farm. This tale and thirteen others appeared in 1948 under the title, The Circus in the Attic and Other Stories. World Enough and Time (1950) returns to Kentucky history for its setting and plot. In this tale of seduction, betrayal, and retribution, Warren again probes a factual event to find the significance of the past. Warren's Band of Angels (1955) relates the

46 Bohner, p. 21.

experience of a young woman who discovers at her father's
death that she is legally a slave because her mother was
black. Set in nineteenth century Kentucky, Band of Angels
portrays one woman's search for identity and makes her
plight the symbol of the quest for meaning in Southern his-
tory. Like a great portion of Warren's fiction, The Cave
(1959) is based on an actual event, the death of a young man
trapped for two weeks in a Tennessee cavern. Dealing with
this youth's tragedy forces the other characters to explore
their own identities and motives. Wilderness: A Tale of
the Civil War (1961) plunges once again into a historical
event as a means of illuminating the present. Flood (1964)
depicts a situation in which members of a small community
are forced to analyze their personal relationships as they
face destruction of their town to make way for a new dam.
Warren's Meet Me in the Green Glen (1971) focuses on a lonely
woman whose life of isolation changes with the arrival of a
young, exciting wanderer and then with the tragedy of a murder
trial. A Place to Come To (1977) depicts the existence of an
alienated man of the twentieth century trying to reconcile
his past with his attempts to carve some meaning from life
through the study of literature and the experience of love.
Warren's fascination with interpreting Southern history and
contemporary Southern life permeates his fiction and makes

48 Richard B. Sale, "An Interview in New Haven with
him both a spokesman for and at times a critic of his native region.

In addition to his fiction, Warren has published poetry, children's books, drama, and criticism. From 1935 to 1978 he produced twelve volumes of poetry; his poems encompass in capsule form all of the themes he developed more fully in his fiction. Although poetry and fiction have been Warren's most intense literary interests, he wrote a dramatic version of All the King's Men (1947) and, like Hawthorne, children's books, Remember the Alamo (1958) and The Gods of Mount Olympus (1959). Early in his career Warren earned the respect of his colleagues for his critical acumen. Interested in techniques of fiction and poetry and influenced by the Fugitives' emphasis on textual analysis, Warren incorporated his critical concepts in texts such as An Approach to Literature (1936) and Understanding Poetry (1938). Besides his editorial work connected with founding The Southern Review, Warren continued his critical writing in such volumes as Understanding Fiction (1943), edited with Cleanth Brooks, several collections of short stories and poems edited in collaboration with others, and anthologies of American literature. In 1958 Warren's Selected Essays provided a synthesis of his critical standards; his essays offer critical evaluations of Conrad, Faulkner, Hemingway, Frost, Porter, Welty, Wolfe, Melville, and Coleridge. Warren has contributed numerous articles on American and English
During his long literary career, Warren has also taught at Southwestern College in Memphis, Vanderbilt University, Louisiana State University, the University of Minnesota, and Yale University. For his literary and scholarly achievements he has received numerous awards and acknowledgments of merit. Beebe reports that besides being selected as a Rhodes Scholar (1928-1930) and accepting two Guggenheim Fellowships (1939-1940 and 1947-1948), Warren occupied the Chair of Poetry at the Library of Congress in 1944. He won the Pulitzer Prize in fiction for *All the King's Men* (1946) and in poetry for *Promises: Poems 1954-1956* (1957). *Promises* also earned Warren the Edna St. Vincent Millay Prize of the Poetry Society of America and the National Book Award. Other honors are his election to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1959; his reception of the Bollingen Prize in Poetry for *Selected Poems, New and Old, 1923-1966* in 1967; the National Medal for Literature in 1970; the 1976 Copernicus Award for *Or Else*; and the 1979 Pulitzer Prize in poetry for *Now and Then: Poems 1976-1978*.

A review of pertinent criticism of Hawthorne's and Warren's fiction reveals that although scholars have employed


similar critical approaches for the works of both writers such as biographical studies, source examinations, formalistic analyses, psychological investigations, mythological interpretations, and thematic surveys, no study which directly compares the fiction of Hawthorne and Warren has been published. Randall Stewart prepared the way for his authoritative _Nathaniel Hawthorne_ (1948) with his editions of Hawthorne's _The American Notebooks_ (1932) and _The English Notebooks_ (1941). With his comprehensive understanding of Hawthorne, Stewart integrates events in Hawthorne's life with elements of his works to provide a genuine critical biography. Akin to biographical studies is F. O. Matthiessen's _American Renaissance_, which discusses Hawthorne in the context of the literary milieu of the 1830s and 1840s. As a corollary to biographical research, scholars have explored the sources of Hawthorne's works. Elizabeth Chandler's _A Study of the Sources of the Tales and Romances Written by Nathaniel Hawthorne Before 1853_ (1926) was followed by investigations of specific sources for Hawthorne's characters, plots, and themes. A. N. Kaul in "Nathaniel Hawthorne: Heir and Critic

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54 Matthiessen, 1941.

55 Elizabeth Chandler, _A Study of the Sources of the Tales and Romances Written by Nathaniel Hawthorne Before 1853_ (Northampton: Smith College, 1926).
of the Puritan Tradition" discusses perhaps the most often
cited source for Hawthorne's probing of moral questions.56
In *Nathaniel Hawthorne and the Tradition of Gothic Romance*,
Jane Lundblad analyzes Hawthorne's fiction in relation to its
literary background.57 William Bysshe Stein's *Hawthorne's
Faust: A Study of the Devil Archetype* focuses on Hawthorne's
recurring character types and his artistic development of the
Faust myth.58

The influence of twentieth-century critical standards
and literary trends has prompted formalistic, psychological,
mythological, and thematic interpretations of Hawthorne's
fiction. Following the dicta of the New Critics, Richard
Harter Fogle, in *Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and the
Dark*, explores Hawthorne's use of light or "clarity of design"
and darkness or "tragic complexity" and suggests that inter-
weaving these two qualities forms the fabric of Hawthorne's
fiction.59 Others have developed Henry James' suggestion that
"the fine thing in Hawthorne is that he cared for the deeper

56 A. N. Kaul, "Nathaniel Hawthorne: Heir and Critic
of the Puritan Tradition," *The American Vision: Actual and
Ideal Society in Nineteenth Century Fiction* (New Haven: Yale
University Press, 1963), pp. 139-213.

57 Jane Lundblad, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and the Tradition

58 William Bysshe Stein, *Hawthorne's Faust: A Study of the
Devil Archetype* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press,
1953).

59 Richard H. Fogle, *Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and
psychology and that, in his way, he tried to become familiar with it."60 In his *Sins of the Fathers: Hawthorne's Psychological Themes*, Frederick Crews provoked considerable controversy over Freudian analysis of Hawthorne's life and fiction.61 As part of the modern revaluations and reinterpretations of literary works in terms of myths, Hugo McPherson published *Hawthorne as Mythmaker*, a study which attempts to define the "myth-making nature of Hawthorne's imagination" by considering Hawthorne's personal myth, his retelling of the Greek myths for children, his development of New England history as myth, and the recurring character types which become the "personae" of Hawthorne's myth.62 As a part of these studies cited and as a logical outgrowth of the approaches, critics have emphasized themes which appear throughout Hawthorne's fiction. In the introduction to *The American Notebooks*, Stewart identifies "Recurrent Themes in Hawthorne's Fiction."63 Numerous articles like Darrel Abel's "The Theme of Isolation in Hawthorne"64 and Nina Baym's "The Head, the Heart, and the Unpardonable Sin"65


describe specific themes and suggest their significance in Hawthorne's fiction. Because of the richness of his writing and the ambiguity of his meanings, Hawthorne, as man and artist, has inspired hundreds of studies. The amount of critical response indicates continued fascination with his fiction; the quality of the scholars attracted to his works and the scholarship they have produced attests to the relevance of his themes and the merit of his literary artistry.

Pertinent criticism of Warren's work indicates that scholars have subjected his fiction to approaches comparable to those applied to Hawthorne's writings. Although no definitive biography of Warren has yet been published, several critics place their discussions in the framework of biographical material. Bohner not only supplies basic information about Warren's life but also traces Warren's artistic development and the maturation of his themes. Unlike Hawthorne, Warren has not provided notebooks revealing significant details of his life and art, but he has participated in interviews about his background and work. Two of the most useful interviews

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transcripts have appeared in *Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews* (1957) and *Studies in the Novel* (1970). In the Paris interview, Warren discusses his youth in the South and his bond with that region, his experience as a member of the Fugitives, and his fictional treatment of history.68 In the *Studies in the Novel* interview, Warren comments on his method of writing, his interest in poetry, and his reaction to contemporary literary figures.69 To place Warren in his literary milieu, three critics have published book-length studies of the Fugitives. John M. Bradbury offers what he calls a "critical account" of this group and their work by discussing each of the original members in their roles as poets, critics, and novelists.70 Louise Cowan approaches the Fugitives by writing a literary history of their work and assessing their influence on American literature.71 Concentrating on the intellectual background of the group, John Stewart closely examines the literary production of Warren as well as John Crowe Ransom and Allen Tate.72

68 Cowley, pp. 183-207.

69 Sale, pp. 325-354.


Formalistic, psychological, and thematic studies reflect other approaches to Warren's works. Formalistic analyses emphasize structural patterns of patricide\(^73\) and the "dialectical configuration" of Warren's themes.\(^74\) Bradbury furthers this approach by examining symbolic and textual patterns and concluding that Warren's technique is "symbolic naturalism," the dominant technique of the Southern Renaissance.\(^75\) In psychological investigations, critics point to Warren's study of his "insecure characters."\(^76\) For example, Cargill argues that Warren has a psychological and artistic compulsion to study people who are monsters and that violence merely exemplifies their method of achieving identity or self-knowledge.\(^77\) Thematic studies include essays on specific themes and Caspar's outlining Warren's artistic development according to his major themes: the problem of evil, the meaning of history, the human penchant for violence, the search for self-knowledge, and the


\(^75\) John M. Bradbury, "Robert Penn Warren's Novels: The Symbolic and Textual Patterns," Accent, 13 (1953), 77-89.


need for self-fulfillment. Although Warren's poetry is not the focus of this study, one critical account of his poetic achievement is pertinent. Victor H. Strandberg's *A Colder Fire: The Poetry of Robert Penn Warren* surveys Warren's poetry as it reveals his answer to naturalism—a combination of religion and psychology. Strandberg believes that Warren's poems can be viewed as thematic extensions of his fiction.

For Warren, as for Hawthorne, the study of sources is interwoven with the study of history and thus with myth. For example, Hugh Moore suggests that understanding Warren's fictional use of history is vital to comprehending the full significance of his themes. Moore insists that Warren uses history as the myth through which an individual and a society can gain self-knowledge. The nature of Warren criticism indicates the security of his position as a man of letters and a representative of the Southern Renaissance.

A review of the literary approaches used to elucidate the fiction of Hawthorne and Warren establishes general similarities; however, Warren provides even more specific support for linking his fiction with Hawthorne's. Early in his career, Warren published "Hawthorne, Anderson, and Frost"

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80 Moore, p. 20.
(1928), reviewing biographical studies of these three authors. Warren sees Hawthorne as an artist whose special relationship to the past and to Puritanism supplies the "premises of a certain concept of tragedy, . . . 'a myth' . . . susceptible to a deep psychological interpretation." Although over forty years would pass before Warren published an article devoted exclusively to Hawthorne's work, critical comments scattered throughout his numerous studies reveal that Hawthorne's fiction and his response to American life and history serve as reference points for Warren's critical standards. For example, two essays printed in 1936 contain representative comments. In "Some Don'ts for Literary Regionalists" Warren cites Hawthorne as an example of a regionalist whose work was universal because he did not resort to mere "quaintness and local color" and because he did not overtly seek to give his work a regional flavor. Warren queries, "Did Hawthorne have to reason or to will himself into his regionalism, into appropriate relation to his place and its past and present?"

What was natural for Hawthorne may have become affected for later writers, Warren believes. In "Literature as Symptom," Warren lists Hawthorne, Milton, Shakespeare, and Melville as regionalists who, each in his own way, came to terms with "the


relation of an undead past to a present."\(^83\) Warren's frequent reference to Hawthorne as one of the great authors of the past and his association of Hawthorne with Milton and Shakespeare attest to Warren's high regard for Hawthorne's fiction.

When Warren accepted the 1970 National Medal for Literature at the Library of Congress, he chose as the title of his address, "Hawthorne Was Relevant." He directed his comments to those who indict modern society: "in brief they seem to neglect the nature of the human animal—what we used to refer to as Original Sin."\(^84\) To demonstrate the relevancy of Hawthorne's vision of man and his true nature, Warren compares Hawthorne and Emerson. The Transcendentalist was relevant to his time because he was absorbed in it, but Hawthorne's work has endured partly because he resisted complete involvement in the world around him: "We revere Emerson, the prophet whose prophecies came true, but having once come true, these prophecies began to come untrue. More and more Emerson recedes grandly into history, as the future he predicted becomes a past. And what the cat's eye of Hawthorne saw gave him the future—and relevance. He died more than a century ago, but we find in his work a complex, tangled and revolutionary


vision of the soul, which we recognize as our own.\textsuperscript{85} Warren's literary kinship to Hawthorne stems from this common view of human nature, their reverence for the past, and the necessity of standing apart from one's times in order to place the individual human struggle in historical perspective.

Three years later Warren again directed his critical attention to Hawthorne's fiction. In "Hawthorne Revisited: Some Remarks on Hellfiredness," Warren analyzes two of Hawthorne's short stories as precursors to The Scarlet Letter and notes the "interpenetration of . . . themes,"\textsuperscript{86} a characteristic also discernible in Warren's fiction. Recognizing that a genius must exist in relation to his times, Warren believes Hawthorne maintained a balance that nourished his imagination:

\begin{quote}
He lived in the right ratio . . . between attachment to his region and a detached assessment of it; between attraction to the past and its repudiation; between attraction to the world and contempt for its gifts; between a powerful attraction to women and a sexual flinch; between a faith in life and a corrosive skepticism; between a capacity for affection and an innate coldness; between aesthetic passion and moral concern; between a fascinated attentiveness to the realistic texture, forms, and characteristics of nature and human nature, and a compulsive flight from that welter of life toward abstract ideas; and between most crucially of all, a deep knowledge of himself and an ignorance of
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., pp. 86-87.

himself instinctively cultivated in a fear of the
darker potentialities of self. 87

By citing Hawthorne's paradoxical concerns, Warren also
describes the conflicts dramatized in his own fiction.

To highlight the continuities of theme and method in
Hawthorne's and Warren's fiction, this study will focus on
one idea or cluster of ideas in each chapter with concen-
tration on one major fictional work by each author. Chapter
II, "A Bitter Kind of Knowledge," compares Hawthorne's
"Young Goodman Brown" and Warren's "Blackberry Winter" as
classic treatments of initiation. Each author utilizes
archetypal patterns to dramatize the possibilities for moral,
emotional, and psychological maturity. Chapter III, "Blood
to Drink'—The Curse of the Past," expands the theme of ini-
tiation to incorporate understanding and accepting the past.
Hawthorne's The House of the Seven Gables and Warren's Band
of Angels illustrates the authors' fascination with history
transmuted into fiction. Chapter IV, "In Cold Blood,"
traces alienation as a dominant theme in Hawthorne's Blithe-
dale Romance and Warren's At Heaven's Gate. Both authors
create characters who separate themselves from their fellow
men either through an obsession with some abstract idea or
goal or through the selfish manipulation of other people.

Chapter V, "Descent into the Cavern," indicates the concern

87 Ibid., p. 75.
shared by Hawthorne and Warren for a man's need to penetrate to the heart of his existence and the core of his identity. Through the suffering of self-discovery, characters in Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* and Warren's *The Cave* provide support for the concepts of Original Sin and the Fortunate Fall. In Chapter VI, "Redemption Through Suffering," an analysis of the parallels in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and Warren's *All the King's Men* reveals that each author wove the thematic fabric of his masterpiece out of themes dramatized in his other works. Chapter VII, "American Literary Continuity," concludes this study by associating Hawthorne and Warren in the American literary tradition of the romance, the context of American regionalism, and the thematic continuum of American literature.
CHAPTER II
"A BITTER KIND OF KNOWLEDGE"

In The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century, R. W. B. Lewis responds to attempts to isolate qualities unique to American literature by suggesting "there may be no such thing as 'American experience'; it is probably better not to insist that there is. But there has been experience in America, and the account of it has had its own specific form."¹ A close analysis of the thematic continuum in American literature reveals a major, perhaps the dominant, form, what Lewis calls the "pattern for American fiction"--the initiation story.² Through dramatizations of the theme of initiation, American authors return again and again to the process of maturation or what William Coyle labels the "threshold story," the tale of a young man's encounter with the adult world.³ Coyle proposes that "perhaps because Americans think of themselves as a youthful

² Ibid., p. 6.
nation, their literature, especially fiction, has dealt preponderantly with youth."^4

Because of the rites and rituals associated with initiation ceremonies and because of the basic, even primitive aspect of the crisis of maturity, scholars such as Northrop Frye traditionally acknowledge the close relationship between initiation stories and myth.\(^5\) Alan W. Watts offers one pertinent definition of myth: "a complex of stories—some no doubt fact, and some fantasy—which, for various reasons, human beings regard as demonstrations of the inner meaning of the universe and of human life."\(^6\) An important part of this "inner meaning" of human experience is the true nature of the adult world. Consequently, George Whalley insists that myth "embodies in an articulated structure of symbol or narrative a version of reality. It is a condensed account of man's Being and attempts to represent reality with structural fidelity, to indicate at a single stroke the salient and fundamental relations which for a man constitute reality."\(^7\) In American literature the quest for an understanding of reality finds its "fullest expression" in the theme of initiation.\(^8\)

\(^4\) Ibid., p. vii.


\(^8\) Coyle, p. 2.
There can be little doubt that, whatever the reason, the initiation theme has captured the imagination of American authors. James Fenimore Cooper's *The Deerslayer*, Herman Melville's *Billy Budd*, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, William Faulkner's "The Bear," and Ernest Hemingway's "Big Two-Hearted River" and other Nick Adams stories attest to the import of the initiation theme in American literature. W. Tasker Witham notes the continued fascination with this aspect of human experience when he cites over six hundred American adult novels dealing with the crisis of maturity published between 1920 and 1960. In "Young Goodman Brown" (1835) and "Blackberry Winter" (1946), Hawthorne and Warren forcefully dramatize the way initiation has captured the imaginations of American writers.

As an extension of initiatory experience, the myth of the American Dream with its prospect of standing on the threshold of a new Eden in the New World became an integral part of American culture and literature. Lewis describes the "American Adam" as a man independent of heritage and facing experience with innocence and self-reliance: "A century ago the image contrived to embody the most fruitful contemporary ideas was that of the authentic American as a figure of heroic innocence and vast potentialities, poised at the

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start of a new history."\textsuperscript{10} However, not the preservation of innocence but the loss of it and initiation into the awareness of evil produce the most profound American literature: 

"This is the darker thread in our literary fabric which, contrasting as it does with the myth of bright expectancy, lends depth and richness to the over-all design; it also reminds us of the disturbing proximity of Dream and Nightmare."\textsuperscript{11} In "Young Goodman Brown" and "Blackberry Winter" Hawthorne and Warren employ mythic patterns to explore the process of initiation and to examine the "darker" components of American cultural and literary identity.

Joseph Campbell lists the standard rites of passage as separation, initiation, and return: "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder; fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory won; the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man."\textsuperscript{12} Hawthorne and Warren adapt this pattern based on the life of Prometheus to their characters who venture outside their protected worlds and return changed. Northrop Frye points out the modification of classic myths in American stories of

\textsuperscript{10} Lewis, p. 1.


initiation: in myth the hero is divine; in romance he is human. Because Hawthorne and Warren belong to the tradition of American romance, their fiction associates the qualities of classical myths with the story of Adam, a figure embodying the possibilities and flaws of common humanity. Like Adam, characters in Hawthorne's and Warren's stories discover knowledge which casts them out of their Edenic childhood and forever colors their adult lives: "the proposition, implicit in much American writing from Poe and Cooper to Anderson and Hemingway, that the valid rite of initiation for the individual in the new world is not an initiation into society, but given the character of society, an initiation away from it: something I wish it were legitimate to call denitiation." Through a combination of mythic patterns infused with American characters and experiences, Hawthorne and Warren probe the nature of reality and the unsettling knowledge which introduction to the adult world can produce.

In "Young Goodman Brown," Hawthorne turns to the late seventeenth century in Salem, Massachusetts, and to the witchcraft associated with this site. At sunset one evening, a young Puritan, Goodman Brown, leaves Faith, his wife of three months, to keep an appointment in the forest with a figure who resembles Brown as a father might his son. Acknowledging

13 Frye, p. 188.

that he has kept the "covenant" by coming here, Brown decides that he will proceed no further into the forest; he argues that he comes from a "race of honest men" who have never taken the path he now follows. The stranger reveals that he has been sufficiently acquainted with Brown's father to supply him the torch to set fire to an Indian village. Shocked at his family's involvement with this stranger, Brown still insists that his ancestors would "abide no such wickedness" (X, 77). Brown's companion responds with laughter.

While Brown hesitates, the traveller points to an old woman, whom Brown believes to be Goody Cloyse, the woman who taught him his catechism. She recognizes the stranger and screams "the devil" (X, 79). Although surprised that such a pious woman would be journeying to a meeting of witches, Brown determines not to abandon his faith. Soon Brown hears horses and the voices of the minister and Deacon Gookin, who with Goody Cloyse, have been Brown's spiritual guides. The two riders speak of a meeting they are journeying to attend and a "goodly young woman to be taken into communion" (X, 81). Stunned but still resisting, Brown cries out, "With heaven above and Faith below, I will yet stand firm against the devil" (X, 82). Just then Brown hears the familiar voice of

his wife and believes he sees a pink ribbon float through
the air to a branch of a tree. "My Faith is gone" (X, 83)
Brown shouts and dashes through the forest laughing loudly
in his despair.

In a clearing deep within the gloomy woods, Brown dis-
covers a "grave and dark-clad company" (X, 84) gathered
around a rock. In the throng pious and saintly Puritans
mingle with men and women known for their evil and ungodly
lives. The "congregation" sings hymns, and then a figure
who resembles a Puritan minister calls for the "converts"
(X, 86) to be brought to the altar. A young woman joins
Brown standing before the gathering; the speaker pronounces,
"Now are ye undeceived. Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil
must be your only happiness (X, 88). Fearful of what he may
see when he again looks at his wife, Brown calls upon Faith
to look to heaven.

With these words Brown finds himself back on the edge
of the forest, unsure of whether Faith has obeyed his plea,
and even of whether he has really seen her or only dreamed.
Whether his experience is real or imagined, he returns from
the forest a changed man. He can no longer look upon the
minister, the deacon, Goody Cloyse, or even his wife without
doubting their goodness. The despair which has permeated
his being in the forest remains with him for the rest of his
life: "And when he had lived long, and was born to his grave
a hoary corpse, . . . they carved no hopeful verse upon his
tombstone, for his dying hour was gloom" (X, 90).
Writing a century after Hawthorne, Warren, in "Blackberry Winter," chose the time of his boyhood in Tennessee for his tale of initiation. The narrator, who recalls his experience as a boy of nine, remembers that he was attempting to slip out of the house barefoot despite his mother's admonishment that there has been a storm and a cold spell or "Blackberry Winter."\(^\text{16}\) Seth is about to protest his mother's command to put on his shoes when he notices a strange man approaching the house.

With his attention diverted to the stranger, the boy wonders why a man would be walking through the woods coming from the river on a path even local residents rarely used. The stranger looks "like a man who has come a long way and has a long way to go" (p. 66). Seth's mother faces the tramp and inquires if he wants work. She instructs him to bury drowned chicks and poults and then clean the flower beds. The boy follows the stranger around the yard, but the man's staring makes the boy so uncomfortable that he leaves the yard to go to the river where a crowd has gathered to gaze at the damage caused by the flood.

Instead of returning to his house, the narrator goes to Dellie's cabin to play with her son Jebb. Dellie and Old Jebb are "white-folks' niggers" (p. 77) because they work in

a white man's house, keep their cabin clean, and plant a vegetable garden. The boy is surprised to see trash and filth in the yard washed from beneath Dellie's porch. He steps carefully to avoid touching the filth with his bare feet. Dellie is in bed, and the boys have been warned to be quiet; Seth cannot resist urging Jebb to bring out a special toy. When Jebb imitates the sound of a train whistle, Dellie calls him to her bed and, while Seth watches, she slaps Jebb. Stunned by the ferocity of Dellie's uncharacteristic action, the narrator runs out the door of the cabin and through the yard without giving any thought to the filth that he gets on his feet.

Back in his own yard, Seth witnesses a confrontation between his father and the tramp. When Seth's father says he has no more work, the tramp replies with a word Seth says his parents would "have frailed me to death for using" (p. 84). At the command of Seth's father to get off the farm, the tramp appears to consider drawing his knife but instead gives a "sickish grin" (p. 84) and spits. Then he edges off the porch and starts toward the road. The boy follows, first at a safe distance, but then out of curiosity approaches the tramp, who threatens Seth if he comes any closer.

The narrator recalls that all of these events happened thirty-five years ago. Time has changed the world of his boyhood. His mother, his father, and Dellie have died. Jebb is in jail for killing a man in a fight. Old Jebb still lives
but now questions the prayer that brought him long life but permitted him to outlive his time. The tramp had threatened to cut the boy's throat if he followed, but the narrator, now a man, remembers, "I did follow him, all the years" (p. 87).

On first reading, these stories appear dissimilar. One deals with an adult, a married man; the other concerns a nine year-old boy. Hawthorne's tale occurs at night and describes a dream, a nightmare. Warren's story happens in the day and is realistic, even naturalistic in use of details. Yet on closer examination, appearance and reality become less distinct. The emotional atmosphere of Young Goodman Brown's experiences resemble the fears of a child as he confronts the mysteries beyond his sheltered world, and Warren's story, narrated by a man of forty-four recalling his adventures as a boy of nine, is an adult's interpretation of time and the effects of change. The distinction between childhood and adulthood blurs, and the two stories become different approaches to the same universal experience: initiation into the nature of the adult world.

"Young Goodman Brown" and "Blackberry Winter" have been studied individually in relation to author's biography, themes, form, sources, history, philosophy, and psychology. One way to synthesize various interpretations and focus on essential similarities between the two stories is to concentrate on archetypal motifs or patterns as enumerated by Winston Weathers
in his brief article on "Blackberry Winter": the "First Paradise," the "Path in the Woods," the "Sacred River," the "Images of Spoiled Beauty," and the "Journey of Initiation." By comparing the two tales as they illustrate each motif or pattern, a reader can discover primary elements that link Hawthorne and Warren in the continuum of American literature.

From the biblical story of Eden through Greek literature to modern fiction, "First Paradise" has meant a state of perfect innocence spoiled by knowledge of evil. In American fiction, specifically in "Young Goodman Brown" and "Blackberry Winter," the mysteries of adulthood, like the serpent in the Garden, steal into the innocence of childhood and, with the promise of knowledge and experience, lure youth into a world from which there is no return. Weathers cites three components of the First Paradise: a central youthful figure, a good father and mother, and pronouncements about time and knowledge. Although Weathers discusses only Warren's story, these elements of the First Paradise form the basis for a comparison between "Blackberry Winter" and "Young Goodman Brown."

In "Blackberry Winter" Warren's narrator at age nine challenges his mother's authority when he sneaks outside in early June without shoes:

18 Ibid., p. 45.
You know how a thing has been and you know that you can go barefoot in June. You do not understand that voice from back in the kitchen which says that you cannot go barefoot outdoors and run to see what has happened and rub your feet over the wet shivery grass and make the perfect mark of your foot in the smooth, creamy, red mud and then muse upon it as though you had suddenly come upon that single mark on the glistening auroral beach of the world (p. 64).

Seth's childhood world includes his parents, who represent protection and security. When the tramp appears at the farm, Seth recalls, "my mother wasn't afraid. She wasn't a big woman, but she was clear and brisk about everything she did and looked everybody and everything right in the eye from her own blue eyes in her tanned face. . . . She was a steady and self-reliant woman . . ." (p. 68). Seth's pride in his mother's strength is reinforced when he sees that she is not afraid to tell the tramp that her husband is away from home. Seth's father also represents security. At the river he sits on his mare "over the heads of the other men" (p. 72). Later when the tramp curses him for not having any work, Seth's father does not resort to violence; his quiet strength makes the tramp back down and slink away. Yet even in the midst of this childhood environment, Seth's fascination with the tramp and the places he has seen prompt the boy to follow the stranger.

The relationship between Seth's experience during this particular blackberry winter and his recollection of it years
later involves time and knowledge. To the boy of nine, both are stable and familiar:

When you are nine years old, what you remember seems forever; for you remember everything and everything is important and stands big and full and fills up Time and is so solid that you can walk around and around it like a tree and look at it. You are aware that time passes, that there is a movement in time, but that is not what Time is. Time is not a movement, a flowing, a wind then, but is, rather a kind of climate in which things are, and when a thing happens it begins to live and keeps on living and stands solid in Time like the tree that you can walk around. (pp. 64-65)

Knowledge is also secure: "When you are nine, you know that there are things that you don't know, but you know that when you know something you know it" (p. 64). Seth questions Old Jebb about Dellie's illness and receives the answer that "Hit is the change of life and time" (p. 82). The boy fails to comprehend how this statement relates to him. To the man of forty-four, neither time nor knowledge can be considered secure. Change has become a personal experience. His father died of lockjaw while Seth was still a boy, and his mother died three years later. Dellie is gone, but Old Jebb still lives pondering the prayer that brought him long life: "A man doan know what to pray fer, and him mortal" (p. 87). The tramp, representing the unexpected and irrational elements of adulthood, intruded into Seth's childhood and then threatened the boy when he tried to follow. Like the serpent in the Garden of Eden, the tramp symbolizes the lure of
experience, adventure, and secret knowledge which could not be denied.

Hawthorne chose as his central character a Puritan of Salem village, whose age earns him the description "Young" to distinguish him from his elders. Married only three months, Brown also carries the title "Goodman," explained by David Levin as designating one qualified to serve on a jury. In Colonial usage "Goodman" also denoted a husband or head of household. Thus through his name, Brown reveals his recent introduction to adult experience and responsibility. Yet Hawthorne's tale suggests that Brown still lingers in a childlike state. One aspect of Brown's youth is his dependence on parental surrogates who provide him what Weathers calls "cognitive assurance" about his religion and morality. Brown's confidence in his own morality rests on his family: "My father never went into the woods on such an errand, nor his father before him. We have been a race of honest men and good Christians since the days of the martyrs . . ." (X, 77). His wife, according to Brown, is an "angel on earth" (X, 75). After his journey, he plans to return and "cling to her skirts


21 Weathers, p. 46.
and follow her to heaven" (X, 75). His religious mentors, Goody Cloyse, Deacon Gookin, and the minister have contributed to his view of the world and his acceptance of his ancestors as a "people of prayer and good works to boot" (X, 77). Brown believes the version of reality he was taught as a child, but his need to penetrate the world beyond childhood, beyond the safety of the village, leads him to the forest and the secrets it contains.

In "Young Goodman Brown" Hawthorne compresses time to depict in one evening an initiatory experience that in reality usually requires a much longer period. From sunset to dawn Brown journeys from innocence to knowledge, or at least the suspicion of knowledge, from believing that his world is one of purity and piety to sensing evil and gloom everywhere and in everyone. Brown comes to believe that "Evil is the nature of mankind" (X, 88). This knowledge is reinforced by the appearance of his parents at the witches' meeting. His father beckons him toward the baptism, but his mother raises her hands to caution. The result is Brown's ambivalent attitude toward reality. Perceiving evil everywhere, he cannot return to his former familiar association with the villagers. However, not totally certain that his experience was real, he does not flee the village nor sever his relationship with Faith. Instead he remains caught in the state of adolescence—not quite a naive child but not yet a mature adult. He is disillusioned by his brief experience in the adult world and unable to adjust to losing his first paradise.
A second archetypal pattern significant in both stories is what Weathers calls the "Path in the Woods" associated with a traveler, a wandering path, a forest, and darkness. As Weathers points out, the figure most often identified with the Path in the Woods is some version of the Mysterious Stranger. Both Hawthorne and Warren employ such characters to represent worldly experience and secret knowledge. Young Goodman Brown's stranger appears when Brown wonders aloud, "What if the devil himself should be at my very elbow!" (X, 75). The figure is a traveler in both time and space. His knowledge of Brown's family spans at least three generations, and his most recent journey has been a supernatural one: "The clock of the Old South was striking as I came through Boston, and that is full fifteen minutes ago" (X, 75). The stranger possesses other miraculous qualities such as his staff which "perhaps, . . . assumed life" (X, 79) and his wide knowledge of New England and its people: I have a very general acquaintance here in New England. The deacons of many a church have drunk the communion wine with me; the selectmen of divers towns make me their chairman; and a majority of the Great and General Court are firm supporters of my interest. The governor and I, too--but these are state-secrets" (X, 77). This mysterious stranger reveals

22 Ibid., p. 47.
23 Ibid., p. 48.
to Brown little by little the secret life that has existed within his village and even his family but which he did not suspect. Through the presence of Goody Cloyse, the minister, Deacon Gookin, Faith, Brown's mother and father, and numerous dignitaries, the stranger pleads his case for evil being the nature of mankind.

In "Blackberry Winter" the stranger is a tramp, "moving steadily, but not rapidly, with his shoulders hunched a little and his head thrust forward" (p. 66). Seth reasons, "there was no place for him to have come from, and there was no reason for him to come where he was coming, toward our house" (p. 66). Yet from the perspective of Seth's maturation, the tramp plays an essential role. His clothes, which "didn't belong there in our back yard, coming down the path, in Middle Tennessee, miles away from any big town, and even a mile off the pike" (p. 69) and his "crazy" (p. 69) shoes bring to the farm evidence of an existence in a city far removed from Seth's farm. Even though his coarse manners, gruff comments, and threats with his knife make the tramp an unattractive figure, his behavior and demeanor, so foreign to the farm, intrigue the boy. Unwilling to share his secrets, the tramp, in his insolence, disorder, and unruliness, is "an embodiment of that challenging, frightening, and unknown life force that must be understood, tamed, even subdued. But clearly, this is a savage, wild force that wants not to be questioned, not
to be fathomed." For Seth the tramp represents the beginning of a journey into the unknown.

Both Seth's tramp and Brown's guide are associated with a wandering path, the forest, and darkness. Brown's journey takes him on a "dreary road, darkened by all the gloomiest trees of the forest, which barely stood aside to let the narrow path creep through, and closed immediately behind" (p. 1034). Seth marvels that the tramp comes from a path which "disappeared into the woods. It led on back, I knew, through the woods and to the swamp . . ." (p. 65). Associated with both paths are the darkness and mystery of the forest. Hawthorne suggests that the "traveller knows not who may be concealed by the innumerable trunks and the thick boughs overhead; so that with lonely footsteps he may yet be passing through an unseen multitude" (X, 75). Seth describes his, and by extension Brown's, fearful anticipation of what the forest holds in store for those who venture forth:

When you are a boy and stand in the stillness of woods, which can be so still that your heart almost stops beating and makes you want to stand there in the green twilight until you feel your very feet sinking into and clutching the earth like roots and your body breathing slow through its pores like the leaves—when you stand there and wait for the next drop to drop with its small, flat sound to a lower leaf, that sound seems to measure out something, to put an end to something, to begin something, and you cannot wait for it to happen and are afraid it

will not happen, and then when it has happened, you are waiting again, almost afraid. (p. 65)

For Brown, the path in the woods leads to experience which he believes to be all too real; for Seth, the promise of what he will experience on the path traveled by the stranger provides motivation to "follow him, all the years" (p. 87). For both characters, the path in the woods represents a fearful attraction to the mysterious elements of human existence.

A third archetypal element which contributes to the universality of these stories is the "Sacred River" which Weathers associates with a crowd of representative human beings at the water's edge; an object used as a symbol of death; and discussions of survival, mortality, and reality. Crowds gathered in "Young Goodman Brown" around a rock basin representing a baptismal font and in "Blackberry Winter" on the banks of a flooded river set the stage for revelations about good, evil, and the nature of man.

In his final despair at discovering his wife may also be in the forest, Brown dashes through the night until he approaches a clearing where "hemmed in by the dark wall of the forest, arose a rock, bearing some rude, natural resemblance either to an altar or a pulpit, and surrounded by four blazing pines, their tops aflame, their stems untouched, like candles at an evening meeting" (X, 84). Gathered around

25 Weathers, p. 47.
the "altar" are representatives of the council board of the province; recognized members of local churches; respectable women of high station, perhaps even the Governor's wife; innocent girls; disreputable men of "dissolute lives" (X, 85); harlots; suspected criminals; and even, so it appears to Brown, his mother and father. As D. K. Anderson suggests, the effect of the crowd is to intensify Brown's loneliness, magnify his bewilderment, and increase his disillusionment and sadness. The group assembles around a hollow basin in the rock. Hawthorne questions, "Did it contain water, reddened by the lurid light? or was it blood?" (X, 88). Regardless, this liquid will be the instrument of Brown's baptism into knowledge.

As Brown approaches the altar, a figure which "bore no slight similitude, both in garb and manner, to some grave divine of the New England churches" (X, 86) beckons the converts to partake of the baptism, a universal symbol for the death of one way of life and a commitment to a new faith. In the presence of the "congregation" (X, 86) and before the baptismal font, Brown hears a declaration that the nature of all men is evil. His summons to participate in the "communion of your race" (X, 86) will result in his knowledge of reality: "By the sympathy of your human hearts for sin ye shall scent out all the places . . . where crime has been

committed, and shall exult to behold the whole earth one
stain of guilt, one mighty blood spot" (X, 87). Even though
at the moment of baptism Brown calls upon Faith to look to
heaven, he cannot be sure if she complies. In fact, whether
or not he was baptized, Brown fulfills the charge of the dark
figure by seeing only evil in the villagers for the remainder
of his life.

In contrast to Brown's experience, Seth's involves a
crowd assembled at the river to inspect damage caused by a
flood. The group includes Seth's father and numerous neighbors
and strangers who are gazing at the debris washed downriver
by the flood. The symbol of death appears in the form of a
drowned cow floating like just "another big piece of drift-
wood" (p. 74). As the group consider whose cow it may be, a
ragged boy blurts out, "Rekin anybody ever et drownt cow?"
(p. 76). An old man with a white beard responds, "Son, . . .
you live long enough and you'll find a man will eat anything
when the time comes" (p. 76). Another in the crowd suggests
that, as a result of the flood, some will face such a choice
soon. The men stand before the visible results of nature
reasserting power over ineffectual humans and ponder what a
person will do to survive in the midst of forces he cannot
control.
Although not exactly an archetypal pattern, the "Image of Spoiled Beauty" elucidates the initiatory experiences. When Goodman Brown leaves the village, he is a young man whose world is ordered and understood, at least on the surface. His wife wears pink ribbons in her hair, and, although she is a bit melancholy, Brown plans to return the next morning and find her unchanged. Instead, his night in the forest with his emotional state culminating in a wild laugh of despair alters Brown's world forever. The assurance of order and beauty he previously held no longer exists. When he returns, Faith still wears her pink ribbons, but Brown's new knowledge of sin causes him to perceive evil everywhere:

On the Sabbath day, when the congregation were singing a holy psalm, he could not listen because an anthem of sin rushed loudly upon his ear and drowned all the blessed strain. When the minister spoke from the pulpit with power and fervid eloquence, and, with his hand on the open Bible, of the sacred truths of our religion, and of saintly lives and triumphant deaths, and of future bliss or misery unutterable, then did Goodman Brown turn pale, dreading lest the roof should thunder down upon the gray blasphemer and his hearers. Often, waking suddenly at midnight, he shrank from the bosom of Faith; and at morning or eventide, when the family knelt at prayer, he scowled and muttered to himself, and gazed sternly at his wife, and turned away. (X, 89)

The beauty of his religion, his marriage, and his faith in his fellow men has been destroyed by doubt.

27 Even though Weathers does not list the "Image of Spoiled Beauty" as a conventional pattern, he calls the use of Dellie's cabin a "brilliant structure" (p. 47).
In "Blackberry Winter" the image of spoiled beauty is a more naturalistic one. To avoid his mother's reminders about wearing shoes, Seth visits Dellie's cabin. As he approaches, he is astonished to find that trash and filth have been washed from beneath the cabin. Since the boy believes Dellie and Old Jebb are different from the other tenants because of their tidiness and industry, he cannot hide his surprise about the "foulness" (p. 79) in the yard. He "picked" his way past the filth, "being careful not to get my bare feet in it" (p. 79). Like the unexpected filth, Dellie's striking Little Jebb reveals an emotional ferocity Seth has not suspected. Warren explains that the slap reflects the "shock of early recognition that beneath mutual kindliness and regard some dark, tragic, unresolved something lurked." The littered yard and the slap are only temporary manifestations of the alterations in his boyhood world which Seth will face as he follows the tramp. Old Jebb, like the old man at the river, knows that change is inevitable. Seth cannot avoid stepping in filth as he trades innocence for knowledge any more than Brown could avoid being tainted by the sin he experiences. As Warren indicates, growing up has something to do with recognizing a "human communion," a common identity with the "lost, mean, defeated, cowardly, worthless, bitter" human.

creatures. Neither Brown nor Seth can regain the state of unspoiled beauty.

"Young Goodman Brown" and "Blackberry Winter," two apparently dissimilar tales, when viewed from the perspective of mythic criticism become strikingly similar. Hawthorne and Warren, whether by conscious design or coincidence, form their stories in a basic pattern of the journey of initiation with common elements enumerated by Weathers as Everyman as a traveller, an encounter with a mysterious stranger as a guide, a symbolic visit to the Stygian River, a consultation with a wise man, and witnessing a conflict between good and evil.30

Frye establishes the formula for initiation stories as the "marvelous journey" or quest, and Roy Male adds a "representative young man" as a traveller. Campbell notes that the "adventure is always and everywhere a passage beyond the veil of the known into the unknown" and only by challenging the guardian of "established bounds" can youth pass into new experience.33 Frequently the journey, at least in a symbolic sense, is a psychological one: the guide who appears, the "disgusting or abhorred one . . . is the representative of

29 Ibid.
30 Weathers, p. 50.
31 Frye, p. 57.
33 Campbell, p. 82.
that unconscious deep . . . wherein are hoarded all the rejected, unadmitted, unrecognized, unknown, or undeveloped factors, laws, and elements of existence."\textsuperscript{34} To discover the depths of this unknown, the traveller may, like Odysseus and Aeneas, seek advice from a wise man by visiting the Stygian River or some other representative source of water, in psychological terms suggesting his own subconscious.\textsuperscript{35} Thus the journey becomes an exploration of the self as well as the exterior world. As a witness to a conflict between figures who represent his conception of Good and Evil, the traveller discovers within his own nature the propensity to follow the Evil rather than the Good. For modern man, as both "Young Goodman Brown" and "Blackberry Winter" indicate, the nature of Evil is less distinct and more attractive than expected. In fact, evil becomes the "impossibility of absolute order either in nature or in man" or more directly "the presence of disorder and the need to deal with it."\textsuperscript{36} Ultimately the journey leads the traveller back to his world, now "freighted with care and uncertainty"\textsuperscript{37} where he must reconcile his recent experience with everyday life.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., p. 52


\textsuperscript{36} West, p. 79.

\textsuperscript{37} Melvin W. Askew, "Hawthorne, the Fall and the Psychology of Maturity," \textit{American Literature}, 34 (1962), 340.
A journey of initiation results in knowledge not always welcome or expected. In Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale is a young Puritan minister who has fathered an illegitimate child and then failed to find the courage to acknowledge the child or her mother, Hester Prynne. After years of self-chastisement and continual rationalization about his need to maintain his image of purity for the sake of his congregation, Dimmesdale meets Hester in the forest and succumbs to the hope of happiness by planning a journey that will take them away from the site of their sin and eliminate his reason for self-recrimination. When he returns to the village, however, he recognizes with anguish that he is compounding his previous sin and senses a transformation in his character: "But he seemed to stand apart, and eye this former self with scornful, pitying, but half-envious curiosity. That self was gone. Another man had returned out of the forest; a wiser one; with a knowledge of hidden mysteries which the simplicity of the former never could have reached. A bitter kind of knowledge that!"  

Like Dimmesdale, Seth and Goodman Brown return from their journeys of initiation with an altered picture of the world or at least a sense of the alteration to come.

The question of exactly what kind of "bitter" knowledge Seth and Brown possess as a result of their initiatory

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experiences has puzzled critics. "Young Goodman Brown" exemplifies Hawthorne's technique of ambiguity or what Yvor Winters calls a "formula for alternative possibilities" and F. O. Matthiessen labels a "device of multiple choices." As a result of the richness of the thematic texture, critics have suggested numerous interpretations of the knowledge Brown obtains on his nocturnal adventure. Fogle believes Brown confronts the issue of Good and Evil in man but cannot settle the question of man's nature and therefore remains in a state of doubt for the remainder of his life. Turner explains the tale as Brown's introduction to the effects of sin or the knowledge of sin. McKeithan adds that Brown neither went into the forest nor dreamed his journey but rather "continued to indulge in sin longer than he expected and suffered the consequences, . . . the loss of religious faith and faith in all other human beings." John E. Becker and Michael Davitt Bell consider Brown's experience in terms


43 D. M. McKeithan, "Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown': An Interpretation," Modern Language Notes, 67 (1952), 96.
of Puritanism. Becker argues that, as a Puritan, Brown learns that if he insists on viewing the world as black and white, blackness will prevail; he will ferret out evil everywhere. Bell notes that Brown is a third generation Puritan and therefore finds his faith can be shaken by doubt. Thomas E. Connolly refutes the notion that what Brown learns destroys his faith; Brown "did not lose his faith at all. In fact, not only did he retain his faith, but during his horrible experience he actually discovered the full and frightening significance of his faith."

According to Connolly, Brown realizes the full import of the doctrine of the elect and discovers that those he most revered are condemned to hell, not destined for heaven as he naively assumed.

Other scholars associate Brown's knowledge with witchcraft and sexual experience. Levin proposes that Brown commits the same error perpetuated in the Salem Witch Trials in 1692; he accepts spectre evidence by believing the figures conjured by the Devil are in fact inhabitants of Salem. On this false testimony he bases his doubt.


Morsberger concludes that through Brown's experience, Hawthorne explains the witchcraft mania: "it is not difficult to imagine Goodman Brown as an accuser and persecutor of his neighbors."\(^{48}\)

A significant element of witchcraft and of Brown's dark discovery is the sexual aspect of many sins revealed to him. Daniel E. Hoffman emphasizes "the inherent sexual character of Young Goodman's quest. Brown's whole experience is described as the penetration of a dark and lonely way through a branched forest--to the Puritans the Devil's domain. At journey's end is the orgiastic communion amidst the leaping flames."\(^{49}\)

Richard P. Adams relates Brown's recent marriage and his Puritan belief that sex is evil to demonstrate that Brown's maturation is arrested; he fears the responsibility of adulthood and cannot alleviate the guilt he bears as a consequence of his sexual experience.\(^{50}\)

Therefore, whether or not he fully comprehends, Brown's journey has led him within himself. As Frederick C. Crews points out, Brown faces "the embodiments of his own thoughts."\(^{51}\)

Likewise Paul Hurley concludes the


tale is not about external devils or forces but Brown's own "distorted mind." To insist that Brown better understands himself as he returns to Salem would negate Hawthorne's technique of ambiguity, but to argue that true maturity depends on self-knowledge encompasses and reinforces various interpretations of Hawthorne's story of initiation.

In "Blackberry Winter" Seth's comment that he followed the tramp after being threatened is a signal that the encounter with the tramp informs Seth's future. The editors of Theme and Form: An Introduction to Literature suggest that Seth's statement emphasizes the effect of time and change on his boyhood world: "It is a metaphor, expressive of Seth's regret for the rootless life that has been his as a result of the changes that Time has brought." For Weathers, Seth's adventure is an encounter with evil:

Seth, the child of paradise, mankind in his innocence, finds himself, in a strange and inexplicable season, witness to the advent of evil in his world and measurer of the dimensions of reality. He sees the mysterious evil march across his paradise and he sees the metamorphosis of beauty into ugliness. Innocent mankind is being prepared for the fall of Adam. And in the epilogue of the story, at the point from which Seth has told his story, we do see man after the Fall, standing in the wilderness recounting that day when it all began.


54 Weathers, p. 50.
Weather concludes that Seth's statement "becomes man's confession for the predilection to evil" (p. 50). Ray B. West argues that "Blackberry Winter" goes further "than any other contemporary short story of its kind in defining specifically the nature of the evil which confronts man and with which he must eventually come to some kind of terms."  

Charles H. Bohner sees the story as a recognition "that the brotherhood of man must embrace even the contemptible, cowardly, and defeated tramp of the story."  

Warren incorporates all of these interpretations when he recalls introducing the tramp, "a creature altogether lost and pitiful, a dim image of what, in one perspective, our human condition is." A figure "out of the darkening grown-up world of time," the tramp reinforces the concept of "human communion." Finally, Warren states explicitly, "I wanted the story to give some notion that out of change and loss a human recognition may be redeemed, more precious for being no longer innocent." Thus Seth's initiation grows from an awareness that as a boy of nine, he knows he can never forget the tramp and his intrusion in the innocence of childhood; as a man, Seth can never forget the tramp because of his association with time and change. Therefore,

55 West, p. 78.


"by throwing a floodlight of luminous memory backward upon a boy in Tennessee, Robert Penn Warren has explored the soil of planting, the climate of growth, the time of harvest."58

Irving Kristol suggests that American literature "is at one and the same time a literature of innocence and experience, haunted by both for never having come to terms with either."59 In a sense, the fiction of Hawthorne and Warren tests Kristol's theory in different settings and situations. "Young Goodman Brown" and "Blackberry Winter" provide an appropriate introduction to a comparison of Hawthorne's and Warren's works because they contain the "germ"60 of the rest of the authors' fiction. Each tale suggests, within the economy of a short story, the themes which find more thorough development in other works: dealing with the past, alienation of the individual, the nature of man, and knowledge through suffering. Basic to all of these themes is the conflict dramatized in "Young Goodman Brown" and "Blackberry Winter," the conflict between innocence and experience.

58 Buckler and Sklare, p. 151.


60 Adams, p. 39.
CHAPTER III
THE CURSE OF THE PAST: "BLOOD TO DRINK"

Robert Penn Warren has written, "Art is the little myth we make, . . . and history is the big myth we live."\(^1\) Everett Carter explains that the "little myth of the artist is the personal pattern which the individual sensitivity imposes on its world, the big myth the pattern by which a society makes sense of its universe."\(^2\) In their interpretations of past American experience, Hawthorne and Warren employ a "historical sense," which, according to T. S. Eliot, "involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past but of its presence."\(^3\) In much of their fiction, but especially in The House of the Seven Gables (1851) and Band of Angels (1955), Hawthorne and Warren combine events from the national past with their characters' fictional experiences to dramatize issues important for both cultural and personal identity.

Hawthorne finds in American history salient elements of human experience which form the basis of myth. Peter White suggests that Hawthorne "steeped himself" in the history and


\(^{2}\) Ibid.

literature of the seventeenth century "because he recognized the dramatic setting and the dynamic character necessary to a story of universal significance." What Hawthorne calls "the 'Universal Heart' or the 'Magnetic Chain of Humanity' links not only one man to another but one age to another." Warren believes that Hawthorne's imagination was drawn to the Salem Witch Trials and other violent episodes of New England history because he possessed "some feeling that in that violence there was at least a confronting of reality, which was lacking in the doctrines of Transcendentalists, Brook Farmers, and Unitarians, and in Emerson, along with the current horde of reformers. If there was violence and cruelty in that older society there was also, in that very fact, a sense of reality and grim meaningfulness, something that paradoxically appealed to Hawthorne. . . ."

Christoph Lohmann points out that Hawthorne's treatment of the past assumes a "moral, ethical, and theological function" so that the past becomes an arena for exploring the consequences of sin and guilt.

Since Hawthorne finds human nature to be the same, no matter


5 Ibid.


what the century, his fiction indicates that "different epochs exhibit common dilemmas." To consider the universality of human experiences and the interrelationship of past and present is the legacy Hawthorne left to writers like Robert Penn Warren. Transmuting historical fact into fiction constitutes the basis of Hawthorne's and Warren's novels.

A historian before he was a novelist, Warren began his literary interest in history with a biography of John Brown in 1929 and continued with other nonfiction works tracing the impact of the Civil War on American life. In his fiction, Warren relies so often on the Civil War for historical significance that Alfred Kazin suggests that all of Warren's work can be called a legacy of the Civil War. Like Hawthorne, however, Warren does not merely create a historical framework for his fiction; his use of the facts of the past becomes "more selective, more imaginative, more that of an artist than that of a historian." Thus Warren's retelling of history becomes an attempt to "break through to a new understanding of human ambition and human error." Warren says


he does not think he writes historical fiction: "I try to find stories that catch my eye, stories that seem to have issues in purer form than they come to one ordinarily."\textsuperscript{12} But Charles Anderson puts the writer's use of the historical fact in perspective: "Warren always makes it clear that he is concerned with the unchanging nature of man rather than with the changing social fabric in which the nature manifests itself."\textsuperscript{13} In the sense that the study of the past is a study of universal human nature, history is a crucial element of Warren's fiction.

According to Robert Heilman, writers may employ history in their fiction in several ways: to provide a veneer for entertainment, to create a sense of the past in historical novels, or to develop a sense of the present in historical allegories.\textsuperscript{14} Hawthorne and Warren surpass these possibilities, however, and use the past to create "a sense of both past and present, or of realities that are neither past nor present because they are both."\textsuperscript{15} In this way they create


\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
myths which permit moral and psychological interpretations of universal human experience: "The human, moral sense which each man must make out of history is embodied in myth, and in this way each man is a myth-maker as he carves the formless material of history to suit ... the values that separate him from the beasts."\textsuperscript{16} Seen from a broader view, it is myth that establishes the pattern through which a society develops its cultural identity.\textsuperscript{17} In their fiction, both Hawthorne and Warren probe history as the "big myth" to create artistic versions of the "little myth." In \textit{The House of the Seven Gables} and \textit{Band of Angels}, Hawthorne and Warren make history a personal experience by viewing events like the Salem Witch Trials and the Civil War from the perspective of individual characters.

As novels representing Hawthorne's and Warren's treatment of history, \textit{The House of the Seven Gables} and \textit{Band of Angels} share a common theme: the influence, even the curse, of the past on the present. Hawthorne could be describing the general thematic impact of both novels when he records a plot outline in his \textit{American Notebooks}:

\begin{quote}
To represent the influence which Dead Men have among living affairs;--for instance, a Dead Man controls the disposition of wealth; a Dead Man sits on the judgment-seat, and the living judges do but repeat his decisions; Dead Men's opinions
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{16} Moore, p. 105.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 125.
in all things control the living truth; we believe in Dead Men's religion; we laugh at Dead Men's jokes; we cry at Dead Men's pathos; everywhere and in all matters, Dead Men tyrannize inexorably over us.  

F. O. Matthiessen amplifies Hawthorne's comment by observing that throughout Hawthorne's fiction the past weighs "heavily on the present's back." For both Hawthorne and Warren, this "weight" frequently assumes the form of a curse, either literal or figurative, which casts a shadow over the present. In *The House of the Seven Gables* and *Band of Angels* the curse is articulated in a specific phrase, "blood to drink." Through the elements of human experience associated with the curse, the past exerts a paralyzing effect on the present.

Specifically, the two novels share parallel situations in which individuals, through family name and tradition, participate in the American past. In *The House of the Seven Gables* and *Band of Angels*, major female characters derive their personal identity from a family heritage associated with a history of pride and a family mansion. Each clings to a self-concept no longer realistic but still attractive because it refutes the unpleasant present. Hepzibah Pyncheon

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wants to be a lady, and Amanda Starr insists she is still the protected, adored child she has always believed herself to be. Financial difficulties and family dishonor have altered Hepzibah's world; and Amanda discovers she is not the pampered inheritor of a plantation but instead a slave. Through the experiences of these and related minor characters, Hawthorne and Warren explore the effect of the past on the present; the relationship between American history and the life of an individual; the development of personal identity apart from a family name and tradition; and the need for self-knowledge as a means of reconciling past and present. In short, the pattern of each novel involves dealing with the sins of the fathers passed from generation to generation and the way in which an individual must cope with the curse of the past as it informs personal, familial, and social identity.

In the "Preface" to The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne explains his purpose: "to connect a bygone time with the very present that is flitting away from us." The theme, Hawthorne states, is that "the wrong-doing of one generation lives into the successive ones, and, divesting itself of every temporary advantage, becomes a pure and uncontrollable mischief" (II, 2). Two elements of Hawthorne's novel help to fulfill the purpose and dramatize the theme: Maule's curse.

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and the Pyncheon house. The curse dates from the Salem Witch Trials of 1692 when a condemned Matthew Maule called down evil on Colonel Pyncheon and his descendants: "God will give him blood to drink" (II, 8). Prior to his death, Maule had resisted for several years the Colonel's attempts to purchase Maule's homestead; after the execution Colonel Pyncheon quickly came into possession of the property and erected a family mansion on the very spot where Maule's hut had stood. A lavish celebration was planned and numerous guests invited, but Colonel Pyncheon did not appear to greet even the lieutenant-governor. The host's corpse was discovered, his beard saturated with blood; God had, indeed, given him blood to drink. From this early period, the curse, the house, and the Pyncheon family are inextricably linked and move through time to the nineteenth century of the events of the novel.

After a quarter century of seclusion in the Pyncheon mansion, Hepzibah, who, with her brother Clifford and cousin Jaffrey, represents the current Pyncheon generation, is forced by dire financial circumstances to open a shop added earlier to the original edifice but unused for many years. Hepzibah's first customer is Holgrave, the only boarder in the Pyncheon mansion and a daguerreotypist who sets the stage for the basic conflict in the novel by suggesting to Hepzibah that it is better "to be a true woman than a lady" (II, 45). All other events and characters in the novel are touched by the burden of the past on the present.
Although Hepzibah has become accustomed to living alone with only the memories of past Pyncheon generations for company, her solitary existence ends when two other Pyncheons take up residence in the mansion. Young Phoebe Pyncheon, a "country-cousin" (II, 69), arrives to live with Hepzibah, giving only a vague hint of an uncomfortable situation at home as the reason. Her "gift of practical arrangement" (II, 71) and her cheerful disposition not only win Hepzibah's affection but also provide a suitable alternative as a clerk in the shop. Hepzibah's brother Clifford, imprisoned as a convicted murderer, also returns to live in the Pyncheon house and appears to Phoebe as a child taking his first step: "Yet there were no tokens that his physical strength might not have sufficed for a free and determined gait. It was the spirit of the man that could not walk" (II, 104). Roused only by his craving for beauty, Clifford's nature is "selfish in its essence" (II, 109) and incapable of loving anything ugly or disharmonious.

Shortly after Clifford's return, Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon visits the mansion. Recalling the resemblance between Colonel Pyncheon, of whom she has heard so much, and the Judge standing before her, Phoebe's fantasy merges them until "the Colonel Pyncheon of two centuries ago steps forward as the judge of the passing moment" (II, 120). The Judge's purpose in coming is revealed when he demands to see Clifford and threatens, "Take care! Clifford is on the brink of as black
a ruin as ever befell him yet!" (II, 129). At Hepzibah's almost ferocious defense of the door concealing her brother, Jaffrey Pyncheon relents but promises to return when both Clifford and Hepzibah "acknowledge your injustice" (II, 130).

For some time after the Judge's departure, Phoebe and Hepzibah devote themselves to amusing Clifford and to reviving his waning spirit. During her time spent with Clifford in the garden, Phoebe also comes to know Holgrave, who fascinates her but makes her uneasy by his "lack of reverence for what was fixed" (II, 177). In the Pyncheon house, Holgrave considers himself a "mere observer" (II, 179), yet he recognizes "that in this age, more than ever before, the moss-grown and rotten past is to be torn down, and lifeless institutions to be thrust out of the way, and their dead corpses buried, and everything to begin anew" (II, 179).

While Phoebe is in the country to visit her family, the past again intrudes into the Pyncheon house when Jaffrey Pyncheon returns to insist that he interview Clifford. Only with the threat that he set Clifford free and can again incarcerate him, this time in an asylum, does Judge Pyncheon intimidate Hepzibah to summon Clifford. The Judge's purpose is to question Clifford about secret information that will reveal lost family wealth. He waits in an ancestral chair beneath the portrait of Colonel Pyncheon. When Hepzibah cannot find Clifford, she returns to explain but discovers
the corpse of Judge Pyncheon. Once again Maule's curse has been fulfilled.

With the oppression of Judge Pyncheon suddenly lifted, Clifford and Hepzibah flee as if in a dream. Without any specific destination in mind, they board a train. Clifford's uncharacteristic energy triggered by Jaffrey's death lasts until the train stops at a remote station where he tells his sister, "You must take the lead now. . . . Do with me as you will" (II, 266). Before they can return to the Pyncheon house, Holgrave discovers the Judge's corpse and then reveals his death to Phoebe when she arrives from the country. Sharing the shock causes Holgrave and Phoebe to declare their love. Hepzibah and Clifford enter to find joy in the Pyncheon house. The narrator reveals that Clifford is innocent of murder, having been wrongly accused by Jaffrey, motivated by greed and jealousy. The demise of Judge Pyncheon brings fortune to Clifford, Hepzibah, Phoebe, and, by marriage, to Holgrave, who discloses that he is a descendant of Matthew Maule. Thus the antipathy of the Maules and the Pyncheons is reconciled and the "drama of wrong and retribution" (II, 316) ended.

Throughout The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne artistically employs symbols to reinforce his theme of the effects of the past on the present, an idea articulated by Holgrave:
Shall we never, never get rid of this Past! . . . It lies upon the Present like a giant's dead body! In fact, the case is just as if a young giant were compelled to waste all his strength in carrying about the corpse of the old giant, his grandfather, who died a long while ago, and only needs to be decently buried. Just think a moment; and it will startle you to see what slaves we are to by-gone times—to Death, if we give the matter the right word! (II, 182-183)

The dominant symbol of the novel is the Pyncheon house, associated with the "collective conscience"21 of the family past. In fact, the house and the family are so closely identified that, as in Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher," reference to the condition of one is indicative of the state of the other. The house "exudes a moral condition—a building of gloom, dry-rot, dust. . . . As an object that retains its palpable being through time, it is the visible heart of the Pyncheon family—whispering of tormented and doomed spirits, the center of the family's timeless and haunted afterlife."22 Because the chronicle of the Pyncheons spans two centuries, Arthur Waterman sees the house as a "microcosm of American history, beginning in a limited past and growing to include more of the external world and more of an open society, as the curse of the past is assimilated into a meaningful


present."23 In a sense, as Harry Levin suggests, for Hawthorne, the family feud becomes a class struggle reflecting American "social history in terms of the conflict between those well-known families, the patrician Haves and the plebian Have-nots."24 By using the house as the visible manifestation of the original sin of Colonel Pyncheon passed from generation to generation, Hawthorne provides not only an appropriate atmosphere for his plot but also a focal point for thematic development.

Other symbols contribute to the significance of the mansion. Like the house, the portrait of Colonel Pyncheon hanging above the ancestral chair and the miniature of Jaffrey Pyncheon which Holgrave shows Phoebe illustrate inherited sin and guilt. The "hard, stern, relentless look" (II, 119) in both pictures suggests that the "weaknesses and defects, the bad passions, the mean tendencies, and the moral diseases which lead to crime are handed down from one generation to another, by a far surer process of transmission than human law has been able to establish in respect to the riches and honors which it seeks to entail upon posterity" (II, 119). Reflecting the moral as well as the physical decay of the


Pyncheon house, a large rose bush propped against the side of the mansion is laden with "a rare and very beautiful species" of white roses, most with "blight or mildew at their hearts" (II, 71). Fresh, pure water in a well, dug by Matthew Maule, after the construction of the Pyncheon house, "grew hard and brackish" and still remains "productive of intestinal mischief to those who quench their thirst there" (II, 10). In the garden a rooster, two hens, and one chicken, descendants of a race the size of turkeys, are now "scarcely larger than pigeons, and had a queer, rusty, withered aspect, and a gouty kind of movement" (II, 88-89). In front of the house, Pyncheon Street, formerly named Maule's Lane (II, 6), with its procession of citizens going about their daily business, represents the stream of life outside the mansion from which the Pyncheon pride and reserve have separated the inhabitants. Reigning above the scene, the Pyncheon Elm, "of wide circumference, rooted before the door" (II, 5), is identified along with the house as one of "two antiquities" (II, 5). Alone of all the animal and vegetable life near the house, the Pyncheon Elm does not evidence blight nor decay but rather thrives as it continues to change with the seasons, perhaps a hint that nature, if not man, can accommodate both change and permanence as part of the past and the present.

Warren's *Band of Angels* begins with a quotation from A. E. Housman: "When shall I be dead and rid / Of the wrong
my father did?" Warren's novel explores the life of Amanda Starr as she attempts to come to terms with her past. She believes her heritage includes an ancestral home her grandfather built and a family name associated with "rank and privilege" (p. 5). Amanda does not remember her mother, but she has known great love from her father, Aaron Pendleton Starr, master of Starrwood, who calls her his "Little Manty" (p. 19). After she has been attending Oberlin for several years, Aaron Starr dies. When Amanda returns to Starrwood for his funeral, she is confronted at her father's grave by the sheriff who announces she is the daughter of a slave and, therefore, property to be confiscated for payment of debts. She keeps insisting to herself that everything is a mistake: she is Little Manty. Nevertheless she is taken away for sale. Bluntly her owner tells her she is in her present situation precisely because of her identity: "You're Amanda Starr, all right. And that's why you are here, because you are you, gal" (p. 64). In New Orleans, Amanda is purchased by Hamish Bond, who defies a young dandy insisting on inspecting her before he bids. Sensing that her new master means salvation, Amanda runs to keep up as she follows him home.

As one of Hamish Bond's slaves, Amanda prepares to defend herself against her new master and to reject her identity as

a slave at every opportunity. Soon, however, she discovers that she cannot think of Hamish Bond as her oppressor. A slave who manages Bond's house and has formerly been his mistress explains his character to Amanda: "he is a kind man, and you are fortunate. But it is a strange kindness. . . . You might say that his kindness is like a disease" (p. 100). Out of his kindness, Bond invites Amanda to dine with him; takes her for rides in the country; introduces her to Rau-Ru, a young African whom Bond treats as his son; and finally makes Amanda his mistress.

Amanda questions her role in the new life thrust upon her:

You live through time, that little piece of time that is yours, but that piece of time is not only your own life, it is the summing-up of all the other lives that are simultaneous with yours. It is, in other words, History, and what you are is an expression of History, and you do not live your life, but, somehow, your life lives you, and you are, therefore, only what History does to you. (p. 134).

Her personal concern is "how do you know how you yourself, all the confused privateness of you, are involved with that history you are living through?" (p. 134). Almost as if in answer to her own question, Amanda accepts and then denies the freedom Bond gives her. She says she is "not responsible for what was to happen" (p. 138) when she walks off the steamboat that can take her to Cincinnati and freedom. The only explanation comes from Bond: "We're just what we are,
Little Manty. That's all we are" (p. 139). To define what she is becomes more difficult when Amanda is caught up in the Civil War.

For "Little Manty," the security of Bond's plantation seems more important than the world "away off yonder--the slave under the lash, men bleeding from gunshot in Virginia" (p. 146). Her world shatters when a friend of Bond tries to rape her and Rau-Ru defends her, putting himself in the position of the hunted Negro who assaults a white man. Then one night in New Orleans, Bond reveals that his real name is Alec Hinks and that he formerly was a slave trader. He inter- spersed his story with comments like "We can't help it, Little Manty. . . . We can't help it if things are the way they are" (p. 178). He recounts bartering for slaves who were being traded by their countrymen, and he associates the drinking of blood with the violence buried in all men. He recalls raiding parties and on one occasion butchering the population of a whole village including a woman who has just given birth. Bond saves the baby and raises him as Rau-Ru. As he concludes his story, Bond repeats, "I didn't make this world and make 'em drink blood. I didn't make myself and I can't help what I am doing. They drove me to it" (p. 189).

From Amanda's perspective, events in the Civil War appear ironic. Her security depends on her remaining Bond's slave, but circumstances prevent her continuing as "Little Manty." In 1862 with her manumission papers in hand, Amanda leaves
Bond but questions what her freedom means: "Free--from what? For what?" (p. 209). She discovers the freedom "to create my new self" (p. 234) when she meets Tobias Sears, a white captain in the Union Army. When she marries Sears, she asks herself, "What had the past to do with me? Nothing, I told myself, and believed it" (p. 234).

During the years that follow, Amanda feels safe from her past, at least with Tobias, because she believes he knows her secret, revealed to him by a young man whom she had known at Oberlin. An idealist and a liberal, Sears commands a troop of black soldiers. His bravest officer is Lieutenant Oliver Cromwell Jones, a man whom Amanda recognizes as Rau-Ru. She discovers that Tobias has no knowledge of her Negro blood and immediately confronts him with the information. Tobias professes his love for her, but his preoccupation with forestalling violence at a convention on Negro suffrage angers Amanda. She goes to Rau-Ru, becomes caught up in the raiding, and finds Hamish Bond about to be hanged by angry blacks. When Bond sees Amanda in the crowd, he jumps to his death saying only, "All niggers... You, too" (p. 323).

Amanda and Tobias move to St. Louis, where he practices law and writes a book analyzing the country's failure to fulfill its responsibilities to the freed slaves. Because The Great Betrayal makes enemies for Tobias, he and Amanda move their family to Kansas. There in 1888, while walking down the street, Amanda sees a tattered, scarred old Negro
man and believes he is Rau-Ru. She gives him money and flees with the word "nigger" ringing in her ears. Later when Tobias mentions that the beggar has died, Amanda tells herself he is dead but she is not free. "Free from what?" (p. 362) she echoes. Then she thinks of all those she has hated because they did not give her freedom. Gradually a thought forms in her mind: "Nobody can set you free" (p. 363). Then she adds, "except yourself" (p. 364); thus she realizes her complicity in her own enslavement:

That thought meant that I had to live and know that I was not the Little Manty . . . who had suffered and to whom things happened, to whom all the world had happened, with all its sweet injustice. Oh, no, that thought, by implying a will in me, implied that I had been involved in the very cause of the world, and whatever had happened corresponded in some crazy way with what was in me. . . . (p. 364)

With this understanding of herself comes the knowledge that she can never again be Manty, depending for her identity on another person's protection. All the "old shadows" of her life seem "canceled" in the "awfulness of joy" (p. 375) as Amanda recognizes the basis of true freedom.

_Band of Angels_ illustrates Warren's comment that depicting stories in a historical setting is "dealing with issues in a more mythical form."²⁶ By placing Amanda's experiences in the context of slavery and the Civil War, Warren crystallizes the need for identity, the denial of which, at its deepest level,

²⁶ Ellison and Walter, p. 188.
is the real sin of enslaving another person. Moore points out that Warren explores history, "with its record of human sin and brutality," because it "confirms man's depravity and can help him come to terms with his sinful nature." Since Warren frequently uses the term "history" to mean an individual's personal past and family heritage, in Band of Angels the national past and Amanda's personal past are fused to explore the relation between personal and national identity. Just as Hawthorne discovers in The House of the Seven Gables, the "nation's destiny is bound to the cycle of individual sinfulness, guilt, and expiation." Thus as Warren argues, "race isn't an isolated thing--I mean as it exists in the U. S.--it becomes a total symbolism for every kind of issue. They all flow into it and out of it." Slavery becomes the curse of the past for both the nation and Amanda Starr.

Crucial to understanding the significance of past and present for an individual is the rebellion against but finally acceptance of representative figures who embody characteristics of the past. For both Hawthorne and Warren, fathers serve as metaphors for "time, for an awareness of man's place

27 Moore, p. 76.
28 Ibid., p. 15.
29 Levy, p. 194.
30 Ellison and Walter, p. 204.
in relation to the past and the future."\textsuperscript{31} To achieve independent identity, each character must first come to terms with his father and then acquire self-knowledge through a reconciliation of past and present. In \textit{The House of the Seven Gables} and \textit{Band of Angels}, the search for independent identity coincides with the rejection and then acceptance of the past.

Crews suggests that Hawthorne's fiction is based on a sense of the past which is "nothing other than the sense of symbolic family conflict writ large."\textsuperscript{32} Basic to such conflict is the relationship between a father and his child, but Hawthorne's fiction contains few real fathers. Frequently, a surrogate provides the paternal force. Crews notes that "the absence of literal parents will entail, not a sense of playful freedom, but a dual obsession, a feeling of vague parental tyranny and longing for an ideal parent-figure to restore security and forgive offenses."\textsuperscript{33} In \textit{The House of the Seven Gables}, the past is directly related to the collective family history through father figures. Both Hepzibah and Clifford regard Jaffrey in the role of a father to be hated and feared and yet one whose approval must be sought. Hepzibah still lives in her childhood notion that


\textsuperscript{32} Crews, p. 60.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 226.
the Pyncheons are aristocratic by nature: "I was born a lady, and have always lived one, no matter in what narrowness of means, always a lady!" (II, 45). She never relinquishes her pride or her hatred for Jaffrey, the father figure associated by appearance and demeanor with the early family patriarch, Colonel Pyncheon. Jaffrey reminds her of her poverty, yet when he first views her shop, Hepzibah wonders, "What does he think of it? . . . Does it please Him?" (II, 57-58). Like Hepzibah, Clifford remains in a state of childishness threatened by a dominating father whose stern judgment of a sensitive, senuous character is debilitating. He responds to the Judge as to the portrait of Colonel Pyncheon: "I cannot bear it! It must not stare me in the face!" (II, 111). Jaffrey, who has divorced himself from the past by refusing its bonds of guilt and remorse, is ironically bound to his forefathers by his hereditary way of dying. During Jaffrey's life, neither Hepzibah nor Clifford can even attempt rebellion; their flight after his death is merely a result of the sudden removal of the authority figure.

Parent-child relationships, at least in a historical sense, affect the descendants of Matthew Maule. According to Holgrave's account of his early life, he lost the guidance of a father while quite young. Perhaps because he has been spared a father's teaching about the traditions of the past, he has the "inward prophecy . . . that we are not doomed to creep on in the old, bad way" (II, 179). Just as Hepzibah
errs in living totally in the past, so Holgrave makes the mistake 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" (II, 180). Holgrave's rejection of the past extends to the "planting" of families: "The truth is, that, once in every half-century, at longest, a family should be merged into the great, obscure mass of humanity, and forget all about its ancestors" (II, 185).

Yet the story that Holgrave writes about Alice Pyncheon and the grandson of the hanged Matthew Maule reveals his absorption of certain elements of the past. Through his power of mesmerism, Maule's grandson conquers the proud Alice Pyncheon so that he can command her actions wherever she is. When Alice dies, Maule knows the anguish of having destroyed another human soul. As Holgrave finishes his story, Phoebe nods as she succumbs to his mesmeric control. Just in time to avoid the sins of his fathers, Holgrave waves his hand to awaken Phoebe.

In Band of Angels, Amanda's apparent betrayal by her real father thrusts her into a desperate search for protection and love. But first she must reject the father in death from whom in life she had known only love:

Oh, he had always betrayed me, in every act, from the act of my begetting to the act of his death. Oh, he had always lied to me. And I remembered how he had said that my mother's grave was apart
from the others because he wanted her nearer the house, to him and to me, and that lie, somehow, summed up all the other lies, and with that recollection came an access of hatred. It came with a surging exhilaration. With that hatred something seemed to be settled, something relieved. (p. 72)

With the reality of her enslavement, Amanda transfers responsibility for her welfare to Hamish Bond. From the first time she meets the middle-aged man who strives to atone for his slave trading with obsessive kindness, Amanda's greatest fear is being abandoned by him. Her identity rests on her invisibility. As Leslie Fiedler believes, Amanda uses the men in her life, her "Band of Angels," to prevent her from developing her personal identity: "like the hero of Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man, she fades from sight because she becomes nothing except her role."34 With Tobias Sears, she is an adjunct to his nobleness. With Rau-Ru, she is again the slave but still requires his protection. Whenever she is forced to consider her past, her pain at remembering her father prevents her from any action except denial of who and what she is. She witnesses Tobias' rebellion against his materialistic father and then sadly watches her husband's dissolution as he is disinherited and forced to reassess the father he so frequently scorned. She accompanies Rau-Ru to Bond's plantation, where the violence of a surrogate son against a surrogate father results in Bond's leaping to his death. Then in Kansas, she

learns of a black son whose father rejected him and lived like a beggar. The son locates his father and returns to Chicago and a life of comfort. Amanda envies the son's honoring the father who had rejected him. With this picture in her mind, she recalls her father and realizes that his apparent betrayal of her resulted from his love: "He had not been able to make the papers out, or the will, that would declare me less than what he had led me to believe I was, his true and beloved child" (p. 373). Only after reconciling her feelings for her father can Amanda consider herself as having an identity apart from her role of "Little Manty."

Hawthorne and Warren use parent-child relationships to consider the necessity of separation from the past tainted with sin in order to revalue personal identity and learn to accept the past without submitting to its domination. In *The House of the Seven Gables*, the "main theme that Hawthorne evolves from the history of the Pyncheons and the Maules was not the original curse on the house, but the curse that the Pyncheons continue to bring upon themselves generation after generation." As Levy observes, evil is not predestined but chosen by the first Pyncheon and then repeated by succeeding Pyncheons. Only when Holgrave decides not to use

36 Matthiessen, p. 326.
37 Levy, p. 470.
his mesmeric power to control Phoebe and she, in turn, provides love to temper his disdain for everything from the past, does compromise reconcile past and present. The cycle is not complete, however, because Hawthorne is "sowing all over again the same seeds of evil." For Hepzibah and Clifford, the inheritance means she can play the role of a lady and he can continue his aimless enjoyment of beauty. Phoebe and Holgrave, who will perpetuate the Pyncheon family, possess the potential for good or evil; the choices they make will determine whether or not they repeat the sins of their fathers.

Warren's Band of Angels answers Housman's question about one generation's ridding itself of the sins of the previous generation with Amanda's search for identity. She begins her quest by asking, "Who am I? (p. 3) and concludes by discovering that she must assume responsibility for herself and her past. As Caspar argues, Amanda's suffering is "psychological and largely self-inflicted." She has been fleeing from herself. Like the Pyncheons and the Maules, Amanda learns that the sin of her father has controlled her life only because she duplicates his error: "Man inherits the condition of evil, yet is capable of choosing otherwise."  

38 Matthiessen, p. 332.
39 Caspar, p. 143.
40 Ibid., p. 145.
As Hawthorne questions, "What other dungeon is so dark as one's own heart! What jailer so inexorable as one's self!" (II, 169).

Writing a century apart, Hawthorne and Warren again reveal their literary kinship through their attempts to "reactivate history, to bring past and present into a form of coalescence." In Warren's *Brother to Dragons*, Thomas Jefferson recalls that he once wrote to John Adams, "the dream of the future is better than the dream / of the past." But considering the years of experience and the development of his country, Jefferson adds, "Now I should hope to find the courage to say / That the dream of the future is not / Better than the fact of the past, no matter how terrible. / For without the fact of the past we cannot dream the future." To translate the national experience into a personal wisdom, Hawthorne and Warren go beyond the facts of the past to create a "sense of the inner form of human existence." Through their exploration of American history in fiction, Hawthorne and Warren reinforce the thematic continuum in American literature.


CHAPTER IV

"IN COLD BLOOD": THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

Just as the themes of initiation and reconciliation of the past and the present reverberate throughout the fiction of Hawthorne and Warren so character types reappear, emphasizing a particular quality or condition and providing the basis for probing the nature of human morality. Hawthorne and Warren reveal a certain fascination with what D. H. Lawrence calls the "archetypal American," one whose "soul is hard, isolate, stoic, and a killer."¹ Richard Chase suggests that American writers like Hawthorne have "customarily observed Lawrence's archetypal American acting on the interior stage of the mind and have shown him making psychological aggressions, coldly rifling the souls of others."² Repeatedly, personal ambition and private interest so dominate their actions that proper concern for or consideration of other people is diminished. In Byronic terms, this type of character is the "gloomy egoist,"³ disillusioned by the


² Ibid.

world's corruption, absorbed in his own quest, and, above all, isolated from common humanity. For Hawthorne, this condition is often the result of committing the unpardonable sin: for Warren, it is the consequence of submitting to the split between idea and action, the malady of modern man. For both, the resulting alienation and estrangement constitute an abominable moral state. In a comparison of Hawthorne's and Warren's fiction, the concepts of an unpardonable sin and a self divided between intellect and emotion merge. Defined and illustrated in "Ethan Brand," "The Birthmark," Night Rider, and World Enough and Time, characters manifesting traits of the "isolated temperament" can then be more completely scrutinized in The Blithedale Romance and At Heaven's Gate.

Hawthorne's "Ethan Brand" (1851) supplies the prototype of the character committing the unpardonable sin. Searching for the one sin that God cannot forgive, Brand travels the world only to discover what he seeks in his own heart. His quest began with "tenderness, . . . love and sympathy for mankind, . . . and with reverence . . . for the heart of man." As a part of his investigation, he made a young woman "the


subject of a psychological experiment, and wasted, absorbed, and perhaps annihilated her soul in the process" (XI, 94. Recognizing that he is the source of his own destruction, Brand proclaims his sin to be "an intellect that triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man and reverence for God, and sacrificed everything to its own might claims!" (XI, 90). Tracing the development of Brand's sin, the narrator recalls how the sympathy for mankind withered as the "vast intellectual development, in its progress, disturbed the counterpoise between his mind and heart" (XI, 98-99). Thus critics of Hawthorne have come to refer to this recurring theme in his fiction as the split between the "head" and the "heart." 6

In his American Notebooks Hawthorne speculates about what sort of transgression could be beyond forgiveness:

The Unpardonable Sin might consist in a want of love and reverence for the Human Soul; in consequence 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 what ever 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? 7

In "Ethan Brand" Hawthorne answers his question with physical evidence. Distraught by the success of his quest, Brand


either falls or jumps into the flames of a lime burner's kiln. When his remains are discovered, his skeleton has been converted to lime by the flames, and "within the ribs--strange to say--was the shape of a human heart" (XI, 102). The symbolic implication of the "coldness" and "hardness" of Brand's heart indicates his final sad state: "he had lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity" (XI, 99).

In "The Birthmark," Hawthorne further illustrates the theme of intellect dominating emotion by creating a man of science whose search for the elixir of life overshadows his love for his beautiful wife. Aylmer marries Georgiana for her beauty, perfect except for a birthmark shaped like a hand which appears distinctly on her cheek when she becomes pale. Obsessed with removing this "visible mark of earthly imperfection," Aylmer treats his wife with special potions developed during years of unsuccessful experiments. His assistant, Aminadab, with his "vast strength, his shaggy hair, . . . and the indescribable earthiness that incrusted him" (X, 43), represents the physical, flawed side of man in opposition to Aylmer's lofty aspirations. Recognizing the risks, Georgiana nevertheless submits to Aylmer's attempts to achieve perfection through her and dies as his greatest experiment succeeds—the birthmark fades. But as the narrator concludes, "had Aylmer

reached a profounder wisdom, he need not thus have flung away the happiness which would have woven his mortal life of the selfsame 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 in eternity, to find the perfect future in the present" (X, 56). Like Ethan Brand, Aylmer permits his intellectual pursuit to obscure his opportunity for maintaining his link in the magnetic chain of humanity.

Aylmer's choice, however, has not been a simple one, for, as Robert Heilman points out, "Aylmer may be less the villain than the tragic hero"\(^9\) because his scientific investigations were originally motivated by sympathy for man. Brooks and Warren note Aylmer's "questing spirit which will not resign itself to the limitations and imperfections of nature."\(^{10}\) But Aylmer, although perhaps not yet to the point of Ethan Brand's hardened heart, commits the unpardonable sin by falling prey to the "tyrannizing influence acquired by one idea over his mind, and of the lengths which he might find in his heart to go for the sake of giving himself peace" (X, 40). Once his own self interest becomes the dominating force and the removal of the birthmark is a matter of personal obsession,


his commendable motives are tainted. Like Brand, Aylmer errs not in his original aspiration but in his failure to maintain the proper balance between the "head" and the "heart."

Although Warren chooses to describe his characters in terms of the "man of idea" and the "man of action," his characters in _Night Rider_ (1939) and _World Enough and Time_ (1950) recreate the folly of Ethan Brand and Aylmer. In _Night Rider_, a young Kentucky lawyer, Percy Munn, becomes involved in the Association of Growers of Dark Fried Tobacco. Almost by accident he makes a speech to the assembled farmers asserting, "There is nothing here but an idea. And that idea... does not exist unless you give it life by your own hope and loyalty." As if in response to his own voice, Munn incorporates his life into the cause of revolt against price fixing by the tobacco trusts. As he becomes absorbed in the effort to encourage farmers to unite against the trusts, he helps form a band of night riders, who burn the crops and harrass farmers who reject membership in the Association. Only in the work of the Association does he find he can be "completely himself" (p. 25).

Sensing his personal isolation in which "a man might be to another man only the sound of a voice muffled and


incoherent" (p. 164), Munn clings to the Association for his identity and link with the world. His marriage fails as a result of his increasing coldness toward his wife who does not share his obsession; his affair with the daughter of an Association board member is marked by coldness and emptiness; he participates in the murder of a man who has betrayed the Association; and finally he dies, killed by state militia for a murder he did not commit. Ironically, in his search for a genuine "association" with humanity, Munn succeeds only in intensifying his separation: "the anarchic and immoral actions of the Association, however just the claim for a fair price for their tobacco crop, are only a travesty of the true search for a community. The solidarity or community he wants is one that respects the individual human person and the imperatives of his sole self, not one that swallows up the individual in some absolute."¹³ Like that of Hawthorne's Ethan Brand and Aylmer, Munn's experience illustrates that devotion to an idea to the exclusion of human bonds produces not achievement and fulfillment but despair.

World Enough and Time (1950) relates the story of Jeremiah Beaumont, a tale of "what is left . . . after the pride, passion, agony and bemused aspiration."¹⁴ A young law student in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Jeremiah is

¹³ Ryan, p. 51.

maneuvered by a friend and his own lofty concept of justice into defending the honor of a young woman he has never seen. Convinced that Rachel Jordan has been seduced and abandoned by Cassius Fort, a father surrogate to Jeremiah, the young man meets Rachel and marries her, questioning whether a man might "come to some moment when, all dross and meanness of life consumed, he could live in the pure idea" (p. 57). When Fort refuses Jeremiah's challenge to a public confrontation, his sense of retribution is frustrated and vengeance becomes a necessity: "The blood of Fort would clear him. It would clear him before the world. It would clear him before himself. He would bathe in it and be clean, and the words of the hymn ran through his head, of a fountain filled with blood which would wash away all guilty stains" (p. 164). So obsessed with his own concept of justice that he no longer considers Rachel's wishes about the life they will lead, Jeremiah finally stabs Fort.

Arrested and convicted of murder, Jeremiah escapes and flees with Rachel to live with a band of renegades. Their existence is filled with despair, debauchery, and insanity. Rachel finally commits suicide after shouting at Jeremiah that all that happened was done not for her honor but so that he might maintain his concept of himself: "'Oh, for yourself! . . . Not for me. For yourself. You came and you used me. You made me hate Fort and you used me. Oh, I didn't hate him, I loved him, and you used me, you used me to kill
him, you used me, you ruined me, you used me ..." (p. 452).

Realizing that "he had lived so long with the idea that that alone had seemed real," Jeremiah decides to return to "the world" and proclaim his guilt, so that the "world" can "redeem" his "idea" (p. 207). But this final redemption is denied him as he discovers that his world has been false, created by a cunning ambitious friend who deceived him about Fort's seduction of Rachel, betrayed him during his trial, and engineered his escape only to order him killed. Jeremiah is beheaded by his murderer; his head is returned as proof of this death and is buried with Rachel, a final symbol of the idea she represented to him. Throughout his imprisonment, Jeremiah kept a journal recording his thoughts and his assessment of his life. His concluding statement links his experience with Percy Munn, Ethan Brand, and Aylmer:

I had longed for some nobility, ... but did not know its name. I had longed to do justice in the world, and what was worthy of praise. Even if my longing was born in vanity and nursed in pride, is that longing to be wholly damned? For we do not damn the poor infant dropped by a drab in a ditch, but despite the mother's fault and tarnishment we know its innocence and human worth. And in my crime and vainglory of self is there no worth lost? Oh, was I worth nothing, and my agony? Was all for naught? (p. 465)

Jeremiah's question suggests the tragic complexity of Hawthorne's and Warren's morally fragmented characters.

Although writing a century apart and influenced by different regions, Hawthorne and Warren share a common view of
the dualism in human life reflected in the moral division within individual characters. One way to highlight the similarity in Hawthorne's and Warren's fiction is to place their works in the framework of American experience and American literature. Van Wyck Brooks suggests that American writers have responded to the "peculiar dualism that lies at the root of our national point of view; . . . human nature itself in America exists on irreconcilable planes, the plane of stark theory and the plane of stark business."\(^15\) Hawthorne and Warren specify Brooks's generality by dramatizing the effect on an individual of the split between idea and fact, between head and heart, between self and world. Characteristically, this internal division directs a person to pursue a single goal and to neglect the emotional bonds that maintain his place among common humanity. In the process, he exemplifies what Warren calls the "contamination implicit in the human condition--a kind of Original Sin as it were--the sin of use, exploitation, violation."\(^16\) For Hawthorne, as for Warren, the penalty for this kind of sin is "the misery of estrangement, of separateness, of insulation from the normal life of mankind."\(^17\) Thus the fiction of Hawthorne and Warren is populated

\(^{15}\) Eddy Dow, "Van Wyck Brooks and Lewis Mumford: A Confluence in the 'Twenties,'" American Literature, 45 (1973), 410.


with characters whose pride leads them to believe that their obsessions justify the manipulation of other people. They often begin with a purpose or motive sympathetic to the good of mankind. But in the process of achieving their objectives, they abuse others and often thoughtlessly "violate the sanctity of a human heart."^18

In *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) and *At Heaven's Gate* (1943), Hawthorne and Warren depict the human consequences of the inhuman acts people perform when they become obsessed with their selfish goals and possess power which permits them to manipulate other people, what Dimmesdale in *The Scarlet Letter* calls the violation "in cold blood" of a human heart.^

Hollingsworth in *The Blithedale Romance* and Bogan Murdock in *At Heaven's Gate* manifest the quality of "cold blood" which damns their philanthropic and seemingly humane and honorable actions. The structure of both novels is designed to define the two "unpardonable sinners" through the effect they have on others, who are in turn frequently corrupted by the association. As a testimony to the modernity of their theme, Hawthorne and Warren select the present rather than the past for the milieu of their plots. Their characters are urban people, whose affairs belong to an active social, political,

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19 Ibid.
and economic world. Withdrawing from the exterior world, the characters attempt to create new "circles" of associates or communities. Strikingly similar patterns of human relationships exist in the two novels. Two women, one strong and rebellious and the other passive and long-suffering, vie for the affection and attention of the principal sinner. Violent death for the stronger woman results from estrangement and despair. A young man, influenced by and wishing to emulate the dominant character, serves as an observer but falls short of commitment to life and to other people and fails to prevent tragedy. In both novels, money proves to be a central motivating factor and becomes the symbol of the corruption of an ideal. In truth, the focus of each character's actions is self and the realization of personal ambition.

In The Blithedale Romance, Hawthorne probes what A. N. Kaul describes as the "archetypal American experience: withdrawal from a corrupt society to form a regenerate community." The novel opens with the retreat of the four major characters from the "business of the world" and their gathering at Blithedale, an "ideal" community. The most forceful character, and the one who affects the lives of all the others, Hollingsworth, is a former blacksmith with the "external


21 Ibid.
polish" of a "tolerably educated bear." His interest in Blithedale stems from his plan to influence the inhabitants to support his project: the "reformation of criminals through an appeal to their higher instincts" (III, 36). Gradually those around him discover that the warmth of his heart is being wasted on the "mighty purpose" of his life: "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 men, nor scarcely for the nutriment of individual attachments, unless they could minister, in some way, to the terrible egotism which he mis-took for an angel of God" (III, 55). Through his effect on other characters in the novel, Hollingsworth contributes to the moral drama and the human tragedy of The Blithedale Romance.

A counterpart to Hollingsworth is the narrator, Coverdale, a young poet drawn to Blithedale out of curiosity. He recognizes that the "iron substance of his heart" (III, 29) makes him more a spectator of than a participant in life. His aloofness produces a condition similar to Hollingsworth's: "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

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my heart" (III, 154). Thus Hollingsworth and Coverdale complement each other, one with too intense a devotion to a single idea and the other with insufficient genuine emotion to participate in the fate of his friends.

Complementing the quartet of major characters, Zenobia and Priscilla represent two poles of feminine character. Zenobia's beauty and passionate nature are reflected in a brilliant, exotic flower which she wears in her dark, lustrous hair. Because she is a public figure, well known for her literary career and for her feminist ideas, she assumes the name "Zenobia" while she is at Blithedale. In contrast, Priscilla's chief quality seems to be her wanness. Pale, weak, and defenseless, Priscilla arrives at Blithedale with Hollingsworth, entrusted to his care by an old man. With the kindness of the Blithedale inhabitants, good food, fresh air, and a growing affection for Hollingsworth, the little seamstress blossoms until her childlike adoration vies with Zenobia's womanly passion in a contest for Hollingsworth's love. Coverdale observes that of all the people at Blithedale, only Zenobia and Priscilla are "disciples" of Hollingsworth's mission; the narrator reports that he "spent a great deal of time, uselessly, in trying to conjecture what Hollingsworth meant to do with them--and they with him" (III, 68). In a sense how one person uses another becomes the underlying principle of The Blithedale Romance.

Throughout the novel two elements--mesmerism and the veil--intertwine to form a motif of images and allusions
which reinforces the theme of the unpardonable sin linking these four characters in the Blithedale experiment. Coverdale opens his narrative by recording that he has just returned from a performance by the Veiled Lady, an entertainment in which a young woman covered by a white veil performs miraculous acts while under the mesmeric control of her "exhibitor" (III, 5). For the four main characters, mesmerism becomes the visible symbol of control by one person over another, and the veil represents the facade each maintains in the quest for personal satisfaction. As Richard Fogle suggests, all of the characters are veiled in one way or another, and the pattern of the plot is based on vision, what Coverdale as the narrator can uncover to reveal the truth.23

In the process of his revelations, Coverdale reveals that shortly after the "blithe" (III, 12) brotherhood is formed, one by one, Coverdale, Zenobia, and Priscilla fall under Hollingsworth's charismatic spell only to discover that his regard for each is in direct proportion to the potential contribution to his project for the reformation of criminals. Hollingsworth demands that Coverdale choose either complete commitment to the reformation of criminals or alienation from Hollingsworth's affections. Through his attentions, Hollingsworth appears to encourage Priscilla and Zenobia.

until Coverdale predicts, "for a girl like Priscilla and a woman like Zenobia to jostle one another in their love of a man like Hollingsworth was likely to be no child's play" (III, 72). Rumors at Blithedale suggest that Zenobia and Hollingsworth will marry, and Coverdale believes that Zenobia's great wealth has been dedicated to Hollingsworth's obsessive purpose. Apparently as a bargain for the wealth, Zenobia, with Hollingsworth's approval, conveys Priscilla back to the city and to the control of Professor Westervelt, a strikingly handsome man who seems to have "nothing genuine about him, save the wicked expression of his grin" (III, 95). His control over Zenobia suggests that he may have been her husband, and his mesmeric power over Priscilla reveals that he is the exhibitor and she the Veiled Lady. As Coverdale watches a performance of Professor Westervelt, he notices Hollingsworth in the audience. Just as the Professor demonstrates his power over the Veiled Lady by proclaiming that no "moral inducement, apart from my own behest, . . . could persuade her to lift the silvery veil, or arise out of that chair" (III, 202), Hollingsworth approaches the stage, speaks to Priscilla, who rises, throws off the veil, and flees to the safety of his arms.

When Coverdale returns to Blithedale, he finds dissension instead of brotherhood in the community. Zenobia bitterly denounces Hollingsworth for altering his affections when he learned that Priscilla was Zenobia's half-sister and that
their father was reclaiming Zenobia's fortune for Priscilla.

In her anger, Zenobia accuses Hollingsworth:

It is all self! . . . Nothing else; nothing but self, self, self! The fiend, I doubt not, has made his choicest mirth of you these seven years past, and especially in the mad summer which we have spent together. I see it now! I am awake, disenchanted, disinthralled! Self, self, self! You have embodied yourself in a project. You are a better masquerader than the witches and gypsies yonder; for your disguise is a self-deception. See whiter it has brought you! First, you aimed a death-blow, and a treacherous one at this scheme of a purer and higher life, which so many noble spirits had wrought out. Then, because Coverdale could not be quite your slave, you threw him ruthlessly away. And you took me, too, into your plan, as long as there was hope of my being available, and now fling me aside again, a broken tool! But, foremost and blackest of your sins, you stifled down your inmost consciousness!—you did a deadly wrong to your own heart!—you were ready to sacrifice this girl, whom, if God ever visibly showed a purpose, He put into your charge, and through whom He was striving to redeem you! (III, 218)

As Hollingsworth leads Priscilla away, Zenobia acknowledges her sister's victory and her own hard-hearted actions: "You stood between me and an end which I desired. I wanted a clear path" (III, 220). Hollingsworth's happiness is short lived, however, when Zenobia drowns herself after requesting that Coverdale give Hollingsworth a message: "Tell him he has murdered me!" (III, 226). As a member of the party searching for Zenobia's body, Hollingsworth probes the water with a pole and wounds the corpse's breast. This physical act, representing the emotional wounds he caused during her life, reveals to Hollingsworth his own criminality. He
abandons his plan for reforming numerous criminals and concentrates on one murderer. Coverdale concludes that Hollingsworth exemplifies the truth in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress: "from the very gate of heaven there is a by-way to the pit" (III, 243).

Warren's title, At Heaven's Gate, echoes Coverdale's suggestion that no matter how honorable and commendable the project, selfishness can always find a means of corruption. All the major characters become what John L. Longley labels "monsters" who have grown "grotesquely overdeveloped and lopsided in some aspect of their humanity, and maimed and shrunken in others." As Longley points out, in At Heaven's Gate Warren demonstrates an evil represented in Dante's seventh circle, "the warping of excessiveness of something which under ordinary circumstances is good." Thus power, ambition, independence, and love—admirable motives in moderation—become obsessions for the character in At Heaven's Gate.

Like Hollingsworth in The Blithedale Romance, Bogan Murdock personifies the unpardonable sin and infects those around him with the blind selfishness which prompts cold-hearted use of other people. Murdock, the prototype of the American businessman, has made an idol of success and personal


25 Ibid., p. 62.
power and is willing to manipulate emotional relationships with family and friends to maintain economic position. Having built a financial empire on the illegal financing of securities, Murdock demonstrates in business dealings the same violation of natural order reflected in his character as an unpardonable sinner. In Dante's terms, Murdock commits the crime of usury and thus permits the "abstraction" of money to dominate his existence. Warren recalls that America is based on an idea, a promise of independence and opportunity. When the fulfillment of that promise is corrupted to mean success at any cost and freedom from moral responsibility, Hawthorne's unpardonable sin becomes the essence of Warren's twentieth century American experience.

At Heaven's Gate begins with a casual discussion of riding horses at Bogan Murdock's home. Slim Sarrett, a cynical college student, argues that people do not really enjoy riding horses; they merely enjoy the "idea" of controlling a powerful animal. Sarrett adds, "the true contest should be to set oneself against another human being, not against a brute" (p. 4). Just as mesmerism provides the symbol for the manipulation of other people in The Blithedale

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26 Ibid.


Romance, horseback riding as a way of asserting control over another living creature sets the thematic tone for *At Heaven's Gate*. Warren deftly associates each of the four main characters with horses and thus with the selfish manipulation of other people.

Bogan Murdock exploits other people with subtle means: "Politeness, . . . it's just a way of making people do things" (p. 6). His wife remembers him as she has seen him lie under a sun lamp, a "glinting body, . . . modeled by the hard will locked inside" (p. 183). Defying Murdock's attempted control of his daughter, Sarrett diagnoses Murdock's moral malady as "the special disease of our time, the abstract passion for power, a vanity springing from an awareness of the emptiness and unreality of the self which can only attempt to become real and human by the oppression of people who manage to retain some shreds of reality and humanity" (p. 250).

Jerry Calhoun, a young college graduate who has chosen a career in Murdock's organization instead of a position teaching geology, imitates Murdock and surrenders more and more of his moral identity for acceptance in Murdock's circles. Jerry rejects his crippled uncle, invalid aunt, and farmer father, all of whom seem uncouth in comparison to Murdock's associates. In love with Sue Murdock, Jerry becomes a tool in her desperate rebellion against her father. She coldly seduces Jerry late one night in the Murdock living room with her parents moving about upstairs. Later when he recalls the
experience, all he can think is "my God, suppose somebody had come, suppose Bogan Murdock had come!" (p. 95). Thus all of Jerry's relationships become subordinate to the influence of Bogan Murdock.

Like Jerry Calhoun, Sue Murdock finds her life dominated by her father, but unlike Jerry, she bitterly rebels. Genuinely in love with Jerry, she agrees to marry him but breaks their engagement when Jerry openly defends Bogan Murdock to her friends. Later she agrees to a reconciliation on the condition he leave Murdock and find a job elsewhere. The real obstacle to their marriage is Bogan Murdock's approval of the match. Furious at her father's attempted intervention in her life, Sue leaves home and cultivates a new circle of friends. Her actions are motivated by her repeated assertion to herself: "Nobody owned her" (p. 5).

Having failed to use Jerry as an instrument of defiance against her father, Sue seeks other means. She moves to a dilapidated apartment, refuses financial assistance, and takes as lovers two men who actively reject Bogan Murdock. Slim Sarratt, a cynical student, becomes Sue's lover after he defies Murdock in her apartment. Sweetie Sweetwater, a labor leader who has instigated strikes against Murdock's companies, loves Sue but refuses to surrender his identity by marrying her. He realizes that she uses sex to define herself: "it was like she grabbed hold of something just
because it came to hand and was something to grab hold of. Like somebody in quicksand grabs hold of something" (p. 302). To dramatize her alliance with Sweetwater, she joins him in a picket line at Murdock's plant, knowing that she will be recognized and that her picture in the paper will be one further antagonistic blow she has struck against her father. Sue believes she is acting to separate her identity from her father's. Ironically, she does not perceive that she can achieve true independence only when she abandons her father's methods and ceases using other people for her selfish ends.

Dorothy Murdock succeeds in subjugating her will and her personality to her husband's, at least superficially. Jerry senses that there exists "in her quietness, a restraint, a tautness, which only waited for the slightest contact of the appropriate circumstance to set it in vibration or snap it" (p. 21). In her role as Bogan Murdock's wife, she maintained the "precariously won balance" (p. 21) in her life with alcohol. Twice she upsets the balance to risk asserting her identity. On the day that Sue moves out of the Murdock house, Dorothy seems almost "victorious" (p. 178) in Sue's rebellion. Again when the Murdock financial empire is crumbling, she takes the opportunity to strike out at her husband for the lost years of love and fulfillment that were sacrificed to his dream of power. In a final desperate effort to grasp some remnant of emotion, if only through shocking her husband, she confronts Bogan Murdock with the possibility that he has been cuckolded.
by his friend, Private Porsum. Like her daughter, Dorothy Murdock's attempts to rebel against Bogan reveal that she has adopted his methods of using other people.

At Heaven's Gate is the story of the American Dream corrupted by blind ambition. The lure of success and power prompts Murdock to abuse the affection and loyalty of those around him as he builds his empire. Under the guise of restoring honor to his father, who murdered a political rival, Bogan Murdock donates to the state the Major Lemuel Murdock State Park. By maneuvering state legislators, Murdock secures passage of a bill by which he "dumped upon the taxpayers of this state at an enormous figure" (p. 270) additional land for the Park, a transaction based on falsifying collateral for loans. Caught in the mounting corruption is Private Porsum, a war hero whom Murdock deluded into using his influence with workers to end a strike, elevated to the position of bank president, and then implicated in the illegal manipulation of securities. Jerry Calhoun discovers that his misplaced faith in Murdock is rewarded with the position of scapegoat; from jail Jerry begins to understand Murdock's evil and to recognize that the means of achieving personal identity is in his power, not Murdock's. Besides the economic ruin he causes, Murdock heartlessly uses his family. His son becomes an errand boy, spying on anyone not loyal to Murdock. His wife remains a convenient part of the public image he must maintain. His daughter, pregnant with Sweetwater's child,
refuses to return home, obtains an abortion, and then, in her despair, accepts death at the hands of Sarrett without even a struggle. Murdock exploits Sue's death to get publicity and public sympathy. The novel concludes with a press conference. Murdock, standing in front of a portrait of Andrew Jackson, accepts responsibility for the failure of his company, not for any wrong he personally did but because he "trusted too much in friends . . . and subordinates" (p. 391). He urges the people of the state to remember their heritage of courage, fostered by men like Andrew Jackson and Major Lemuel Murdock.

Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* and Warren's *At Heaven's Gate* dramatize the authors' "sense of the danger and deficiencies which they saw encircling the possibilities they believed the country possessed."29 In their quest to rise above the common American, to take advantage of the promise of individual opportunity, to dedicate themselves to the pursuit of a personal ideal, Hollingsworth and Murdock illustrate the unpardonable sin, not in abstract but in specific terms. A project to rehabilitate criminals and a desire for financial success—admirable motivations in moderation—become obsessive and evil when the regard for other people is stifled. Hollingsworth is a "second-cousin of Melville's

Ahab, ... a monomaniac," 30 and Murdock has "turned human beings into ciphers of profit and loss." 31 Both authors demonstrate that "the means defile the end; when the end becomes abstract, the means become inhuman." 32 As a result of their inhumanity, Hawthorne's and Warren's characters are separated from the community of mankind, "whose bond is the heart"; thus they "involve themselves in futile efforts to cultivate the icy ranges of abstraction." 33 They place their concept of "self" above everything without realizing that the true self can be realized only through individual completeness:

human wholeness means a capacity for commitment, dedication, passionate concern, and care—a capacity for whole-heartedness and single-mindedness, for abandon without fear of self-annihilation and loss of identity. In psychological terms, this means that a whole man retains contact with his deepest passions at the same time that he remains responsive to his ethical sense. No one psychic potential destroys or subverts the others: his cognitive abilities remain in the service of his commitments, not vice versa; his ethical sense guides rather than tyrannizing over his basic passions; his deepest drives are the sources of his strength but not the dictators of his action. 34

30 Chase, p. 84.


33 Ibid., pp. 286-287.

What Hollingsworth discovers too late and Murdock never perceives is that they have separated themselves from the human community to accomplish self-fulfillment which can be achieved only by losing the self:

The recognition of complicity is the beginning of innocence.
The recognition of necessity is the beginning of freedom.
The recognition of the direction of fulfillment is the death of the self.
And the death of the self is the beginning of selfhood.
All else is surrogate of hope and destitution of spirit.35

For Warren, as for Hawthorne, the path to self-realization and moral responsibility is marked by involvement with and commitment to humanity.

CHAPTER V
DESCENT INTO THE CAVERN

In The American Notebooks, Hawthorne pictures a cavern as a symbol of the human heart:

At the entrance there is sunshine, and flowers growing about it. You step within, but a short distance, and begin to find yourself surrounded with a terrible gloom, and monsters of divers kinds; it seems like Hell itself. You are bewildered, and wander long without hope. At last a light strikes upon you. You press towards it yon, and find yourself in a region that seems, in some sort, to reproduce the flowers and sunny beauty of the entrance, but all perfect. These are the depths of the heart or of human nature, bright and peaceful; the gloom and terror may lie deep; but deeper still is this eternal beauty.¹

In Hawthorne's The Marble Faun (1860) and Warren's The Cave (1959), journeys into the catacombs of Rome and into a Tennessee cave are analogous to descending into the moral and psychological darkness, the "core of being,"² within each character. For Hawthorne and Warren, this process of self-examination produces an awareness of original sin, the human


propensity to evil. For a few, this discovery provides an opportunity for moral growth through perceiving that beyond the evil remains a potential for good. Thus the sacrifice of innocence can be "fortunate" because knowledge of human nature is acquired by "accepting the logic of experience, . . . which when earned, has a dynamic value the innocent never know."³ The Marble Faun and The Cave affirm that the childlike innocence lost is replaced by a more mature, if still imperfect, perception of reality. Thus, the recognition of original sin and the experience of a "fortunate fall" provide thematic connection between The Marble Faun and The Cave.

For Hawthorne and Warren, the struggle to reconcile good and evil in the human heart informs the structure, as well as the theme, of their novels. The narrator of The Marble Faun comments that "every human life, if it ascends to truth or delves down to reality,"⁴ must undergo a transformation as a result of the knowledge acquired. What Sheldon Liebman observes about The Marble Faun is also true of Warren's The Cave: "The chapters . . . follow a distinct pattern. The characters ascend and delve, move from high to low. . . .


By itself, this movement means little. Seen in the context of other motifs, however, it is a comment on the journey of life. . . ."5 In their ascending and delving, characters within each novel can be considered in reference to the stages of their awareness and the progress of their journey into the heart of darkness. As Clark Griffith suggests, the innocents, unaware of the "monsters" lurking within, accept the reality of the sunshine and flowers at the entrance. Others pass beyond the light to the "terrible gloom" and become obsessed with the sin and guilt pervading humanity. Only those who penetrate beyond the entrance, experience evil, and use their knowledge as a basis for recognizing the complicity of all men in both good and evil join the redeemed:

Moving into the heart-cavern, they accept there the obligation to love which Hawthorne exacts of all the sinful. They recognize that since sin is the one shared condition of all mankind, it is likewise the condition upon which a workable human society must be founded. Spurred by this realization, the redeemed go on to take their place as responsible members of the community of fallen men. They have confronted directly the foulness in Everyman's heart, and have learned from the confrontation a lesson of love and humility. . . .6

Warren concurs when he writes in Brother to Dragons:

For whatever hope we have is not by repudiation, And whatever health we have is not by denial,


But in confronting the terror of our condition. All else is a lie.  

By avoiding the "lie" that obscures knowledge of oneself and thus of human nature, a person wins the opportunity to penetrate beyond the darkness in the cavern to the light and peace.

In The Marble Faun and The Cave, Hawthorne and Warren employ a profusion of imagery to mirror the inner development of each character. Waggoner points out that Hawthorne depended chiefly on Rome and its art treasures to provide "thematic density." In a similar fashion, Bohner notes that "symbolic richness . . . gives The Cave a texture unlike anything else in Warren's fiction." Although Warren uses a variety of images, he most often refers to sexual experience as a way of defining self. In both novels, the association of darkness and subterranean places with the mystery of the inner self reinforces the themes of original sin and the fortunate fall.

Hawthorne begins The Marble Faun with a description of his four main characters standing before the "pretty figure of a child, clasping a dove to her bosom, but assaulted by a snake" (IV, 5). The narrator identifies the statue with the


human soul confronted by a choice between good and evil. Throughout the novel, the four must deal with the combination of good and evil they discover in each other and in themselves. A young Italian count, Donatello, is the most innocent character in the novel and yet a murderer. In physical appearance, he resembles a statue of the Faun of Praxiteles, a "beautiful creature, standing betwixt man and animal, sympathizing with each, comprehending the speech of either race, and interpreting the whole existence of one to the other" (IV, 13). Like the Faun, Donatello's simplicity provides the source of his honesty and goodness. Seemingly without intellect, he "has hardly a man's share of wit" (IV, 7). In the statue, as in Donatello, "the characteristics of the brute creation meet and combine with those of humanity in this strange yet true and natural conception of antique poetry and art" (IV, 9-10). The history of Donatello's family includes the story of the marriage of a "sylvan creature, native among the woods," (IV, 723) to a mortal maiden. Usually full of good humor, light-hearted, and dancing, Donatello reveals his savage ancestry on occasion when he displays anger like that of a "fierce brute" (IV, 18). Donatello cannot bear to think of the past or the future, but, in his simple view of the world, dwells only in the present.

Miriam is a dark beauty whose past is shrouded in secrecy. Associated with Beatrice Cenci by the tragedy which follows her, Miriam is connected with an important Italian family
and is linked to a horrible but unnamed crime committed some years earlier. Unlike Donatello, Miriam frequently grown "moody . . . and subject to fits of passionate ill-temper" (IV, 35). She dwells in a room filled with shadow, where she paints pictures often on the theme of revenge. The image of a man, a shadowy figure who follows Miriam wherever she goes, can be recognized in her sketches, frequently depicted as a demon. The dark figure claims that Miriam shares with him "a destiny which we must needs fulfill together (IV, 94) and insists their "fates cross and are entangled" (IV, 95). She rejects Donatello's simple love because she wishes to avoid tainting his generous nature with "the odor of guilt, and a scent of blood" (IV, 97) that cling to her out of her past.

The third character is a young American girl named Hilda, who dresses in white and lives in a tower "at a height above the ordinary level of men's views and aspirations" (IV, 52). As a service in exchange for her lodging, Hilda tends the lamp in the Tower of the Virgin. Miriam describes her friend's purity:

You breathe sweet air, above all the evil scents of Rome; and even so, in your maiden elevation, you dwell above our vanities and passions, our moral dust and mud, with the doves and the angels for your nearest neighbors. I should not wonder if the Catholics were to make a saint of you, like your namesake of old; especially as you have almost avowed yourself of their religion, by undertaking to keep the lamp alight before the Virgin's shrine. (IV, 53-54)
A "daughter of the Puritans" (IV, 54), Hilda is a copyist of paintings and often captures through her depth of sympathy "what the great master had conceived in his imagination, but had not so perfectly succeeded in putting upon canvas" (IV, 59). However, Hilda's virtue reflects not sympathy but the sternness of her Puritan ancestors so that she is intolerant of the moral weaknesses of others; not having experienced sin, she cannot condone it in her friends.

Kenyon is a young American sculptor in love with Hilda. He exhibits in his personal relationships and in his art a preference for the ideal, represented by a tiny marble hand he has copied from the "ethereal" (IV, 128) Hilda, yet he also shows intuitive perception of the vibrant womanhood illustrated in his sculpture of Cleopatra in a moment of "repose" (IV, 126). Cleopatra's sinking "out of the fever and turmoil of life . . . for one instant" cannot obscure the "great smouldering furnace deep down in the woman's heart" (IV, 126). Miriam marvels at Kenyon's comprehension of Cleopatra's character: "fierce, voluptuous, passionate, tender, wicked, terrible, and full of poisonous enchantment" (IV, 127). Surprised that he can understand the "seemingly discordant elements" (IV, 127) in Cleopatra, Miriam responds to his apparent sympathy for the passionate nature of woman by attempting to confide the secret of her past. Although he appears "perfectly frank and kind," she senses in him a "certain reserve and alarm" (IV, 128). Throughout The Marble
Faun, Kenyon's intuitive understanding of and yet resistance to the complex mixture of good and evil in the human heart provide the tension out of which his knowledge of human nature must grow.

Together in Rome, the four characters become entangled in one another's lives and through sympathy and love are transformed in some way by their common bond. Each discovers the nature of reality as they share the knowledge of sin. Early in the novel, the four visit the catacombs, where Miriam becomes separated from the others. When she rejoins the group, she returns with a dark figure, who claims she has "called me forth, and must abide the consequences of my reappearance in the world" (IV, 31). From this moment, Miriam and the spectre of the catacombs are inseparable. He tortures her with reminders of his mysterious power over her, forces her to kneel to him in public, and urges her to accompany him in washing his hands to remove the stain of guilt. Instead she takes water in her hands and practices "an old form of exorcism by flinging it in her persecutor's face" (IV, 147). Shortly after the spectre first appears in the catacombs, Miriam attempts to drive him away with the warning that the conclusion of their association will be death. When he questions, "Your own death, Miriam,—or mine?" (IV, 97, she rejects the possibility that she can be a murderess.

However, Miriam, as well as Donatello, and, to a lesser extent, Hilda and Kenyon, discover within themselves previously
unacknowledged elements of their nature that unify them in a bond of sin. Donatello's childlike adoration of Miriam and instinctive animal hatred for her shadow prompt him to shout in his rage, "Shall I clutch him by the throat? ... Bid me do so, and we are rid of him forever" (IV, 91). Miriam insists she wants no violence, but late one night as she and Donatello stand on a precipice above Rome, the spectre appears, and Donatello, hesitating only long enough to receive compliance from Miriam's glance, throws the dark figure to his death. At first denying that she shares the guilt, Miriam then realizes "the deed knots us together, for time and eternity, like the coil of a serpent!" (IV, 690). Hilda, who has come in search of her friends, witnesses the murder but slips away unnoticed.

As an eventual consequence of the murder, all four characters struggle within themselves for the means of adjusting their concept of themselves and of their friends. As the murderer, Donatello discovers that the act of flinging his victim over the precipice dispels his innocence so that his heart "shivers" (IV, 196) at his own guilt. Creatures of the forest no longer respond to him, and Miriam's love, which he thought would bring him happiness, becomes only a bond of despair. Previously free and spontaneous with his emotions, Donatello now restrains his feelings, "thrusting them down into the prison-cells where he usually kept them confined" (IV, 250). The load of Donatello's debilitating wretchedness
is lightened only by Kenyon's suggestion that some men have found solace in "living for the welfare of . . . fellow creatures" (IV, 268). As Kenyon forms a clay bust of Donatello, the sculptor accidentally "gives the countenance a distorted and violent look, combining animal fierceness with intelligent hatred" (IV, 272). If Miriam or Hilda had been present, they might have recognized the expression of Donatello's face "at that terrible moment when he held his victim over the edge of the precipice" (IV, 272). Donatello wants to retain the bust as a constant source of anguish and penitence, but Kenyon warns him not to keep his soul "perpetually in the unwholesome region of remorse" (IV, 273). Kenyon recognizes the alteration occurring within Donatello:

A wonderful process is going forward in Donatello's mind. . . . The germs of faculties that have heretofore slept are fast springing into activity. The world of thought is disclosing itself to his inward sight. He startles me, at times, with his perception of deep truths; and, quite as often, it must be owned, he compels me to smile by the intermixture of his former simplicity with a new intelligence. (IV, 282)

Gradually Donatello learns the "price we pay for experience" (IV, 250).

Miriam, Hilda, and Kenyon reflect the count's anguished search for peace. Miriam is exiled from Donatello's presence and his heart because he no longer feels worthy of their love. Seeking comfort from her friend, Miriam goes to Hilda but finds only rejection:
I always said, Hilda, that you were merciless; for I had a perception of it, even while you loved me best. You have no sin, nor any conception of what it is; and therefore you are so terribly severe! As an angel, you are not amiss; but, as a human creature, and a woman among earthly men and women, you need a sin to soften you. (IV, 209)

Although she will not betray Miriam and Donatello to the authorities, Hilda finds that keeping the dreadful secret forces her to "understand how the sins of generations past have created an atmosphere of sin for those that follow. While there is a single guilty person in the universe, each innocent one must feel his innocence tortured by that guilt" (IV, 212). Hilda believes Miriam's deed has "darkened the whole sky" (IV, 212).

In her search for peace, Hilda finally compromises her religious rigidity and goes to confession in St. Peter's Cathedral. She discovers that because she is not a Catholic, what she tells the priest is not protected by the sanctity of the confessional and can be related to Roman officials. In her despair that her own peace has been purchased at the price of her friends' freedom, Hilda discovers a need for Kenyon's love to sustain her. But even he admonishes her about her inflexible attitude toward good and evil: "You need no mercy, and therefore know not how to show any" (IV, 384). Hilda recalls a pledge she has made to Miriam and goes to deliver a packet of papers to the Cenci Palace. Detained mysteriously in a convent, Hilda is so long absent
from her shrine that the lamp goes out. In his panic at the thought of Hilda in danger, Kenyon experiences a new depth of feeling, akin to the emotion that inspired Donatello to commit murder to protect the woman he loved.

After the safe return of Hilda through the intervention of Miriam and Donatello, Kenyon ponders the "moral" (IV, 460) of the experiences that the four friends have shared. He proposes that a creature like Donatello, who possesses a nature "compounded especially for happiness" (IV, 459), no longer can exist in a world marked by evil. When Hilda rejects this notion, Kenyon offers an alternative earlier suggested by Miriam: "Donatello perpetrated a great crime; and his remorse, gnawing into his soul, has awakened it, developing a thousand high capabilities, moral and intellectual . . ." (IV, 460). Hilda refuses this explanation also and clings to her view that good can never come from sin. She and Kenyon plan to marry and return to the United States, where they expect a happy life. In Rome, they leave Donatello, probably imprisoned, and Miriam, whom they last see kneeling in prayer and then with hands extended "to repel," as if she "stood on the other side of a fathomless abyss, and warned them from its verge" (IV, 461).

Hugh McPherson argues that experience in The Marble Faun is humanizing: Donatello learns about evil; Miriam's obsession with her past is tempered by her concern for Donatello; and Hilda and Kenyon become more sympathetic and less cold
and aloof. Each character understands, to some extent, the nature of reality in which good and evil share. As Arlin Turner suggests, "Donatello, the faun-like being who represents, the other characters playfully suppose, the link between man and animals, gains the knowledge required to make him fully human." But just as Donatello has possessed too simple a view of the world, so Hilda's concept of the moral nature of the world has been too refined, too "sophisticated." Although her spiritual development is quite limited compared to the change in Donatello, her involvement with her friends permits Hawthorne to demonstrate the "murderer and the presumed paragon of innocence to be companions in guilt." Probing deep within themselves as a result of their sin, Miriam and Donatello discover a truth that Hilda and Kenyon only dimly perceive:

Guilt is original, a necessary aspect of the human condition, not something that sets conspicuous sinners apart from the rest of us. And it is mutual so that in our inevitable complicity we may not relieve ourselves of its burden by pointing the finger, casting the stone. Still, we need not


12 Ibid., p. 64.

13 Ibid.
despair if only we will acknowledge our complicity and enter the human circle.14

Recognition of an individual's bond with the human community is the glimmer of light beyond the darkness in Hawthorne's cavern, and the basis of the thematic continuity in the fiction of Hawthorne and Warren.

Just as Hawthorne depicts a situation in which the descent into the catacombs releases the spectre from Miriam's past, so in The Cave Warren relates a story in which the descent into a cave unleashes emotion, long submerged and repressed to avoid the terrifying exploration of the self. Through their response to the tragedy of a young man lost in a Tennessee cave, Warren's characters are forced to recognize the basic elements of their inner being: "each must leave the dark cavern of his own nature to face the light of self-knowledge."15 Warren notes that the original title of his novel was The Man Below; he explains that "the man below is the man, of course, inside you. The submerged man in you and the man in the ground."16 By his choice of a cave as the site of the action of the novel, Warren provides a physical counterpart for the "corkscrew motion" of psychological and moral action, "that downward circling toward a climax of

14 Waggoner, p. 256.
15 Bohner, p. 49.
horror which makes of the plot an outward symbol of our inward flight from and attraction toward the revelation of guilt."17

A young Tennessee hillbilly known for his free and easy manner, his medal of valor, and his love for caves, Jasper Harrick appears in Warren's novel only as his life and death in the cave are "refracted" through the consciousness of his family and friends.18 Jasper's jaunty self-assurance inspires a good-natured envy in those who know him:

   He had that trick of being himself so completely, it looked like he wore the whole world over his shoulders like a coat and it fit. That was why everybody reached out and tried to lay a hand on him, get a word off him, have something rub off him, hold him back a minute, before he moved on toward wherever he was going.19

When his mother inquires why he enjoys cave crawling, he replies, "Well, in the ground at least a fellow has a chance of knowing who he is" (p. 241). Jasper's exploits as a cave crawler mirror his excursions into self-knowledge, and what others recognize as self-assurance results from his continual attempts to discover who and what he is, a determination to probe deeper and deeper into the cave of the self. The other characters must descend into their own caves to confront their personal identity.

18 Bohner, p. 147
Jasper is a "chip off the old block" (p. 14); his father is Jack Harrick, a blacksmith who for thirty years has "dragged jugs dry, whipped his box till folks fell down from dancing, cracked jaws with his fist like hickory nuts under a claw hammer, and torn off drawers like a high wind in October stripping sycamore to bare-ass white, all over Kobeck County, counties adjacent and contiguous" (p. 13). At the time Jasper goes into the cave and does not return, Jack Harrick is dying of cancer, vacillating between praying and venting his anger at discovering he is mortal. In his attempt to determine who the Jack Harrick is who sits dying, he discovers that "there was a big black hole right in the middle of him where a man's thinking and feeling and living ought to be, and he was going to fall into the hole and fall forever into black nothing" (p. 139). Jack becomes obsessed with the idea of penetrating the mystery in himself before he dies.

Celia Harrick calls her husband "John T." She resents the years of life and love he enjoyed before they were married and believes her identity and her relationship to him will be made permanent if she can hold his hand at the moment of his death. But just as he refuses pain pills out of pride, so he insists he must confront death alone. Celia's sorrow about her son's entrapment in the cave stems from her regret that "she hadn't even been able to reach out and touch him" (p. 241). Sensing that she never really communicated with Jasper, she longs for Jack to put out his hand to her so that as parents they can share the guilt.
When Jack Harrick disappears underground, he leaves his boots and guitar at the mouth of the cave where they are discovered by his brother Monty, who wants to believe he, too, inherited his father's lust for life and self-assurance but secretly admits that he is not really "off the old block" (p. 19). Monty wears shiny new boots just like Jasper's, but Monty's do not have the "casual confidence of long use" (p. 29) that his brother's exhibit. He plays the guitar that belonged to Jack Harrick and then to Jasper. Eventually Monty learns to look within himself for his self-definition; he must follow his big brother into the cave and return alone with knowledge of his personal identity.

Jasper Harrick crawls into the cave as part of a business venture to develop a tourist attraction, perhaps like Mammoth Cave. The land on which the cave is located belongs to his friend and partner, Isaac Sumpter, son of the minister Mac-Cardland Sumpter. When Monty discovers Jasper's boots and guitar and spreads the alarm, Isaac, as Jasper's friend quickly assumes a position of authority and refuses to let anyone else enter the cave. After his first trip inside, Isaac announces that Jasper is alive but trapped. Because Isaac maintains his self-identity by controlling others, he manipulates what he perceives as the "darkness" in other people. He persuades Nick Papadoupalous, a Greek restaurant owner who owes four thousand dollars to the bank, to join in exploiting Jasper's misfortune. Nick sets up a concession on the mountain, and
Isaac manages to get publicity by writing eyewitness accounts and providing exclusive interviews—all for a price. Soon hundreds of people are camped on the hillside, awaiting word of Jasper’s fate. With each trip into the cave to take supplies, Isaac comes back with a message from the trapped man to generate more publicity: Jasper sends comforting words to his bereaved mother and dying father, who has been brought to the cave in his wheelchair; Jasper wants the girl who is carrying his baby to know that he would have loved her and the child; and finally, if he dies, Jasper wants the cave sealed as his tomb.

At a moment when Isaac is exhausted and caught off guard, his father slips into the cave for one last attempt to free Jasper. The minister returns to report publicly that Jasper is dead; what he cannot report, even privately, is that the body is still warm and all the supplies Isaac supposedly carried to his friend at great risk to himself are piled within a safe distance of the mouth of the cave—Isaac never penetrated far enough to locate Jasper. For some time, Isaac has accused his father of lacking the faith to be a true father like Abraham and sacrifice his son. MacCarland Sumpter proves Isaac right by concealing the truth and protecting his son. Isaac has been to college to acquire knowledge, but lacking the moral depth to understand what has been offered him, he cannot see beyond the darkness to the
distant glimmer of light. Before he enters the cave for the last time, Isaac considers his own fate:

Maybe he would go into that cave and not come out. He shut his eyes and he heard the cold, deep sound of water from the pit in the cave, in the fourth chamber. In the absolute darkness of his head—and the pit—he saw a body in the absolute darkness of the rolling water, and even wondered how he could see it, in absolute darkness.

Whether it was his own body, or Jasper Harrick's, he couldn't tell. No, it was not Jasper's, it had to be his own, for if you couldn't see anything, you could still feel things, and if he knew that the body was there, it would have to be because he himself was the body in that water, and he himself was that knowledge in that absolute darkness. (p. 193)

Isaac finds himself wanting when his inner strength is tested. His life has been a search for freedom from his father, whom he despises, and the Tennessee town that refuses him any identity but that of the minister's son. With money he has acquired through publicity of Jasper's plight, Isaac can flee to New York, but as he prepares to leave his father, "he suddenly felt betrayed. He felt lost. He felt the fear of being thrown absolutely upon his own frail resources, alone, dropped in a sea, at night" (p. 359). In Joseph Conrad's terms, Isaac is "hollow at the core"; he has searched his heart and found only darkness.

Other characters, however, delve into their personal caves and find beyond the darkness a spark of light to

illuminate their core of being. Celia Harrick survives the
grief to question her husband about why he secretly wanted
Jasper to die: "She stood there marveling that you could be
yourself all those years and not know you could up and say
something like that to an old man you had loved. It was like
not knowing who you were" (p. 375). But then she realizes
that who she is cannot be determined by her dying husband,
hers dead son, or her son who has crawled into the cave after
everyone has left the mountain to say goodby to his brother.

Jack Harrick admits to himself, "I did not want my son
to come out of the ground, because somebody always has to go
in the ground. If he was there I would not have to go"
(p. 35). Finally he can accept that he is an "old, nigh-
illiterate, broke-down blacksmith, sitting here in the middle
of the night" (p. 388) with his boy dead. Understanding what
he does now, he can accept MacCarland Sumpter's confession
that Isaac never attempted to rescue Jasper. Both Jack and
the minister perceive that their weakness, as well as their
strength, has been within their own caves and that Jasper's
death has caused them to explore depths of their being in a
way they avoided before. With this acceptance, Jack proclaims,
"every man's got to make his own kind of song" (p. 401). On
the guitar that had been his, then Jasper's, and now Monty's,
Jack plays a ballad and sings:

He is lying under the land,
But I know he'll understand.
He is lying under the stone,
But he will not lie alone—
I'm coming, son, I'm coming,
Take your Pappy's hand.
(p. 402)

With his song of acceptance, Jack tells Celia, "I reckon living is just learning how to die. . . . And . . . dying . . . it's just learning how to live" (p. 403). With a "clanging chord" that filled the room, Jack Harrick cries "let that anvil ring" (p. 403) and reaffirms the life that he has found in the depths of his personal cave.

The quotation from Plato with which Warren introduces The Cave provides the framework in which characters like John T., Celia, Donatello, and Miriam confront the reality within themselves:

You have shown me a strange image, and they are strange prisoners.

Like ourselves, I replied; and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

True, he said; how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads? (p. v)

Clark Griffith observes that the "mass of men, chained there by either ignorance or apathy, are pictured as trapped in a cave, and as perceiving on its walls shadows which they mistakenly take to be realities."21 Throughout the two novels, light and dark become qualities linked with the search for

21 Griffith, p. 552.
and the denial of the nature of reality. Shadows become the outward symbol of each person's inner "delving," illustrated in The Marble Faun by scenes in the catacombs, Borghese Gardens, Colosseum, and Capuchin cemetery. In The Cave characters visit the "hole in the ground" (p. 223) and are prompted to explore the "inner reality" (p. 37), the "empty ache" (p. 40), the "secret center" (p. 41), the "inner logic" (p. 285), and the "darkness that was himself" (p. 256). Each questions himself to find "something emerging . . . into a new light" (p. 221). Thus the action in both novels concerns what Miriam calls "the joys and sorrows, the intertwining light and shadow, of human life" (IV, 46).

In the context of the possibility of discovering hollowness in oneself and with the backdrop of Plato's cave, where images are mistaken for reality, T. S. Eliot writes:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Between the conception} \\
\text{And the creation} \\
\text{Between the emotion} \\
\text{And the response} \\
\text{Falls the Shadow}\end{align*}
\]

For characters in The Marble Faun, attitudes toward art reveal their fallacious acceptance of shadows for reality. At the beginning of the novel, Donatello does not respond to art; when Miriam requests that he pose as a dancer for a picture she is planning, his response is to dance, to

\[22\text{ Eliot, p. 59.}\]
identify with the physical act, not the artistic recreation. Miriam's creations reveal her absorption in guilt and revenge. Hilda is a copyist whose comprehension of any painting that interested her is "perfect" (IV, 57). Kenyon's comments about art are influenced by his love for Hilda and the regard he has for her sense of goodness. By the end of the novel, Miriam's love for Donatello has turned her thoughts away from herself, and she is facing her past and her guilt. Hilda no longer achieves success as a copyist, partly because she has a more personal understanding of the emotions which inspire art; she has experienced too much merely to reflect the emotions of other artists. Kenyon still permits Hilda to influence him, but he has been Donatello's companion during much of the agonizing transformation and is able to produce a bust of Donatello reflecting the alteration. The title The Marble Faun introduces the parallel between life and sculpture, and Hawthorne's title for the English edition, Transformation, reinforces the link between art and reality.

For Warren, sex becomes the index of a character's self-knowledge, and again the association to Eliot's "Hollow Men" is relevant:

    Between the desire
    And the spasm
    Between the potency
    And the existence
    Between the essence
In _The Cave_, sex is a "proclamation of self," a way of asserting power over another and, at some deeper psychological level, a means of achieving communion with another soul: "With an impulse largely unconscious . . . human need gropes through lust for love, through desire for a reality beyond desire." But sexual drives are merely "shadows in a Platonic cave"; the reality each seeks cannot be provided by sex alone. Jack Harrick recalls all the women "wanting something from him, always a different something, . . . and always something he didn't care whether in their emptiness, they ever got or not" (p. 387). He, in turn, seeks identity and escape from mortality by clinging to Celia Harrick; his terror is being caught in the "vertigo of his own non-being" (p. 387). Nick Papadoupalous, the Green restaurant owner, marries a stripteaser because as she performs one night, he imagines her to be Jean Harlow, and his sexual desire provides an experience to which he can link his dreams. The minister, MacCarland Sumpter, longing for the comfort of his dead wife's body, "knew that flesh is all, and all else is delusion"

23 Eliot, p. 59.
24 Bohner, p. 151.
26 Ibid.
(p. 83). As if in response to his observation, the crowd gathered at the cave, upon hearing that Jasper is dead, asserts its hold on life with an orgy in the woods. In a sense, all who came to the mountain were striving to "break through to the heart of the mystery which was themselves" (p. 396).

Through art and sex, Hawthorne and Warren join events of the present in each novel to generations past and thus to the universal sin and guilt that mankind shares. The site of Donatello's crime is Rome, "the native soil of ruin" (IV, 73) which links "the past, the present, and the eternal." As they wander through the galleries of Rome and study the works of past masters, Hilda and Miriam sense a connection with the past that reinforces their interpretation of the present: Hilda finds her rigid concept of morality, and Miriam sees a world stained with guilt. As if to amplify further the connection with the past, in The Cave Celia Harrick imagines the sexual act throughout her family history:

She looked out at the light on the field, beyond the shadow-thickening trees of the yard, and thought how Jasper had put that baby in that girl, and how John T. had put the baby who was to be Jasper in her, and how her father, that sickly man she could only remember reaching for a medicine bottle, had put the baby that was to be her inside the woman who was her mother, and how her mother once had been a baby inside somebody. The

thought dissolved into a sense of shadowy concatenation of flesh reaching back into darkness. (p. 290)

Rome, with its centuries of history and art, and the Tennessee cave, perhaps the result of eons of natural formation, reinforce the mythic quality of both *The Marble Faun* and *The Cave*; the compulsion for self-knowledge is a timeless experience.

To dramatize the process of recognizing and reconciling light and dark, good and evil, innocence and guilt, appearance and reality, Hawthorne depicts Donatello's transformation from the "wild boy, the thing of sportive animal nature," to the "man of feeling and intelligence" (IV, 320) as an educative experience. As Turner indicates, Hawthorne suggests that "sin affords an otherwise impossible depth of insight into the meaning of life and at the same time isolates the sinner from human associations." Caspar adds that the same alternatives open to a person who has sinned are "implicit in the cave: escape and encounter." The knowledge that returns the sinner to the human community is the awareness that all are "brothers to dragons." Thus "any fall ... can be fortunate. By admitting to the minotaur

29 Caspar, p. 157.
30 Warren, *Brother to Dragons*. 
in their private caves, they are prepared to be men." But rarely is the experience that educates sought; more often the impulsive act, the accidental circumstance, the unexpected opportunity appears, and a person responds to his inner darkness. If he is fortunate, he discovers with Hawthorne and Warren that "it is the heart that rescues, the Original Goodness—perhaps more immemorial and ingrained than Original Sin itself." This is the light beyond the darkness in Hawthorne's cavern and Warren's cave.

31 Caspar, p. 157.

CHAPTER VI
REDEMPTION THROUGH SUFFERING
PUTTING "HUMPTY DUMPTY TOGETHER AGAIN"

The Scarlet Letter, published in 1850 when Hawthorne was forty-six, and All the King's Men published in 1946 when Warren was forty-one, represent the epitome of the authors' achievements in fiction. No other single work by either author incorporates so many of the themes which dominate their fiction; the thematic fabric of these two novels is woven out of the recurrent ideas presented in works discussed in Chapters II, III, IV, and V of this dissertation. In "Young Goodman Brown" and "Blackberry Winter," The House of the Seven Gables and Band of Angels, The Blithedale Romance and At Heaven's Gate, and The Marble Faun and The Cave, characters experience initiation into the reality of the adult world; reconciliation of past and present; isolation resulting from sin, especially the "unpardonable" sin; and recognition of original sin as the nature of man and the fortunate fall as a means of his salvation. Yet in each of these works characters only partially perceive the significance of what happens to them, experience a sudden moment of recognition at the end of the story, or resign themselves to the pervasiveness of evil in the world. However, with The
Scarlet Letter and All the King's Men, Hawthorne and Warren surpass the thematic development of their other works by realistically depicting the gradual process of expanding awareness and moral maturity. Hester Prynne and Jack Burden experience a symbolic "fall" as described in the nursery rhyme from which Warren selected his title. With Humpty Dumpty, they discover that "all the king's horses and all the king's men" cannot put them back together again; their redemption must come from their own inner strength forged out of suffering. Thus, they cannot merely withdraw to a life of despair but must reenter the imperfect world and become an active force in it. In The Scarlet Letter and All the King's Men, Hawthorne and Warren employ the theme of redemption through suffering, or "putting Humpty Dumpty together again," as the central idea reinforced and enriched by themes emphasized in their other works.

Comparing Hawthorne's and Warren's treatments of these themes reveals the essential similarities in the two novels and confirms the authors' association in the continuum of American literature. In The Scarlet Letter and All the King's Men, the authors emphasize the same themes: introduction to the precarious balance between good and evil in the world; recognizing and resolving guilt associated with the personal past as illustrated through the relationship with father figures; experiencing alienation as a consequence of sin, whether in the form of adultery, the violation of
another human soul, or the failure to acknowledge complicity in the imperfect human condition; discovery of original sin as the nature of man but also the acceptance of the possibility of moral regeneration; and understanding of the necessity of knowledge of self as a prerequisite for comprehending truth about humanity. Hawthorne and Warren select the same plot pattern for dramatizing these themes. In each novel, the consciousness of the main character provides the perspective for considering the sequence of events influencing the process of moral awakening, a process reflected in some degree by other characters. Thus the intertwining of the lives and fates of the characters illustrates Lowell's description of Hawthorne's romance:

> the interest centres in one . . . ruling Idea, of which all the characters are fragmentary embodiments. They remind us of a symphony of Beethoven's, in which, though there be variety of parts, yet all are infused with the dominant motive, and heighten its impression by hints and faraway suggestions.¹

Through these "hints" and "suggestions," Hawthorne and Warren invest their novels with a complexity of themes, each theme amplifying the others.

Hawthorne alerts the reader to the thematic focus of *The Scarlet Letter* by opening his story not with the sin of adultery, but with a scene marking the beginning of Hester Prynne's spiritual journey. Carrying her newborn child and

wearing an embroidered scarlet A on her dress, Hester emerges from prison and ascends a scaffold in the town square to face the scorn of the Puritan community. In this opening scene, Hawthorne introduces elements which he develops throughout the novel: Hester's shame and alienation, her clinging to the child in the midst of her spiritual agony, the appearance of her long absent husband among the villagers, and her refusal to reveal the Reverend Dimmesdale as her partner in sin. Hester is gradually transformed from a moral outcast to a person who rejoins the stream of human life not in spite of, but because of, her experience with sin. Cut off from any solace but her own inner strength, Hester progresses through periods of defiance, fear that she may lose her child, despair that the Reverend Dimmesdale agonizes in his remorse, anguish that her husband seeks revenge on the young minister, increasing sensitivity to sin and spiritual pain in others, and finally commitment to life through service to those with whom she shares the common bond of human frailty.

In *All the King's Men*, Warren traces the moral growth of his narrator, Jack Burden, from a youth unable to find direction or accept responsibility for his life to a man whose recognition of his own participation in both good and evil prepares him to accept the burden of being human. As Jack recounts the experiences which have contributed to his expanding moral awareness, he searches for an understanding of himself and a way to reconcile what he has learned with
his future actions. A student of history and a reporter, Jack discovers that he can no longer divorce facts from an understanding of human emotions and motivation. In his personal life, he must come to terms with a beautiful mother searching for love in a procession of husbands; a father who walked out on his wife and son and became a religious fanatic; a boss, whose political ambitions are supported by a charismatic appeal to the common man and a belief that the end justifies the means; a surrogate father, a judge whose one act of corruption destroys Jack's boyhood image of honor; a friend, who cannot bear to have his ideal concept of good tainted by the "dirt" of imperfect humanity; and a woman Jack loves, whose affair with his boss reflects her own search for self-knowledge. Like Hester, Jack must learn to accept the imperfections of those around him by recognizing the bond of sin that unites him with all humanity.

In a general sense, all of the action in The Scarlet Letter and All the King's Men can be associated with "Young Goodman Brown" and "Blackberry Winter" in the dramatization of the process of initiation, the expanding awareness of physical, moral, and psychological reality. Specifically, the novels share the traditional initiatory pattern of separation from a safe environment, a journey resulting in experience, and a return with an altered view of the world. In The Scarlet Letter, Hester Prynne recalls a "village of rural England, where happy infancy and stainless maidenhood seemed
yet to be in her mother's keeping."² Having married a man much older than she, Hester precedes him to the new world, where, in his absence as a result of shipwreck and captivity among the Indians, she comes to love Arthur Dimmesdale and conceives his child. Ostracized by the Puritan community and forced to wear a scarlet "A" on her dress, Hester faces the consequences of her sin. Although she feels that her love for Dimmesdale "had a consecration of its own" (I, 195), she, nevertheless, accepts the punishment in the hope that "the torture of her daily shame would at length purge her soul, and work out another purity than that which she had lost" (I, 80). Through seven years of penance and charitable works, Hester experiences a sort of "new birth, with stronger assimilation than the first" which "converted the forestland . . . into Hester Prynne's wild and dreary, but lifelong home" (I, 80). Through her suffering and regeneration, Hester discovers that the nature of reality may at best be described as a "troubled joy" (I, 114).

Initiation in All the King's Men focuses primarily on Jack Burden and reinforces Hawthorne's concept of reality as "troubled joy." Jack drifts through life, unable to penetrate beyond the surface of his existence. In love with Anne Stanton, a woman he has known since childhood, he cannot bring

himself to make a commitment to her through a sexual relationship or even a definite decision about his career. Because he naively accepts appearance for reality, Jack believes that his father, whom he calls the "Scholarly Attorney,"\(^3\) is a weak man who abandoned his family; that Jack's mother is a vain woman who drifts from one husband to the next without loving anyone; that Anne Stanton represents purity and serenity as illustrated by Jack's recurring memory of her face "lying in the water, very smooth, with the eyes closed, under the dark greenish-purple sky, with the white gull passing over" (p. 126); and that Jack himself can fulfill his role as researcher and dig up "dirt" (p. 50) on Willie Stark's political opponents without being morally responsible for the pain his searches cause or the way in which the information is used. As a result of his literal and symbolic journey from Burden's Landing, where he grew up, to the state capitol and Willie Stark's world of politics, Jack discovers that his perception of reality is distorted: the Scholarly Attorney's "weakness" is his way of coping with the adultery of his wife and his best friend; Jack's mother buries her love for Jack's real father in a procession of husbands; Anne Stanton, through her own disillusionment about her father's honor, becomes Willie Stark's mistress;

and Jack discovers that, in one way or another, he has contributed to the tragedy in the lives of those around him.

In "Young Goodman Brown" and "Blackberry Winter," Hawthorne and Warren had portrayed a young New England Puritan and a Southern boy approaching the threshold of maturity; in The Scarlet Letter and All the King's Men, Hester Prynne and Jack Burden complete the initiatory experience begun in the short stories. Hester consciously participates in the kind of sin Goodman Brown may have only imagined, and Jack Burden, like Seth, follows the tramp to the city where politics provides an education in the way of the world. Ultimately both Hester and Jack learn the necessity of "accepting evil as an inevitable part of life." But their achievement is more profound than Brown's and Seth's because both recognize what Seymour Gross points out: a moral synthesis becomes possible when a person perceives his involvement in both the good and the evil that constitute reality.

For Hawthorne and Warren, an essential part of the process of initiation involves resolving guilt and conflicts from a person's past. Just as in The House of the Seven Gables and Band of Angels, fathers and father surrogates symbolize the link to the past in The Scarlet Letter and All

4 Elizabeth M. Kerr, "Polarity of Themes," Modern Fiction Studies, 6 (Spring, 1960), 25.

the King’s Men. Assertion of independence from and then reconciliation to paternal forces becomes necessary for moral and psychological maturity. In The Scarlet Letter, paternalism exerts a paralyzing force on the minister’s moral will. Throughout the novel, Dimmesdale acts less like a guilty lover than a wayward son. Michael Davitt Bell describes him as a "young man in a world dominated by old men, a son in a community of fathers."

At the beginning of the novel, Hester Prynne, standing before the church fathers, clutching her baby in her arms, is admonished again and again by these "forms of authority" (I, 64) to reveal the baby’s father. Finally Governor Bellingham urges Dimmesdale to use his influence with the adulteress: "the responsibility of this woman’s soul lies greatly with you. It behooves you, therefore, to exhort her to repentance, and to confession, as a proof and consequence thereof" (I, 66). In exasperation, the Reverend Mr. Wilson urges, "Speak, and give your child a father!" (I, 68). Hester replies that her child will have a heavenly father; "she shall never know an earthly one!" (I, 68).

As Dimmesdale struggles with his guilt and remorse, he cannot bring himself to confess he is Pearl’s father. Amid his self-inflicted scourges and his fasts, Dimmesdale’s despair leads him to a vision of his own "white-bearded father"

who looks upon his son with a "saint-like frown" (I, 145).
In place of his natural father, Dimmesdale honors his "professional father" (I, 150), Mr. Wilson, whom the young minister envisions in the light of a lantern as wearing a halo. Unable to live up to this model of a saintly father, Dimmesdale cannot publicly acknowledge Pearl as his daughter. On a dark night when his anguish drives him to ascend the scaffold where Hester and Pearl join him, Dimmesdale experiences through them a "tumultuous rush of new life, other life than his own, pouring like a torrent into his heart" (I, 153).
But his vitality subsides when Pearl inquires whether he will join her and her mother on this spot the following day.

Shocked at Dimmesdale's nervous condition on the evening of their chance meeting at the scaffold, Hester decides she must alleviate some of his pain by revealing the true identity of Chillingworth. She and Pearl encounter the minister in the forest, and Hester informs him that the physician is her husband. As Hester and Dimmesdale unburden their guilt, their love is rekindled, and they plan to flee to Europe in the hope of sharing a happier life. The possibility of escape from his despair produces an exhilaration manifested in Dimmesdale's temptation to make "blasphemous suggestions" (I, 218) to one of his deacons, a "good old man" who "addressed him with . . . paternal affection" (I, 217). Dimmesdale's new vitality carries him through the election sermon, but as he concludes, his energy falters, and he stumbles
toward Hester, his movement resembling "the wavering effort of an infant, with its mother's arms in view" (I, 251).

Mr. Wilson steps forward to assist the young minister, who "tremulously, but decidedly, repelled the old man's arm" (I, 251). With his last strength, Dimmesdale climbs the scaffold with Hester and Pearl and reveals that he is the child's father. Pearl, the alienated product of sin, kisses her father and sheds tears, a "pledge that she would grow up amid human joy and sorrow, nor forever do battle with the world, but be a woman in it" (I, 256).

In All the King's Men, Jack Burden resembles Telemachus, a dispossessed young man searching for a father and a means of establishing a lost relationship with his home, his community, and his world. Feeling that he has been rejected by his father, Jack adopts a cynical attitude and rejects his home and his heritage. The man Jack believes to be his father, the "Scholarly Attorney," (p. 213) had been a loving father during Jack's early childhood but then had walked away from Jack and his mother. Years later Jack still wonders about the reason, speculating that his father "wasn't enough of a man to run his own house" or maybe was just a "fool" (p. 213). Scorning the life of the Scholarly Attorney, who writes religious tracts and cares for derelicts and

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unfortunates, Jack recalls fondly his father's friend, Judge Irwin, who was "more of a father to me than those men who had married my mother and came to live in Ellis Burden's house. And the Judge was a man" (p. 44). Searching for his own identity, Jack drifts aimlessly through college and into a job as a reporter. Attracted to Willie Stark because, as a politician, he is a man of action, a man who employs whatever means necessary to accomplish good, Jack becomes a member of Stark's staff. Unlike the weak Scholarly Attorney or the disciplined Upright Judge, Stark is the "man of fact" (p. 462) who exists in the present and harbors few illusions about himself or anyone else.

As a part of his research for Stark, Jack is told to discover some defect in the Judge's moral armor, some weakness that can force him to retract his support of Stark's opponent. Refusing to believe that the Judge has committed any dishonorable act, Jack reluctantly sets out to discover the truth. After months of searching, he learns that Judge Irwin had once taken a bribe to pay off his mortgage and save his home in Burden's Landing. Before he surrenders the proof to Stark, Jack, at Anne's request, insists on giving the Judge an opportunity to refute the evidence or at least explain. The Judge admits the truth but says he could stop Jack from using it by telling him something. Jack returns to his mother's home and later is awakened by his mother's piercing scream. With the phone in her hand, she laughs
hysterically: "You killed him! . . . Your father . . ." (p. 370). The sudden revelation that the Judge is Jack's father forces him to a kind of rebirth. Louise Gossett associates the scream of Jack's mother with the pain of birth and suggests that only through such a shock as the knowledge of his culpability for his father's death can Jack be ejected from the dark womb of irresponsibility. 8

Although saddened by Judge Irwin's death, Jack is relieved to have traded a weak father, the Scholarly Attorney, for a strong one, Judge Irwin, who had "cuckolded a friend, betrayed a wife, taken a bribe, driven a man, though unwittingly, to death" (p. 375), and yet who had done good and been a just judge. But the Judge's death and the knowledge that he is Jack's father also force Jack to a new understanding of the Scholarly Attorney. Having inherited the Judge's home, preserved by acceptance of a bribe, Jack begins to understand the legacy of human fraility and also human strength that his fathers have left him:

So now I, Jack Burden, live in my father's house. In one sense it is strange that I should be here, for the discovery of truth had one time robbed me of the past and had killed my father. But in the end the truth gave the past back to me. So I live in the house which my father left me. With me is my wife, Anne Stanton, and the old man who was once married to my mother. When a few months ago I found him sick, . . . what could I do but bring

him here? (Does he think that I am his son? I cannot be sure. Nor can I feel that it matters, for each of us is the son of a million fathers.) (p. 462)

Through his experience with his fathers, Jack discovers the basic principle of the adult world: the complex combination of good and evil, of sin and morality, that is the burden of humanity.

Just as rejection of and reconciliation with fathers is necessary to mark the progress of initiation, so the integration of various elements within a single individual produces a moral balance conducive to accepting the responsibilities of adulthood. In The Blithedale Romance and At Heaven's Gate, Hawthorne and Warren demonstrate the consequences of an imbalance between intellect and emotion, between idea and action, and between isolation and community. In The Scarlet Letter and All the King's Men, this theme takes the form of the "compartmentalized" person, the divided self, and provides a pattern for character portrayal. For example, Richard H. Fogle suggests that in The Scarlet Letter, "the heart is closer to nature, the head to the supernatural"; thus Dimmesdale personifies the "heart" because his sin "assailed him through passion." Roger Chillingworth, Hester's wronged husband, coldly utilizes his intellect to psychologically torture Dimmesdale; therefore, Chillingworth

9 Gossett, p. 60.
represents the "head." Hester embodies both heart and head because she, too, has sinned and yet through her strength of intellect and will achieves a moral integration of the elements within her character. In a comparable manner, Warren dramatizes the "tragedy of incomplete personalities" by depicting Willie Stark as the "man of fact" and Adam Stanton as the "man of idea" (p. 462). Attempting to avoid responsibility for either the idea or the action, Jack Burden recognizes the interrelationship of the two only after he involuntarily contributes to their violent confrontation. Jack, like Hester, discovers that moral fragmentation can be alleviated only by the realization that "wholeness embodies the acceptance of evil and guilt." Roger Chillingworth and Adam Stanton best illustrate the authors' concern with isolation and alienation of characters who permit one aspect of their nature to overshadow all others until the individual's moral sensibility becomes warped. Chillingworth seeks vengeance as a wronged husband but becomes the unpardonable sinner; Stanton condemns violence and spurns the contamination of politics, but concludes by becoming a murderer. Through intensive introspection and


12 Louis D. Rubin, Jr., "All the King's Meanings," Georgia Review, 8 (1954), 431.
obsession with a personal quest, each severs the common bonds with humanity and alienates himself from other people. As physicians, Chillingworth and Stanton possess the knowledge to heal, yet they use their ability to separate themselves from humanity. Chilingworth perverts his ability as a doctor to achieve vengeance on his wife's lover. Stanton dissociates his practice of medicine from human emotion until he considers human illness in impersonal and mechanical terms.

In *The Scarlet Letter*, while Hester Prynne stands on the scaffold facing the villagers and her humiliation, Chillingworth joins the crowd. No doubt shocked by the scene of his wife holding a baby, he focuses immediately on the identity of the father: "It irks me . . . that the partner of her iniquity should not, at least, stand on the scaffold by her side. But he will be known!—he will be known!—he will be known!: (I, 63). Chillingworth's determination to discover the father leads him to swear Hester to secrecy about their former relationship; to take an assumed name which foreshadows the cold, calculating vengeance he will pursue; and to apply his powers as a scientist and physician to reveal and punish the guilty man. Because the minister's guilt has such a debilitating effect, Chillingworth is able to persuade Dimmesdale and the congregation that the close care of a physician is necessary: "So Roger Chillingworth--the man of skill, the kind and friendly physician--strove to go deep into his patient's bosom, delving among his principles,
prying into his recollections, and probing every thing with a cautious touch, like a treasure-seeker in a dark cavern" (I, 124). The intensity of his quest not only punishes Dimmesdale, who painfully struggles with guilt, but also affects Chillingworth, who changes from a "calm, meditative, scholar-like" (I, 127) physician to an "ugly and evil" fiend, "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" (I, 170). When Hester reveals Chillingworth as her husband, Dimmesdale realizes the depths of Chillingworth's evil: "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 a human heart" (I, 195). Like Ethan Brand, Chillingworth has lost sight of the purpose of his quest and has become so obsessed that he disregards the soul of another; thus he commits Hawthorne's unpardonable sin.

Like Chillingworth, Adam Stanton in *All the King's Men* devotes his talents to his profession:

He was a hot-shot surgeon now, with more folks screaming for him to cut on than he had time to cut on, and a professor at the University Medical School, and busy grinding out the papers he published in the scientific journals or took off to read at meetings in New York and Baltimore and London. He wasn't married. He didn't have time, he said. He didn't have time for anything. (p. 108)
Withdrawing into his antiseptic environment, Adam refuses to acknowledge any connection with the tainted world of politics. When Jack makes inquiries about Judge Irwin's past, Adam scornfully replies, "Politics, ... thank, God, I don't have to mess with 'em" (p. 224). Seeing the world through "abstract eyes" (p. 248) which look straight at Jack Burden and evaluate everything in terms of good and evil, Adam lives by the "idea" that "a thing does not grow except in its proper climate" (p. 252), and in a moment of anger at his sister, he proclaims he is "proud not to touch filth" (p. 261). As a scientist, Adam prefers to believe his image of the world where "everything is tidy, .... The molecule of good always behaves the same way. The molecule of bad always behaves the same way" (p. 263). To persuade Adam to become administrator of a hospital Willie Stark plans to build, Jack must revise this "picture of the world" (p. 263) Adam carries in his head.

Jack accomplishes this alteration by revealing to Adam that two of the "molecules of good" in his private world, Judge Irwin and Governor Stanton, Adam's father, shared complicity in the bribe Judge Irwin accepted. The proof Jack produces induces Adam to assume control of the hospital with the agreement that Willie Stark will not interfere. Having made this concession, Adam retreats to the sterility of medicine and takes refuge in a mechanical explanation of human behavior, as evidenced by a surgical procedure he
perfects, a prefrontal lobectomy which alters a man's personality. As he retreats into a world which he believes operates on scientific, even mechanistic, principles, Adam fails to take into consideration the violence buried deep within his own nature. When he discovers that his sister, Anne Stanton, has become Willie Stark's mistress, Adam confronts the Governor in the Capitol lobby and shoots him; Adam dies, shot by Sugar Boy, Willie Stark's bodyguard. Reflecting on the course of events after both Willie Stark and Adam Stanton are buried, Jack Burden surmises that "the man of idea" and the "man of fact" were "doomed to destroy each other, just as each was doomed to try to use the other and to yearn toward and try to become the other, because each was incomplete with the terrible division of their age" (p. 462).

Lacking sufficient knowledge of themselves and the necessity of a bond with the human community, Chillingworth and Adam Stanton share a common error described by Hawthorne:

In their researches into the human frame, it may be that the higher and more subtle faculties of such men were materialized, and that they lost the spiritual view of existence amid the intricacies of that wonderous mechanism, which seemed to involve art enough to comprise all of life within itself. (I, 119)

Attempting to refute evil by punishing sinners or remaining aloof from the dirt of the world, Chillingworth and Stanton,
like Ethan Brand, illustrate that the greatest sin dwells not in others but in their own hearts.

Hawthorne's tale of New England and Warren's story of the South are not merely about Puritanism and politics: "the real subject is the nature of man." Just as in The Marble Faun and The Cave, characters in The Scarlet Letter and All the King's Men are forced to penetrate their individual hearts of darkness and discover the sin that unites all men. As Leslie Fiedler suggests, Hawthorne focuses on the scarlet letter as a symbol; the "A" represents the "beginning of all things, and that, in the primers of New England, stood for Adam's Fall--in which we . . . sinned all!" Jack Burden, like Hester Prynne, realizes the "paradox of identity: that knowledge of self consists in a recognition not only of man's isolation but also of the burden of sin that binds all men." For Hawthorne, the sin inherent in human nature is dramatized as the "iron link of mutual crime" (I, 160) which unites Hester and Dimmesdale. For Warren, the basic element of human creation is depicted as "dirt" (p. 50), the "common guilt of man" (p. 173) which must be accepted as a principle of human existence. In

13 Heilman, p. 154.


Willie Stark's words, "Man is conceived in sin and born in corruption and he passeth from the stink of the didie to the stench of the shroud" (p. 54).

In neither The Scarlet Letter nor in All the King's Men is the "fortunate fall" an overt element. Yet the effect of Hester Prynne's and Jack Burden's experiences can be viewed as an illustration of Hawthorne's speculation in The Marble Faun: "Is sin then . . . like Sorrow, merely an element of human education, through which we struggle to a higher and purer state than we could otherwise have attained?"16 The path to redemption for Hester Prynne and Jack Burden becomes one of suffering as a means of acquiring knowledge about the nature of self, man, and the world. Set adrift from a society that cannot accept her sin, Hester wanders "without rule or guidance, in a moral wilderness; . . . her intellect and heart had their home . . . in desert places. . . . Shame, Despair, Solitude! These had been her teachers,—stern and wild ones,—and they had made her strong" (I, 199). Forced by the circumstances of her life, Hester has "turned, in a great measure, from passion and feeling, to thought" (I, 164). On one occasion, Chillingworth observes that all that happened was a "dark necessity" (I, 174); thus out of the shadows of sin and sorrow, Hester transforms the scarlet

letter from a "stigma, which attracted the world's scorn and bitterness" (I, 263) into an object to be revered as a symbol of the sympathy and humanity of the woman who wears it. Through her dedication to ministering to others, Hester paves the way for a "new truth" which would, in the future, "establish the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness" (I, 263).

The fortunate fall of Jack Burden leads him to an understanding of himself in relation to the rest of the world. As a student of history, Jack had attempted to write the story of Cass Mastern, a young man living during the Civil War who committed adultery with his friend's wife and thus shared the guilt for his friend's suicide. Unable to penetrate beyond the facts of the Mastern story, Jack abandoned his studies and throughout the next few years devised escape mechanisms to avoid confronting the truth: the "Great Sleep" (p. 107), a prolonged period of slumber and mental drowsiness designed to keep him from facing reality; the theory of the "Great Twitch" (p. 333), a means of explaining human behavior merely as a response to stimuli; and the journey West, a physical flight from painful knowledge. The deaths of Judge Irwin, Willie Stark, and Adam Stanton force Jack to recognize the significance of the Cass Mastern story:

Cass Mastern lived for a few years and in that time he learned that the world is all of one piece. He
learned that the world is like an enormous spider web and if you touch it, however lightly, at any point, the vibration ripples to the remotest perimeter and the drowsy spider feels the tingle and is drowsy no more but springs out to fling the gossamer coils about you who have touched the web and then inject the black, numbing poison under your hide. It does not matter whether or not you meant to brush the web of things. Your happy foot or your gay wing may have brushed it ever so lightly, but what happens always happens and there is the spider, bearded black and with his great faceted eyes glittering like mirrors in the sun, or like God's eye, and the fangs dripping. (p. 200)

Jack realizes that his world also is "all of one piece": the information he had discovered about Judge Irwin perhaps contributed to the Judge's suicide; the miscellaneous fact that Governor Stanton had covered up for his friend's accepting a bribe was sufficient knowledge to disillusion Adam Stanton so that he would consent to be administrator of Willie Stark's hospital; Anne Stanton, convinced of her father's corruption, saw no reason not to become Willie Stark's mistress; and the discovery of Willie and Anne's affair triggered the violence in Adam. As Jack realized, the problem with his research into Judge Irwin's past was that this historical project produced not merely fact; it "meant something" (p. 203). As Warren states in *Brother to Dragons*, "For nothing we had, /Nothing we were, /Is lost. All is redeemed, /In Knowledge." Only through knowledge of the past and a readiness to accept responsibility for his actions

can Jack face the future with hope. Thus he prepares to
"go into the convulsion of the world, out of history into
history and the awful responsibility of Time" (p. 464).

The Scarlet Letter and All the King's Men provide the
culmination of thematic development in the fiction of Haw-
thorne and Warren. Incorporating ideas dramatized in other
novels and short stories, these works reveal a dialectic
configuration of themes that suggests that "any movement
upward, toward a superior realization and state of being,
is possible only as struggling evolution, fetal uncoiling,
emergence not despite but through the rub of outer and in-
er circumstance."18 Like Hawthorne, Warren maintains a
"precarious balancing of antinomies,"19 an examination of
good and evil, past and present, idea and action, and truth
and falsehood. The stories of Hester Prynne and Jack Burden
reaffirm Hawthorne's and Warren's link in the continuum of
American literature as they demonstrate that the process of
expanding moral awareness involves reconciling conflicting
elements of human nature. Thus Hester and Jack discover
with Willie Stark that "goodness" must be created out of
"badness . . . because there isn't anything else to make it
out of" (p. 272), but they learn to temper their knowledge.

18 Leonard Caspar, The Dark and Bloody Ground (Seattle:

19 John Edward Hardy, "Robert Penn Warren's Double
of evil with equal surety of good; as Hawthorne observes: "It is to the credit of human nature, that, except where its selfishness is brought into play, it loves more readily than it hates. Hatred, by a gradual and quiet process, will even be transformed to love ..." (I, 160). With knowledge of evil and faith in good, both of which reside in the human heart, Hester and Jack find redemption through suffering and commitment to responsibility for active participation in an imperfect world.
That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.

Ecclesiastes 3:15

Warren argues that no matter how multifaceted the talents of a writer, "every man has only one story. He doesn't know what his story is so he keeps fiddling with the possibilities. . . . Every writer, no matter how trivial, and every writer, no matter how great, has only one tale; and the great writers have more versions of it."¹ A comparison of the works of Hawthorne and Warren reveals not only that each author tells one basic story but also that each focuses on the same elemental human experience: in a disordered and chaotic universe, an individual achieves personal identity only through the development and exertion of his inner moral force; even if the moral order he creates within himself has little visible effect, he can exist as a mature person only as he recognizes the real, if unconscious, fact of human frailty uniting him with all mankind. The works of fiction analyzed in Chapters II, III, IV, V, and VI

illustrate that regardless of the differences in setting and superficial circumstances, Hawthorne and Warren are "fiddling with the possibilities" of one basic story. Because these authors represent two centuries and two geographical regions, the similarities in their works have profound significance for a consideration of American literary continuity.

An analysis of the thematic parallels in the fiction of Hawthorne reflects what Ihab Hassan calls "the enduring search for wholeness and vitality in the literary response." Identifying the parallels in the works of Hawthorne and Warren supports the proposition that beneath the superficial differences in American novels is an "organic" and "continuous" substratum of themes attesting to the continuum in American literature. Warren echoes this notion when he says, "I guess I think more of trying to find what there is valuable to us, the line of continuity to us, and through us." Hawthorne and Warren share what Dan Vogel labels an "American type of tragic vision":

characters gain nobility not by reason of status, but in proportion to the growing recognition . . .


that they are involved in an enactment of magnitude; that they have a responsibility beyond the narrowness of self; that they have importance in the scheme of things that transcends the immediate situation; that they are predetermined, yet free enough to fulfill their responsibility.\(^5\)

Writing a century apart and representing the New England Renaissance and the Southern Renaissance, Hawthorne and Warren, through the comparable elements in their fiction, testify to the cohesiveness of American literature as a record of human experience.

The existence of parallels in the fiction of Hawthorne and Warren suggests the need for further exploration of such continuities in American literature. Wasserstrom points out the value of focusing on a "model," such as the work of Robert Penn Warren: "it indicates that our literature is organic and continuous, not unauthentic or removed from the main line of culture. It is after all pointless for each new literary generation to feel that it has no past, no idiom, no public, nor a coherent society, nor masters."\(^6\) Hawthorne and Warren are representative of American writers whose works speak across the span of time and space to acknowledge their literary kinship, thus joining past and present in a thematic continuum.


\(^6\) Wasserstrom, p. 122.
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