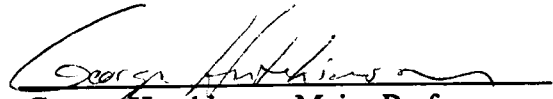


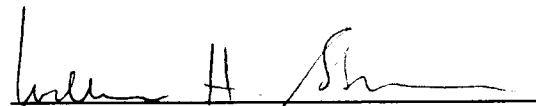
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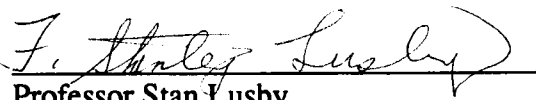
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Alfred James Wohlpart entitled "Images of the Artist as God: Puritan and Transcendental Doctrine in Hawthorne's Developing Aesthetic." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in English.


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**Images of the Artist as God:
Puritan and Transcendental Doctrine in Hawthorne's Developing Aesthetic**

**A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

Alfred James Wohlpart

May 1993

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated, very simply,
to the one who made it all possible:
to my wife, Susanna.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank, first, those who have had a hand in the creation of what has become this dissertation, including, most importantly, George Hutchinson, my advisor, and John Zomchick, both of whom thoughtfully and patiently read and commented on every draft, as well as my other committee members, William Shurr and Stan Lusby. Their guidance has reached well beyond the scope of this dissertation and into my professional and personal life. I would like to thank those at Colorado State University, including Patti Cowell, Rosemary Whitaker, and Donald Crosby, for directing my Master's Thesis, what ultimately was the beginning of this dissertation. I would also like to thank the community of professors and graduate students who have surrounded me during my tenure at the University of Tennessee, including Michael Lofaro, Richard Finneran, Allen Dunn, and Art Smith, as well as Margaret Bauer, Sandie Hancock, Jack Slay, Lance Dean, David Taylor, and many others, too many to name. In addition, I would like to acknowledge the generous support of the various fellowships that I have held while at the University of Tennessee, including those from

the College of Liberal Arts, the Graduate School, and the English Department. Without such support, graduate work is at best difficult—if not, indeed, impossible.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, for their love and guidance throughout my life, and the rest of my family, David, Heidi, Bridgett, and Kathryn. They provided the foundation on which all of my achievements rest. But most importantly, I would like to acknowledge the force which guides me now in all that I do, my wife, Susanna, and the force which gives meaning to all that I do, my son, Zachary James.

Abstract

This dissertation explores a rather conventional topic in Hawthorne studies: that is, Hawthorne's aesthetic. Furthermore, it concentrates on a rather conventional theme: the conception of the artist as one who, in creating an artistic world, becomes a god-like figure. In contrast to previous critical analyses, however, this dissertation explores the *development* of Hawthorne's aesthetic over the three decades in which he wrote short stories in order to understand the growth of that aesthetic. Thus, my analysis uses a great deal of historical, cultural, and biographical background in order to set up the different manifestations of the theme of the artist as god that Hawthorne reacted against.

In the early part of his career, marked as the early 1830s before Transcendentalism, Hawthorne struggled primarily with a Puritan conception of art, very often suggesting that the artistic act might indeed be an immoral and blasphemous act as the Puritans believed. In the middle of his career, during the 1840s, Hawthorne came to accept the imaginative faculty largely because of the liberating effects of the "new philosophy." But while Transcendentalism reveled in the artist's use of the

imagination to figure forth the unity of the universe, Hawthorne feared the loss of the artist's individuality in this creative process. Such a fear was translated, in Hawthorne's works of the 1840s, into a discussion of the relationship between the artist and a woman, ultimately leading Hawthorne to define a type of "love" that would allow the artist to create an artistic world even while remaining thoroughly human—thus abrogating the depiction, negative or positive, of the artist as god.

The special relationship that exists between the artist and the community that surrounds him, represented in the love that exists between the artist and a woman, allows the artist, according to Hawthorne, to remain in touch with the real world while engaged with the ideal world, and thus to remain thoroughly human in the creative act. My dissertation concludes with an analysis of the way in which Hawthorne's definition of this relationship lies at the heart of his formulation of the Romance in the prefaces to his longer works of the 1850s.

Preface

I do not mean to suggest, by way of my title or the introduction that follows, that this work will simply explore the way in which certain artists or artist-figures are, or are not, gods or god-like figures. Rather, I use the theme of the artist as god as I believe Hawthorne used it: as a vehicle for the exploration of ideas about art and the artist. For Hawthorne, as I demonstrate, this theme had rich and meaningful associations which offered him a means to explore, and to react against, various conceptions of the artist prevalent in his private thinking and in his society. It also ultimately offered him some of his most fruitful metaphors for, and beautiful descriptions of, artistic creativity. Thus, the theme which centralizes and unifies this dissertation becomes the ground from which I explore the many aspects relevant to a discussion of the growth and maturation of Hawthorne's aesthetic.

Naturally, such a ground correctly suggests that I am greatly indebted to the many critics before me who have studied Hawthorne's life and works and communicated their findings in the many books and articles existing on this subject. My work is, indeed, only an extension of this large body of work; while I may

occasionally quarrel with a certain interpretation of a specific Hawthorne short story, or with a particular reading of an important event in Hawthorne biography, I would greatly prefer that my reading be seen as one voice in a rich conversation rather than as an attempt to explicate, once and for all, Hawthorne's work and life. I am particularly indebted to such critics and scholars as Millicent Bell, Michael Davitt Bell, Nina Baym, Sacvan Bercovitch, Marjorie Elder, Claudia Johnson, Terence Martin, Perry Miller, Randall Stewart, and Arlin Turner, along with many, many others.

What follows, then, is my reading of the development of Hawthorne's aesthetic through the lens of what I consider the central theme of this aesthetic: the artist as God. The dissertation is organized chronologically, beginning with a discussion of Hawthorne's first phase, the period of the late 1820s to about 1838 when Hawthorne primarily engaged Puritan ideas about art, before moving on to a discussion of the second phase, the period from 1838 to 1845 when Hawthorne juxtaposed Puritan and Transcendental ideas about art, and finally to the last phase, the period of the late 1840s and early 1850s when Hawthorne wrote his last short stories and began his first romances. My work concludes where most begin, with a discussion of Hawthorne's mature statements about art and the artist as found in the prefaces to the romances of the 1850s. Because of the organizing principle of my analysis, I am able to offer new insights into these statements while also suggesting possible reasons for their composition.

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Why are poets so apt to choose their mates, not for any similarity of poetic endowment, but for qualities which might make the happiness of the rudest handicraftsman, as well as that of the ideal craftsman of the spirit? Because, probably, at his highest elevation, the poet needs no human intercourse; but he finds it dreary to descend, and be a stranger.

—Nathaniel Hawthorne
The House of the Seven Gables

The imagination that has produced much of the best and most characteristic American fiction has been shaped by the contradictions and not by the unities and harmonies of our culture. . . . [T]here are some literatures which take their form and tone from polarities, opposites, and irreconcilables, [and] are content to rest in and sustain them, or to resolve them into unities, if at all, only by special and limited means. The American novel tends to rest in contradictions and among extreme ranges of experience.

—Richard Chase
The American Novel and Its Tradition

I'm dying for some action
I'm sick of sittin' around here trying to write this book.

—Bruce Springsteen
"Dancing in the Dark"

Chapter One

Introduction: Images of the Artist as God

While Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* received some attention in the form of friendly reviews, several negative notices of his first full-length romance suggested that the type of fiction Hawthorne had written was not yet fully acceptable to a nineteenth-century American audience. Orestes A. Brownson reviewed Hawthorne's first romance in such a light. According to Brownson, "There is an unsound state of public morals . . . when the novelist is permitted, without a scorching rebuke, to select such crimes, and to invest them with all the fascination of genius, and all the charms of a highly polished style" (qtd. in Faust, *Hawthorne's Contemporaneous Reputation* 78). In his review, Brownson suggests that the critic's role is to reveal the immorality of a fictional creation such as *The Scarlet Letter*, a romance in which characters are created and contrived to act out certain parts, and perhaps to act them out in ethically improper ways, based on the fanciful imagination of a fallible human being.

Significantly, Hawthorne himself presents an extension of this charge against art and the artist within the fictional world of a tale he had written some thirteen years

earlier. According to the narrator of "The Prophetic Pictures," the townspeople in the colonial village to which the portrait painter has come hold a dubious view of his work:

Their admiration, it must be owned, was tinged with the prejudices of the age and country. Some deemed it an offence against the Mosaic law, and even a presumptuous mockery of the Creator, to bring into existence such lively images of his creatures. (IX: 169)

Underlying these prejudices, according to the narrator, is the idea that the artist, in creating a fictional world and populating it with creatures of his own imagining, presumes to imitate God's creative powers. Such an act is morally reprehensible because the human being who creates this new world is a limited and finite creature without the knowledge and wisdom of God the Creator. These inherent limitations would likely cause the human creator to allow his fictional creations to act in a manner which would never occur in the natural world created by God.

Such a description of the creative act, originating in the Puritan tradition of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and translated into a more modern doctrine by Scottish Common-Sense Philosophy in the nineteenth century, was sure to have an effect on Hawthorne's ideas about art. According to Claudia Johnson, Hawthorne felt a distrust of the imagination, the basis of which "was the same as that of his Puritan forebears and common-sense contemporaries—that the artist played God with his imagination and created a false world" (35). Because of Hawthorne's extensive reading in the annals of American history, and especially Puritan history, his imagination was filled with the darkness and gloom of Puritan beliefs and ideas. Significantly, for Hawthorne these ideas, reinforced during his education at Bowdoin,

revolved around the status of the artist in a society that perceived art as both useless and dangerous, the latter because of its reliance on the imagination.¹

While several critics have noted the theme of the artist as god in their analyses of Hawthorne's works, those who focus primarily on his aesthetic have generally turned to other elements in developing what they consider to be the basis of his ideas about art. For instance, Millicent Bell's pioneering discussion, *Hawthorne's View of the Artist*, details the way in which Hawthorne reacted primarily to romanticism, English and Emersonian, in generating his conception of the status and role of art. While Bell does proceed to describe various "anti-romantic" patterns in Hawthorne's aesthetic, she finds the basis for these patterns in gothicism, a brand of English romanticism. Indeed, while Bell admits that Hawthorne was "aware of the Puritan judgment of the arts," she claims, incorrectly as I hope to demonstrate, that our understanding of this judgment needs rectification, for Hawthorne "knew that the Puritan had not condemned all artistic creation," only that which led to an idle lifestyle (77). Yet idleness was only one Puritan criticism of art, the other centering on the role of the artist in the creative process.

In a similar vein, Marjorie Elder claims that "Careful investigation of Hawthorne's aesthetic will indicate not only . . . general correspondences to the Transcendental aesthetic but artistic views so specifically detailed that his aesthetic theories can only be called Transcendental" (49-50). Differing from these readings, which focus solely on romantic and transcendental concepts in elaborating

1. In relation to the colonists' prejudices against the portrait painter in Hawthorne's tale "The Prophetic Pictures" (cited above), Mary E. Dichmann concludes that the painter's creative act "is, in fact, a godlike act, analogous to—if not a duplicate of—God's divine artistry in His creation of man" (191). While my reading of this tale will differ considerably from Dichmann's, her emphasis on the theme of the artist as god points to what I consider Hawthorne's primary concern in the development of his early aesthetic.

Hawthorne's ideas about art, Claudia Johnson emphasizes primarily the Puritan background to Hawthorne's thinking. Johnson notes that,

By relating Hawthorne to the seventeenth-century Puritanism of his ancestors and the nineteenth-century perfectionism of his contemporaries, one discovers that their Protestant psychology, which had created the disparity between Hawthorne's art and his morality in the first place, eventually provoked his productive experimentation, leading him to a tentative intellectual reconciliation between the two. (7)

While Johnson does define "Hawthorne's philosophy of art" as "romantic transcendentalism" (44-45), she concludes that it is in the Puritanism of his forebears, along with the contemporaneous manifestations of that Puritanism, that Hawthorne found a productive tension which he was able to resolve, but only tentatively, in his last romance, *The Marble Faun* (124).

In contrast to such analyses of Hawthorne's ideas about art and artists, my reading, while focusing on the central theme of the artist as god, will develop the way in which Hawthorne reacted to the various manifestations of that theme, including the negative conception found in Puritanism and Scottish Common-Sense Philosophy as well as the positive conception found in Transcendentalism. I will concentrate my analysis on the development of Hawthorne's aesthetic rather than, as many critics have done, finding that aesthetic in the prefaces to the romances of the 1850s and then reading it backward onto Hawthorne's earlier works. As I hope to show, we can only understand Hawthorne's fully developed aesthetic, especially as that aesthetic is stated in the prefaces to the longer works of the 1850s, after analyzing Hawthorne's developing ideas about art as he presents them in his tales and sketches of the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s.

As Bertha Faust has noted, Hawthorne had a "peculiar and specialized interest in the grave questions of the older New England theology," an interest which Faust describes as "anachronistic in a day when the world no longer felt their urgency although it had not altogether come to doubt their validity" (144). Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Puritans, concerned primarily with survival in the harsh new world, had no time for the frivolous and vain strivings of the imagination. From this legacy, as Terence Martin has pointed out, Hawthorne received "a fundamental doubt about the efficacy of fiction. Having decided to be a writer, Hawthorne found it extremely difficult to sustain a belief in the value of his fiction" (*Nathaniel Hawthorne* 8). Indeed, Hawthorne's investigations into his Puritan past led him to distrust the very occupation that had warranted these investigations in the first place.

For Puritan writers and their seventeenth- and eighteenth-century audiences, writing was meant to be utilitarian, often instructing humans in the ways of God. Indeed, any type of writing that went beyond mere utility, dabbling, perhaps, in pleasure or entertainment, was certainly perceived as an idle pursuit and, more often, as an immoral one. In their anthology of Puritan works, Perry Miller and Thomas Johnson note that "the Puritan held to a belief in the poet's high calling, but thought that the danger of poetry lay in its magic spell,—that it tempted men away from truth to fable . . ." (*The Puritans* 667). Thus, for the Puritans, any type of art that attempted to create another world, a fictional world, was dangerous in that it turned its creator and its audience away from God's created world.

The crux of the issue according to Puritan psychology was the role of the imagination, for the imagination could, ultimately, determine the actions of a human being. And, as Perry Miller describes in *The New England Mind*, for the Puritans the imagination has the power "to combine sense-images into synthetic phantasms that

correspond to nothing in nature" (246). In their many discussions of the ways in which humans might fall into Satan's power, becoming sinful and depraved, the Puritans targeted the imagination as "a particularly bad spot because it had never been bound to the senses and could form images beyond and in excess of nature," even images of "such vices as could never have been conceived merely from experience" (*The New England Mind* 257). Such criticisms of the imagination indicate the basis of the Puritan distrust of artistic creativity, that it created another world, beyond the natural world, which might embody crimes in a fashion which could not exist in the natural world.

The importance of these early definitions of the role of the imagination for the later, nineteenth-century perception of art, and especially of fiction, cannot be overemphasized. The similarities between turn-of-the-century thinking about imaginative representation and that promulgated during the seventeenth century can be seen in four treatises. In *The Souls Conflict*, Richard Sibbes, a seventeenth-century Puritan critic, claims that the imagination is a source of harm because of its very nature as the faculty which forges "matter out of itself without any external sensation" (Miller, *The New England Mind* 258). Perry Miller, in analyzing *The Souls Conflict*, concludes that Sibbes makes it

clear why to Puritans what we might call "romantic" poetry . . . [was] not only nonsense, but sinful. . . . If imagination is ungoverned, Sibbes declared, it "is a wild and ranging thing; it wrongs not only the frame of God's work in us, setting the baser part of man above the higher, but it wrongs likewise the work of God in the creatures, and everything else, for it shapes things as it pleaseth." (*The New England Mind* 258)

Sibbes claims, in his work, that the first act of regeneration must be the cleansing, and controlling, of the imagination. Likewise, Samuel Mather concludes in *The Figures or Types of the Old Testament* (1705) that "Men must not *indulge their own Fancies*, as the Popish Writers use to do, with their Allegorical Senses, as they call them; except we have some Scripture ground for it. It is not safe to make any thing a Type merely upon our own fansies and imaginations; it is *Gods Prerogative* to make *Types*" (55; spelling has been regularized). Both Sibbes and Mather consider the use of the imagination inherently dangerous as it tends to create a heterocosm, or a false "type" in Mather's words, which replaces the original creation of God.²

At the end of the eighteenth century, nearly one hundred and fifty years after Sibbes' work and a mere fifty years before Hawthorne began to publish in earnest, both John Trumbull and Timothy Dwight cast a gloomy eye on the newest form of imaginative representation: novel writing. According to Alexander Cowie, one of the primary objections that Trumbull held to fiction was its "gross want of proportion and probability. . . . Trumbull recognized, of course, that going beyond 'nature' might subtend the purposes of art" (70). Similarly, in *Travels in New England and New York*, composed in the 1790s, Timothy Dwight inveighs against the newest form of diversion for women: "By the first novel which she reads, [a young lady] is introduced into a world literally new, a middle region between 'this spot which men call earth' and that which is formed in Arabian tales" (I: 372). Rather than confrontations with beings from the natural world, the novel reader becomes surrounded by beings, the "character

2. A distinction must be noted between the different manner of types implied here. For the Puritans, a type which originated from the Old Testament was not based on the human imagination but rather on verifiable and real incidents, on what the Puritans considered historical fact; in direct contrast, a type which originated from the human imagination, not being grounded in the bible, the Puritans considered false and misleading, indeed usurping God's prerogative. See Mason I. Lowance's "Introduction" to Mather's *The Figures or Types of the Old Testament*.

and circumstances of which . . . [come] at the wish or the call of the enchanter" (I: 372). The reaction of both Trumbull and Dwight to novel writing is based on a similar conception of fiction as that held by Sibbes and Mather, for all four conclude that such works lead their audience away from the natural world created by God and into a fictional world created by a fallible human.

In his detailed discussion of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Puritan reaction to fictional writing in England, Leopold Damrosch notes that the Puritan distrust of fiction must be carefully understood not as a distrust per se, for fiction which could be labelled allegorical was acceptable in that it demonstrated spiritual truth (69). Damrosch continues:

The deeper difficulty arose with the realization, whether fully conscious or not, that a novelist is free to manipulate events exactly as God does For a Puritan artist there can be but one Creation, of which art is at best a faithful mirror, yet as artist he is well aware of his pleasure in creating a heterocosm that stands apart from the true Creation, and indeed competes with it. (69)

Yet an important difference exists between the English novel tradition and the American novel tradition, for the English novel withstood such criticism largely because of the long career of nonutilitarian literature preceding it. As Michael Davitt Bell has noted, by the end of the eighteenth century, when Americans were just beginning to write novels, England could boast a tradition of fiction writers in Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne (*The Development of American Romance* 11). And while these writers were indeed frequently attacked for the immoral nature of their pursuit, the very fact of their success allowed them to withstand these charges.

In America, on the other hand, novelists worked against both the absence of a literary tradition and the presence of an attitude "that the writing or reading of imaginative fiction was at best frivolous and usually dangerous" (Bell, *The Development of American Romance* 11). Such an attitude, built up over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, peaked in America at the beginning of the nineteenth century when novel reading and writing became popular. From his survey of the censure of fiction during this time, G. Harrison Orians concludes that "novels were objected to, not only because of their fruits, pragmatically considered, but because they were fiction: they related that which had not occurred and had no basis in actual happening; they were bundles of *lies* and therefore not to be countenanced" (211). Underlying the charge that fiction was an immoral creation because of its reliance on the imagination is the Puritan emphasis on the finite, and thus infinitely fallible, nature of human beings.³ Because of their limited nature, humans do not have the knowledge necessary to create a world of their own in a moral and ethical fashion, a world like that created by God. Instead, humans, as Brownson claims in his review of Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, might create a world and invest it with actions which never could occur in a world governed by God.

Significantly, ample reinforcement for the Puritan conception of art came from the Scottish Common-Sense Philosophy which dominated education and religion in America in the first half of the nineteenth century.⁴ Such an influence eventually

3. In discussing the grand designs of the sovereign God, Leonard Fick notes that Hawthorne, like his Puritan ancestors, believed that "Man can only, in virtue of his finiteness, his partial scope of vision, see each separate design in isolation . . ." (15). Fick concludes: "the finite mind of man is not in a position of sufficient eminence to understand the incomprehensible designs of God" (31).

4. M. F. Heiser, in "The Decline of Neoclassicism, 1801-1848," concludes that by the end of the eighteenth-century, "Calvinism had absorbed the rationalism of the followers of Locke and Newton and Shaftesbury; such Calvinism, in watered-down form, still dominated religious thought in the first half of the nineteenth century" (154).

permeated the literary culture of writers like Hawthorne and Melville (Bell, *The Development of American Romance* 14). In his definitive biography of Hawthorne, Arlin Turner details the prevalence of the Scottish influence at Bowdoin College in the 1820s during Hawthorne's attendance. Turner notes that the "study of moral and mental philosophy was weighted toward the moral and had its base in the rationalism of the preceding century" (35). Hawthorne received this Scottish influence from the likes of Thomas Cogswell Upham, professor of mental and moral philosophy and writer of *Elements of Mental Philosophy* (1831), who took up his tenure at Bowdoin the year before Hawthorne graduated.⁵

The basis of the Common-Sense attitude toward fiction, like the Puritan attitude, lay in the inherent tension "between sense-based 'facts' and thought-based 'ideas' . . ." (Manning 56). Because American culture in the nineteenth century was materialist in nature, emphasizing physical reality and sensual experience, Hawthorne's audience tended to reject that which was contrived from ideas. The tension between these polarities, coupled with the distrust of imagination handed down from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Puritanism, led to a censure of fiction based on its inherently false and contrived nature. Significantly, such a criticism culminated in the sense that the creation of a fictional world was a blasphemous act, an act akin to God's creation of the world but one enacted by a vain and fallible human. As Claudia Johnson concludes, "the common-sense critics, like the Puritan critics, were alarmed at the ability of the author to play God with his imagination. The artist pretended to create a world and invent circumstances, things only God could do" (36).

5. Susan Manning also concludes that the influence of Scottish Common-Sense was strong, claiming that "Hawthorne pays evasive, equivocal and sceptical homage to it" (55).

In summarizing an oration that Samuel F. Jarvis delivered in 1807 before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, Terence Martin details the way in which the Scottish Common-Sense argument ran. Martin notes, citing Jarvis' speech, that "Few writers . . . 'who forge a series of events,' consider the responsibility they assume and the particular hazard attached to their undertaking" (*The Instructed Vision* 61). He continues: "Since the writers (and the events) lack truth as their basis, 'they are continually liable to give false notions of things, to pervert the consequences of human actions, and to misrepresent the ways of divine providence'" (61). But the falsity of the work only leads to further and more serious charges. Martin concludes:

Jarvis distrusts the imagination and hence the novel. To him, the novel is not a plaything with which to idle away an hour. Rather, it is an invention of insidious potency; for in a novel one finds the author undertaking the terrible responsibility of playing God, of creating a little world and the people in it, of having them act for good and for evil, and of meting out rewards and punishments in the light of a mortal and hence fallible mind. . . . The novel, lacking truth as its basis, is by that very fact unable to correspond with the eternal, timeless plan of God. As a substitute it is based on the particular plan of a particular man. In short, the novel substitutes the finite for the infinite, the temporal for the eternal, the fallible for the infallible—man as creator for God as Creator. (61-62)

Two years out of Yale, Jarvis displays in his oration the general attitude toward fiction during the first part of the nineteenth century, an attitude originating from the Puritanism of the past and reinforced by the Common-Sense Philosophy of Hawthorne's contemporaneous culture.

As I will note later, the link between Puritan ideas and the Scottish philosophy is quite important, for Hawthorne often confesses in both his fiction and his prefaces the way in which his Puritan ancestors influenced his thinking about art. Yet, as many critics have pointed out, the Scottish philosophy did not so much replace Puritan ideas as reinforce them. A comparison of the role of the imagination within the Puritan psychology outlined earlier and in the work of Dugald Stewart, one of the more influential Scottish philosophers, will reveal to what extent the Scottish thinking merely emphasized various elements already existing in American culture. In his summary of Stewart's arguments, Terence Martin notes that

The Scottish realists uniformly insist that the mind must keep in touch with objective reality; the actual order not only partakes of the highest order of finite existence, is not only the foundation of knowledge, but works as a constant corrective to the idealistic tendencies of the intellect. With the intellect weakened by divorce from actuality, the working of the imagination may bring about a complete dislocation of the mind from reality. (*The Instructed Vision* 97)

As in Puritan thinking, the imagination must be kept in check—here by the real world, as in Puritan psychology by the reason and will. Indeed, the ultimate goal of both Puritan and Scottish thinking was to see that the use of the imaginative faculty was limited and controlled, thus making it safe and respectable.⁶

6. Michael Davitt Bell notes that "One should be cautious in discussing the 'influence' of Scottish philosophy in America. It did not so much introduce new attitudes as provide a new and conveniently secular means of supporting what were already firm convictions" (*The Development of American Romance* 13). Likewise, Terence Martin concludes that, indeed, the "Puritan case against the imagination could not survive intact the dilution of Puritan theology; but with the Scottish philosophy of Common Sense in the service of apologetics, the old arguments could be given a new force . . ." (*The Instructed Vision* 161).

The extent to which Hawthorne was aware of and accepted the Puritan attitude toward art, even as that attitude was manifest in his nineteenth-century culture through the permeation of Common-Sense thinking, will be the subject of my later investigations of his tales and prefaces. But records of Hawthorne's reading indicate his concern with the issues existing at the heart of this attitude. In *Hawthorne's Reading, 1828-1850*, Marion L. Kesselring notes that both Lord Kames' *Elements of Criticism* and Dugald Stewart's *Philosophical Essays* were checked out in Hawthorne's name in 1827. Additionally, Hawthorne had checked out in 1828 Chandler Robbins' *Remarks on the Disorders of Literary Men; or, An Inquiry Into the Means of preventing the Evils usually incident to Sedentary and Studious Habits*. Furthermore, Hawthorne's commencement from Bowdoin featured an oration from a close friend, Jonathan Cilley, entitled "The Effects of Fictitious Writing on Morals." Hawthorne's education at Bowdoin under Upham and reading of the Scottish philosophers Kames and Stewart during his formative years, along with his investigations of Puritan history, suggests that he imbibed, to a certain extent, the criticism of fiction prevalent in his society.⁷

Yet with the rise of Transcendentalism in the late 1830s came a significant change in the negative connotation of the Puritan conception of the artist as god. Behind the Puritan belief, as I have noted, is the notion of humans as finite and fallible and thus incapable of creating a fictional world which accurately represents God's created world. Transcendentalism, on the other hand, rejected the primary belief of an innately depraved humankind, opening the door to a very different conception of the artist. A. Bronson Alcott notes in his "Orphic Sayings," first published in *The Dial*, that "Every soul feels at times her own possibility of becoming a God; she cannot rest

7. See Nina Baym, *The Shape of Hawthorne's Career* (18).

in the human, she aspires after the Godlike" (qtd. in Albanese 167). For the Transcendentalists, humans were not fallen and finite creatures but rather part and parcel of the universal spirit, capable of becoming one with God or the Over Soul. Significantly, sermons such as the Unitarian William Ellery Channing's "Likeness to God," delivered in 1828, led the way to such an altered view of humankind.⁸

As is commonly acknowledged, the basis of Emerson's Transcendental philosophy is the concept of "self-reliance," for if humans are potential gods then they no longer need to depend on others for their perfection. Yet central to this conception of humankind is a contradiction, something which would not, of course, have concerned Emerson. As Myra Jehlen has pointed out, in the context of Emerson's philosophy of self-reliance, "diversity connotes not difference but instead avatars of the universal. Such a concept of diversity tends in fact to deny difference precisely by expressing it, as yet another facet of the enlarged whole" (12). Thus Emerson's Self-Reliance actually becomes reliance on the universal spirit, for only in uniting with the Over Soul does a human achieve self-actualization and individuality. For the Transcendentalists, difference and originality were established through unity and sameness.⁹

Significantly, "reliance on God" becomes the heart of the Transcendental aesthetic for such thinkers as A. Bronson Alcott, John S. Dwight and Elizabeth Peabody, as it does for Emerson. In his "Orphic Sayings," Alcott notes that "All

8. As Floyd Stovall concludes in his discussion of the transition from Puritanism to Transcendentalism, Emerson, as a representative of the new system, "believed that every man is an incarnation of God, although of course men express God incompletely and in different degrees. For God is the soul, and there are not two orders of souls, human and divine, but one universal soul which reveals itself in many individual forms" (40).

9. See Alexander Kern's "The Rise of Transcendentalism," which concludes that "it is to be admitted that Emerson's Self-Reliance he felt to be God-Reliance and not romantic individualism" (295).

creative minds have been inspired and guided by the law of unity: their problem is ever to pierce the coarse and superficial rind of diversity, and discover the unity in whose core is the heart and seed of all things" (qtd. in Albanese 170). According to Donald N. Koster, John S. Dwight's "theoretical explanation of music . . . provides an extremely lucid statement of the Transcendental approach to art in general"; Koster concludes that, according to this theory, the "work of art . . . grows out of the artist's need to plunge the self into the over-soul, the universal being, the ineffable One" (29).

A similar definition occurs in Elizabeth Peabody's prefatory essay to *Aesthetic Papers*, the Transcendental journal meant to replace *The Dial*. As Koster notes, citing Peabody's essay,

she proclaimed that those of the Transcendental inclination use [the word "aesthetic"] to designate "that phase in human progress which subordinates the individual to the general, that he may appear on a higher plane of individuality." In other words, the artist can realize his potential only by immersing himself in the Universal Being, some facet of which he is then able to express. (28-29)

In all of these descriptions of poetic inspiration, the artist loses him or herself in god, the Over Soul, in order to create, in order to become a god on his or her own. As Millicent Bell notes, the artist must be willing to submit to "the current of the invisible" for "poetic inspiration": "He cannot reach the heart of Nature by direct examination; rather, to his passive mind truth is suddenly revealed by the flash of the imagination, the unsolicited gift of grace" (48-49).

Such delineations of the Transcendental aesthetic find expression throughout Emerson's career and works. In "The Over-Soul," Emerson compares humans to a "stream whose source is hidden" and who must continually put themselves "in the

attitude of reception . . . from some alien energy . . ." (*Collected Works* II: 159-160). He continues: "the heart which abandons itself to the Supreme Mind finds itself related to all its works and will travel a royal road to particular knowledges and powers" (164). In describing revelations from the Over Soul, he notes that such communications are "an influx of the Divine mind into our mind. It is an ebb of the individual rivulet before the flowing surges of the sea of life" (166). Similarly, in "Art," Emerson concludes that the "creative impulse . . . is the inlet of that higher illumination which teaches to convey a larger sense by simpler symbols" (*Collected Works* II: 209).

Perhaps the most detailed discussion of Emerson's aesthetic comes in two essays, "The Poet" and "Poetry and Imagination." In "The Poet," Emerson explains that the poetic insight,

which expresses itself by what is called Imagination, is a very high sort of seeing, which does not come by study, but by the intellect being where and what it sees, by sharing the path, or circuit of things through forms, and so making them translucent to others. . . . The condition of true naming, on the poet's part, is his resigning himself to the divine *aura* (*Collected Works* III: 15)

Not only does the poet surrender himself to the Over Soul, but he also, in the process of artistic creation, becomes a god who creates "a new world" (23): "Poets are thus liberating gods. Men have really got a new sense, and found within their world, another world, or nest of worlds" (17).

Indeed, in "Poetry and Imagination," Emerson directly compares a poet's artistic creation with God's creation of humans: "The reason we set so high a value on

any poetry . . . is, that it is a new work of Nature, as a man is" (*Ralph Waldo Emerson* 456). In describing poetic creations, Emerson notes:

As a being whom we have called into life by magic arts, as soon as it has received existence acts independently of the master's impulse, so the poet creates his persons, and then watches and relates what they do and say. . . .

This force of representation so plants his figures before him that he treats them as real; talks to them as if they were bodily there; puts words in their mouth such as they should have spoken, and is affected by them as by persons. (458)

Thus, in resigning to the infinite, creative impulse of the universe, the artist becomes a god because of the inspired ability to create a heterocosm, a world distinct from the natural world. The artist, in this process, remains passive to the currents of the universal spirit as they flow through his or her being, allowing the creation of art.¹⁰

While for Hawthorne such a view of art and the artist must have been enlightening, especially considering the earlier Puritan influence on his aesthetic, critics have generally agreed that Hawthorne, in the words of F. O. Matthiessen, was indebted to Transcendentalism "by being forced to react against its philosophical assumptions" (xii). One of the primary assumptions which clearly troubled Hawthorne can be found in the paradoxical formulation of Emerson's aesthetic. While the Transcendental conception of the artist as god, which revels in the artist's new found "self-reliance," is no longer blasphemous, it forces the artist to surrender his

10. Alexander Kern concludes that within Emerson's aesthetic "the best art derives from the flow of the divine spirit through the artist's passive soul. Thus Emerson put a good deal of emphasis upon an inspiration that was beyond the power of the artist . . ." (294). See also Marjorie Elder (20-21) and F. O. Matthiessen (135).

individuality, a fact which greatly troubled Hawthorne during the late 1830s and into the 1840s (Foster 252). Indeed, one of the primary contradistinctions between Emerson's and Hawthorne's aesthetics lies in their definitions of "self-reliance." For Emerson, as already noted, self-reliance meant reliance upon the universal currents, upon the Over Soul; yet for Hawthorne true independence and individuality were the key to his brand of self-reliance. Hawthorne's desire for independence had incredible force during this period primarily because of his exploration and analysis of his growing relationship with Sophia Peabody (who was connected to the Transcendentalists). Indeed many of his statements concerning his need for independence were articulated within the framework of this relationship, especially in relation to his need to maintain his individuality in their relationship in order to continue writing.¹¹

While the movement from Puritanism and Scottish Common-Sense Philosophy to Transcendentalism might seem to provide a clean delineation for the discussion of Hawthorne's intellectual development, this movement was certainly anything but clearly demarcated. As I will demonstrate in later chapters, not only did Hawthorne continue to react against the negative, Puritan conception of the artist as god after his initiation into Transcendentalism, but the philosophies themselves had similar origins. Indeed, while the lack of the artist's individuality becomes a primary concern for Hawthorne when he engages Transcendentalism, a similar depiction of the artist is present in Common-Sense thinking, as William Charvat has noted (44, 59).

11. Discussing Hawthorne's relationship with Sophia, Arlin Turner notes in his biography of Hawthorne, "Even in vowing his devotion to the composite spiritual Dove and naughty Sophie Hawthorne, he left no doubt that his individuality, his personal integrity, would remain intact" (123). Turner goes on to explain that while business and matters of the heart will be discussed with Sophia, "He wanted it understood that, at the level of day-to-day affairs . . . his individuality and independence must be inviolable" (126).

For the purposes of my study, I have followed Hawthorne's division of his career into three periods of productivity, but with the awareness that these periods overlap. In the preface to *The Snow-Image*, Hawthorne describes these three eras as "the indices of intellectual condition at far separated epochs" (XI: 6), a description which indicates a realization of the way in which his ideas and intellectual notions had changed and grown. In the first period of literary production, marked as the first part of the decade of the 1830s, up to about 1838, Hawthorne primarily reacted, in developing his ideas about art, to the more negative Puritan conception of the artist, along with its translation into Scottish Common-Sense Philosophy, often agreeing with its condemnation of the artist as a godlike figure. In such tales as "Sylph Etherege," "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," and "The Prophetic Pictures," Hawthorne depicts artists and artist-figures intent upon creating and controlling their own little world—always with deleterious effects on those who are the subjects of their creative process.

At the end of the 1830s, with his growing relationship to the Peabody sisters and other Transcendentalists, Hawthorne's ideas slowly transformed from a Puritan-based distrust of the imagination to a more complex, yet still limited, acceptance of the creative faculty. Indeed, Hawthorne, in the second period of productivity, up to the mid 1840s, continued to demonstrate, in stories such as "The Birth-Mark," "Rappaccini's Daughter," and "Egotism; or the Bosom-Serpent," his fear that the artist might become godlike. However, at this time he also began to define a way in which the artist, while creating a fictional world and populating it with beings of his imagination, could remain thoroughly human. For instance, the artist stories of the 1840s, "Drowne's Wooden Image" and "The Artist of the Beautiful," reflect a change

in Hawthorne's thinking about art as they portray artists who, through a carefully defined type of "love," remain human in the creative process.

In the final period of productivity, the era of the late 1840s and early 1850s, while Hawthorne composed his last short stories and first romances, he finally demonstrates a full and complete belief in the artist's powers. In "The Great Stone Face" and "The Snow-Image" Hawthorne describes artists and artist-figures who remain fundamentally human, thus abrogating the depiction, negative or positive, of the artist as god. Yet he also shows an awareness of the fact that his audience can neither understand nor accept the brand of fiction which he composed. Thus, in these tales, Hawthorne not only defines his aesthetic, but he also defines the perspective from which an audience should appreciate the works created from that aesthetic. As I will argue in my conclusion, an understanding of these complex issues lies at the heart of interpreting and comprehending Hawthorne's various definitions of the Romance in his prefaces of the 1850s.

In conclusion, I would like to note that I do not mean to suggest, by way of this introduction to the various manifestations of the conception of the artist as god, that what follows is merely an exploration of the way in which Hawthorne's artists and artist-figures become gods—or resist becoming gods. While such an analysis is obviously the central paradigm of the following chapters, I rather use the theme of the artist as god as a vehicle, just as I believe Hawthorne did, to explore the various elements in the development of his aesthetic, perhaps the most important of which is the distinction between the world of the real, created by God, and the world of the imagination, created by the artist. Such a distinction Hawthorne sets up through a series of dichotomies, physical/spiritual, actual/imaginary, real/ideal, waking/dreaming, warm/cold, domesticity/isolation, and heart/intellect.

Early in his career, Hawthorne defined these two realms, through Puritan and Common-Sense conceptions of Reality, as the physical, sensual, and objective—that which corresponds to the world existing beyond the subject—and the spiritual, intellectual, and subjective—that which corresponds to the inner world of the subject, especially his or her thoughts, ideas, and imaginings.¹² As his career advanced, however, and with the insurgence of a belief in the positive powers of the imagination, Hawthorne began to deconstruct these carefully distinguished dichotomies with ever more force and replace them with a conception of Reality which helped mitigate not only the divergence between these two realms but also the conception of the artist as a god who is isolated from humanity. In the middle and the end of the 1840s, with an awareness of the importance of audience, Hawthorne defined a way in which the artist might create out of both the real and the ideal worlds and thus remain human in the creative act. Through a carefully established link with the community, a link that would join the artist with others even while maintaining his individuality, the artist, Hawthorne felt, could abrogate the charge of blasphemy.

The way in which Hawthorne moved towards this definition of the artist's status and role, and the way in which it operates in his definition of the Romance in the 1850s, is the focus of what follows.

12. I realize, of course, that this distinction has been greatly problematized with the rise of structuralism and poststructuralism, though I must note that such a problematization can be found in the "Idealism" section of Emerson's *Nature*. Nevertheless, I feel that Hawthorne used these terms in a rather consistent and coherent manner, a manner which has indeed carried over into criticism on Hawthorne and nineteenth-century American literature. (See, for instance, Terence Martin's *The Instructed Vision*, passages of which have been quoted in the foregoing discussion.)

Chapter Two

Tales of the 1830s: The Puritan Influence

Hawthorne's use of Puritan history in his fiction has led critics to question the extent to which the Puritan religion of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and, equally important, the "puritanical sternness" (Orians 211) of his nineteenth-century contemporaries influenced his aesthetic. In discussing Hawthorne's early career as a writer, the period of the 1830s, Neal Frank Doubleday emphasizes that, while critics have often categorized Hawthorne with Emerson, Thoreau, Melville and Whitman, "What we need to remember, or realize, is how completely Hawthorne's literary interests and literary habits were formed before any one of the other four was known as a writer at all—how early in our literary history Hawthorne developed" (*Hawthorne's Early Tales* 5). Indeed, both Hawthorne's training at Bowdoin and his historical interests immediately after graduation fostered such an early development in the literary arena. Significantly, this training emphasized traditional ideas, those based on Scottish Common-Sense thinking at Bowdoin and on the Puritan past in his own

reading, to such an extent that his early aesthetic was primarily an engagement with Puritan conceptions of art.¹

The Puritan censure of literary pursuits apparent in Hawthorne's schooling was manifold but often returned to the idea that the artist neglected the business of living in the real world. As Perry Miller notes in *The Puritans*, "The motive behind Puritan writing was utilitarian . . . the end he purposed was never merely an enjoyment of belles-lettres or of literature for its own sake" (665). For Puritans, art existed as another means of glorifying God—specifically of analyzing the way in which God operated in their lives. Any art which failed to operate on this utilitarian level was considered a waste of time for both its creator and its audience. Because of such a conception of the artist and his works, Hawthorne understood that his contemporaries perceived art as a useless occupation and the artist as an isolated, idle figure who remained apart from humanity.²

Several of Hawthorne's tales of the 1830s depict this attitude toward the artist, including "Fragments from the Journal of a Solitary Man" (published in 1837), "The Village Uncle" (1835), "The Devil in Manuscript" (1835), and "Chippings with a Chisel" (1838). In these works, Hawthorne not only questions the utility of various types of art but also depicts the relationship between the artist and the community which surrounds him. In addition to demonstrating a concern with the status and role of the artist in the works of the 1830s, Hawthorne specifically develops in "Passages from a Relinquished Work" (published in two sections in 1834 and then in its final

1. See Susan Manning, who claims that Hawthorne's artistic world "becomes a physical, metaphorical and metaphysical image of the relationship between seventeenth-century puritan Boston and the experience of nineteenth-century provincial America" (181).

2. See Kenneth B. Murdock, as well as G. Harrison Orians who concludes that nineteenth-century critics of fiction "held that indulgence in romances . . . was an ill preparation for a serious life in a workaday world" (210).

form in 1837) and "The Seven Vagabonds" (1832) how religious ideas, and particularly Puritan ideas, form a nexus in which he not only writes but also investigates what it means to be a writer. These latter two tales define the primary paradigm in which Hawthorne's tales of the 1830s must be understood.

"Passages from a Relinquished Work," one of Hawthorne's earliest published tales about art and the artist, details the way in which the narrator, in deciding to become an artist, operates in the shadow of Puritan dogma. The tale suggests such a conclusion in its opening, as the narrator-artist describes how "From infancy, I was under the guardianship of a village parson . . ." (X: 405). Yet the characters of the narrator and the old parson, nicknamed Parson Thumpcushion for his gestures during preaching, are at odds. After describing himself as "wayward and fanciful," he notes:

What a character was this, to be brought in contact with the stern old Pilgrim spirit of my guardian! We were at variance on a thousand points; but our chief and final dispute arose from the pertinacity with which he insisted on my adopting a particular profession; while I, being heir to a moderate competence, had avowed my purpose of keeping aloof from the regular business of life. (407)

Such a resolution would have been dangerous "any where in the world," the narrator indicates, but "it was fatal, in New England" (407). Here, Hawthorne clearly indicates that his aesthetic is one which unfolds in reaction to Puritan beliefs and sentiments which hold that all humans should be engaged with "the regular business of life."

In explaining the apparent hostility towards his decision to become a "wandering story teller" (407), the narrator details the specifics which lie at the heart of the Puritan censure of fiction. Because of the "grossness in the conceptions" of his

fellow Americans, whom Parson Thumpcushion represents (Baym, *The Shape of Hawthorne's Career* 43), the narrator stipulates,

they will not be convinced that any good thing may consist with what they call idleness; they can anticipate nothing but evil of a young man who neither studies physic, law, nor gospel, nor opens a store, nor takes to farming, but manifests an incomprehensible disposition to be satisfied with what his father left him. (407)

Millicent Bell explains, in her discussion of the anti-romantic patterns in Hawthorne's fiction, that the artist in nineteenth-century America "was obliged to find a social function, to achieve communicability, to preach wisdom. Otherwise he had no right to waste the wits which industry might put to more fruitful employment" (77). In relation to the opening section of "Passages from a Relinquished Work," such an obligation suggests that the narrator is at odds with both his guardian—the puritanic Parson Thumpcushion—and his countrymen because they cannot accept the inutility of his profession.

After the opening frame, which significantly provides background not only for the tale but also for the life of the outseting artist, the narrator describes how he escapes from the old Parson, setting out in a "heavy mist" (409). Yet, shortly after, he meets and joins company with a young man reading a "pocket-Bible" (412). The narrator attempts to portray the young man's character:

Though I piqued myself, at that period, on my great penetration into people's characters and pursuits, I could not decide whether this young man in black were an unfledged divine from Andover, a college-student, or preparing for college at some academy. (412)

While the narrator may not have the insight to fully comprehend the import of the young man's character, the reader quickly discerns that he becomes a replacement, albeit a younger replacement, for old Parson Thumpcushion. Indeed the narrator delineates how his character conflicts with that of the young man, just as it did with his former guardian: "We were a singular couple, strikingly contrasted, yet curiously assimilated, each of us remarkable enough by himself, and doubly so in the other's company" (415).

Yet Eliakim Abbot, the young divine who becomes united with the narrator—though "Without any formal compact" (415)—represents more than simply the Puritan past which seems to haunt the narrator as he journeys forth to become a wandering story teller. He also becomes, as Robert Fossum notes, "the moral and spiritual side of the artist" (90 n. 4)—he represents, in effect, an alter ego under which the artist must labor. Such a delineation of these two characters can be seen in the similarities that occur when they pursue their various vocations. After describing his failed first attempt at story telling, the narrator comments that he "was more deeply grieved by an almost parallel misfortune, which happened to [his] companion on the same evening" (416). In preparation for the narrator's second engagement, a handbill is distributed announcing the "celebrated Story Teller" with an appended notice that Eliakim Abbot will simultaneously hold a "religious meeting . . . [to] address sinners on the welfare of their immortal souls" (417-18). Indeed, the narrator visits his companion's meeting in order to quicken his imagination for his own performance. Such an act suggests that while the young divine might represent the Puritan religion, as Fossum asserts, he

does so in perhaps a milder form, one which does not completely stifle the narrator's creative energies.³

Hawthorne emphasizes the way in which Eliakim Abbot symbolically represents one aspect of the narrator's self in the conclusion of the tale. After receiving, and then burning, a letter from Parson Thumpcushion, the narrator remarks that

I left the town, in spite of a laudatory critique in the newspaper, and untempted by the liberal offers of the manager. As we walked onward, following the same road, on two such different errands, Eliakim groaned in spirit, and labored, with tears, to convince me of the guilt and madness of my life. (421)

In the young divine's impetration that the narrator quit his life as a wandering story teller, Hawthorne depicts him as a literal representative of the Puritan past. Yet Hawthorne also, in the shifts from first person singular—"I left town"—to plural—"we walked onward"—suggests that Eliakim is the spirit of Puritanism which the narrator has imbibed and internalized from his one-time guardian, and thus depicts him as a haunting shadow of Puritan morality.

Hawthorne therefore demonstrates, in "Passages from a Relinquished Work," that the drama of the outsetting artist is enacted under a religious influence, albeit a slightly weakened influence, which refuses to accept the creation of art as a useful form of employment. The extent to which the narrator, and indeed Hawthorne, accepts such an attitude can be seen in the eventual relation that the narrator attempts to

3. Robert H. Fossum asserts that "the young divine . . . accompanies the narrator as the present incarnation of the spirit of the Puritan past represented by Parson Thumpcushion" (90 n. 4). I suggest here that Eliakim Abbot does not represent the Puritan past in the present but rather the present (and milder) form of Puritanism.

establish with Parson Thumpcushion, the full-bodied representative of the Puritan past. The narrator explains, after returning to his room with the letter from his guardian, that he suddenly pictured the old man with "the gentleness of sorrow, softening his authority with love, as a father might, and even bending his venerable head, as if to say, that my errors had an apology in his own mistaken discipline [sic]" (421). With this picture indelibly imprinted in his mind, the narrator decides to burn the letter rather than risk reading it and having the image destroyed. Here again Hawthorne suggests that the form of the Puritan influence which plagues the narrator is slightly altered and even softened. Such a mild re-visioning seemed to be Hawthorne's only method of disarming the Puritan claims against art at this period of his career.

That Hawthorne discerned a contradiction at the heart of artistic creativity is compatible not only with his own experiences as a writer in early nineteenth-century America but also with his Puritan heritage. In "Passages from a Relinquished Work," the narrator's very being becomes an arena in which the contradictory forces of an artistic impulse and a Puritan censure of such an impulse are played out against one another. As Leopold Damrosch has noted, "For the Puritans the self is all-important not because it is one's self but because it represents the sole battleground of the war between good and evil" (4). In deciding whether or not to burn Parson Thumpcushion's letter, the narrator realizes that he is making his "irrevocable choice between good and evil fate" (421). In this way, Hawthorne demonstrates that his own early theorizing about art necessarily occurs within a paradigm based on Puritan conceptions of its morality.

"Passages from a Relinquished Work," what would have been chronologically the first in Hawthorne's projected collection, *The Story Teller*, shows not only how

the artist must labor in his undertaking in the shadow of the Puritan religion but also how the creation of art is considered a useless pursuit. "Fragments from the Journal of a Solitary Man," what would have been last in the projected collection, extends such a critique by showing how the purportedly useless pursuit of art leads to isolation from humanity. The form of the tale itself suggests such a conclusion. After requesting that the narrator burn his manuscripts, Oberon, the artist of the tale (who is the narrator of "Passages" grown old), dies before he can explain what he wants the narrator to do with his journal. The narrator, as the artist's friend, decides to publish excerpts of the journal, thus symbolically suggesting the distance that lies between the artist and society.

The artist's life described in Oberon's journal further develops the existence of a chasm between the artist and his audience. Oberon notes that

He who has a part in the serious business of life, though it be only as a shoemaker, feels himself equally respectable in youth and age, and therefore is content to live, and look forward to wrinkles and decrepitude in their due season. It is far otherwise with the busy idlers of the world. (XI: 316)

Not long after leaving home as a youth and adopting the life of a wandering story teller, Oberon understands the wastefulness of such an idle lifestyle. Yet he also becomes, because of his chosen profession, what the narrator describes as a "solitary man"—one who merely skims "the surface of life," knowing nothing "of its deep and warm realities" (313-14).⁴

4. As I noted in the conclusion to Chapter One, from the very beginning of his career, Hawthorne counterpoints two aspects of existence, the real and the ideal. He also, from the very beginning, links the real to warmth and depth—associations that become highly charged later in his career. The idea is that the artist, who primarily uses his imagination, becomes separated from everyday existence, from the tangible, physical aspect of life.

When he describes his homecoming, Oberon emphasizes how becoming an artist has not only led him to idleness but also to a deep solitude. Having traveled far and even achieved a certain amount of fame, the story teller opts to return home after becoming ill. He remarks as he enters the village that if some youth should show interest in his "wild life and worthless fame," he "would save him" (326). He explains:

He shall be taught . . . by my life, and by my death, that the world is a sad one for him who shrinks from its sober duties. My experience shall warn him to adopt some great and serious aim, such as manhood will cling to, that he may not feel himself, too late, a cumberer of this overladen earth, but a man among men. I will beseech him not to follow an eccentric path, nor, by stepping aside from the highway of human affairs, to relinquish his claim upon human sympathy. (326-27)

In "The Journal of a Solitary Man," Hawthorne directly links the choice of art as a profession with isolation, suggesting that the isolation stems directly from art's purported uselessness. As the narrator notes, in death, Oberon, because of his role as an artist in a society that refuses to acknowledge the importance of art, "sleeps with the silent of ages" (312).

Hawthorne's rather negative depiction of the artist as it unfolds from his various Oberon tales suggests his concern with the possible immorality of his own profession. As Millicent Bell asserts, the Oberon mask is "a self [that Hawthorne] proposed to himself, a self he tested and considered as a possibility of himself . . ." (137). His representation of the artist's condemnation, as it originated not only from his own nineteenth-century milieu but also from his reading in Puritan history, becomes a way of dramatizing such a censure in order to explore its force. Indeed the

general misunderstanding of one of Hawthorne's more often discussed artist tales from this period, "The Village Uncle," stems from a lack of awareness of this context.

Rosemary F. Franklin, in discussing "The Village Uncle," claims that the tale shows not the negative effects of becoming an artist but rather the positive outcome of forsaking art for domestic felicity. In the tale, an "Imaginary Retrospect" which curiously shifts from second to first person when discussing the old man/narrator, Hawthorne certainly concerns himself with the question of the artist's isolation as he describes the relationship between an artist, who at times claims to be a fisherman and husband, and society, represented by the artist's "wife," Susan. According to Franklin, Hawthorne shows in the tale how "Susan kindled 'a domestic fire' within the man's heart and saved him from his intellectual whims" (60). Leo B. Levy develops such a reading, claiming that the narrator has found a middle ground between domesticity and art: "The life of the imagination and the life rooted in the family combine to form an order of values that only death can decompose" ("The Mermaid and the Mirror" 211).

Yet within the context of the issues concerning Hawthorne in his artist tales of the 1830s, and especially in consideration of the influence of the Puritan religion in which Hawthorne was working, the tale seems to show, rather, the way in which the artist's imagination has gained complete control of his being, causing him to confuse an ideal vision of domesticity with reality. As Levy has noted, "The Village Uncle" constantly shifts between two visions: on the one hand, that of the isolated artist who stares into his looking glass and imagines the family which surrounds him, and, on the other hand, that of the village patriarch, married to Susan and surrounded by children. Yet what has not been noticed is that the tale makes clear that the second vision is a

product of the first: that the artist has reached the epitome of isolation in being able to create a family only in his imagination.

The very opening of the tale suggests the created nature of the second vision. The narrator exclaims: "Come! another log upon the hearth. True, our little parlor is comfortable, especially here, where the old man sits in his old arm chair; but on Thanksgiving night, the blaze should dance higher up the chimney, and send a shower of sparks into the outer darkness" (IX: 310). The narrative then shifts from a third person description of the old man, the village patriarch, to a first person reminiscence: "And now, come, Susan, come, my children, draw your chairs round me, all of you" (310). The narrator moves from envisioning the old man who sits in his chair to becoming the old man who attempts to solidify his vision of his family:

There is a dimness over your figures! You sit quivering indistinctly with each motion of the blaze, which eddies about you like a flood, so that you all have the look of visions, or people that dwell only in the firelight, and will vanish from existence, as completely as your own shadows, when the flame shall sink among the embers. (310)

The opening paragraph concludes with a description of the old man's failed hearing and vision, and with a suggestion that perhaps even his mind is failing: he tells Susan, "else you would not all be so shadowy, in the blaze of his Thanksgiving fire" (311).

After the opening vacillation, in which the narrator moves from his isolation to his (created) domestic situation, he turns to confessing his true condition. He notes that it was only "a few moments since I sat in another room":

yonder model of a vessel was not there, nor the old chest of drawers, nor Susan's profile and mine, in that gilt frame; nothing, in short, except this same fire, which glimmered on books, papers, and a

picture, and half discovered my solitary figure in a looking-glass. But it was paler than my rugged old self, and younger, too, by almost half a century. (311)

Indeed only a few moments separate these two rooms as the narrator creates out of his solitary artistic labors the second room with his wife and family. Yet in becoming the old man, the village patriarch, the narrator substitutes the ideal created vision for reality, and everything that follows under the rubric of the real is in fact the created.⁵

The next section develops the vacillation between the youthful but isolated artist, who narrates the tale, and the old patriarch, who becomes the narrator as he imaginatively replaces the artist. The narrator beseeches his wife and children to speak to him, "for the scene [of his younger, isolated self] is glimmering on my sight again, and as it brightens you fade away" (311). He continues:

Oh! I should be loth to lose my treasure of past happiness, and become once more what I was then; a hermit in the depths of my own mind; sometimes yawning over drowsy volumes, and anon a scribbler of wearier trash than what I read; a man who had wandered out of the real world and got into its shadow, where his troubles, joys and vicissitudes were of such slight stuff, that he hardly knew whether he lived, or only dreamed of living. Thank heaven, I am an old man now, and have done with all such vanities. (311)

5. Hawthorne's playing with these categories, which later in his career he will fully deconstruct, begins in this important early tale, a tale which has often confused critics, and, I'm certain, Hawthorne's own audience, into reading the artist's ideal vision as his present reality. Such a masterful and ironic use of the ideal and the real aspects of human existence, demonstrating that they are not so clearly demarcated as they seem, suggests what will ultimately become Hawthorne's perspective towards these categories.

The last sentence of the paragraph signals a change in the narrative; from this point forward, the narrator's use of first person refers to the old man whereas before it referred to the young artist. Likewise, third person is used to describe the artist—who admittedly does not know if he lives or only dreams of living, who does not know how to separate reality from imagination.

Yet, as the narrator concludes, he is now "an old man," and the narrative proceeds from this perspective. Significantly, the narrator can finally describe Susan in detail as her figure no longer fades but is "illuminated from head to foot" (311). The conclusion of his description once again suggests that the artist's ideal vision will be considered the real, that indeed for the old man/artist, that which is real is the imaginary. He notes, of his depiction of Susan, that he "dip[ped] her image into my mind and color[ed] it of a thousand fantastic hues, before I could see her as she really was" (312). Similarly, the narrator's subsequent descriptions of the village and of his ventures as both a fisherman and village story teller suggest that they are created images, like Susan, like the children, and indeed like the old man himself.

Admittedly, the village patriarch details the way in which Susan "kindled a domestic fire within my heart, and took up her dwelling there, even in that chill and lonesome cavern, hung round with glittering icicles of fancy" (316). Yet he also admits that his image of Susan occasionally fades; he notes how, while walking on the seashore and glancing at their reflections in a pool, "Suddenly, your image, Susan, and all the little faces made up of yours and mine, seemed to fade away and vanish around me, leaving a pale visage like my own of former days, within the frame of a large looking-glass" (318). Once again the true condition of the narrator as an isolated artist gazing into his mirror impinges on the narrative, indicating that the narrator deludes himself into accepting for reality his concocted visions.

The conclusion of the tale once again directly contrasts the young artist and the old man, who now appears to be dying as his vision can no longer be sustained. After describing the warmth that he receives from his family, the old man exclaims: "Susan! My children! Something whispers me, that this happiest hour must be the final one, and that nothing remains but to bless you all, and depart with a treasure of recollected joys to Heaven" (322). As the isolated artist can no longer sustain the vision of the village patriarch, the old man dies a symbolic death and with him die the visions of his family. He continues:

Alas! your figures grow indistinct, fading into pictures on the air, and now to fainter outlines, while the fire is glimmering on the walls of a familiar room, and shows the book that I flung down, and the sheet that I left half written, some fifty years ago. I lift my eyes to the looking-glass, and perceive myself alone, unless those be the mermaid's features, retiring into the depths of the mirror, with a tender and melancholy smile. (322)

While the narrator implies that a fifty year gap exists between these two visions, the narrative, which progresses from discussing the old man's plight in first person to discussing the artist's situation in first person, demonstrates a conflation of the two images—the young artist becomes the old patriarch through the artist's imagination.

Before presenting the morals of the tale, the narrator as young artist (for the old patriarch is indeed dead now that he has faded into the mirror) comments on his own flights of fancy: "Ah! One feels a chilliness, not bodily, but about the heart, and, moreover, a foolish dread of looking behind him, after these pastimes" (322). Not only does the narrator emphasize, once again, his true condition, that in his isolation he feels a chilliness about the heart, but he obliquely comments on the subtitle of the tale.

This pastime, the creation of an old man's life on which to reflect—that is, a retrospect, an analysis of past times—becomes, admittedly, an imaginary retrospect.

The narrator then presents two morals for his reverie. The first, expounded as a mere suggestion, is “that, since fancy can create so bright a dream of happiness, it were better to dream on from youth to age, than to awake and strive doubtfully for something real” (323). Yet, as the tale demonstrates and as the narrator goes on to confess, we always awake from our dreams: “the slight tissue of a dream can no more preserve us from the stern reality of misfortune, than a robe of cobweb could repel the wintry blast” (323). So the narrator turns to his final moral: “In chaste and warm affections, humble wishes, and honest toil for some useful end, there is health for the mind, and quiet for the heart, the prospect of a happy life, and the fairest hope of Heaven” (323). In this final moral, Hawthorne suggests that a happy life and healthy mind will be obtained through communion with society, but he also shows that such a communion depends upon adopting a useful profession. For as the tale shows, the artist's isolation and his profession's uselessness lead to a complete disassociation from what is defined in the tale as reality—wakefulness, domesticity, warmth, and refusal to engage in the use of the fancy.

Significantly, Scottish Common-Sense philosophy asserts that an overindulgence in the imagination, like the artist's in “The Village Uncle,” would indeed lead to an inability to differentiate between the ideal and the real. As Terence Martin notes,

The Scottish realists uniformly insist that the mind must keep in touch with objective reality; the actual order not only partakes of the highest order of finite existence, is not only the foundation of knowledge, but works as a constant corrective to the idealistic tendencies of the

intellect. With the intellect weakened by divorce from actuality, the working of the imagination may bring about a complete dislocation of the mind from reality. (*The Instructed Vision* 97)

Hawthorne uses fire imagery in the tale to represent such a disconnection from reality. As Shannon Burns notes, the hearth becomes a “recurring symbol” in Hawthorne’s fiction often representing all that is opposed to the isolation of man “from the company of his fellow man” (265).

Yet the fire imagery here, as in other of Hawthorne’s early tales about art, is used ironically, for though it is often associated with Susan and the village patriarch’s family, it rather symbolizes the heated imagination so feared by the Puritans. As Michael Davitt Bell explains, Hawthorne’s society believed that the type of fiction which he wrote “emanated from, and appealed to, the unfettered imagination, the ‘heated brain,’ of narrator or reader. It was therefore both deeply fascinating and deeply subversive” (*The Development of American Romance* 11). As already noted, the Puritans considered the role of the imagination crucial in maintaining an ordered life, for the imagination had the power to control the entire being of an individual. A. W. Plumstead explains, citing Cotton Mather:

the colonial Puritans condemned reading novels and romances because, as Cotton Mather says in an oft-quoted passage, “Most of the modern plays, as well as romances, and novels and fiction” make up Satan’s library and must be avoided because of “their tendency to excite and foment impure flames.” (220)

The use of fire imagery, then, is not accidental in Hawthorne’s fiction as it is a recurring referent in Puritan literature to the heated imagination which isolates an

individual from reality, causing the individual to mistake what is real for what is imagined.⁶

Significantly, fire imagery is also connected to images of the devil, for, according to the Puritans, it is often Satan who causes individuals to rely on their imagination rather than on their reason. Claudia Johnson notes that "The Puritans were convinced that Satan could work most dangerously through human imagination because that faculty could act independently of checks from other faculties, independently of nature herself" (35). Thus Hawthorne often uses fire imagery to represent the way in which Satan has infected the being of the artist, causing the artist to indulge in the imagination and create a fictional world. Hawthorne makes such a connection between fire, the devil and the heated imagination in "The Devil in Manuscript," another Oberon sketch meant to be included in *The Story Teller* collection.

In the tale, the narrator sits with Oberon before "a great blazing fire" next to "a pile of blotted manuscripts" (XI: 170-171). After glancing with an "expression of disquietude" at these papers, Oberon tells the narrator

I do believe . . . that there is a devil in this pile of blotted papers. You have read them, and know what I mean—that conception, in which I endeavored to embody the character of a fiend, as represented in our traditions Oh! I have a horror of what was created in my own brain, and shudder at the manuscripts in which I gave that dark idea a sort of material existence. (171)

6. I do not mean to suggest that Shannon Burns' claim is inaccurate, for Hawthorne does often use fire imagery in its more traditional sense. Yet with the inherent confusion of the real and the ideal in "The Village Uncle," in fact causing their reversal, Hawthorne also ironically inverts the symbolic significance of the fire imagery. Indeed such an inversion is a logical extension of the confusion in the tale.

In "The Devil in Manuscript," Hawthorne embodies the image of Satan, who works through the imagination, in Oberon's literary productions, again dramatizing the Puritan censure of fiction. Oberon continues, explaining "how the hellish thing used to suck away the happiness of those who, by a simple concession that seemed almost innocent, subjected themselves to his power" (171).

Yet Oberon claims that he and the narrator will be the "last and only victims" of the novelistic impulse, "for this night I mean to burn the manuscripts, and commit the fiend to his retribution in the flames" (171). He then tells the narrator why he needs to exorcise his devil: "I am surrounding myself with shadows, which bewilder me, by aping the realities of life. They have drawn me aside from the beaten path of the world, and led me into a strange sort of solitude—a solitude in the midst of men" (172). Like that of the village uncle, the heated imagination of Oberon has led him to mistake his created visions for reality, thus actually distancing him from humanity. As Oberon notes when he describes the vision which led to the creation of one tale in particular: "That scribbled page describes shadows which I summoned to my bedside at midnight; they would not depart when I bade them; the gray dawn came, and found me wide awake and feverish, the victim of my own enchantments!" (174).

Significantly, Oberon's agitation grows as he prepares to burn his tales. After adding wood to the fire, he "seized the champagne bottle, and drank two or three brimming bumpers, successively. The heady liquor combined with his agitation to throw him into a species of rage. He laid violent hands on the tales" (175). The alcohol, which truly heats the artist's brain, combines with the fire imagery to demonstrate Oberon's loss of contact with the real world. When the narrator attempts to stop Oberon from consigning the tales to the flames, Oberon's eyes flash with fire and he exclaims that "Not a scorched syllable shall escape!" (175). The narrator then

notes, as the tales burn, that "Oberon stood gazing at the conflagration, and shortly began to soliloquize, in the wildest strain, as if Fancy resisted and became riotous, at the moment when he would have compelled her to ascend that funeral pile" (176). While Oberon claims that consigning his tales to the fire will end his preoccupation with art, the tale demonstrates that he is deluded and that his act, an act which only redoubles the flames, reinforces his imaginative impulses. Indeed the fire's consumption of the products of the heated imagination only propagates the wildness, the lack of control. In this way, Hawthorne demonstrates, as he did in "The Village Uncle," that in the artist's solipsism the imagination reigns supreme and collapses the world in upon itself.

The conclusion of the tale reiterates that the burning of the tales further removes the artist not only from a useful relation to society but also from a rational mode of behavior. As the tales escape the chimney, "like a demon with sable wings," they catch the roof on fire and spread the artist's dementia (177). After hearing the cries of "Fire!" and realizing what has happened, Oberon becomes delighted:

His frenzy took the hue of joy, and, with a wild gesture of exultation, he leaped almost to the ceiling of the chamber.

"My tales!" cried Oberon. "The chimney! The roof! The Fiend has gone forth by night, and startled thousands in fear and wonder from their beds! Here I stand—a triumphant author! Huzza! Huzza! My brain has set the town on fire! Huzza!" (178)

With a symbolic dissemination of the artist's work, the town's imagination is inflamed, thus insinuating that the imagination presents danger for both the artist and his audience. While "The Village Uncle" focuses on the solipsistic universe of the

artist, "The Devil in Manuscript" describes the way in which the artist's lack of connection to reality might lead both the artist and the town astray.

In stark contrast to the wildness which the artist's imagination spreads in "The Devil in Manuscript," "Chippings with a Chisel" depicts a Puritan artist with a truly moral foundation to his art. The narrator notes that the artist, named Mr. Wigglesworth and a direct "descendant of the old Puritan family of Wigglesworth," is a man "with a certain simplicity and singleness" (IX: 408) who came to Martha's Vineyard "in search of professional employment" as a carver of tombstones (407). Viewing his art in no other terms than its utility, the "sculptor's" "literary attainments evidently comprehended very little, either of prose or poetry, which had not, at one time or other, been inscribed on slate or marble" (409). As a true Puritan, Mr. Wigglesworth eschews not only originality but also any unnecessary adornment or overwrought phrasing for his tombstones.

R. K. Gupta claims that Hawthorne depicts this artist "sympathetically," for the artist's pride and vision do "not prevent him from showing understanding for the grief of the bereaved who seek his professional services" ("Hawthorne's Treatment of the Artist" 74). Yet such a conclusion ignores the narrator's comments at the end of the tale when Mr. Wigglesworth asks the narrator what he might like for a tombstone. The narrator replies quite honestly:

I care little or nothing about a stone for my own grave, and am somewhat inclined to scepticism as to the propriety of erecting monuments at all, over the dust that once was human. The weight of these heavy marbles, though unfelt by the dead corpse or the enfranchised soul, presses drearily upon the spirit of the survivor, and causes him to connect the idea of death with the dungeon-like

imprisonment of the tomb, instead of with the freedom of the skies. Every grave-stone that you ever made is the visible symbol of a mistaken system. Our thoughts should soar upward with the butterfly—not linger with the exuviae that confined him. (417-18)

Not only does Mr. Wigglesworth ignore the desires of his customers, thus truly showing very little concern for their grief, but he also bases his art on a “mistaken system.” In representing the sculptor’s art as founded on a Puritan aesthetic, Hawthorne demonstrates, in this concluding passage, the way in which the mistaken system of the Puritans weighs on those who are left in its wake.

Significantly, Mr. Wigglesworth replies to the narrator’s conjectures that he had “never heard any thing so heathenish” and that he is “perplexed and displeased at sentiments which controverted all his notions and feelings, and implied the utter waste, and worse, of his whole life’s labor . . .” (418). In “Chippings with a Chisel” Hawthorne turns the Puritan censure of art back upon itself. While he shows in such other tales as “Passages” and “Fragments from the Journal of a Solitary Man” that art, from a Puritan perspective, is useless and isolating, Hawthorne suggests in “Chippings with a Chisel” that an art based on Puritan definitions might likewise lack utility and isolate the creator. Like the inversion of the real and the ideal in “The Village Uncle,” an inversion which suggests that such categories are not so easily distinguished, Hawthorne ironically reverses the charges of inutility and isolation and so implicates the Puritans in their own system.

The conclusion of the tale further explains Hawthorne’s position on the influence of the Puritan aesthetic in the early period of his career. The narrator admits that he “had grown the wiser” from his companionship with the sculptor. “And yet,” he continues,

with my gain of wisdom, I had likewise gained perplexity; for there was a strange doubt in my mind, whether the dark shadowing of this life, the sorrows and regrets, have not as much real comfort in them—leaving religious influences out of the question—as what we term life's joys. (418)

Indeed the very point of such tales as “Chippings with a Chisel” and “Passages from a Relinquished Work” is that an artist in Hawthorne's position cannot leave behind the “religious influences,” for these very influences cause the perplexities and doubts in the first place. Moreover, the narrator claims that a kind of comfort exists in these influences, perhaps explaining Hawthorne's willingness to embody them in his fiction.

Nevertheless, most of Hawthorne's tales of the 1830s center on the negative influence of Puritan ideas of art, particularly in relation to the artist's connection to the real world. Yet only “Passages” and “The Seven Vagabonds” directly detail the conflict existing between the impulse towards an artistic life and the Puritan censure of that impulse. Indeed, “The Seven Vagabonds,” like “Passages” and “Fragments,” is one of the tales which Hawthorne meant to include in his collection, *The Story Teller*, as it likewise relates the way in which the narrator first determines to be a wandering story teller.

The tale opens at a fork in the road, where the narrator has three different paths from which to choose. He sees, at the fork, a showman's vehicle and decides to enter in order to escape a storm that is blowing up. He remarks that he “immediately conjectured that this was some itinerant show, halting at the confluence of the roads to intercept such idle travellers as myself” (IX: 350). After watching the showman's staged performance, the narrator admits: “Indeed, I liked the spectacle, and was tickled with the old man's gravity as he presided at it, for I had none of that foolish wisdom

which reproves every occupation that is not useful in this world of vanities" (352). In the very opening of the tale, Hawthorne notes both that the showman's trade is for idlers and that it is not a useful form of occupation. In entering the vehicle, the narrator enters the world which the Puritans condemned as the world of Satan.

After a young damsel and a young foreigner climb aboard, the girl tells the narrator that they are heading to "the camp meeting at Stamford," a meeting described as "a great frolic and festival" (358). The camp meeting becomes the missing referent, symbolic of art in its purported uselessness and idleness, to which all of the vagabonds are headed with their various forms of entertainment. But because the narrator has not yet announced his own occupation, the group begins to interrogate him, asking him his business. When he replies that he, too, is on his way to the camp meeting, the showman queries, "But in what capacity?" The showman continues: "All of us here can get our bread in some creditable way. Every honest man should have his livelihood. You, sir, as I take it, are a mere strolling gentleman" (365).

The narrator admits that his "talent was less respectable, and might be less profitable, than the meanest of theirs," but announces that he will "become an itinerant novelist, reciting my own extemporaneous fictions to such audiences as I could collect" (365-66). When the storm abates, the group exits the vehicle and prepares to depart. Yet on the Stamford road, the group sees "a horseman approaching leisurely, and splashing through the little puddles" (368). The showman soon recognizes the figure as "a travelling preacher of great fame among the Methodists" and realizes that he is heading away from Stamford (368). When they ask him for news of the meeting, the narrator observes that "a smile was endeavouring to disturb the iron gravity of the preacher's mouth" before he announces that "the camp meeting is broke up" (369).

The narrator then notes that since their "union" was thus "nullified, by the removal of its object, we were sundered at once to the four winds of Heaven" (369).

While Hawthorne has a Methodist preacher announce with a sly iron smile the break up of the meeting, the description of his character clearly indicates that Hawthorne intended the preacher to symbolize a more general religious and moral attitude, but one indeed based on Puritanism. As in other tales, in "The Seven Vagabonds" Hawthorne uses iron imagery to refer to Puritanism. As the preacher approaches, he is described as "sticking up in his saddle with rigid perpendicularity, a tall, thin figure in rusty black . . ." (368). Moreover, the censure of fiction during Hawthorne's early career, as G. Harrison Orians notes in "The Rise of Romanticism," might simply be labelled Puritanism, "but actually the matter is more complex than this. The recurrent revivals, especially among Methodists and Baptists, kept the moral fervor [against fiction] incandescent" (176). Thus Hawthorne uses the Methodist preacher to represent the pervasive nature of the puritanic spirit—and especially its condemnation of art—in his society.

As in "Passages from a Relinquished Work," "The Seven Vagabonds" shows that any discussion of aesthetics must take into account the religious influence of Hawthorne's past and present. More specifically, "Passages" concludes with the rather pessimistic suggestion that the artist must simply live with a guilty conscience, with the spirit of Puritanism as a constant companion. "The Seven Vagabonds," on the other hand, proffers a solution to the Puritan censure of fiction which claims that art separates the artist from the real world. While in the showman's vehicle, two vagabonds are curiously suggested as mentors for the narrator. The first is a "prophetic beggar," a mendicant who begs for money as well as tells fortunes (360). And just as the narrator links the beggar to the future, he also likens him to the devil, suggesting

that he possibly "possess[es] some of the mental and moral characteristics . . . of the Devil in popular stories" (361). Of course the outsetting artist's connection to the beggar would only prove fatal.

The seventh vagabond, however, a Penobscot Indian, the narrator connects to both nature and the past. He is described as a "wild man, like a fir-tree in his native forest" (364). When he enters the wagon, he causes the narrator to "imagine, either that our wagon had rolled back two hundred years into past ages, or that the forest and its old inhabitants had sprung up around us by enchantment" (363). Perhaps equally importantly, the Catholic religion has tempered the Indian: a "crucifix betokened that our Father the Pope had interposed between the Indian and the Great Spirit" (363). Finally, rather than immediately demonstrating a kindred relation to the company of artists, the Indian must be adopted; the girl exclaims, "You shall be one of us" (364). The Indian comes to represent history, and particularly American history because of his link to nature, which is not only seen as useful to Puritans but is central to their religion. More importantly, his connection to Catholicism suggests a more ancient and purer form of religion, one that predates, and thus has more moral authority than, Puritanism.

The conclusion of "The Seven Vagabonds" details the choice that the outsetting artist finally makes between joining the party of Satan and joining a higher form of moral exactitude. The narrator notes that "with a pensive shadow thrown across my mind, yet emulous of the light philosophy of my late companions, I joined myself to the Penobscot Indian, and set forth towards the distant city" (369). Significantly, "The Seven Vagabonds" demonstrates not only that an aesthetic must be worked out under the aegis of a religious influence, and particularly of Puritanism, but also that a solution exists to its censure of fiction. In the narrator's union with the Indian and

movement towards the city, Hawthorne indicates that a certain type of fiction might be created which would allow the artist to remain in contact with the real world.⁷ In order to counteract the claims that art is both useless and isolating, claims which Hawthorne dramatizes in such works as "Fragments from the Journal of a Solitary Man," "The Village Uncle" and "The Devil in Manuscript," in "The Seven Vagabonds" Hawthorne suggests that a type of historical writing, represented in the figure of the American Indian, might ameliorate the Puritan censure of fiction.

As several critics have noted, most of Hawthorne's historical fiction was written during this early period, before about 1840 (Baym, *The Shape of Hawthorne's Career* 58). Samuel Miller explains, in his *Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century* (1803), that fictitious writing with a historical bent,

when constructed on proper principles and executed in a proper manner, may be productive of utility. . . . Novels *may* be so written as to promote the cause both of knowledge and virtue. They *may* be constructed in such a manner as will tend to lead the mind insensibly from what is sordid and mean to more worthy pursuits, and to fill it with pure, elevated and liberal sentiments. (172-73)

According to Michael Davitt Bell, as a reaction to the nationalistic impulse during this time, the historical romance of Hawthorne and his contemporaries is "an apparent mode of reconciliation" meant "to bridge the chasm between fantasy and experience, fiction and fact" (*The Development of American Romance* 15). Thus Hawthorne's symbolic depiction of the narrator at the conclusion of "The Seven Vagabonds"

7. James G. Janssen claims that the Indian provides "the richest mine of mythic material upon which the romancer-vagabond can draw. And it is fitting that [the narrator] move toward civilization (the city) accompanied by the most natural, least artificial source of inspiration" (27). Robert H. Fossum agrees, noting that "in setting out toward the town the novelist-to-be is moving toward human involvement" (90).

suggests his attempt to solve the many perplexities and doubts that plagued him during the 1830s, perplexities arising from the religious influence of Hawthorne's Puritan past and Common-Sense contemporaries.

Chapter Three

Tales of the 1830s: The Artist as God

Sometime in late 1836 or early 1837 Hawthorne reflected in his journal on the significance of the church spire, a recurrent symbol in his work and especially important to a tale written some five years before, "Sights from a Steeple." In his entry, he suggests the existence of two different spheres, one based on the common thoughts of people, the other reaching beyond those thoughts: "The ideas of people in general are not raised higher than the roofs of the houses. All their interests extend over the earth's surface in a layer of thickness. The meeting-house steeple reaches out of their sphere" (VIII: 24). Hawthorne contrasts, here, two very different worlds, one based on an earthly existence and represented as subsiding below the roofs of the houses and one based on an ascension into the heavens and represented as soaring upward with the church steeple. Clearly, reaching beyond the ideas of common people seems at once admirable and desirable, especially for an artist since these ideas are described here as a "layer of thickness." Yet Hawthorne knows that in ascending

towards the heavens, the artist would necessarily become separated from humanity and from the world created by God.

Significantly, the contrast between these two worlds, the earthly and the heavenly, the human and the godlike, lies at the heart of Hawthorne's aesthetic in the period of the 1830s when he was influenced largely by Puritan conceptions of art. Such conceptions suggested that in the creation of the artwork the artist necessarily turned away from the world of God, the earthly, and substituted for it his own world, what becomes defined, in "The Prophetic Pictures," as the world of the picture. In the artist tales of the 1830s, including "The Prophetic Pictures" but also "Sylph Etherege" and "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," Hawthorne deals not only with the artist's substitution of a fictional world for the real world but also with the effects of such a substitution on the artist and his subjects. While Hawthorne is capable, in this period, of analysis and exemplification of the Puritan censure of artistic creativity, he seems incapable of suggesting a solution or alternative to such a criticism.

"Sights from a Steeple" (1831) introduces the division of the world into two spheres as the narrator, momentarily caught between these two realms, ascends the church steeple, with the earth "at a dizzy depth below, but heaven far, far beyond me still" (IX: 191). He continues: "O that I could soar up into the very zenith, where man never breathed, nor eagle ever flew, and where the ethereal azure melts away from the eye, and appears only a deepened shade of nothingness!" (191). The narrator confesses his desire to become godlike, to ascend into the heavens, here represented by the "ethereal azure," where humans never tread. Yet the narrator admits that attaining such a desire would only lead to isolation and loneliness: "And yet I shiver at that cold and solitary thought" (191). Tied to the idea of ascending into the heavens, and thus becoming godlike, is the reality of the isolation of such an ascension.

But the narrator proceeds to enact just such a part, symbolically usurping the role of God and thus metaphorically rising into the heavens.¹ In his descriptions of the view which surrounds him, he uses language recalling the biblical description of the world's creation:

In three parts of the visible circle, whose centre is this spire, I discern cultivated fields, villages, white country-seats, the waving lines of rivulets, little placid lakes, and here and there a rising ground, that would fain be termed a hill. On the fourth side is the sea, stretching away towards a viewless boundary . . . (192)

In addition to the description of the earth's separation into land and sea, where the narrator symbolically assumes the Creator's omnipotence, the narrator notes that he resides over it all, "a watchman, all-heeding and unheeded" (192), thus also assuming God's omniscience.

While the narrator seems to avow a role similar to the Creator's in these descriptions, he immediately rescinds such a claim in admitting, as he had done in his opening description, that these allegations only reveal his desire:

O that the multitude of chimneys could speak, like those of Madrid, and betray, in smoky whispers, the secrets of all who, since their first foundation, have assembled at the hearths within! O that the Limping Devil of Le Sage would perch beside me here, extend his wand over this contiguity of roofs, uncover every chamber, and make me familiar with their inhabitants! The most desirable mode of existence might be

1. Dana Brand claims that "the narrator does not fulfill the expectation that he may have created in his audience by climbing to his special vantage point" (9). As I hope to show, while a tension does exist between the narrator's desires and the limitations placed on those desires, he does indeed proceed to enact a part which suggests his success in becoming a godlike figure.

that of a spiritualized Paul Pry, hovering invisible round man and woman, witnessing their deeds, searching into their hearts, borrowing brightness from their felicity, and shade from their sorrow, and retaining no emotion peculiar to himself. (192)

After his claim to be "all-heeding" the narrator admits that, indeed, he has no knowledge of what occurs in the lives of those existing beneath him: "But none of these things are possible; and if I would know the interior of brick walls, or the mystery of human bosoms, I can but guess" (192). Significantly the narrator hints that while he may not have such knowledge, he is indeed capable of guessing, of putting forth his own version of these lives.

Following this introductory section, which reveals both the narrator's limits and his desires, the sketch depicts the narrator in the act of creating a drama in the face of his inability to comprehend what occurs below him. He at first sees a young man wandering on the boulevard and suggests several possible circumstances which might fit his demeanor, again admitting that he is not capable of understanding the lives of those in the village. But when the young man encounters two females, the narrator notes that the young man places himself "nearest the Venus to whom I—enacting, on a steeple-top, the part of Paris on the top of Ida—adjudged the golden apple" (194). The narrator begins to enact a new role as director of the events taking place in the village below.

But he admits, one last time, that he is incapable not only of truly perceiving the details of events below him, from which he is distanced physically and spiritually, but also their meaning. The narrator philosophizes on the occurrences taking place in "the houses over which my eyes roam so coldly": "How various are the situations of the people covered by the roofs beneath me, and how diversified are the events at this

moment befalling them!" (196). He concludes, however, that he is incapable of giving any "distinctness" to the "broad thoughts" which begin to struggle in his mind as a result of his distant observations. Hawthorne demonstrates here, in agreement with the Puritans, that because the artist is truly fallible and finite—and not omniscient—his artistic *representation* would be likewise fallible, that is, it could not accurately represent God's created world. But because the artist cannot resist his creative impulse, and because his limitations will not allow him to produce an artistic representation, he interposes a fallible and imaginary *creation* on the world, causing not only his isolation from God's created world but also from humanity.²

After his final concession, however, he does indeed proceed to create a drama in the streets below him. The narrator describes a rich old man hurrying homeward in order to escape a tempest which has suddenly blown up with great intensity. As the merchant turns the corner towards his home, the narrator notes that "a sudden catastrophe" occurs when the old man collides with the young man and his lady friends (197).

He likes not the sweet encounter, the darkness of the whole air gathers speedily upon his visage, and there is a pause on both sides. Finally he thrusts aside the youth with little courtesy, seizes an arm of each of the two girls, and plods onward, like a magician with a prize of captive fairies. All this is easy to be understood. (197)

2. This distinction between representation and creation parallels the Puritan distinction, noted above in Chapter One (7 n. 2), between different manners of types—one which is based on scripture and thus on historically verifiable fact (which would correspond to an accurate representation of God's world) and one which is based on ideas created in the human imagination (which would correspond to the creation of a heterocosm). According to the Puritans, the former is to be praised as revealing God's truth, while the latter is to be avoided as blasphemous.

While earlier the narrator admitted that he could not perceive the details of events so distant below, not to mention understand those events, he here not only describes the minute details of the events, including the facial expressions of the old man, but he also claims that they are quite easy to comprehend.

The narrator's new found powers are emphasized in his sudden ability to see into the houses which he earlier lamented were closed to him: "In every dwelling I perceive the faces of chambermaids as they shut down the windows, excluding the impetuous shower, and shrinking away from the quick fiery glare" (197). Jeffrey H. Richards concludes that the town has become a theater and the narrator a "stage manager" who selects "those details which make the best drama" (40). Yet Hawthorne depicts the narrator as more than a mere "stage manager"; he indeed presents the narrator as an artistic creator of a fictional event. No longer merely attempting to represent what he admittedly cannot see or comprehend, the narrator begins to create a drama and thus becomes a godlike figure. In this way, the narrator replaces the natural world of God with his own fictional world, a substitution which is necessarily less perfect because of its creation by a fallible and finite being.

But the growing storm appears to interrupt the narrator's powers when he admits that "I love not my station here aloft, in the midst of the tumult which I am powerless to direct or quell . . ." (198). As he prepares to descend, he glances one more time at the sky, "now gloomy as an author's prospects," and notices a sudden change: "A little speck of azure has widened in the western heavens; the sunbeams find a passage, and go rejoicing through the tempest; and on yonder darkest cloud, born, like hallowed hopes, of the glory of another world, and the trouble and tears of this, brightens forth the Rainbow!" (198). While the rainbow generally symbolizes reconciliation, as Teresa Toulouse notes, here it becomes a rather contrived event to

bring about conclusiveness, a "deus ex machina" grafted onto the tale (Toulouse, "Seeing Through 'Paul Pry'" 213). Certainly, such a reading correctly interprets the way in which the tale ends, but we might perceive the rainbow not as an inadvertent imposition but rather as a literal *deus ex machina*. In the widening of the azure, earlier linked with the artist's ascent heavenward, the narrator symbolically demonstrates his now fully developed godlike abilities which allow him to quell the storm and bring it to a romantic conclusion.

"Sights from a Steeple" thus shows the artist as he metaphorically ascends to heaven and becomes a god (while literally ascending heavenward and becoming godlike), but it also demonstrates the inherent loneliness and isolation in such an ascent. Nina Baym concludes that the narrator's "ability to embellish the reality he transcribes" depends upon "his position of detachment and withdrawal" (*The Shape of Hawthorne's Career* 51). Certainly the narrator of "Sights," like both the village uncle and Oberon, becomes an isolated figure as he views the earth from a dizzying height, perceiving those below him with a cold eye. Yet his isolation stems not from any ability to embellish or transcribe a reality which he sees below him; indeed such an act of representation might have left the narrator in a mediatory position *between* heaven and earth. Instead, the narrator's isolation originates from his creation of a new reality, a fictional and imagined world which he imposes on God's created world.

Hawthorne develops a similar portrait of the artist in "Sylph Etherege" (1838), a tale also concerned with the detachment that results from artistic creation. The tale opens with two characters, Edward "Hamilton" and Mrs. Grosvenor, "stealthily watching a young girl" while she remains unaware of their gaze (XI: 111). The narrator describes Edward Vaughan, who is the girl's cousin and fiance and who has returned to America from Europe disguised as Edward Hamilton, as a godlike figure

who controls those around him; according to the narrator, he "seemed to regard [the girl, Sylvia Etherege] as a creature completely within the scope of his influence" (111). As the discussion between Vaughan and Mrs. Grosvenor, Sylvia's guardian, indicates, Vaughan has returned in order to cure the girl of her overindulgence in the world of the imagination "by putting forward [a] shadow of a rival" who will "vanish into thin air" at his bidding (111).

From the beginning of the tale, the narrator characterizes Vaughan as a godlike figure who controls both Sylvia and the ideal image of her concocted fiance. Indeed, the narrator portrays Sylvia as a picture, as one who resides within the world of the artist: "The girl's slender and sylph-like figure . . . set within the deep frame of the window, was a perfect picture" (111-12). In order to explain such a depiction, the narrator provides Sylvia's history, noting that she "was shy, sensitive, and fanciful" and that "her guardian's secluded habits had shut her out" from intercourse with the world (112). The narrator continues: "She had been left to seek associates and friends for herself, in the haunts of imagination, and to converse with them, sometimes in the language of dead poets, oftener in the poetry of her own mind" (112-13). During her childhood, Sylvia did not maintain sufficient contact with the real world and was thus led astray into the world of the imagination. Because she did not even have contact with her cousin as she grew up, she created "a vision of Edgar Vaughan, and tinted it with stronger hues than a mere fancy-picture, yet graced it with so many bright and delicate perfections, that her cousin could nowhere have encountered so dangerous a rival" (113).

A few weeks after his arrival in America, Vaughan, disguised as Edward Hamilton, gives Sylvia a miniature of her fiance, who had a "countenance . . . almost too perfect to represent a human creature" (114). Clearly, in providing Sylvia with a

physical representation of her ideal vision, Vaughan furthers her delusion: "now could Sylvia give a brighter semblance of reality to those day-dreams. Clasp[ing] the miniature to her heart, she could summon forth, from that haunted cell of pure and blissful fantasies, the life-like shadow, to roam with her in the moonlight garden" (115). Vaughan intends, as he explains to Mrs. Grosvenor, to cure Sylvia of her romantic notions by first providing apparent reality to the ideal image which she concocted as a lonely child and then destroying that image, and thus hopefully destroying her desire to indulge in the use of her imagination.

Yet the narrator warns that Vaughan's method will prove disastrous, that indeed one cannot cure overindulgence in the imagination through deeper engrossment in it. The narrator remarks that the ideal image of her lover, captured in the miniature, "wiled Sylvia away from earth, which seemed strange, and dull, and darksome, and lured her to a country where her spirit roamed in peaceful rapture, deeming that it had found its home" (116). The narrator not only delineates the existence of two separate worlds but also suggests the danger of the world of the imagination: "Many, in their youth, have visited that land of dreams, and wandered so long in its enchanted groves, that, when banished thence, they feel like exiles everywhere" (116). Vaughan's exacerbation of Sylvia's fantasizing pushes her further from contact with the real world, making her fit only for existence in the world of imagination.

On the night that Sylvia sits with Mrs. Grosvenor awaiting the arrival of her fiance, Edward Vaughan unveils his true identity as Sylvia's cousin and fiance. Sylvia drops the miniature, which Vaughan then crushes under foot, telling her: "It was I that created your phantom-lover, and now I annihilate him! Your dream is rudely broken. Awake, Sylph Etherege, awake to truth! I am the only Edgar Vaughan" (117). As Sylvia faints, Mrs. Grosvenor remarks that they have gone too far "in the hope of

curing Sylvia of her romantic notions, and reconciling her to the truths and realities of life" (118). Vaughan replies:

Well, my conscience is clear. I did but look into this delicate creature's heart; and with the pure fantasies that I found there, I made what seemed a man,—and the delusive shadow has wiled her away to Shadow-land, and vanished there! It is no new tale. Many a sweet maid has shared the lot of poor Sylph Etherege! (118)

Vaughan understands that his perpetuation of Sylvia's delusion has not cured her but rather "wiled her away" to another world, yet he declares that his conscience remains clear and that he is unwilling to accept responsibility for his own part in her fatal delusion.

As Vaughan notes, the plot of "Sylph Etherege" is indeed not new but rather originates from such works as Tabitha Tenney's *Female Quixotism: Exhibited in the Romantic Opinions and Extravagant Adventures of Dorcasina Sheldon* (1801). More importantly, however, in addition to criticizing certain novels existing in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the tale also comments upon the critical reception of those novels.³ One particular review, published in March 1798 in *Weekly Magazine*, stands as a type of that criticism, as it describes the unvarying plot structure of these works:

Novels not only pollute the imaginations of young women, but likewise give them false ideas of life, which too often make them act improperly; owing to the romantic turn of thinking they imbibe from their favorite studies. They read of characters which never existed, and never can

3. See especially Timothy Dwight's discussion of the Novel, written in the mid 1790s, in *Travels in New England and New York* (I: 370-75), as well as Henri Petter's discussion of "Pernicious Novels" in *The Early American Novel* (46-59).

exist: and when all the wit and invention of a luxuriant fancy are stretched to paint a young man all perfection in body and mind, it is hardly possible for a girl to avoid falling in love with the phantom, and being out of humour with the piece of plain mortality which she afterwards marries, and finds, to her great disappointment and mortification, does not act like the image her fondness had dressed up to her view. (qtd. in Orians 199 n. 20)

Indeed, while Sylvia plans to marry the now unveiled Vaughan, she dies before the ceremony can take place, largely because of the disparity between the ideal image and the real figure of her fiancé.

While in "Sylph Etherege" Hawthorne mocks both a traditional plot and a standard criticism of the novel by serio-comically exaggerating both the plot and the purported effects of the novel, his analysis of the artist-figure in the tale adds a new dimension to these discourses. At one point in the tale, Sylvia describes Vaughan as "illuminated by that evil smile, from which his face derived so marked an individuality" (117). Prevailing criticism of Hawthorne's time objected to the trait of individuality and uniqueness in the artist as characteristic of his reliance on the imagination and rejection of the real. As William Charvat notes, American critical inquiry, "guided by Scottish philosophy," "rejected the literature of egotism. It had no patience with that sort of individualism which warred against society . . ." (59). Just as Hawthorne's tales of the 1830s analyze the Puritan censure of the imagination without seeming to suggest an alternative, they also exemplify the possible evil which might underlie the Scottish rejection of individuality without defending, as will later works, its significance for the artist.

Indeed, the opening of "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" (1837) also emphasizes the individuality of the artist-figure protagonist: "That very singular man, old Dr. Heidegger, once invited four venerable friends to meet him in his study" for their assistance in an experiment (IX: 227).⁴ As Lawrence E. Scanlon has suggested, the names of these four characters need close attention. The narrator describes them in detail:

three white-bearded gentlemen, Mr. Medbourne, Colonel Killigrew, and Mr. Gascoigne, and a withered gentlewoman, whose name was the Widow Wycherly. They were all melancholy old creatures, who had been unfortunate in life, and whose greatest misfortune it was, that they were not long ago in their graves. (227)

As Scanlon notes, Hawthorne borrows the names of these characters from former playwrights who primarily produced comedies. A certain Heidegger, according to Scanlon, was appointed the manager of the King's Theater by George II (254-55). From this historical background, Scanlon concludes that the tale obviously has "a much lighter tone" than critics have allowed and that "the 'experiment' can be read as a kind of entertainment or masquerade" (256-57).

While clearly such background is important in understanding the tale, I would suggest that rather than perceiving the tale as a joke and Dr. Heidegger as a "prodigious fumbler" (Scanlon 258) we read the tale in light of the Puritan condemnation of drama as a form of art. Indeed, while many have supposed that Dr.

4. My discussion of Dr. Heidegger, a scientist, as an artist-figure parallels accepted critical inquiries into Hawthorne's aesthetic; see especially Millicent Bell who states her rationalization for such inclusiveness in her preface (ix-x). Hawthorne's artists and scientists share not only common goals and interests (the creation of a new world apart from the natural world) but also common characteristics (isolation, coldness, an emphasis on the intellect), thus suggesting that Hawthorne used scientists as analogues for artists. Significantly, his methods of describing artists and scientists, as well as his language in such descriptions, are remarkably similar.

Heidegger's experiment deals with the effects of the liquid from the Fountain of Youth on the human frame, as the tale suggests on the literal level, on another level it deals with the effects of an unhealthy propensity for the imaginative faculty. Heidegger becomes engaged, as Edward Vaughan had done, in testing humans to see how they will react when they indulge in the ideal world, here, when they believe that they have regained their youth.⁵

Dr. Heidegger asks his four friends if they will "aid" him in performing "an exceedingly curious experiment" (229). He first places a fifty-five-year-old, withered rose in a tall vase filled with the magical liquid. After the flower assumes "a deepening tinge of crimson, as if [it] were reviving from a death-like slumber" (230), the four friends call the show a "deception" (231). But after he explains to them that the water comes from the Fountain of Youth, they suddenly alter their original view and ask him how it might affect the human frame. Heidegger explains that the four will be allowed to judge for themselves: "all of you, my respected friends, are welcome to so much of this admirable fluid, as may restore to you the bloom of youth. For my own part, having had much trouble in growing old, I am in no hurry to grow young again. With your permission, therefore, I will merely watch the progress of the experiment" (231). Much as the narrator in "Sights" directed the drama in the village streets while remaining aloof, Heidegger admits that he intends to remain detached in order to observe the actions of his four friends who become, in effect, the subjects of his curiosity. More importantly, Heidegger, like Vaughan, abdicates his own responsibility in the experiment that follows.

5. William Blair surely goes too far in reading Dr. Heidegger as Satan incarnate, who attempts to get his friends to commit the seven deadly sins and thus lose their souls to perdition. While Dr. Heidegger might metaphorically be read as a devil figure because of his use of the imagination, Hawthorne's descriptions of the scientist seem to suggest rather his ascent heavenward as a godlike figure.

Heidegger then announces the true nature of his experiment. Knowing that the three gentlemen "were early lovers of the Widow Wycherly, and had once been on the point of cutting each other's throats for her sake" (228), Heidegger suggests that the four create certain guidelines from their past experiences to direct their actions.

Before you drink, my respectable old friends . . . it would be well that, with the experience of a life-time to direct you, you should draw up a few general rules for your guidance, in passing a second time through the perils of youth. Think what a sin and shame it would be, if, with your peculiar advantages, you should not become patterns of virtue and wisdom to all the young people of the age! (232)

The true experiment, then, does not center on the effects of the liquid on the human body, but rather on the effects of the delusion of a regained youth on the human mind. But the four friends ridicule the idea that "they should ever go astray again," "knowing how closely repentance treads behind the steps of error" (232). To their laughter, Heidegger replies: "Drink then . . . I rejoice that I have so well selected the subjects of my experiment" (232). After their first draught, the narrator notes that "an almost immediate improvement" occurs in the four, "not unlike what might have been produced by a glass of generous wine" (232). They look at each other and fancy "that some magic power had really begun to smooth away the deep and sad inscriptions which Father Time had been so long engraving on their brows" (233). The four quickly demand more of the liquid; Dr. Heidegger, watching the experiment "with philosophic coolness," at first urges patience but then acquiesces to their demands (233). The four gulp down their second draught and the narrator exclaims (not asks): "Was it delusion! Even while the draught was passing down their throats, it seemed to have wrought a change on their whole systems . . ." (233). The widow runs to a

mirror to see her younger self, while the three men behave as if the liquid "possessed some intoxicating qualities" (234).

The narrator's continual comparison of the effects of the liquid to that of alcohol recalls Oberon's symbolic drunkenness in "The Devil in Manuscript." As in the Oberon tale, the delirium associated with drinking the liquid in "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" suggests an indulgence in the realm of the imagination. Such a conclusion is reinforced in the narrator's description of Heidegger's role in the experiment. After supplying even more of the liquid to his subjects, the narrator notes that Heidegger "sat in a high-backed, elaborately-carved, oaken arm-chair, with a gray dignity of aspect that might have well befitted that very Father Time, whose power had never been disputed, save by this fortunate company" (235). As Heidegger noted earlier, he chose his subjects well in that they are willing to dispute the passage of time and believe that they might be young again.

At this point, the scientist's real experiment begins. The narrator first notes that the four feel "like new-created beings, in a new-created universe," suggesting the parallel between the artist-figure and the Creator (235). In his experiment, Heidegger becomes more than simply a stage manager; he becomes an artist, a creator who proceeds to enact a drama with his newly created beings. The four turn "to mock the infirmity and decrepitude" they see in Heidegger before the widow chidingly asks him to dance (235). The aloof scientist refuses because of his age but suggests that she ask one of the three young gentlemen in the room. Very quickly, the three become embroiled in a fight over the young buxom lady:

Never was there a livelier picture of youthful rivalry, with bewitching beauty for the prize. Yet, by a strange deception, owing to the duskiness of the chamber, and the antique dresses which they still

wore, the tall mirror is said to have reflected the figures of the three old, gray, withered grand-sires, ridiculously contending for the skinny ugliness of a shrivelled grand-dam. (236-37)

The scientist's experiment is complete as the passions of his four friends overwhelm them, causing them once again to revive their youthful rivalry. In their scuffle, they overturn the vase and dash it "into a thousand fragments" (237).

Only then does Heidegger protest against their riot, while the four shiver: "A strange chillness, whether of the body or the spirit they could not tell, was creeping gradually over them all" (238). The narrator asks: "Was it an illusion? Had the changes of a life-time been crowded into so brief a space, and were they now four aged people, sitting with their old friend, Dr. Heidegger?" (238). After the four ask if they have grown old again, the narrator replies, emphasizing that their youthful escapade was indeed caused by a delirium and not by a magic potion: "In truth, they had. The Water of Youth possessed merely a virtue more transient than that of wine. The *delirium* which it created had effervesced away" (238; emphasis added).

And Dr. Heidegger concurs, telling them that not only have they grown old again but that "the Water of Youth is all lavished on the ground" (238). He continues: "Well—I bemoan it not; for if the fountain gushed at my very doorstep, I would not stoop to bathe my lips in it—no, though its *delirium* were for years instead of moments. Such is the lesson ye have taught me!" (238; emphasis added). Heidegger notes that his experiment is a success in that he has observed how the delusion of regaining one's youth affects the mind. Indeed, when his four friends promise to journey to Florida, to "quaff at morning, noon, and night, from the Fountain of Youth" (238), they reinforce the conclusion that the imagination holds dangerous powers.

Heidegger's treatment of his four friends as subjects for his experiment, an experiment based on the deluded idea that time can be reversed, is similar to Vaughan's treatment of his cousin, Sylvia Etherege. In both "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" and "Sylph Etherege" Hawthorne shows the way in which the artist-figure controls his subjects to their detriment, demonstrating that an overindulgence in the imagination may in fact cause the subject to become disconnected with reality, as the Puritans claimed. Indeed, the power of the imagination becomes the central focus of Hawthorne's most complex artist tale of this period, "The Prophetic Pictures" (1837).

Hawthorne's only full-length tale of the 1830s dealing with the plight of the artist has divided critics in their views on the status of the nameless painter. Several critics, such as Millicent Bell, unequivocally read the artist of "The Prophetic Pictures" as a godlike figure whose power to control fate is much like that of the Creator. Yet an alternate reading suggests that such an interpretation of the artist and his capabilities is wrongheaded. James K. Folsom concludes that the "analogy between God and the Artist is, it must be confessed, a tempting one, though ultimately . . . false" (43). Such a division has not only led critics to differing opinions about the artist but also supported the idea that in "The Prophetic Pictures" Hawthorne attempts to deal with two different themes, that of the ideal artist and that of the artist's relation to society. According to such critics as Mary E. Dichmann, Hawthorne is unable to synthesize these themes in his tale.⁶

What has not been perceived in this debate is that an analysis which centers on the two worlds presented in the tale, the world of God and the world of the picture,

6. Other critics who have suggested that Hawthorne fails to integrate the two themes of the tale include Terence Martin (*Nathaniel Hawthorne* 59) and Patricia D. Valenti. Those who read the painter as a godlike figure include Myra Jehlen (144), while those who read him as patently human include Stephanie Fay (20-21), R. K. Gupta ("Hawthorne's Treatment of the Artist" 77), and Thelma Shinn (130-31).

unites these seemingly disparate themes as well as clearly defines the status of the artist. The tale demonstrates that the fate of the real world, exemplified primarily in descriptions of natural scenery, is controlled by God, while the fate of the world of the picture, exemplified in those portraits which the painter has created, is clearly controlled by the painter, thus suggesting an analogy between the artist as creator and God as Creator. Significantly, these worlds are confused in two ways. First, the prejudices of the people of the colony in which Hawthorne sets the tale, prejudices represented in the ideas of Walter Ludlow, suggest that an artist, because of his occupation, obtains certain powers over his subjects. Second, the painter's dementia at the end of the tale, which occurs only after his abilities as an artist change and grow, deludes the painter into believing that he controls the fate of his subjects, Walter and Elinor.⁷ More importantly, both of these confusions lead to the belief—in the colonists and the painter—that the artist usurps the place of God.

The opening of the tale, in which Walter describes the painter to Elinor, first suggests the parallel between the artist and the Creator. Because of his seeming omniscience, the painter's knowledge apparently exceeds all human knowledge:

He not only excels in his peculiar art, but possesses vast acquirements in all other learning and science. He talks Hebrew with Dr. Mather, and gives lectures in anatomy to Doctor Boylston. In a word, he will meet the best instructed man among us, on his own ground. Moreover, he is a polished gentleman—a citizen of the world—yes, a true cosmopolite;

7. Both Neal Frank Doubleday (*Hawthorne's Early Tales* 111-15) and Robert H. Fossum (92-95) suggest that the painter is deluded in believing that his powers rival God's powers. But neither notes the double level of confusion in the tale, nor the way in which the painter grows into his delusion.

for he will speak like a native of each clime and country on the globe
... (IX: 166)

In addition to his suprahuman knowledge, the painter, according to Walter, mirrors the image of each human being, having a “natural gift of adapting himself to every variety of character, insomuch that all men—and all women, too . . .—shall find a mirror of themselves in this wonderful painter” (166). Because the bible depicts humans as created in the image of God, the painter, who appears to be that very image, is characterized by Walter as a godlike figure.

The reaction of the populace to the painter’s work further discloses the prejudices held by those such as Walter. When admirers come to observe his portraits, the painter watches them and derives “profit from their remarks, while they would as soon have thought of instructing Nature herself, as him who seemed to rival her” (169). In their unwillingness to critique the painter’s work, the people admit that they perceive that work as constituting a second world, a world which rivals the world of the Creator. The narrator then proceeds to delineate the foundation of their perceptions: “Their admiration, it must be owned, was tinctured with the prejudices of the age and country. Some deemed it an offence against the Mosaic law, and even a presumptuous mockery of the Creator, to bring into existence such lively images of his creatures” (169). The populace considers the painter’s artwork an offense because it mocks God’s creation of the world—that is, the artist’s creation of an artwork parallels God’s creative act while simultaneously belittling it by substituting for it something less perfect.

After the couple decides to engage the painter for their wedding portraits, Walter asks Elinor “whether she knew what an influence over their fates the painter was about to acquire” (172). He then reveals to her the latest gossip in Boston, noting

that once the painter captures "a person's face and figure, he may paint him in any act or situation whatever—and the picture will be prophetic" (172). The people of the colonial village assert that the painter, because of his occupation, controls his subjects, allegedly having the power to paint them in any act that he chooses and thus causing that act to occur. Their prejudices compel them to perceive the painter as God himself, for they believe that he has the ability to act as the agent of destiny among humankind.

As the portraits progress, the tale suggests the possibility that the painter may indeed have supernatural powers. He decides to paint the two portraits simultaneously, now giving "a touch to Walter, and now to Elinor, and the features of one and the other began to start forth so vividly, that it appeared as if his triumphant art would actually disengage them from the canvass. Amid the rich light and deep shade, they beheld their phantom selves" (172). When nearly finished, the painter employs "his leisure moments unknown to them, in making a crayon sketch of their two figures" (172). As the reader discovers at the end of the tale, the painter depicts Walter in the act of murdering Elinor; consequently, the central question of the tale becomes whether or not his mere depiction of the act causes this event to occur.

Yet the tale makes clear that such a supposition is unfounded. While the event depicted does indeed nearly come to pass, the act is foretold long before the couple engages the painter for their portraits. After Walter reveals his apprehensions to Elinor about the painter's purported powers, she asks him if he takes such suggestions seriously. Walter replies that she had better not "let him paint the look which you now wear" (167). While Elinor denies the existence of any peculiar expression, the narrator notes that a "sad and anxious look" does cross her face. Indeed Elinor reflects to herself that her expression may be startling, "if it expressed what I sometimes feel. I know, by my own experience, how frightful a look may be. But it was all fancy. I

thought nothing of it at the time—I have seen nothing of it since—I did but dream it” (167). Elinor herself has seen the look of murder in Walter’s eyes, and seen it long before the painter happens along and captures it in his portrait. Not only has Elinor caught a glimpse of Walter’s true character firsthand, but she also has received a warning from her minister. When the couple goes to the painter’s room to meet him, they admire a portrait of the Rev. Dr. Colman, who looks as if he is speaking “a word of paternal advice” to Elinor while rebuking Walter “for some suspected iniquity,” an appearance which he regularly adopted when speaking to the couple (171). Clearly, the murderous act which the painter eventually depicts in his sketch, and which he subtly captures in his portraits, is known to Elinor long before the painter’s arrival in the colonies. In this way, Hawthorne makes clear that the artist’s depiction is merely a prophecy which does not have the capacity to determine the future.

Significantly, the painter himself in this early part of the tale knows and admits that he is incapable of influencing the fate of his subjects. When the portraits are finally complete, the couple arrives at the painter’s studio and at first is pleased. Upon closer inspection, however, they discern unsettling expressions in each other’s portraits, a “sad and anxious” look in Elinor’s and a “bright thought” flashing from the eyes of Walter. When Elinor asks the painter about these expressions, he claims:

I have painted what I saw. The artist—the true artist—must look beneath the exterior. It is his gift—his proudest, but often a melancholy one—to see the inmost soul, and, by a power indefinable even to himself, to make it glow or darken upon the canvass, in glances that express the thought and sentiment of years. (175)

The painter acknowledges that he only paints what he perceives within his subjects. And when she happens upon the “crayon sketch of two figures,” the sketch of Walter

in the act of murdering her, Elinor is told by the painter that he might change the action of the figures in the sketch but then adds: "would it influence the event?" (176). The painter himself concludes that he is incapable of changing a course of events which is clearly beyond his control, thus admitting that he is not the agent of destiny among humankind.

Yet the painter does claim to be the agent of destiny in quite a different world, the world of the picture. While he knows that he cannot influence Walter's future attempt to murder Elinor, he does admit that he can change the sketch. Indeed, he tells Elinor that if she thinks that he has failed to catch their true spirits in their portraits, "it is not yet too late to alter them" (176). Thus, the painter indicates that two worlds exist, the world of nature, which the Creator controls, and the world of the picture, which the artist controls. Just as God acts as the agent of fate in his created world, so the painter acts as fate in his world.

The details of the painter's decision to come to the new world further such a reading. The narrator notes that the painter was not a native to those parts, but "if he could have revoked his life and pre-arranged his destiny, he might have chosen to belong to that school without a master, in the hope of being at least original, since there were no works of art to imitate, nor rules to follow" (168). His European training, founded on imitative theories, on copying the masters, suggests that the painter cannot, before his arrival in the new world, produce a heterocosm. Yet the narrator adds that precisely because of such training, the painter decided to come to the new world: "He had therefore visited a world, whither none of his professional brethren had preceded him, to feast his eyes on visible images, that were noble and picturesque, yet had never been transferred to canvass" (168). The painter journeys to the colonies in order to escape the masters and the rules "in the hope of being . . . original."

Apparently, the painter makes considerable progress in his abilities after arriving in the colonies. When Walter and Elinor visit the painter in order to request their portraits, they are ushered into a room "where, though the artist himself was not visible, there were personages, whom they could hardly forbear greeting with reverence. They knew, indeed, that the whole assembly were but pictures, yet felt it impossible to separate the idea of life and intellect from such striking counterfeits" (169). In viewing the artist's work, the couple reacts as if the portraits were alive, perhaps, indeed, more alive than their subjects. The narrator notes that "the whole mind and character were brought out on the countenance" of each portrait so that "the originals hardly resemble themselves so strikingly as the portraits did" (170). In such descriptions, the narrator suggests a change in the painter's abilities, for he apparently no longer merely copies other works following specified rules but rather creates images that seem to rival nature.

But it is not until the painter travels to the north, viewing the natural scenery of the new world, that his talents reach their zenith. The narrator explains that the painter came to America because he felt that he could no longer learn from other artists: "Art could add nothing to [the] lessons [of his studies], but Nature might" (168). Indeed, the painter desires to study the natural world, the world created by God, in order to understand and master the techniques of original creativity. Significantly, the painter does not profane the natural scenery "by the mockery of his art" (177). After describing the painter's frustrating and ineffectual attempt to paint Niagara falls, the narrator explains that "it was seldom his impulse to copy natural scenery, except as a frame work for the delineations of human form and face, instinct with thought, passion, or suffering" (178). The painter's refusal to paint nature comes from his awareness that he cannot alter the Creator's world. Just as earlier the townspeople

were reluctant to critique the painter because his art rivaled the natural world, the painter does not attempt to capture the Creator's world on canvass, to transfer it to the world of the picture.

Yet he does capture, and alter as he captures, the emotions and passions of the humans that he encounters during his travel.

The glow of perilous moments; flashes of wild feeling; struggles of fierce power—love, hate, grief, frenzy—in a word, all the worn-out heart of the old earth, had been revealed to him under a new form. His portfolio was filled with graphic illustrations of the volume of his memory, which genius would transmute into its own substance, and imbue with immortality. He felt that the deep wisdom in his art, which he had sought so far, was found. (178)

A profound change has occurred in the painter as his studies culminate in the achievement of his purpose for travelling to the new world. In his now fully developed ability to transmute what he observes into his own creation, the painter has become fully engrossed in the world of the imagination, just like the village uncle and Oberon.

The narrator emphasizes such a conclusion when he delineates the painter's isolation, a characterization of the artist not provided until this moment in the tale. After noting that the "two phantoms" of Walter and Elinor haunt the painter during his travels, the narrator defines the painter's character:

Like all other men around whom an engrossing purpose wreathes itself, he was insulated from the mass of human kind. He had no aim—no pleasure—no sympathies—but what were ultimately connected with his art. Though gentle in manner, and upright in intent and action, he did

not possess kindly feelings; his heart was cold; no living creature could be brought near enough to keep him warm. (178)

Like Hawthorne's other artists in the tales of 1830s, as the painter increasingly indulges his imagination he becomes an isolated, solitary figure who communes only with himself.

Because of both his preoccupation with the world of the imagination and his isolation, the painter eventually becomes deluded into substituting the imagined world, the world of the picture, for the real world, the world of God. The narrator describes what the painter considers his relation to both the portraits of Walter and Elinor and their subjects:

So much of himself—of his imagination and all other powers—had been lavished on the study of Walter and Elinor, that he almost regarded them as creations of his own, like the thousands with which he had peopled the realms of Picture. . . . They haunted his pictorial fancy, not as mockeries of life, nor pale goblins of the dead, but in the guise of portraits, each with the unalterable expression which his magic had evoked from the caverns of the soul. (179)

In his deluded state, the notion that the subjects of his portraits exist in the realm of the picture haunts the painter, and he thus comes to believe that he acts as the agent of fate or destiny in the lives of Walter and Elinor.

When the painter returns to the colonial village in order to see, once again, the portraits, he delivers his credo, his theory of art. Significantly, the narrator reiterates that the painter, in his deluded state, has lost contact with the real world:

"Oh glorious Art!" thus mused the *enthusiastic* painter, as he trod the street. "Thou art the image of the Creator's own. The innumerable

forms, that wander in nothingness, start into being at thy beck. The dead live again. Thou recallest them to their old scenes, and givest their gray shadows the lustre of a better life, at once earthly and immortal. Thou snatchest back the fleeing moments of History. With thee, there is no Past; for, at thy touch, all that is great becomes forever present; and illustrious men live through long ages, in the visible performance of the very deeds, which made them what they are. Oh, potent Art! as thou bringest the faintly revealed Past to stand in that narrow strip of sunlight, which we call Now, canst thou summon the shrouded Future to meet her there? Have I not achieved it! Am I not thy Prophet?" (179; emphasis added)

While the painter had earlier recognized and acknowledged that his powers were limited to the realm of the picture, he now, in his delirium, compares himself to God and indeed states that he, as one who controls all time—past, present and future—has become the agent of fate in the Creator's world.

The narrator emphasizes again, however, that the painter at the end of "The Prophetic Pictures" has become deluded, much as Oberon and the village uncle were deluded, because of his indulgence in the imagination:

Thus, with a proud, yet melancholy *fervor*, did he almost cry aloud, as he passed through the toilsome street, among people that knew not of his reveries, nor could understand nor care for them. It is not good for man to cherish a solitary ambition. Unless there be those around him, by whose example he may regulate himself, his thoughts, desires, and hopes will become extravagant, and he the semblance, perhaps the reality, of a *madman*. (180; emphasis added)

The painter's isolation in the midst of a human community, combined with his fervor and madness, underscores the fact that the painter is no longer the rational being of the first part of the tale. Indeed, when he approaches the couple's house, he exclaims "Heaven help my brains!" (180).

It is with the understanding of the painter's confusion in mind that we must turn to the conclusion of the tale. After arriving at the home of Walter and Elinor, the painter asks of the servant, "The Portraits! Are they within?" before "recollecting himself" and enquiring of the "master and mistress! Are they at home?" (180). The painter subconsciously admits, once again, that he now confuses the real and the imaginary.⁸ When he finally enters the room where he finds both the portraits and their subjects, "He involuntarily paused on the threshold" (180): "The painter seemed to hear the step of Destiny approaching behind him, on its progress towards its victims. A strange thought darted into his mind. Was not his own the form in which that Destiny had embodied itself, and he a chief agent of the coming evil which he had foreshadowed?" (181). While the tale has clearly shown that the painter is not the agent of fate in God's world, that indeed the murderous act which he witnesses as he stands on the threshold was foretold long before he encountered Walter and Elinor, and further that before the painter became delirious he knew that he was not such an agent, in this concluding scene the confused painter assumes that he has gained such powers through his art.

Significantly, not only does the painter make this assumption but so too does Walter, though Walter was under the influence of such prejudices from the beginning

8. In this way, "The Prophetic Pictures" parallels "The Village Uncle" with its confusion of the real and the ideal. Yet "The Prophetic Pictures" is considerably more important for understanding Hawthorne's aesthetic, for in this tale Hawthorne shows the way in which the artist moves from comprehending the scope of his powers and their relation to God's world to a confusion of these powers.

of the tale. As Walter stands "communing" with the portraits, he abandons "himself to the spell of evil influence, that the painter had cast upon the features" of his portrait (181). Walter becomes wild, causing a "look of terror" in Elinor's eyes, and turns upon Elinor, completing the expressions captured in their portraits (181). Walter howls, "Our fate is upon us! . . . Die!" and draws a knife, aiming it at Elinor's bosom and completing the painter's sketch (181). At this point, the painter steps forward and interposes "himself between the wretched beings, with the same sense of power to regulate their destiny, as to alter a scene upon the canvass. He stood like a magician, controlling the phantoms which he had evoked" (181-82). Walter then relapses from his "fierce excitement" and asks the painter: "Does Fate impede its own decree?" (182).

While Walter, throughout the tale, admitted that he was susceptible to the belief that the painter controlled their fate, the painter, in his deluded state, only now acknowledges such a belief. Whereas previously he acknowledged that he could only alter the scene upon the canvas and not the event in real life, the tale's conclusion suggests that he comes to feel as if he can do both. Significantly, the final scene mirrors Abraham's near sacrifice of his son Isaac, an event which God decreed but then altered through his own intercession (Genesis 22:1-12).

When the painter asks Elinor if he had not sufficiently warned her of this impending event, she admits that he had and replies "But—I loved him!" (182). The narrator then presents the moral of the tale: "Could the result of one, or all our deeds, be shadowed forth and set before us—some would call it Fate, and hurry onward—others be swept along by their passionate desires—and none be turned aside by the PROPHEMIC PICTURES" (182). The moral relates directly to Walter's and Elinor's differing reactions to the painter's work. Elinor, while warned of her fate, is swept along towards its grim conclusion because she feels that she loves Walter, while

Walter merely hurries forward as if he can do nothing to alter what has been prophesied; the artist's prophesy turns neither aside from what he has seen in their hearts.

Yet we must remember that Elinor had other warnings of her fate, that of a murderous look from Walter and that of an admonition from her minister. Because the paintings are only one more element in this series of omens, Hawthorne clearly asserts that the artist is not an agent of fate in the real world, regardless of his powers in the world of the picture. In the painter's and the populace's mistaken identification of the artist with the Creator, Hawthorne embodies in "The Prophetic Pictures" the Puritan conception of the artist as one who usurps the place of God. Yet Hawthorne carefully demonstrates that the artist's ability to act as god or destiny in the world of the picture does not transfer to an ability to act as fate in the world of God. Nevertheless, Hawthorne's complex analysis and refutation of such mistaken prejudices falls short of offering a solution, an alternative view of the artist and his relation to society and nature.

While both "Sylph Etherege" and "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" demonstrate the dangers of the imagination, these tales focus on the effects of the imagination on the artist's subjects. "The Prophetic Pictures," on the other hand, describes the way in which both the artist and his subjects are affected by indulgence in the world of the imagination. Significantly, the role of the artist is also taken up in a short sketch published in 1837 entitled "Fancy's Show Box." The sketch ostensibly deals with the question of the guilt of "deeds which may have been plotted and resolved upon, but which, physically, have never had existence" (IX: 220). The narrator asks: "will guilty thoughts . . . draw down the full weight of a condemning sentence, in the supreme court of eternity?" (220). In order to answer this question, the narrator proposes an

"imaginary example," one Mr. Smith who is visited one night by three figures: Fancy, Memory and Conscience (220-21). In the course of the sketch, the three figures prick Mr. Smith for his guilty thoughts as if he were indeed to be held accountable for them.

The narrator, in Mr. Smith's defense, suggests a parallel to the matter at hand:

A scheme of guilt, till it be put in execution, greatly resembles a train of incidents in a projected tale. The latter, in order to produce a sense of reality in the reader's mind, must be conceived with such proportionate strength by the author as to seem, in the glow of fancy, more like truth, past, present, or to come, than purely fiction. . . . Thus a novel-writer, or a dramatist, in creating a villain of romance, and fitting him with evil deeds, and the villain of actual life, in projecting crimes that will be perpetrated, may also meet each other, half-way between reality and fancy. It is not until the crime is accomplished, that guilt clenches its gripe upon the guilty heart and claims it for its own. (225-26)

Rather than exonerating the artist, the narrator's specious logic actually implicates him in the same guilt which the narrator only desires to alleviate from the person who conceives, but does not act upon, sinful plans (Baym, *The Shape of Hawthorne's Career* 67). Indeed, the sketch demonstrates throughout that Mr. Smith *should* be pricked for his guilty thoughts and desires and thus, by extension, so should the artist. The sketch becomes, in the end, an illogical rationalization for the thoughts of the sinner and the actions of the artist.

Like "The Prophetic Pictures" and Hawthorne's other artist tales of the 1830s, "Fancy's Show Box" reveals Hawthorne's desire to analyze and dramatize the Puritan censure of fiction which plagued him in these early stages of his career. While he demonstrates, through careful analysis of the Puritan conception of the artist that the

artist's power to create a fictional world should not be feared as many suggest, at this point Hawthorne is incapable of offering an alternative conception of the artist. Not until the next decade, when he reveals in his tales the influence of Transcendentalism, will Hawthorne begin to develop his own aesthetic in reaction to such a negative depiction of his chosen profession.

Chapter Four

Tales of the 1840s: The Transcendental Influence

On 22 December 1841, Hawthorne wrote from Boston to his editors, Cornelius Mathews and Evert A. Duyckinck, to discuss the forthcoming second edition of *Twice-Told Tales*, to be published in two volumes with previously uncollected tales of the early 1830s. Noting an important difference between these early works and those of the end of the decade, Hawthorne remarked:

I do not believe that I shall ever write anymore—or at least, not like my past productions; for they grew out of the quietude and seclusion of my former life; and there is little probability that I shall ever be so quiet and secluded again. During the last three or four years, the world has sucked me within its vortex; and I could not get back to my solitude again, even if I would. (XV: 600)

After spending twelve years, from 1825 to 1837, in his maternal grandparent's house, "under the eaves," Hawthorne made the acquaintance of the Peabody sisters and began to break his relative isolation and seclusion. Significantly, the Peabodys drew

Hawthorne away from an isolation dominated by Puritan ideas and into a social milieu dominated by transcendentalist ideas.¹

In a July 1838 journal entry, Hawthorne juxtaposes his Puritan heritage with that originating from this new milieu. The beginning of the entry describes the burial ground on Charter Street, which includes a marker for his Puritan ancestor, the “witch-judge” Colonel John Hathorne, Esq., who died in 1717. The entry proceeds to note how the cemetery, which also includes graves of other important Puritans such as Nathaniel and Cotton Mather, borders the grounds of the Peabody household, which represents Hawthorne’s introduction to Transcendentalism. Hawthorne concludes: “It gives strange ideas to think how convenient to Dr. Peabody’s family this burial-ground is,—the monuments standing almost within arm’s reach of the side windows of the parlor,—and there being a little gate from the back yard through which we step forth upon those old graves aforesaid” (VIII: 173). In his letter to Mathews and Duyckinck, Hawthorne indicates his awareness of the way in which his introduction to the ideas of the Transcendentalists had changed his conception of art, noting that he will no longer write as he did of old. Yet in his journal entry a few years earlier, he suggests that the Puritans and the Transcendentalists, while perhaps separated by “a little gate,” are not so very distinct. Such a paradoxical recognition lies at the heart of an understanding not only of Hawthorne’s relation to Transcendentalism but also of his works of the 1840s, and especially of those which deal with his ideas about art.

Nina Baym has called Transcendentalism “the single most important stimulus to [Hawthorne’s] literary development,” concluding that he expanded his literary venue in the 1840s “in order to accommodate” his new experiences (*The Shape of*

1. See Chapter Fourteen of Arlin Turner’s biography for a detailed discussion of this period of Hawthorne’s life.

Hawthorne's Career 85, 84). Similarly, Millicent Bell claims that "there is no denying that [Hawthorne] absorbed the elements of transcendentalism in common with his contemporaries" (12). Yet the degree to which such an absorption or accommodation occurred has remained largely a matter of speculation such that critics seem to contradict themselves within their own analyses on this point. For example, Bell proceeds to concede that Hawthorne felt the failings of a transcendentalist aesthetic, turning to "his Puritan inheritance" for "a moral seriousness which dissolved the Romantic veil" (15), but she later concludes "that Hawthorne gave conscious assent to the transcendentalist view of art . . ." (33). While readings such as Bell's suggest at the outset that Puritan ideas about art may be important to Hawthorne's aesthetic during the 1840s, few develop the way in which the Puritan heritage may be as important as Transcendentalism to Hawthorne's growth as an artist during this period.²

As I hope to demonstrate, such contradictions stem in part from the nature of Hawthorne's introduction to Transcendentalism, which allowed his ideas about art to mature from a conception based strictly on Puritan ideas to one which paradoxically integrated Puritanism and Transcendentalism. Yet perhaps as significant as the ideas of Transcendentalism to this transformation was the fact that this period of intellectual

2. Nina Baym also seems to contradict herself, first suggesting that Puritanism and Transcendentalism are important to Hawthorne's growth during the 1840s but then failing to read Hawthorne's works in this light. In her introduction, Baym claims that Hawthorne "worked under the influence of a commonsense attitude about the imagination and the artist's place in society" throughout the first phase of his career, which she marks as 1825-1849—even though she concedes, as I note above, that Transcendentalism was "the single most important stimulus to [Hawthorne's] literary development" in the 1840s (*The Shape of Hawthorne's Career* 8, 85). Such internal contradictions seem to stem in part from an awareness that Hawthorne reacted to his intellectual milieu in often paradoxical ways, as I hope to demonstrate in the remainder of this chapter, without an attempt to understand the nature of these paradoxes. A similar contradiction occurs in Marjorie Elder's work, which claims that Hawthorne began developing his ideas about art only in the 1840s; as evidence, Elder cites the "fact" that Hawthorne began to write tales about artists in this decade, failing to note that such works actually began in the early 1830s (46). See also Robert Fossum, who conflates Hawthorne's tales of the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s (see especially Chapters Four and Five).

growth occurred at the same time that Hawthorne met, fell in love with, and married Sophia Peabody, an occurrence which altered his conception of himself and his relation to the world. Such an alteration necessarily reverberated within his own works of art, and especially in those works which delineated figures, artists and scientists, who were analogues of himself.

In January of 1838, Hawthorne published a sketch which responded to what he considered the heart of Transcendentalism, the emphasis on the spiritual and ideal aspect of human experience at the expense of the physical and real. "Foot-Prints on the Sea-Shore" describes the meanderings of the narrator as he treads the boundary between the sea and the land, the ideal or imaginary and the real or actual, and analyzes his place on this margin between two worlds.³ As the sketch opens, the narrator admits that he must occasionally steal "from the sultry sunshine of the world, to plunge into the cool bath of solitude" (IX: 451), setting up the dichotomy in the tale between the actual (the "sultry sunshine") and the imaginary (the "cool bath of solitude").

The narrator then moves from this generalized description of his plight to a description of one particular journey:

Setting forth, at my last ramble, on a September morning, I bound myself with a hermit's vow, to interchange no thoughts with man or woman, to share no social pleasure, but to derive all that day's enjoyment from shore, and sea, and sky,—from my soul's communion with these, and from fantasies, and recollections, or anticipated realities. (451)

3. David C. Cody claims, rather, that "It is Wordsworth [not Emerson, as I am suggesting] . . . who is the tutelary genius presiding over 'Foot-prints on the Sea-shore'" (40). Cody seems to disregard both Hawthorne's nationalistic impulses and his interaction with American culture, and particularly with Transcendentalism.

While the narrator insinuates that his journey will occur between the real and the ideal worlds, on the "shore," he confesses that he will derive his inspiration primarily from the ideal world—the "sea" and "sky" (the latter suggesting the metaphor of ascent). Such an admission reveals what Hawthorne considered a primary aspect of Transcendentalism and a strong influence on his aesthetic, that is, the reveling in the ideal or spiritual world. For Hawthorne, the Transcendental philosophy allowed an indulgence in the imagination, ultimately to foster the artist's and society's godly potential, which his previously Puritan-based heritage did not and which this heritage even considered blasphemous.

Yet Hawthorne understood that such a transcendental celebration came at some cost: the artist's isolation from the human community. Significantly, Hawthorne's Puritan heritage had ingrained in him the belief that such an isolation lay at the heart of the artist's blasphemous act, his separation from God's natural world in order to replace that world with a fictional and fallible creation of his own making. Such an integration of Puritan and transcendental attitudes can be seen in the narrator's conclusion to this passage, a merely hopeful statement of the beneficial quality of his journey: "Surely here is enough to feed a human spirit for a single day" (451-452). Clearly, the ramble is meant to feed the spirit, to allow the artist a respite from the sultry sunshine of the real world and an indulgence in a transcendental reverie. Yet the sketch itself questions whether or not such an isolated reverie of the spirit is sufficient in and of itself. If the narrator finds that it is—if he is able to walk alone on the sea-shore, indulging only in the ideal—then he might be labelled a Transcendentalist, one who is willing to forsake his own personality to meld with the Over Soul. In order to initiate such a journey, the narrator proceeds to restate his desire to be freed from the real on his transcendental journey: "Farewell . . . busy world! Till your evening lights

shall shine along the street . . . free me from your ties, and let me be a peaceful outlaw" (452).

Significantly, the narrator's transcendental reverie begins as he steps upon the beach: "How gladly does the spirit leap forth, and suddenly enlarge its sense of being to the full extent of the broad, blue, sunny deep!" (452). While the narrator seems to lose himself immediately in the immense sea, suggesting his willingness to join with the Over Soul, he proceeds to link arms not with the ocean but with the reader: "Now let us pace together—the reader's fancy arm in arm with mine—this noble beach . . ." (452). Already the narrator has answered the question of the sketch; on the verge of losing his isolated and secluded self to a spiritual oneness with the universe, he attaches himself to some form of companionship.

As it progresses, the sketch develops the tension that I have suggested lies at the heart of Hawthorne's aesthetic in the 1840s as he attempts to incorporate transcendental ideas into his Puritan-based aesthetic, that is, the tension between the narrator's attempts to surrender himself to the world of the spirit and his unwillingness to sever himself from human companionship. He proceeds to note how he treads on the "wet margin" between the sea and the land, making foot-prints on the sea-shore and thus symbolically remaining in touch with the earth and not ascending into the heavens. However, he soon finds himself again caught up in a reverie on the ocean's waves which rush "far up the beach," seemingly overtaking the margin on which he treads (452-453). Yet this spiritual reverie is, once again, interrupted:

As I threw my eyes along the edge of the surf, I remember that I was startled, as Robinson Crusoe might have been, by the sense that human life was within the magic circle of my solitude. Afar off in the remote distance of the beach, appearing like sea-nymphs, or some airier things,

such as might tread upon the feathery spray, was a group of girls.

(453)

Significantly, what appears to be a vision interrupts his second meditation. Unlike the first interruption, caused by the narrator's companionship with the audience, this interruption seems to originate from the ideal world (they tread on the "feathery spray"). More importantly, the narrator, who apparently sees a group of real girls, transforms them into a vision, thus idealizing them and heightening his sense of loneliness and isolation.

Indeed, the narrator later in his ramble encounters these girls, sitting in a favorite basin which he had previously described at length: "On the day of my last ramble, (it was a September day, yet as warm as summer,) what should I behold as I approached the . . . basin but three girls sitting on its margin, and—yes, it is veritably so—laving their snowy feet in the sunny water! These, these are the warm realities of those three visionary shapes that flitted from me on the beach" (457). The narrator, attempting to keep his vow of solitude even while admittedly entranced by the physical presence of the girls, hides from them before contemplating a solution to his growing awareness that indulgence in the ideal alone cannot sustain him. He suggests, in way of mitigation, a mingling of the ideal and the real: "In honest truth, vowed to solitude as I am, there is something in the encounter that makes the heart flutter with a strangely pleasant sensation. I know these girls to be realities of flesh and blood, yet, glancing at them so briefly, they mingle like kindred creatures with the ideal beings of my mind" (457-458). For the narrator, and for Hawthorne, the real does not become the ideal through a reverie in which an individual transcends the physical world; rather, the real and the ideal mingle, creating a margin on which the narrator (and Hawthorne) can tread, leaving foot-prints as evidence of connection to the real world during flights of

fancy. Significantly, Hawthorne suggests that the basis for the artist's connection to the real is communion with humanity, with the "warm realities" of these "three girls."

The sketch emphasizes such a conclusion in the narrator's description of his favorite nook—an isolated hide-away which allows just such flights of fancy. Significantly, his description also explicates the symbolic importance of the title and primary image of the sketch. Speaking of the nook, the narrator remarks that

There is a magic in this spot. Dreams haunt its precincts, and flit around me in broad sunlight, nor require that sleep shall blindfold me to real objects, ere these be visible. Here can I frame a story of two lovers, and make their shadows live before me, and be mirrored in the tranquil water, as they tread along the sand, leaving no foot-prints. (459)

The narrator explains that, while he is in this "magic" spot, he need not sleep and dream (symbols of the imagination, allowing complete escape from the real world) in order to concoct visions which are "mirrored" in the water and which leave no foot-prints (as they are solely ideal and not connected to the real).

The narrator concludes this passage with a reflection on his indulgence in the imagination, on his creation of visionary and ideal beings: "Here, should I will it, I can summon up a single shade, and be myself her lover. Yes, dreamer,—but your lonely heart will be the colder for such fancies" (459). "The Village Uncle," published in 1835, also describes such an event: a lonely artist's conjuration of a wife and family with which to surround himself. Yet in this earlier sketch the narrator demonstrated no awareness of the way in which his imaginative act further isolated him from the real world, causing his heart to turn colder. On the other hand, "Foot-Prints on the Sea-Shore" demonstrates the narrator's awareness of the isolating effects of indulgence in the ideal world and offers a corrective to such a state through constant contact with the

real. By making foot-prints on the seashore and treading the boundary between sea and the land, the ideal and the real, the narrator, in his moderate use of the imagination, remains firmly planted on the earth and fully in touch with the real.

In the conclusion of the sketch, the narrator turns to the sea and asks what mysteries it reveals. He queries: "Has it talked for so many ages, and meant nothing all the while? No; for those ages find utterance in the sea's unchanging voice, and warn the listener to withdraw his interest from mortal vicissitudes, and let the infinite idea of eternity pervade his soul" (460). The sea answers that humans should withdraw from the real and immerse themselves in the ideal, repeating the transcendental philosophy, the sufficiency of which has been questioned throughout the sketch.⁴ Indeed, the narrator continues: "And, after all, can such philosophy be true? Methinks I could find a thousand arguments against it" (460), arguments which he proceeds to throw at the ocean, receiving no answer. He then turns his attention from the sea to human companionship, remarking that "it is good, at the eve of such a day, to feel and know that there are men and women in the world" as he joins a fishing party and the three girls for dinner (462).

Ironically, Elizabeth Peabody gave Ralph Waldo Emerson a copy of "Foot-Prints on the Sea-Shore" for his perusal. Emerson commented on the sketch in his journal: "Elizabeth Peabody brought me yesterday Hawthorne's *Footprints on the Seashore* to read. I complained that there was no inside to it. Alcott and he together would make a man" (*Journals* IV: 479). Emerson's remark indicates that he understood Hawthorne's criticism of Transcendentalism, that it had too much "inside"

4. Significantly, Whitman also uses sea and shore imagery to express a transcendental philosophy in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking"—yet at the end of Whitman's poem, the narrator remains isolated and accepts the transcendental vision, whereas in Hawthorne's tale the narrator seeks human companionship and rejects such a vision. For a detailed discussion of Whitman's poem and the *Sea-Drift* cluster, see my essay in *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*.

to it, lacking sufficient contact with the real world. But Emerson in turn was criticizing Hawthorne, for his conclusion that the most mystical of the Transcendentalists, Bronson Alcott, and Hawthorne together would "make a man" suggests his opinion that Hawthorne sided too much with the real. Yet, in truth, Hawthorne had, rather than emphasizing only one side in the real-ideal dichotomy, suggested a balance between these two worlds. According to Hawthorne, this balance might allow the artist to engage in the imaginative realm while remaining firmly in contact with the actual.

Such a call for balance lies at the heart of Hawthorne's maturing aesthetic during the early and mid 1840s.⁵ Indeed "The Hall of Fantasy," published in 1843, demonstrates that the artist might remain in touch with the actual even while engaged in imaginative activity. The tale opens with the narrator explaining how, "on various occasions," he has found himself "in a certain edifice" which he calls the "Hall of Fantasy" (X: 172-173). He notes how the "light of heaven" is admitted "only through stained and pictured glass . . . so that its inmates breathe, as it were, a visionary atmosphere, and tread upon the fantasies of poetic minds" (172). The hall, filled with its heavenly light and visionary atmosphere, represents the world of the imagination as it exists completely distinct from the world of the actual. The narrator notes that the architectural details "cause the whole edifice to give the impression of a dream, which might be dissipated and shattered to fragments, by merely stamping the foot upon the pavement" (172-173). Again, Hawthorne uses dream imagery to represent the imaginary world, which is set against, as in "Foot-Prints," stamping one's feet on the ground.

5. Several critics have suggested the importance of "balance" in Hawthorne's aesthetic, but in other contexts. See, for instance, Rita K. Gollin ("Hawthorne on Perception" 233) and Terence Martin (*Nathaniel Hawthorne* 29-31).

The introduction to the tale concludes with the claim that "most persons enter [the hall] at some period or other of their lives—if not in their waking moments, then by the universal passport of a dream" (173). The narrator then turns to the description of one particular visit: "At my last visit, I wandered thither unawares, while my mind was busy with an idle tale, and was startled by the throng of people who seemed suddenly to rise up around me" (173). The narrator confesses himself to be some sort of artist, one who at least occasionally uses his imagination; he then turns to a nearby friend and asks where he has been transported. The friend replies that he is "in the world of fancy," concluding that "All who have affairs in that mystic region, which lies above, below, or beyond the Actual, may here meet, and talk over the business of their dreams" (173).

The narrator then describes the centerpiece of the hall, "an ornamental fountain," which his friend notes is occasionally "known to have intoxicating qualities" (174). Significantly, in "The Hall of Fantasy," Hawthorne contrasts not the ideal and the real, as he had done in "Foot-Prints," but rather various degrees of indulgence in the ideal world. Such a paradigm suggests that Hawthorne had moved beyond his concerns of the early 1830s and had come to accept, although conditionally, the workings of the imagination. And yet Hawthorne demonstrates that he has maintained in this period many of the trappings of his Puritan heritage in suggesting, as he had done in "The Devil in Manuscript," that the imagination might cause delirium through its "intoxicating qualities."

The remainder of the tale describes various groups which the narrator encounters in the hall and their relation to the imagination. The first group is described as "water-drinkers . . . men of broad foreheads, meditative countenances, and thoughtful, inward eyes . . ." (175). The narrator notes that he feels "an inward

attraction towards these men, as if the sympathy of feeling, if not of genius, had united me to their order" (175). He then remarks that the world is beginning to get acquainted with the names of these men, suggesting that they are contemporary American writers and perhaps even the Transcendentalists with their "eyes" focused "inward." The narrator admits that while he admires the work of these men, he would "have little desire to meet them elsewhere," a remark which the friend notes is based on the "old prejudice" about artists (175). The friend claims that these men simply desire "to be on equal terms with their fellow-men," to which the narrator replies: "The world does not think so An author is received in general society pretty much as we honest citizens are in the Hall of Fantasy. We gaze at him as if he had no business among us, and question whether he is fit for any of our pursuits" (176). The narrator's prejudice is apparently the Puritan prejudice that artists are idlers disengaged from the workaday world. He indicates in describing himself as an "honest citizen" that he differs from these men in not being a professional writer: though he has already admitted to being engaged with an "idle tale" and thus some type of an author, he notes that he is not one who might be overly preoccupied with the world of the imagination.

In stark contrast to the first group, who are admittedly artists and dabblers existing solely in the hall of fantasy, the second group consists of those who work at the "'Change" and would never have numbered themselves among those who visit the hall. Yet, as the friend explains, this group is indeed more dangerous than the first because their "wildest schemes had the aspect of everyday realities" for them (176). The narrator comments that "Their madness is contagious," a conclusion which the friend seconds, explaining that it is "because they mistake the Hall of Fantasy for actual brick and mortar, and its purple atmosphere for unsophisticated sunshine. But the poet knows his whereabouts, and therefore is less likely to make a fool of himself in

real life" (177). While both the first and second groups are dangerous, and even possibly mad, because of their overindulgence in the imagination, the narrator and his friend suggest a further differentiation amongst those who reside permanently in the hall based on their awareness of the nature of their (pre)occupations. Furthermore, the description of this second group seems to offer a critique of the Puritan prejudice which the narrator had heralded earlier, for he numbers those who are industrious and work hard among the residents of the hall of fantasy.

After quickly describing a third group, "the inventors of fantastic machines" (177), the narrator provides a general survey of the hall's residents:

Many persons were present, whose right of entrance appeared to consist in some crochet of the brain, which, so long as it might operate, produced a change in their relation to the actual world. It is singular how very few there are, who do not occasionally gain admittance on such a score, either in abstracted musings, or momentary thoughts, or bright anticipations, or vivid remembrances; for even the actual becomes ideal, whether in hope or memory, and beguiles the dreamer into the Hall of Fantasy. (178)

The narrator insinuates that all human beings, at one time or another, visit the hall of fantasy, underscoring that the use of the imaginative faculty is quite natural. After describing those who visit the hall only occasionally, the narrator comments on the permanent residents of the hall: "Some unfortunates make their whole abode and business here, and contract habits which unfit them for all the real employments of life" (178). Not only do these people reside solely in the imaginative world, but, like the narrator of "The Village Uncle," they lose complete contact with the real world and become incapable of establishing any normal relation to it.

Yet the narrator does not merely condemn the use of the imagination, suggesting that its influences are always evil. Rather, he proceeds to note the importance of an occasional escape to this realm: "And with all its dangerous influences, we have reason to thank God, that there is such a place of refuge from the gloom and chillness of actual life. . . . It may be said, in truth, that there is but half a life—the meaner and earthlier half—for those who never find their way into the hall" (178-179). Hawthorne suggests, then, in "The Hall of Fantasy" that a balance between the imaginative and the actual is necessary, that the two are "but half a life" each and that only together do they form a whole. Hawthorne's call for such a balance clearly refutes Emerson's claim in his journal that Hawthorne was but half a man, concerned only with the real.

The narrator and his friend come, lastly, to one final group of residents in the hall of fantasy, the "reformers of the day" (180). After describing his admiration for this group, the narrator gazes out "one of the pictured windows" and discerns the "whole external world" under a "glorious aspect," such that he finds it "practicable, at that very instant, to realize some plan for the perfection of mankind" (181). Yet the narrator understands that such sentiments arise only from a confusion of the real and the ideal: "But, alas! if reformers would understand the sphere in which their lot is cast, they must cease to look through pictured windows. Yet they not only use this medium, but mistake it for the whitest sunshine" (181). Like those who work at the Exchange, this group of reformers are unaware that they reside in the hall of fantasy, mistaking their ideal concoctions for the sunshine of the real world. Again Hawthorne suggests a differentiation among those in the hall of fantasy based on their awareness, or lack of awareness, of the degree to which they indulge in the imagination and remain connected to society.

In the midst of the reformers, the narrator sees Father Miller, preaching his millennialist, dooms-day sermon and scattering all of the other reformers' dreams as he announces the end of the world. The narrator remarks that, while the destruction of the earth might be "the only method of getting mankind out of the various perplexities, into which they have fallen," he hopes that the earth will not soon be destroyed: "The poor old Earth . . . She has faults enough, in all conscience; but I cannot bear to have her perish" (182). He continues: "the root of human nature strikes down deep into this earthly soil; and it is but reluctantly that we submit to be transplanted, even for a higher cultivation in Heaven. I query whether the destruction of the earth would gratify any one individual . . ." (182-183). The narrator suggests that humans should be connected as much to the earth, the real, as they are to a higher, more spiritual life in heaven. He concludes: "What I should chiefly regret in her destruction would be that very earthliness, which no other sphere or state of existence can renew or compensate" (183).

The narrator's friend chastizes him for such thoughts and suggests that if the earth were destroyed "man's disembodied spirit may recreate Time and the World for itself" (184). The narrator refuses such a consideration: "Oh, you are ungrateful to our Mother Earth! . . . Come what may, I never will forget her. Neither will it satisfy me to have her exist merely in idea. I want her great, round, solid self to endure interminably, and still to be peopled with the kindly race of man, whom I uphold to be much better than he thinks himself" (184-185). Again, the narrator emphasizes the importance of the real, of the physical aspect of existence, just as earlier he had conceded the importance of an occasional visit to the ideal, the spiritual aspect. And, as in "Foot-Prints," the narrator here desires not only contact with the real but defines that contact in relation to human companionship.

The conclusion of "The Hall of Fantasy" reiterates the desire for a balance between these two realms, the ideal and the real, which has become important to Hawthorne's aesthetic in the 1840s. The narrator notes that as he and his friend leave the hall, he looks back at the fountain and *almost* desires that "life might be spent in that visionary scene, where the actual world, with its hard angles, should never rub against me, and only be viewed through the medium of pictured windows" (185). Stressing the importance of the ideal world, the narrator admits that an occasional visit to the hall of fantasy softens the real world. He continues:

But, for those who waste all their days in the Hall of Fantasy, good Father Miller's prophecy is already accomplished, and the solid earth has come to an untimely end. Let us be content, therefore, with merely an occasional visit, for the sake of spiritualizing the grossness of this actual life, and prefiguring to ourselves a state, in which the Idea shall be all in all. (185)

In his conclusion, the narrator emphasizes several of the important themes of the tale, themes which form the basis of Hawthorne's aesthetic during the early 1840s. He again acknowledges that those who reside in the hall of fantasy, like the Transcendentalists against whom Hawthorne is reacting, have completely forsaken any connection to the real world, here defined as the earthly and physical. Moreover, such a disconnection causes an isolation and alienation from humankind most clearly developed in relation to the reformers. Purportedly attempting to create a better life on earth, these reformers, because of their complete absorption in some ideal vision, fail to perceive, much less to understand, the life of real human beings. And yet the narrator acknowledges the importance of "an occasional visit" to the hall in order to soften the sharp edges of existence in the real world. The key for Hawthorne was to

achieve a balance between engagement with an ideal vision—for example, the creation of a perfect society—and with the real world—a world in which such an ideal vision cannot be fully realized.

By the early 1840s, then, Hawthorne had overcome the deleterious effects of the Puritan influence which had plagued him in the 1830s. In this earlier decade, Hawthorne feared that imaginative creation might be an immoral act allowing Satan to influence the artist in his creation of a fictional world. But through his relationship to Transcendentalism, Hawthorne came to accept, conditionally, the workings of the imagination. Understanding the possibility that the imagination might be perceived positively, Hawthorne realized that the artist's creative act was not necessarily blasphemous, that indeed the artist might create without assuming the Creator's knowledge and powers. The key to such a creativity was the artist's ability to maintain a balance between the imaginary and the actual. Hawthorne's sketch "The Old Manse" (1845), written as a preface for the works collected in *Mosses from an Old Manse*, most fully investigates not only the conception of such a balance but also the way in which his intellectual heritage—both Puritan and transcendental—led him to such a definition of his aesthetic.

"The Old Manse" opens with a description which suggests that the house itself, like the shore which is set between the sea and the land, represents the middle ground between the ideal and real worlds. The narrator notes that "The glimmering shadows, that lay half-asleep between the door of the house and the public highway, were a kind of spiritual medium, seen through which, the edifice had not quite the aspect of belonging to the material world" (X: 3). Hawthorne suggests that in making "The Reader Acquainted with His Abode" (the subtitle of the sketch), he is introducing and explicating his aesthetic. He develops his description of the Manse in a passage which

explains his conception of the relationship between the artist and the society that surrounds him.

From these quiet windows, the figures of passing travellers looked too remote and dim to disturb the sense of privacy. In its near retirement, and accessible seclusion, it was the very spot for the residence of a clergyman; a man not estranged from human life, yet enveloped, in the midst of it, with a veil woven of intermingled gloom and brightness.
(3-4)

In stark contrast to the narrator of "Foot-Prints," who sets out to test the sufficiency of the Transcendental philosophy through a self-imposed isolation, the narrator of "The Old Manse" attempts to strike a balance. He admits the need for retirement and seclusion but qualifies the nature of this retirement with the suggestion that it is not a complete isolation. Like the clergyman, with whom the artist is implicitly compared in the sketch, the artist must both take part in human life and remain detached from it.

The remainder of the introductory section of "The Old Manse" sets up the contrast which becomes the primary focus of this sketch, a contrast between the Puritan and transcendental sources for Hawthorne's ideas about art. He proceeds to note that, up to the time that he took residency, only Puritan ministers had occupied the Manse: "A priest had built it; a priest had succeeded to it; other priestly men, from time to time, had dwelt in it; and children, born in its chambers, had grown up to assume the priestly character" (4). Indeed the walls in the study in which he plans to write his tales "were blackened with the smoke of unnumbered years, and made still blacker by the grim prints of Puritan ministers that hung around" (5). Yet, significantly, the study is also the place where "Emerson wrote 'Nature' . . ." (5), the seminal work of the Transcendentalists.

In his description of those who have worked in the study in the past, Hawthorne suggests possible influences on his own work in the near future. He notes that

I took shame to myself for having been so long a writer of idle stories, and ventured to hope that wisdom would descend upon me with the falling leaves of the avenue; and that I should light upon an intellectual treasure in the Old Manse, well worth those hoards of long-hidden gold, which people speak for in moss-grown houses. (4-5)

Hawthorne then discusses the possible works that might flow from the retirement of the Old Manse, including "Profound treatises of morality" and "histories . . . such as Bancroft might have written," again suggesting the influence of Puritan and transcendental ideas on his work. He concludes that, "In the humblest event, I resolved at least to achieve a novel, that should evolve some deep lesson, and should possess physical substance enough to stand alone" (5). Hawthorne suggests that he might write a didactic novel or novel of purpose, which would evince a moral lesson to his audience and would partake, therefore, of the real world (as many novels of the day claimed to do).

The next section of the sketch describes a journey on which the narrator takes the reader, "in the way of sight-showing" (6). Teresa Toulouse claims that the sketch is organized around a juxtaposition of this journey with a journey on the Assabeth River described later, a juxtaposition which reveals Hawthorne's examination and reconciliation of the "opposing realms of history and nature" ("Spatial Relations" 154). Yet the sketch seems to contrast not history and nature *per se*, but rather the various elements which have influenced the development of Hawthorne's ideas about art. The symbolic purpose of this first journey is thus twofold: to establish, again, the way in

which Puritan and transcendental ideas have influenced his own conception of art and to demonstrate the way in which he has maintained his individuality even while these ideas influenced him. This twofold project implies that Hawthorne both acknowledges the importance of his intellectual heritage and offers various criticisms of that heritage.⁶

The journey begins with a description of the "unexcitable and sluggish" Concord river which winds its way past the Old Manse (6). Hawthorne equates the river, as it "idles its sluggish life away" incapable of serving "some useful purpose," with his tales (6). As William Shurr has noted, Hawthorne's description of the river also suggests that it represents the dual aspects of his intellectual heritage (147). In addition to delineating the way in which heaven and earth are ideally reflected in the river's surface, representing its spiritual nature, Hawthorne describes "its tawny hue and the muddiness of its bed," representing its earthliness (8). Shurr concludes that "Hawthorne places himself among the transcendentalists; he employs their typical method of progression from natural image to spiritual insight; but he is also their strongest link with the older Calvinist tradition" (147).

After his excursion to the river, Hawthorne describes for the reader two pieces of interest at the nearby Revolutionary War battleground. The first, a "monument, not more than twenty feet in height," was erected "in illustration of a matter of local interest, rather than what was suitable to commemorate an epoch of national history" (8). The second, "the grave of two British soldiers," marks an event in the war not handed down as a point of factual history but rather as a tradition, the circumstances of which "cannot altogether be reconciled with probability" (9). Significantly, Hawthorne

6. John S. Martin claims that Hawthorne punctures the idealism of Emerson's philosophy, demonstrating that "this kind of idealism is all too easy and automatic" (457). Surely Martin is correct in asserting that Hawthorne critiques Emerson's ideas, yet he seems to disregard the fact that Hawthorne simultaneously confesses that Transcendentalism strongly influenced him.

indicates that the tale behind this second event "has borne more fruit for me, than all that history tells us of the fight" (10). In the period of the 1830s, Hawthorne composed works based loosely on the historical past as a way of founding these works on reality and thus abrogating the charge of overindulgence in the imagination. In the late 1830s and early 1840s, however, Hawthorne indicates that such a basis is no longer necessary, and hints that it might even be detrimental, to the composition of fiction with ties to the real world.⁷ Indeed, the significance of the second event is its balance of factual and imagined details, a balance which provides Hawthorne with a more fruitful source for his tales.

Hawthorne reinforces his new attitude towards history as he moves from the battleground to the Indian village:

For my own part, I have never found my imagination much excited by this, or any other scene of historic celebrity There is a wilder interest in the tract of land [where] in some unknown age, before the white man came, stood an Indian village, convenient to the river, whence its inhabitants must have drawn so large a part of their subsistence. (10)

Hawthorne links the Indian village, which is ahistorical in that it existed before recorded time, to the river, already established as representative of the imagination. Significantly, Hawthorne then explains specifically why the Indians provide fruit for his imagination, whereas American history does not. In discussing the arrowheads that can still be found in the area, Hawthorne notes that "Their great charm consists in

7. See John J. McDonald's analysis of the shift in Hawthorne's works from the 1830s to the 1840s (77-79).

[their] rudeness, and in the individuality of each article, so different from the productions of civilized machinery, which shapes everything on one pattern" (11).

The basis of this differentiation, the individuality and uniqueness of the arrowheads, suggests that Hawthorne now prefers less restraint on his imagination than the sources for his historically-based fiction allowed. Moreover, the call for originality functions as the basis for Hawthorne's critique of his own intellectual heritage, both Puritan and transcendental, and for the eventual creation of his own aesthetic in reaction to this heritage. The arrowheads, originally chipped from solid rock and found by Hawthorne in the soil, become metonyms for the "great, round, solid self" of the earth that the narrator of "The Hall of Fantasy" so desires. Representing the real or actual, these primal objects, created for their usefulness yet beautiful to behold, contrast sharply with the Puritan need for history and the Transcendentalist tendency toward abstraction.

The fourth and fifth stages of Hawthorne's journey with the reader again emphasize the importance of establishing an individual and unique aesthetic based on some connection to the real world. On this part of the journey, Hawthorne visits the orchard (which the last inhabitant, a clergyman, had planted) as well as his kitchen garden (which Thoreau had planted). Just as the river and the Indian village were linked to the writing of tales, so, too, are the apple orchard and the garden (especially considering the organic metaphor of the volume's title, *Mosses from an Old Manse*). Hawthorne first describes how the "orchard has a relation to mankind, and readily connects itself with matters of the heart. The trees possess a domestic character . . ." as they have become somewhat "humanized" (12). Likewise, in describing the garden, he notes that "Childless men, if they would know something of the bliss of paternity, should plant a seed . . . should plant it with their own hands, and nurse it from infancy

to maturity, altogether by their own care" (13). According to the narrator, the apple trees and the garden plants offer the possibility of an attachment to the real world through domesticity and paternity.

Yet establishing a similar "domestic" and kindred relation between artistic works and the world is only one important facet of Hawthorne's aesthetic in the 1840s. He notes of the orchard that

There is so much of individuality of character . . . among apple-trees, that it gives them an additional claim to be the objects of human interest. . . . The variety of grotesque shapes, into which apple-trees contort themselves, has its effect on those who get acquainted with them; they stretch out their crooked branches, and take such hold of the imagination that we remember them as humorists and odd fellows. (12)

Of his garden plants, he claims that "If there be not too many of them, each individual plant becomes an object of separate interest" (13). He then describes his summer-squashes in detail, noting "their beautiful and varied forms. They [like the apple trees] presented an endless diversity . . ." of shapes and sizes (14). Again Hawthorne remarks that the significant aspect of the apple trees and garden plants is their individuality, symbolically implying the same for the aesthetic on which he bases his own works of art. Having finally reacted against both Puritan and transcendental ideas about art, the first of which suggested that the artist was blasphemous unless he maintained contact with the real world and the second of which suggested that the artist was indeed a god because of his absorption in the ideal world, Hawthorne understood that his aesthetic, a balance between these contradictory paradigms, was rather unique.

At this point, before turning back to the Manse itself, Hawthorne adds a further detail to his description of the garden plants. He remarks that "not merely the

squeamish love of the Beautiful was gratified by my toil in the kitchen-garden. . . . I felt that, by my agency, something worth living for had been done. A new substance was borne into the world. They were real and tangible existences, which the mind could seize hold of and rejoice in" (15). Through the organic metaphor of the volume, in which these plants represent artistic creations, Hawthorne insinuates that the artist, like the gardener who brings into existence a new substance through his own agency, becomes a godlike figure in the creation of his artworks. Yet Hawthorne wants to suggest that these artworks, like plants, are "real and tangible existences" and not simply creations of the imagination.

After clearly delineating not only that he will attempt to establish a balance between the influences of his Puritan and transcendental heritage but that such a balance will bear the mark of a unique and original aesthetic, Hawthorne returns to his discussion of his Puritan past and his transcendental contemporaries in order to demonstrate what he might accept in their various philosophies and what he might reject. This discussion occurs as Hawthorne interacts in the Manse's library and on the Assabeth River with, respectively, an effigy of an old Puritan clergyman and Ellery Channing, one of Hawthorne's contemporaries and a Transcendentalist.

The Manse's library, located in the garret, has "nooks, or rather caverns of deep obscurity, the secrets of which I never learned . . ." (16). In the library, Hawthorne finds a picture of an old clergyman: "As I turned his face towards the light, he eyed me with an air of authority such as men of his profession seldom assume, in our days" (17). Hawthorne then explains his relationship to the clergyman who represents the Puritan past: "I bowed before the effigy of the dignified divine, and felt as if I had now met face to face with the ghost, by whom, as there was reason to apprehend, the Manse was haunted" (17). As the opening of "The Old Manse"

indicates, the house, which exists in the middle ground between the ideal and the real, represents Hawthorne's art. Yet in his description of the Puritan divine, he also indicates that the Puritan past haunts the house, and thus by extension his art, suggesting that Puritan ideas were instrumental in Hawthorne's conception of this middle ground.

But Hawthorne admits in his description of the volumes stored in the library, handed down "from the days of the mighty Puritan divines" (18), that the Puritan doctrine is cold and dead. In searching for any book which might "burn like a coal of fire, or glow like an inextinguishable gem," he admits that "all was dead alike; and I could not but muse deeply and wonderingly upon the humiliating fact, that the works of man's intellect decay like those of his hands" (19). Ironically, only those works which "had been written for the passing day and year, without the remotest pretension or idea of permanence" remain relevant (20). After leafing through old newspapers and almanacs, Hawthorne turns to the image of the divine and asks him why the Puritans were "able to produce nothing half so real . . ." (20), turning the Puritan condemnation of fiction against the Puritans themselves. Because the volumes in the library were "written by men who, in the very act, set themselves apart from their age," they "possess little significance when new, and none at all, when old" (21). Again, Hawthorne emphasizes the need for a middle ground, as the Manse comes to maintain, between seclusion from and contact with the real world.

Hawthorne's journey on the Assabeth river, a fishing excursion with Ellery Channing, becomes a transcendental reverie on the loveliest of rivers barring only the river which "lave[s] the interior regions of a poet's imagination" (22). Hawthorne describes the scene, noting that "the slumbering river has a dream-picture in its bosom. Which, after all, was the most real—the picture, or the original?—the objects palpable

to our grosser senses, or their apotheosis in the stream beneath?" (22). Hawthorne links the river to sleeping and dreaming, representations of the imagination, while the image reflected on the river, ideal as it is, becomes an "apotheosis"—a reflection of heaven on earth. Hawthorne continues his transcendental reverie in describing the pond-lily, which opens with the touch of sunlight. He remarks that Thoreau has seen these flowers unfold in "due succession" as the sun steals across the river, "a sight," Hawthorne comments, referring directly to Emerson's "Nature," "not to be hoped for, unless when a poet adjusts his inward eye to a proper focus with the outward organ" (23).

This transcendental journey becomes linked not only with a heightened sense of seclusion (23) but also with complete and total liberation from the real: "the chief profit of those wild days . . . lay . . . in the freedom which were thereby won from all custom and conventionalism, and fettering influences of man on man. We were so free to-day, that it was impossible to be slaves again tomorrow" (25). The transcendental project of liberation and freedom has clearly influenced Hawthorne and becomes very much a part of his determination to build a unique conception of art. Yet Hawthorne also perceives that the transcendental project calls for complete and total liberation, even complete severance, from all humanity as the individual loses all personality in joining with the Over Soul. Indeed, Hawthorne raises such a criticism of Transcendentalism immediately following his exhortation on freedom: "And yet how sweet—as we floated homeward adown the golden river, at sunset—how sweet was it to return within the system of human society, not as to a dungeon and a chain, but as to a stately edifice, whence we could go forth at will into statelier simplicity!" (25). As in "Foot-Prints on the Sea-Shore," Hawthorne indicates that the transcendental emphasis on the ideal and spiritual is not sufficient in that it excludes contact with

humanity. Hawthorne does not desire such a complete liberation, for in this freedom he feels that he might lose the contact with the real world which he had come to regard as paramount for an artist because of his Puritan training.⁸

The sketch then shifts from describing Hawthorne's relationship to the Puritans and Transcendentalists to describing the beginning of fall and thus, symbolically, the conclusion of the sketch. He once again delineates the Manse as existing in the margin between the real and ideal worlds, between contact with and isolation from human society. He compares the precincts of the Manse to "the Enchanted Ground, through which the pilgrim travelled on his way to the Celestial City" (28). Significantly, the Manse is located, according to Hawthorne, somewhere between earth and heaven. The guests who stop off at the Manse often "felt a slumberous influence" and would stare off into space "dreamily" (28). Hawthorne notes that "Others could give them pleasure and amusement, or instruction—these could be picked up anywhere—but it was for me to give them rest—rest, in a life of trouble" (29).

In linking his abode and his "qualities as a host" to the world of sleep, Hawthorne emphasizes the importance of the imagination to his aesthetic.⁹ Indeed, such an emphasis lies at the foundation of his own philosophy, formulated in response primarily to the Transcendentalists who surround him.

Were I to adopt a pet idea, as so many people do, and fondle it in my embraces to the exclusion of all others, it would be, that the great want

8. F. O. Matthiessen notes that Hawthorne does not share with the Transcendentalists the belief in retreating to nature and solitude in order to "find himself": "Hawthorne visited nature in order to return, refreshed, to the world of men" (238). Matthiessen does not link, as I attempt to do here, Hawthorne's desire to return to society to his Puritan heritage.

9. The balance that Hawthorne achieves between Puritan and transcendental ideas can also be seen in his rhetoric. Using a passage that refers to an important Puritan tract, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Hawthorne inscribes the necessity of the imagination in his aesthetic, a necessity which he realized through contact with the Transcendentalists.

which mankind labors under, at this present period, is—sleep! The world should recline its vast head on the first convenient pillow, and take an age-long nap. It has gone distracted, through a morbid activity, and, while preternaturally wide-awake, is nevertheless tormented by visions, that seem real to it now, but would assume their true aspect and character, were all things once set right by an interval of sound repose. (29)

Hawthorne insinuates that the period of morbid activity, full of distractions, is that period in which the Puritans dominated the American landscape, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, while the period of preternatural wakefulness, full of seemingly real visions, is that of the Transcendentalists. Ultimately, Hawthorne criticizes both groups for the misleading nature of their ideologies.

And while Hawthorne seems to suggest more of the same in his call for a nap (which has been linked to the world of the imagination and thus suggests more “visions”), his philosophy does not conclude with this suggestion but proceeds to call for an eventual awakening. Sleep, he notes,

is the only method of getting rid of old delusions, and avoiding new ones—of regenerating our race, so that it might in due time awake, as an infant out of dewy slumber—of restoring to us the simple perception of what is right, and the single-hearted desire to achieve it; both of which have long been lost, in consequence of this weary activity of the brain, and torpor or passion of the heart, that now afflicts the universe. Stimulants, the only mode of treatment hitherto attempted, cannot quell the disease; they do but heighten the delirium. (29-30)

Instead of suggesting only a sleep, Hawthorne desires a balance, a sleep and then an awakening, just as he noted the positive influences of his transcendental escape up the Assabeth river when it was combined with a return to society. Significantly, Hawthorne likens the Transcendental philosophy, which emphasizes the ideal at the expense of the real, to a mode of stimulant which heightens the delirium that he perceives in his society.

After stating his own philosophy, Hawthorne turns to discussing directly Emerson and his disciples. He calls Emerson's "intellectual fire . . . a beacon burning on a hill-top" (31), referring to the new philosophy using Winthrop's description of America in "A Modell of Christian Charity." Indeed, in the definition of his own philosophy, Hawthorne suggests that while the old delusions arising from the Puritan religion originally caused the delirium of the present, the current stimulants have simply redoubled such a state. Hawthorne thus suggests that, while Transcendentalism might seem a new philosophy, it is actually an extension of the Puritan past. Indeed, Hawthorne felt that ultimately both Puritanism and Transcendentalism were based on abstractions, on attending to the spiritual or ideal aspect of existence that lay behind the real. While the Puritans heavily emphasized the necessity of actuality (for instance, the emphasis on the Bible, what the Puritans considered a historical document, in typology), the end of such an emphasis was to discern the way in which God operated in their daily lives. Hawthorne's aesthetic of the early 1840s reacted against such a foundation, suggesting the necessity of the physical and sensible aspect of human existence.

After delineating the way in which the followers of the Concord sage lack individuality and uniqueness, and thus the way in which the philosophy has lost its originality, Hawthorne returns to discussing himself, fearful that the reader might

"vilify the poor author as an egotist, for babbling through so many pages about a moss-grown country parsonage, and his life within its walls, and on the river, and in the woods,—and the influences that wrought upon him, from all these sources" (32). Yet, he claims, such self-descriptions never jeopardized his privacy: "My conscience . . . does not reproach me with betraying anything too sacredly individual to be revealed by a human spirit, to its brother or sister spirit. . . . So far as I am a man of really individual attributes, I veil my face . . ." (32-33). Hawthorne's claim that he might acquaint the reader with his life even while maintaining his individuality suggests his attempt to strike the balance between seclusion and fraternization so important, in his mind, for the artist.¹⁰

As Hawthorne indicates in the closing of "The Old Manse," he failed to write any "profound treatise of ethics" or "philosophic history" which his Puritan and transcendental heritage suggested he write; indeed, he failed, even, to write a novel "that could stand, unsupported, on its edges" (34). With such a conclusion, Hawthorne indicates that, while both Puritan and transcendental ideas have influenced him, he has developed and followed his own conception of art. William Shurr defines this period in Hawthorne's career as the moment when he came to understand his role as an artist who might clarify the issues which the clash between America's Calvinist past and its transcendental present had raised. Shurr concludes that Hawthorne "ended with abandonment of all American 'isms,' whether Calvinism or transcendentalism, for the purely private solution" (169).

10. Annette K. Baxter, in noting various dilemmas in Hawthorne's conception of the artist, remarks that "How to rise above humanity without losing his humaneness appeared to be the recurring problem of Hawthorne's artist" (231). In her cursory analysis, Baxter notes that Hawthorne is never able to ascribe such an equilibrium to his artists, a claim which I hope to refute in the following chapters.

Hawthorne's emphasis on individuality, on his desire for a unique redefinition of these issues, can be seen in "The Hall of Fantasy" in the narrator's description of the fountain which lies at the center of the hall. The narrator notes that the water of the fountain "continually throws itself into new shapes, and snatches the most diversified hues from the stained atmosphere around. It is impossible to conceive what a strange vivacity is imparted to the scene by the magic dance of this fountain, with its endless transformations, in which the imaginative beholder may discern what form he will" (174). Yet Hawthorne's emphasis on originality existed long before 1843, even as early as "Foot-Prints on the Sea-Shore." At the conclusion of the earlier sketch, Hawthorne explains his relationship to Transcendentalism:

when, at noontide, I tread the crowded streets, the influence of this day will still be felt; so that I shall walk among men kindly and as a brother, with affection and sympathy, but yet shall not melt into the indistinguishable mass of human kind. I shall think my own thoughts, and feel my own emotions, and possess my individuality unviolated.
(461)

While he admits that the new philosophy has influenced him, he again insists that such an influence is significant only upon a return to human society, thus sounding his difference with the Transcendentalists. Rather than melding with the Over Soul, and therein losing his individuated self, Hawthorne prefers to accept what freedom the transcendental reverie provides, especially in establishing his own thoughts and emotions, only to return within the circle of human companionship in order to share these new thoughts.

From his Puritan heritage, Hawthorne had learned that an overindulgence in the imagination might lead to delirium and loss of contact with the real world. The artist,

according to the Puritans, ascended into the heavens as a god, interacting solely with his own created world. Yet the Transcendentalists taught Hawthorne that the imagination was not to be feared, that, indeed, the poet could reestablish the link between humans and the Over Soul. The Transcendentalists also described the artist as ascending into the heavens, becoming the "transparent eye-ball" of Emerson's "Nature"; yet such an ascent was not considered deleterious or harmful but rather the only method of regaining contact with the Real world (the spiritual or ideal world for the Transcendentalists).

But because of the strong influence of his Puritan heritage, Hawthorne never fully accepted the Transcendental philosophy, ultimately perceiving it "as being an escape from reality" (Koster 82). What Hawthorne came to emphasize in his aesthetic was a mitigation of the contradictory ideas of the Puritans and Transcendentalists, a balance between reliance on the real and the ideal. Hawthorne felt that an artist might use the imagination but only if it were used in such a way that the artist maintained a hold on reality; that is, using his own oft-repeated metaphors, Hawthorne felt that if there was to be any ascent into the heavens, the artist's feet must remain firmly planted on the pavement.

The question of the artist tales of the 1840s becomes how to establish such a balance, how to use the imagination in this limited way. Significantly, because of Hawthorne's maturing relationship with Sophia Peabody during this period, this question becomes translated in Hawthorne's aesthetic to a question of the male artist's relationship with a female who might be a potential wife and who represents an attachment to the real world. As Hawthorne indicates in both his journals and his letters, Sophia came to represent a way of extricating himself from the dreamlike existence he led before he met her and attaching himself to the real. In September

1841, Hawthorne visited his home in Salem and wrote to Sophia, contrasting his life before he met her with his present existence:

How immediately and irrecoverably (if thou didst not keep me out of the abyss) should I relapse into the way of life in which I spent my youth! If it were not for my Dove, this present world would see no more of me forever. . . . I should be only a shadow of the night; it is thou that givest me reality, and makes all things real for me. If, in the interval since I quitted this lonely old chamber, I had found no woman (and thou was the only possible one) to impart reality and significance to life, I should have come back hither ere now, with the feeling that all was a dream and a mockery. (XV: 565-566)

Some two years later, in 1843, Hawthorne again had the opportunity to contrast his past existence with his life with Sophia. In a journal entry on March 31, Hawthorne comments on the way in which he has been changed: "at last, I had caught hold of a reality, which never could be taken from me. It was good thus to get apart from my happiness, for the sake of contemplating it" (VIII: 368).¹¹

Yet while Sophia Peabody came to represent contact with the real world, and while Hawthorne felt that such contact was a necessary element in his ability to create art, he also came to understand that such an attachment might be detrimental to his abilities if he became too dependent on her. Indeed, he often comments in his journal on his inability to write because his thoughts constantly stray to his wife. On 8 April 1843, Hawthorne describes how his thoughts have been filled with Sophia: "The

11. For a similar discussion of Hawthorne's relationship to Sophia, see Terence Martin (*Nathaniel Hawthorne* 16-17). A large number of Hawthorne's letters reflect this attitude towards Sophia, including those dated 3 October 1839 (352), 5 December 1839 (382), 18 December 1839 (387-88), and 1 January 1840 (395).

forenoon was spent with the pen in my hand; and sometimes I had the glimmering of an idea, and endeavored to materialize it in words; but, on the whole, my mind was idly vagrant, and refused to work to any systematic purpose" (370). Instead of working, Hawthorne goes to the Post Office to look for a letter from his wife. The next day, as he again attempts to write, he notes that he is "thinking of many things; but the thought of thee—the great thought of thee—was among all other thoughts, like the pervading sunshine . . ." (372). Such a conception of his relation to Sophia is echoed in his letters; on 26 May 1839, he remarks: "I feel as if my being were dissolved, and the idea of you were diffused throughout it" (316).

Indeed, Hawthorne's desire for maintaining his personal integrity in his marriage becomes a focal point for much of his correspondence with Sophia. On 18 December 1839, Hawthorne wrote to Sophia from Boston, commenting that "sometimes I should choose to have her sit in a separate chair, in order to realize our individuality . . ." (387). The next spring, Sophia had asked Hawthorne to hear Father Taylor preach, which he refused to do: "Belovedest wife, our souls are in happiest unison; but we must not disquiet ourselves if every tone be not re-echoed from one to the other—if every slightest shade be not reflected in the alternate mirror. . . . I forewarn thee, sweetest Dove, that thy husband is a most unmalleable man . . ." (431).¹² When Sophia asked Hawthorne how he would like her to sign her name, he replied that he preferred "Mrs. Sophia A. Hawthorne" over "Mrs. Nathaniel Hawthorne" (679).

Hawthorne thus faced a dilemma between a need for attachment to the real, a need he met in his relationship with his wife, and a need for maintaining his

12. For another letter which reflects this attitude, see one dated 18 October 1841, in which Hawthorne warns Sophia against "magnetic miracles"—that is, the use of mesmerism to cure her headaches (588).

individuality, a need threatened through this same relationship.¹³ As Allen Flint remarks,

The conflict Hawthorne experienced between the needs for both solitude and society permeated his life, both as a man and an artist. . . . Ultimately it was in his marriage that he found the most workable solution to this dilemma, though wedlock brought with it demands which continued to impinge upon the freedom and solitude so important to his writing. (112)

While several critics such as Flint have demonstrated an awareness of this conflict and its significance to Hawthorne's art, they have generally concluded that Hawthorne resolved the dilemma by depicting the artist forsaking his art in order to maintain contact with humanity. William Shurr concludes that "The ideological sacrifices that Hawthorne makes to arrive at his private Garden happiness [the form of the resolution which Shurr explores] are considerable, not to say massive and crippling, to the artist and to every kind of reforming enthusiast. The new Adam must abandon the pleasures of art and introspection . . ." (168). The assumption is that Hawthorne was incapable of creating a workable balance between marriage and art, between the need for an attachment to the real and the ability to create under such a restriction.

Indeed, at first glance, many of the tales of the 1840s, including "The Birthmark," "Rappaccini's Daughter," and "The Artist of the Beautiful," seem to support such a suggestion. Even the introductory sketch to *Mosses from an Old Manse* insinuates Hawthorne's inability to balance the two in that "The Old Manse" never mentions Sophia, the other full time resident of the old parsonage. While Hawthorne

13. For detailed discussions of the biographical background of this dilemma, see Randall Stewart (49) and Arlin Turner (*Nathaniel Hawthorne* 123-26).

occasionally uses the first person plural in the sketch, he uses it to refer to his companionship with the reader in their journey through his life in the Manse. Yet when Hawthorne describes his coming or leaving from the parsonage, he generally uses first person singular; for instance, in comparing himself to the previous occupant, he notes that the Old Manse had never "been prophaned by a lay occupant, until that memorable summer-afternoon when *I* entered it as *my* home" (4; emphasis added).

Yet, as I will demonstrate in the following chapters, Hawthorne resolved the conflict apparent in his marriage to Sophia at the same time that he resolved the need for a balance between the ideal and the real; only an analysis which seeks to understand the intimate connection between these two dilemmas can fully demonstrate the way in which Hawthorne established a workable resolution to the issues paramount to his aesthetic in the 1840s. Through defining a specific relationship between the male artist and the female who is a prospective wife, Hawthorne establishes a resolution to the questions which his introduction to Transcendentalism and marriage had raised.

Chapter Five

Tales of the 1840s: The Artist as God

During the period of the late 1830s and early 1840s, Hawthorne's lifestyle changed from one of relative isolation to one of courting a wife and interacting with members of the most current intellectual group, the Transcendentalists. His marriage to Sophia Peabody on 9 July 1842, and their subsequent removal to Concord, altered Hawthorne's perception not only of himself but also of his art. Such an alteration can be seen in his artist tales of the 1840s, which can be separated into two distinct groups depending on the type of artist described. In such tales as "The Birth-mark" and "Rappaccini's Daughter," Hawthorne describes artists and artist-figures whose cold intellect and desire to control others separate them from humanity. Living solely in the ideal world, these artist-figures usurp the place of God.¹ Hawthorne implies that their deviation originates from a deficiency in their "spiritual organization" which causes

1. In this chapter, I will explore the way in which Hawthorne uses various scientific endeavors to symbolize artistic practices. While such a parallel exists in other critical studies of Aylmer (in "The Birth-mark") and Rappaccini (in "Rappaccini's Daughter"), critics have failed to note that the status of these scientists as a god who controls his own created world reveals Hawthorne's attitude toward the type of art they embody. See especially the preface to Millicent Bell's *Hawthorne's View of the Artist* for a detailed rationale for reading these scientists as artist-figures.

them to have no “warmth of heart,” that is, to have no love for or communion with their fellow humans. But in such tales as “Drowne’s Wooden Image” and “The Artist of the Beautiful,” Hawthorne describes successful artists—those figures who are able to create art even while remaining human, a status achieved through their attachment to the real world, an attachment defined in relation to the artist’s communion with the society that surrounds him.

The basis of the aesthetic that allows Hawthorne to create the first of these two groups of tales parallels that underlying the works of the 1830s in that Hawthorne continues to describe figures who metaphorically ascend into heaven, attempting to usurp God’s knowledge and power. But because of Hawthorne’s interaction with the Transcendentalists and his relationship with Sophia, he was able in the 1840s to move beyond mere analytical exemplification of such a blasphemous act and to explicate the charge of immorality leveled against the artist. In “The Birth-mark” and “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” Hawthorne not only describes figures who blasphemously indulge in their “ideal” creations, losing contact with the “real,” but he also more distinctly defines these two categories and thus clarifies the charge of blasphemy. In both “Foot-prints” and “The Hall of Fantasy,” Hawthorne had defined the “real” as the sensible and physical aspect of existence, the “great, round, solid self” of the earth, and the “ideal” as the intellectual and conceptual aspect of existence. But in the artist tales of the early and mid 1840s, Hawthorne suggests a definition of the “ideal” not solely based on the artist’s conceptions but rather on the way in which these conceptions separate him from humanity, on the artist’s inability to communicate his conceptions in such a way that they become a “shared” reality. The “real” becomes, then, that vision or artistic creation which the community holds in common, that which can be shared between the artist and those that surround him.

Hawthorne's "The Christmas Banquet," the second of his tales subtitled "From the Unpublished 'Allegories of the Heart,'" most clearly outlines such definitions. As a frame tale, "The Christmas Banquet" critiques not only a specific type of artistic creation, in this case a tale that depicts a character who lacks reality, that is, connection to those that surround him, but also the artist who creates such a tale. As Hawthorne demonstrates, Roderick Elliston's recounting of his tale about Gervayse Hastings, a figure who is merely a shadow to those who gather around him at an annual Christmas banquet, fails to communicate anything more than the glimmering of an "idea" to Elliston's audience. Of course these two levels of criticism are not mutually exclusive, for Hawthorne's point in creating such a self-reflexive tale is to demonstrate not the results of any and all artistic creation, but of a specific type of artistic creation. Indeed, it is because Gervayse Hastings glides through Elliston's tale as no more than a shadow that Elliston fails to communicate with, and thus partake in the shared reality of, his audience.

In the opening frame of the tale, Roderick explains to his wife, Rosina, and his friend, Herkimer, that his story will describe a man who "is a hopeless puzzle" (X: 284). Herkimer asks Roderick to "propound him," to give them "an idea of him, to begin with" (284). Immediately, the frame suggests that the story will consider a character who is perhaps an insubstantial being, an idea. Roderick develops his characterization: "the demands that spirit makes upon spirit, are precisely those to which he cannot respond. When, at last, you come close to him, you find him chill and unsubstantial—a mere vapor" (284-85). Not only does Roderick note that the character's deficiency is spiritual, causing him to be "unsubstantial," but he also defines the nature of this "spiritual" deficiency as one based upon a lack of communion

with humanity.² After Roderick presents his conception of this character, Rosina notes that she has “a glimmering idea” of him (285), emphasizing that Roderick has failed, thus far, to communicate any type of solid reality to his audience. After these descriptions, the frame ends and Roderick reads his tale to Rosina and Herkimer.

Roderick’s tale concerns the bequests of a singular and eccentric old man who included in his will a special fund, “the interest of which was to be expended, annually forever, in preparing a Christmas Banquet for ten of the most miserable persons that could be found” (285). Gervayse Hastings, the main character of the tale and the only regular visitor to the banquet, fails, year after year, to establish any type of connection to the other banqueteers. Indeed after some conversation with Gervayse, one man tells Gervayse that “my companions and myself must seem no more than shadows, flickering on the wall. And precisely such a shadow are you to us!” (292). Referring to Plato’s metaphor of the cave, the tale delineates the way in which Gervayse has lost all contact with the real world, the shared world of human misery that annually forms a community at the banquet. Whatever the ailment that plagues these banqueteers, they have found in each other a community which provides warmth to their existence. Gervayse, on the other hand, admits that “Men pass before me like the shadows on the wall—their actions, passions, feelings, are flickerings of the light—and then they vanish!” (298).

Indeed, every year, those at the feast have the same reaction to Gervayse, denying him “companionship in their mystic fraternity” because of his lack of connection to the real world (299). The narrator, in describing Gervayse’s life, notes

2. As I note in my introduction, Hawthorne often dichotomizes various aspects of Reality into such pairings as the ideal vs. the real, the imaginary vs. the actual, and the spiritual vs. the physical. Yet Hawthorne seems to be using the term “spiritual” here in a different sense—not as one element in a dichotomy but rather as a description of humanity’s “organization,” that is, the way in which human beings relate to one another. See footnote 8 below for a further clarification.

that while he is outwardly a popular figure, "To the public, he was a cold abstraction, wholly destitute of those rich hues of personality, that living warmth, and the peculiar faculty of stamping his own heart's impression on a multitude of hearts . . ." (300). As in the introductory frame, Gervayse is here characterized as simply an idea, an abstract conception with no substance and no heart. Even his "most intimate associates . . . were startled to find how little hold he had upon their affections. They approved—they admired—but still, in those moments when the human spirit most craves reality, they shrank back from Gervayse Hastings, as powerless to give them what they sought" (300). Significantly, the narrator explains the way in which the "spiritual organization" of Gervayse's associates craves "reality," which is defined as originating in the "affections." Indeed, after losing his wife and children, to whom he never had a close relationship, "old Gervayse Hastings, unscathed by grief—alone, but needing no companionship—continued his steady walk through life" (301).

When a philanthropist asks Gervayse what great lessons he has learned from attending so many banquets, he replies that he knows only his own misfortune and concludes:

It is a chillness—a want of earnestness—a feeling as if what should be my heart were a thing of vapor—a haunting perception of unreality! Thus, seeming to possess all that other men have—all that men aim at—I have really possessed nothing, neither joys nor griefs. All things—all persons—as was truly said to me at this table long and long ago—have been like shadows flickering on the wall. It was so with my wife and children—with those who seemed my friends: it is so with yourselves, whom I now see before me. Neither have I myself any real existence, but am a shadow like the rest! (304-305)

After contemplating his wretched life, he exclaims: "This cold heart—this unreal life! Ah! it grows colder still" (305). Again emphasizing the link between lack of contact with the real and lack of contact with humanity, the tale suggests that Gervayse's spiritual organization remains deficient because of his inability to establish a relationship, based on the affections, with another human being.

At the conclusion of the tale, Gervayse Hastings disappears into thin air: "the old man had undergone a change. His shadow had ceased to flicker on the wall" (305). Roderick then turns to his audience, and he asks Rosina for her "criticism"; she responds that his "success is by no means complete" (305). She explains: "It is true, I have an idea of the character you endeavor to describe; but it is rather by dint of my own thought than your expression" (305). Indeed, Herkimer replies that Rosina's response is inevitable "because the characteristics [of Gervayse] are all negative," existing, as he does, "on the outside of everything" (305). As his audience indicates, Roderick Elliston's failure is in his inability to create a tale in which the author and the audience share in its substance, in which its transference does not depend merely upon the "ideas" of either the author or the audience but rather on a mutual interaction which brings into existence a new "reality." In this way, Hawthorne criticizes not only the tale which Elliston creates as one based solely on a "glimmering idea" but also Elliston himself as a failed artist who cannot share in the community that surrounds him. As noted, however, these two criticisms are not mutually exclusive, for the artist's isolation originates from the type of artistic creation which he brings into existence.

To understand fully the connection to community that Hawthorne posits for the artist, it is necessary to turn to "Egotism; or the Bosom-Serpent," the earlier of the two tales subtitled "From the Unpublished 'Allegories of the Heart.'" Several critics have suggested that "Egotism" is concerned with "the weight of guilt on the spiritual and

psychological consciousness of man" (Bush 181) without explaining the exact nature of the spiritual organization, that is, the relationship to society, that concerns Hawthorne in these tales.³ Four years before the tale opens, Roderick had decided to leave his wife, Rosina, after they had been married for only a year because of some ailment that had troubled him. As the tale begins, Herkimer has returned to Roderick at Rosina's request in the attempt to effect a cure for this ailment, which Herkimer notes originates from either "a diseased fancy, or a horrible physical misfortune" (X: 268). Herkimer discovers that, after Roderick's separation from Rosina, he had "estranged himself from all companionship" (271). The narrator explains that "Not merely the eye of man was a horror to him; not merely the light of a friend's countenance; but even the blessed sunshine, likewise, which, in its universal beneficence, typifies the radiance of the Creator's face, expressing his love for all the creatures of his hand" (271-72). Roderick isolates himself from both humanity and the world created by the hand of God, becoming, in effect, the prototype of the artist-figure who is alienated from society and concerned only with his own created world.

When Herkimer eventually asks Roderick about possible cures, Roderick responds that one exists, "but an impossible one . . . Could I, for one instant, forget myself, the serpent might not abide within me. It is my diseased self-contemplation that has engendered and nourished him!" (282-83). At this point, to delineate fully the type of communion with society that Roderick most needs, Rosina walks up and stands over her estranged husband with a look "so mingled with hope and unselfish love, that all anguish seemed but an earthly shadow and a dream" (283). The tale apparently suggests that Roderick might forget himself in his wife and their mutual

3. Hitoshi Matsusaka likewise notes that Roderick is converted at the end of the tale, but not in a traditional religious sense: "Roderick is saved by forgetting his diseased self-contemplation" (9).

love and thus be cured. As Nina Baym notes, "the cure for the hero's disease rests in a loving woman who connects—or can connect, if he accepts her—the lonely male with the social order and gives him a chance to develop his own capacities for altruism and love" (*The Shape of Hawthorne's Career* 109). Indeed, at this moment in the tale, "if report be trustworthy, the sculptor beheld a waving motion through the grass, and heard a tinkling sound, as if something plunged into the fountain" (283). The narrator notes that "Roderick Elliston sat up, like a man renewed, restored to his right mind, and rescued from the fiend, which had so miserably overcome him in the battle-field of his own breast" (283).

Yet, significantly, Roderick does not, according to the tale, forget himself in his love for his wife, as Baym suggests would be necessary, but rather in the idea of his wife. When Rosina walks up to Roderick as he explains the one impossible cure, she exclaims: "Then forget yourself, my husband . . . forget yourself in the *idea* of another!" (283; emphasis added). Rather than moving from a diseased state based on an overwrought imagination to a healthy state based on a love for another, Roderick has maintained an idealist turn of mind and thus also his isolation. While Rosina claims, at the tale's conclusion, that Roderick is indeed cured, his breast purified of its one-time inhabitant, he has apparently retained his propensity to view others allegorically and thus remains, to a certain extent, diseased.⁴ Such an interpretation of "Egotism" explains the theme and nature of "The Christmas Banquet." In the latter tale, Rosina and Herkimer are only able to capture a "glimmering idea" of the tale which Roderick has created. Thus, while Hawthorne suggests in "Egotism" that the love of a wife might cure the artist-figure not only of his diseased self-contemplation but also of

4. David Van Leer describes the state of mind of both Roderick and Rosina as originating from "Transcendental idealism" ("Roderick's Other Serpent" 79).

his idealist frame of mind, the tale also implies that such a love must originate not from some idea but rather from a depth and warmth of the heart of which Roderick is apparently incapable. Rather than loving Rosina based on his own solipsistic conception of love, or of Rosina, Roderick needs to enter into a relationship of mutual interaction with his wife, one which would allow him to connect with more than merely his idea of her.

Like "Egotism," "The Birth-mark" centers on a relationship between the primary character of the tale and his wife, in this case, the scientist Aylmer and Georgiana. As critics like R. B. Heilman have noted, in "The Birth-mark," "science itself has become religion, able to provide an ultimate account of reality and therefore to exact complete human dedication" (576).⁵ More importantly, as critics have also noted, Hawthorne depicts the primary figure of the tale as attempting to control nature and thus usurp God's creative power.⁶ Yet critics have not noticed that because of this role Aylmer becomes an artist-figure and "The Birth-mark" a critique of a certain type of artist and artistic creativity.⁷ Because of his overwhelming preoccupation with some unattainable ideal, Aylmer solipsistically pursues the perfection of a human, and thus imperfect, being—his wife, Georgiana. Significantly, such a drive means that Aylmer fails to enter into a relationship with his wife which offers any kind of interchange of affection or mutual respect of perspectives. Rather, Aylmer communicates his ideal

5. Both Gabriel Vahanian (53-55) and Lewis Horne (38) have noted the way in which science has become confused with, and thus replaces, religion in "The Birth-mark."

6. See, for instance, R. B. Heilman (577), Thomas F. Scheer (108), and Jane Carter Webb (60). As James W. Mathews concludes, Aylmer's sin is his attempt "to conquer nature" (286).

7. While James K. Folsom (46) and Robert Schulman (226-27) have hinted that Aylmer might be considered an artist-figure, only Mary E. Rucker fully explores Aylmer in this light even though Hawthorne suggests in the tale itself a direct link between science and art—see the narrator's description of the contents of Aylmer's library (48). In contrast to the reading that I develop, Rucker reads Aylmer as a noble figure and thus suggests that Hawthorne endorses the Transcendental struggle to achieve the ideal which she believes Aylmer represents.

vision to Georgiana in such a manner that this vision overwhelms and indeed negates any type of shared affection between husband and wife.

The narrator notes that the tale takes place at the end of the eighteenth century and concerns Aylmer, "a man of science—an eminent proficient in every branch of natural philosophy" (X: 36). Just before the tale opens, Aylmer

had made experience of a spiritual affinity, more attractive than any chemical one. He had left his laboratory to the care of an assistant . . . and persuaded a beautiful woman to become his wife. In those days, when the comparatively recent discovery of electricity, and other kindred mysteries of nature, seemed to open paths into the region of miracle, it was not unusual for the love of science to rival the love of woman, in its depth and absorbing energy. (36)⁸

The introduction indicates that the tale will center on a marked conflict between love of science and love of woman. As the tale progresses, and as specific details of the relationship between Aylmer and Georgiana unfold, these two loves come to represent a conflict between the ideal on the one hand and the actual on the other.

The narrator next explains that the struggle towards achieving the ideal is central to the life of any artist-figure. Distinguishing four distinct human faculties, the narrator notes that each of these faculties might be used to ascend heavenward, to become godlike in creating new worlds, should the "secret of creative force" be discovered:

The higher intellect, the imagination, the spirit, and even the heart, might all find their congenial aliment in pursuits which, as some of their

8. I believe that Hawthorne most explicitly defines his differing use of the term "spiritual" in this passage, where Aylmer's "experience of a spiritual affinity" is defined as his marriage to "a beautiful woman."

ardent votaries believed, would ascend from one step of powerful intelligence to another, until the philosopher should lay his hand on the secret of creative force, and perhaps make new worlds for himself. (36)

While the narrator delineates four human faculties, the tale contrasts two of these faculties: the imagination, represented in Aylmer's love of science, and the heart, represented in his love of Georgiana. Moreover, the tale suggests that two very different creations might result from Aylmer's varying loves: an ideal world (an imaginative creation) and a child (a natural creation).

The narrator continues this introductory section with a discussion of Aylmer's particular plight, admitting that he does not know "whether Aylmer possessed this degree of faith in man's ultimate control over nature" (36). He continues: "He had devoted himself, however, too unreservedly to scientific studies, ever to be weaned from them by any second passion. His love for his young wife might prove the stronger of the two; but it could only be by intertwining itself with his love of science, and uniting the strength of the latter to its own" (36-37). The narrator indicates that while Aylmer's love for his wife might eventually prove stronger, this love will exist only as subsumed by and as a part of his love of science. The opening section of "The Birth-mark" suggests, then, that the conflict between love of science (the ideal) and love of wife (the actual) will be decided in favor of the ideal.

Soon after his marriage to Georgiana, Aylmer becomes obsessed with a birthmark on her left cheek. Aylmer explains to his wife that she "came so nearly perfect from the hand of Nature, that this slightest possible defect—which we hesitate whether to term a defect or a beauty—shocks me, as being the visible mark of earthly imperfection" (37). In such a description, Aylmer indicates that the birthmark comes to represent actuality, the world as created by God, with its imperfections. Indeed, unlike

Gervayse Hastings, who is repeatedly described as lacking substance, the birthmark is said to be "deeply interwoven . . . with the texture and substance" of Georgiana's face (37). Georgiana responds to Aylmer that he "cannot love what shocks" him, thus suggesting that his love of his wife is connected to an acceptance of actuality. Significantly, at this point, Georgiana remarks that she has always considered the birthmark an inoffensive "charm" (37).

The birthmark is described in detail as it appears and disappears from Georgiana's face with her passing emotions, thus suggesting its symbolic connection to the heart: the birthmark could be seen "now lost, now stealing forth again, and glimmering to-and-fro with every pulse of emotion that throbbed within her heart" (38). The narrator also notes that "Its shape bore not a little similarity to the human hand, though of the smallest pigmy size" (38). Not only does the shape of the mark symbolically suggest ties to an infant, and thus to human reproduction, the mark itself, as a *birthmark*, suggests its connection to Georgiana's ability to give birth to children. Again, acceptance of the birthmark would thus represent acceptance of actuality and of natural, as opposed to artistic or imaginative, creativity. In contrast, removal of the birthmark represents a desire for the ideal: many "Masculine observers . . . contented themselves with wishing it away, that the world might possess one living specimen of ideal loveliness, without the semblance of a flaw" (38).

Aylmer, of course, is among this group: "seeing her otherwise so perfect, he found this one defect grow more and more intolerable, with every moment of their united lives. It was the fatal flaw of humanity, which Nature, in one shape or another, stamps ineffaceably on all her productions . . ." (38-39). Such a flaw, according to the narrator, "expressed the ineludible gripe, in which mortality clutches the highest and purest of earthly mould, degrading them into kindred with the lowest . . ." (39).

Significantly, the birthmark as a flaw represents Nature's control of humanity, as it clutches humanity in its grip, as well as the foundation of humanity's interconnection. Yet Aylmer reads the mark with his imagination: "selecting it as the symbol of his wife's liability to sin, sorrow, decay, and death, Aylmer's sombre imagination was not long in rendering the birth-mark a frightful object, causing him more trouble and horror than ever Georgiana's beauty, whether of soul or sense, had given him delight" (39). The narrator thus indicates that the conflict between love of science and love of wife has been decided in Aylmer's mind.⁹

Indeed, to emphasize the way in which Aylmer's perceptions are founded on the imagination, Hawthorne describes Aylmer's dreams. When Georgiana asks Aylmer if he remembers dreaming of the birthmark, he admits: "I might well dream of it; for before I fell asleep, it had taken a pretty firm hold of my fancy" (40). Georgiana then reminds her husband of an expression that he repeated while dreaming: "It is in her heart now—we must have it out!" (40). Aylmer then recounts his dream:

He had fancied himself, with his servant Aminadab, attempting an operation for the removal of the birth-mark. But the deeper went the knife, the deeper sank the Hand, until at length its tiny grasp appeared to have caught hold of Georgiana's heart; whence, however, her husband was inexorably resolved to cut or wrench it away. (40)

The tiny hand of the birthmark, already linked to an infant and thus to natural reproduction, is again tied to the heart. Aylmer's experiment to "have it out" suggests

9. Significantly, Sir Kenelm Digby, Hawthorne's analogue for Aylmer, experienced a similar conflict between love of science and love of wife. As Alfred S. Reid notes, Digby "is at first indisposed to marriage because he thinks that it will prove a 'clog to an active mind,' but later his will becomes 'entirely drowned' in that of Stellina," Digby's wife (342). As I have demonstrated, Hawthorne's own fear is that he will be subsumed by Sophia's love, losing his independence and thus his ability to write. Aylmer thus becomes one extreme way of reacting to such a dilemma in that he subsumes his love of wife into his love of science.

not only his sole preoccupation with the ideal but also his lack of concern with actuality, with love of his wife—for while the “Hand” obviously refers to the birthmark, it also paradoxically refers to Aylmer’s own hand as he operates on his Georgiana.

The narrator notes that the repetition of his dream has led Aylmer to understand the way in which this one idea, the removal of the birthmark, has effected a “tyrannizing influence” over him; he realizes, too, “the lengths which he might find in his heart to go, for the sake of giving himself peace” (40). The tale finally and unequivocally demonstrates that Aylmer’s love of science, the only love that resides in his heart, dominates his existence as well as his relationship with his wife. Indeed, this becomes the turning point in the tale, for not only does Aylmer reveal his sole preoccupation with the ideal, with his love of science, but this same love comes to infect Georgiana. Significantly, from this point forward, her remarks must be understood in light of her own misguided love—a love of the ideal, a love which rejects the actual.

Immediately after discussing the dream, Georgiana asks Aylmer if he is capable of removing the mark. When he responds that he is “convinced of the perfect practicability of its removal,” she tells Aylmer:

life—while this hateful mark makes me the object of your horror and disgust—life is a burthen which I would fling down with joy. Either remove this dreadful Hand, or take my wretched life! You have deep science! . . . Is this beyond your power, for the sake of your own peace, and to save your poor wife from madness? (41)

Georgiana’s altered perception of the mark (earlier she had considered it a “charm”) indicates that she now accepts her husband’s perception: she adopts his horror and

disgust and wants his peace of mind. With this new attitude towards the birthmark, Georgiana puts herself in the hands of her husband.

Aylmer responds that he has “already given this matter the deepest thought—thought which might almost have enlightened me to create a being less perfect than yourself” (41). But rather than attempt to create a less than perfect being, and thus to rival God, Aylmer desires instead to perfect one of God’s creations, and thus to usurp God’s prerogative as the ruler of Creation. He tells Georgiana: “you have led me deeper than ever into the heart of science. . . . what will be my triumph, when I shall have corrected what Nature left imperfect, in her fairest work!” (41). Aylmer once again indicates that his relationship with his wife has only led him to love his science more than ever, to love it so much that he will attempt to control God’s world. And Georgiana concurs, admitting that she has accepted Aylmer’s point of view: “Aylmer, spare me not, though you should find the birth-mark take refuge in my heart at last” (42). Even Georgiana has determined that love of science, of the ideal, should dominate love of wife, of the actual.

The remainder of the tale describes Aylmer’s experiment on Georgiana to remove the birthmark from her cheek. Aylmer secludes his wife in his laboratory, where he had diligently studied “the wonders of the human frame” in his youth, attempting

to fathom the very process by which Nature assimilates all her precious influences from earth and air, and from the spiritual world, to create and foster Man, her masterpiece. The latter pursuit, however, Aylmer had long laid aside, in unwilling recognition of the truth, against which all seekers sooner or later stumble, that our great creative Mother, while she amuses us with apparently working in the broadest sunshine, is yet

severely careful to keep her own secrets, and, in spite of her pretended openness, shows us nothing but results. She permits us indeed, to mar, but seldom to mend, and, like a jealous patentee, on no account to make. (42)

In Aylmer's youth, the narrator claims, he had sought to discover the secret of the creative essence of the universe in order to create a being through his own powers; in short, Aylmer desired to rival God. The narrator also notes that Aylmer has now resumed his "half-forgotten investigations; not, of course, with such hopes or wishes as first suggested them; but because they involved much physiological truth, and lay in the path of his proposed scheme for the treatment of Georgiana" (43). Rather than resume his former attempts to rival God, Aylmer now desires to control and perfect that which He has already created.

As time progresses, Georgiana begins to fancy that she feels "a stirring up of her system,—a strange indefinite sensation creeping through her veins, and tingling, half painfully, half pleurably, at her heart" (48). The narrator notes that when she looks in the mirror and discerns the birthmark, "Not even Aylmer now hated it so much as she" (48), reiterating again the way in which she has imbibed her husband's perception and has become concerned only with the ideal. She then considers her husband's character, "and did it completer justice than at any previous moment. Her heart exulted, while it trembled, at his honorable love, so pure and lofty that it would accept nothing less than perfection, nor miserably make itself contented with an earthlier nature than he had dreamed of" (52). She notes that his love is "more precious" because it will not degrade "its perfect idea to the level of the actual" (52). Just before the climactic scene in the tale, Georgiana reiterates two important details: first, that Aylmer's love of science, of the ideal, has dominated all, including his love

of his wife, of the actual, and, second, that she exults in this same love of the ideal, accepting her husband's point of view.

As Aylmer brings Georgiana the draught, she prays "that, for a single moment, she might satisfy his highest and deepest conception. Longer than one moment, she well knew, it could not be; for his spirit was ever on the march—ever ascending—and each instant required something that was beyond the scope of the instant before" (52). Not only does Georgiana realize that she will soon die, but she also indicates an awareness that Aylmer has objectified her in his struggle to ascend heavenward, an objectification which she willingly accepts in her worship of her husband. Indeed, immediately after drinking the potion, Georgiana notes: "My earthly senses are closing over my spirit . . ." (54). Significantly, such an objectification excludes the type of mutual interaction which would have been necessary for a natural mode of reproduction. Aylmer's attitude towards Georgiana excludes the possibility of the shared affection which would have led to the creation of a shared and tangible reality—a child.

While the experiment unfolds, Aylmer sits by his wife's side, "watching her aspect with the emotions proper to a man, the whole value of whose existence was involved in the process now to be tested. Mingled with this mood, however, was the philosophic investigation, characteristic of the man of science. Not the minutest symptom escaped him" (54). As Aylmer records the facts of his experiment, the narrator notes that his emotions are connected only to two things: his reputation (the "whole value" of his existence) and his science. Georgiana becomes merely an object to Aylmer's scientific studies. Indeed, as he sits watching her, Aylmer, for the first time ever, kisses the birthmark: "His spirit recoiled . . . in the very act, and Georgiana, out of the midst of her deep sleep, moved uneasily and murmured, as if in

remonstrance" (54). Not only does Aylmer recoil from such affection, but so, too, does his wife.

Slowly, however, the birthmark on Georgiana's cheek departs. Aylmer then draws aside "the window-curtain, and suffered the light of natural day to fall into the room, and rest upon her cheek" (55). Simultaneously, Aminadab, who represents, according to the narrator, "man's physical nature" (43), lets out a "gross, hoarse chuckle," suggesting that, for the first time, actuality has entered into Aylmer's laboratory (55). While Aylmer tells Aminadab that he has served him well and that both "Matter and Spirit—Earth and Heaven" have "done their part in this," Aylmer is deceiving himself. Earlier, Aminadab had commented, about the experiment: "If she were my wife, I'd never part with that birth-mark" (43). But Aylmer has refused to accept any alternate perceptions such as Aminadab's, indeed attempting to obscure Aminadab's vision through the claim that he has had his part in the experiment.

When Georgiana awakens from her slumber, she first tells Aylmer that she is dying, and then praises him: "You have aimed loftily!—you have done nobly! Do not repent, that, with so high and pure a feeling, you have rejected the best that earth could offer" (55). Mary E. Rucker reads this passage as an indication that Georgiana's praise is similarly Hawthorne's, that while Aylmer's artistic methods might be criticized, he is noble for having aimed so loftily to envision the ideal (453).¹⁰ Yet such a reading fails to note that Georgiana's perception is as corrupt as Aylmer's, that indeed sacrificing the actual to the ideal is to forsake one half of human nature and, more importantly, to forsake any type of interchange between husband and wife. More

10. Several other critics have read Aylmer as a noble character. Thomas Walsh suggests that "Aylmer's love for Georgiana *did*, in fact, prove stronger than his love for science" ("Character Complexity" 13), while Curtis Dahl concludes that Aylmer's actions "are inspired by love and idealism" (57). These critics base their readings on Georgiana's exclamations, which I have demonstrated to be corrupted by Aylmer's idealism.

specifically, what Hawthorne insinuates is that the sacrifice of human love to the love of science is unacceptable in that this science then becomes not only out of touch with the real world (because of its solipsistic pursuit of an ideal) but also, ultimately, destructive of humanity. Failing to enter into a relationship which establishes a true sense of community, where all perceptions are accepted into a type of communal vision, Aylmer forces his singular vision of perfection onto his wife (and onto Aminadab) and thereby guarantees Georgiana's death.¹¹

Like readings of "The Birth-mark," few of those on "Rappaccini's Daughter" have fully explored the connection between Rappaccini's status as a godlike scientist and his status as an artist. While several critics have indeed aptly demonstrated the way in which Dr. Rappaccini creates his own world and thus rivals God, only Robert Shulman, who calls the doctor "more like an artist than a scientist" (222), and Don Parry Norford, who notes that "Rappaccini may be seen as the artist-writer, and his garden as that neutral territory in which allegory flourishes" (173), have made a direct, though tenuous, connection between Rappaccini's scientific exploration and any type of artistic aspiration.¹² Yet central to "Rappaccini's Daughter," like "The Birth-mark," is a conflict between two particular modes of literary production—one concerned solely with envisioning the ideal, and the other concerned with envisioning the actual. Because both modes are exclusive of each other, they fail to represent a communal vision which offers a balanced perspective.

11. Significantly, Georgiana's nature intermixes earth and spirit and thus represents the balance which Aylmer refuses. For a detailed description of Georgiana's character, see Nathan Cervo (19), Judith Fetterly (169), and Elizabeth R. Napier (32-33).

12. Several critics have noted the way in which Rappaccini usurps the role of God, including Oliver Evans (187), William H. Shurr (151-52), and Jane Carter Webb (60).

The “translator” states in the preface that as a writer, Aubépine (a translation of Hawthorne’s name into French and the fictionalized author of the tale presented here as “Rappaccini’s Daughter”)

seems to occupy an unfortunate position between the Transcendentalists (who, under one name or another, have their share in all the current literature of the world), and the great body of pen-and-ink men who address the intellect and sympathies of the multitude. If not too refined, at all events too remote, too shadowy and unsubstantial in his modes of development, to suit the taste of the latter class, and yet too popular to satisfy the spiritual and metaphysical requisitions of the former, he must necessarily find himself without an audience; except here and there an individual, or possibly an isolated clique. (X: 91)

The preface suggests that Aubépine occupies a middle ground between the Transcendentalists, who are concerned with the ideal, and the great “body” of more popular artists, who are concerned with the actual (in the form of sympathy with the multitude). In such a description, Hawthorne delineates two modes of writing, represented in the tale in the clash between the characters of Dr. Rappaccini and Dr. Baglioni, which the purported author, Aubépine, attempts to mitigate.

Yet he also suggests that in addition to a concern with modes of writing is a concern with modes of reading and analyzing an artistic subject. The preface explains that Aubépine’s works, “if the reader chance to take them in precisely the proper point of view, may amuse a leisure hour as well as those of a brighter man; if otherwise, they can hardly fail to look excessively like nonsense” (92). Thus, “Rappaccini’s Daughter” can either provide both entertainment and a moral if the reader takes the proper perspective or, if the reader fails to take this perspective, look like nothing but

"nonsense." To explain the nature of such a perspective, the narrator notes that works such as Aubépine's "are not altogether destitute of fancy and originality"; indeed, he admits, "they might have won him greater reputation but for an inveterate love of allegory, which is apt to invest his plots and characters with the aspect of scenery and people in the clouds, and to steal away the human warmth out of his conceptions" (91-92). The narrator of the preface here suggests, in discussing Aubépine's reputation and thus the connection between his readers and his works, two different relationships between an audience and a work of art, one based on the singular imagination of an artist and allegorical in nature and the other based on the warmth deriving from interaction between the artist and audience.

To demonstrate the conflict between these two modes of reading, Hawthorne depicts Giovanni, the outseting artist, as he attempts to comprehend what occurs in the tale.¹³ The narrator of the preface explains that the fourth character of the tale, Beatrice, is the text over which such a conflict occurs. The narrator notes that "The ensuing tale is a translation of [Aubépine's] '*Beatrice; ou la Belle Empoisonneuse*'" (93). As Mary Cappello notes, the title "embodies a multiplicity of meanings"; for instance, the main title suggests that the tale is about a character, Beatrice, while the subtitle suggests two possibilities, that the tale is about "A Woman Poisoned" or about "A Fair Poisoner" (265). Indeed, these varying meanings represent the different ways in which Giovanni might read Rappaccini's daughter (and thus in which Hawthorne's reader might read "Rappaccini's Daughter"). He might see her as a human being, "Beatrice," with a complex nature which intermixes good and evil (much like

13. Morton L. Ross pioneered discussion on Giovanni's role as a reader in 1971. Since then, both John Downton Hazlett and Deborah L. Jones have suggested that Giovanni, as a Transcendentalist, misreads Beatrice's complex nature. Unlike all three of these readings, which center only on Giovanni's role as a reader, I will develop the way in which this role fits into the larger context of Hawthorne's aesthetic.

Georgiana's character), or he might read her allegorically, attempting to discern a direct correspondence between his perception of Beatrice and a simplified explanation of that perception.

The tale proper begins with a description of Giovanni Guasconti, a young student who arrives from southern Italy to study at the University of Padua. The narrator notes that Giovanni knows Dante's *Divine Comedy*, thus suggesting that he has an allegorical turn of mind. Outside of the "high and gloomy chamber" in which Giovanni takes residence lies a garden which Lisabetta, the caretaker of the apartment, tells Giovanni "is cultivated by the own hands of Signor Giacomo Rappaccini . . ." (94). Introducing the motif of hands in the tale, Lisabetta demonstrates Rappaccini's control of his garden, a control described in terms similar to those used to describe Aylmer's control of Georgiana in "The Birth-mark." At this point, Giovanni begins to read the garden; the narrator notes that he judges it "to be one of those botanic gardens, which were of earlier date in Padua than elsewhere in Italy, or in the world" (94).

Giovanni concentrates his gaze on a ruined fountain, a constant symbol of art in Hawthorne's works, which lies "in the centre [of the garden], sculptured with rare art, but so woefully shattered that it was impossible to trace the original design from the chaos of remaining fragments. The water, however, continued to gush and sparkle into the sunbeams as cheerfully as ever" (94). Significantly, the fountain as a whole, with its shattered base and pure water, represents an intermixture of the actual and the ideal, just as Georgiana, with her birthmark and pure beauty, does in "The Birth-mark." Yet Giovanni, with his allegorical turn of mind, fails to take the proper point of view towards the fountain, as a representative of art, and perceives only one aspect of its nature, its ideal nature; the narrator notes that Giovanni feels "as if the fountain were an immortal spirit" (94). In addition to the fountain, Giovanni notes "one shrub in

particular, set in a marble vase in the midst of the pool, that bore a profusion of purple blossoms . . . so resplendent that it seemed enough to illuminate the garden, even had there been no sunshine" (95). In stark contrast to the fountain, the shrub, which survives off of the water from the fountain and is purple in color, does indeed represent only the ideal world; indeed, the narrator notes that its illumination is so great that it could substitute for the sun (a representative of the actual).

At this point the tale turns away from Giovanni's incipient reading of the garden to a description of Rappaccini, "a tall, emaciated, sallow, and sickly-looking man, dressed in a scholar's garb of black. He [had] . . . a face singularly marked with intellect and cultivation, but which could never, even in his more youthful days, have expressed much warmth of heart" (95). The narrator continues:

Nothing could exceed the intentness with which this scientific gardener examined every shrub which grew in his path; it seemed as if he was looking into their inmost nature, making observations in regard to their creative essence Nevertheless, in spite of this deep intelligence on his part, there was no approach to intimacy between himself and these vegetable existences. On the contrary, he avoided their actual touch, or the direct inhaling of their odors (95-96)

In these descriptions, the narrator suggests that Rappaccini's project, like Aylmer's project in his youth, is to grasp the creative essence of the universe, thus obtaining the ability to rival God. Significantly, such a depiction reveals Rappaccini as an artist-figure who strives only after the ideal, one who fails to establish any intimacy with his subjects and thus any contact with the actual. Indeed, the narrator notes that as Rappaccini works his hands are "defended . . . with a pair of thick gloves" (96).

The narrator then returns to Giovanni's perception of Rappaccini, noting that "It was strangely frightful to the young man's imagination, to see this air of insecurity in a person cultivating a garden Was this garden, then, the Eden of the present world?—and this man, with such a perception of harm in what his own hands caused to grow, was he the Adam?" (96). Giovanni's reference to the Garden of Eden, like the earlier reference to his knowledge of Dante, has suggested to critics several meaningful allegorical correspondences between these earlier texts and "Rappaccini's Daughter."¹⁴ Yet the point of these references, when taken in connection with the warning in the preface about the tendency to over-allegorize, is not to suggest that the reader should allegorize the tale but rather to demonstrate that Giovanni has a propensity for such a method of reading. His overly frightful imagination searches for some ideal correspondence to the physical facts that he sees, rather than accepting the possibility that the ideal and the actual can exist side by side, as they do in the shattered fountain and as they might in any human.

After working in his garden a short while, Rappaccini calls his daughter, Beatrice, who responds in "a voice as rich as a tropical sunset" (96). Comparing Beatrice to a sunset suggests that she, like the fountain, constitutes a balance between the imaginative world (night) and the real world (day); yet Giovanni, upon hearing this voice, can only "think of deep hues of purple or crimson, and of perfumes heavily delectable" (96-97). Again the tale emphasizes the way in which Giovanni, thinking only of purple (a color symbolic of the imagination), reveals his allegorical turn of

14. Several critics have explored, fruitfully, I believe, the relationship between "Rappaccini's Daughter" and Dante, including David L. Cowles, Lois A. Cuddy, and Lloyd Spencer Thomas. Others have demonstrated Hawthorne's inversion of the Garden of Eden, including Millicent Bell (21-24), Oliver Evans, and William H. Shurr (151-55). Each of these readings admit the complexity of the allegory, the way in which Hawthorne complicates his version of the original text—and each is convincing in itself. As both Beverly Haviland and Deborah L. Jones have noted, and as I develop in my reading, such complications arise out of Hawthorne's special use of and attitude toward allegory.

mind. The narrator then provides a detailed description of Beatrice, who “looked redundant with life, health, and energy; all of which attributes were bound down and compressed, as it were, and girdled tensely, in their luxuriance, by her virgin zone” (97). Like the central mark of Georgiana’s existence in “The Birth-mark,” a mark linked to her ability to reproduce naturally, Beatrice herself epitomizes human life and natural reproduction. As Thomas Walsh concludes, in this “fallen” garden, humans have lost their “sexual innocence” and are thus no longer merely good, a fact which Giovanni, with his desire to idealize Beatrice, cannot accept (“Rappaccini’s Literary Gardens” 10-12).¹⁵

Yet just as Aylmer in the earlier tale aspired only to control the mark, inscribing it in his own type of ideal creative production, Giovanni not only fails to accept this aspect of Beatrice’s existence, as Walsh claims, but he even fails to perceive it, thus stealing away the possible human warmth of their relationship. The narrator notes, immediately after the description of Beatrice, that “Giovanni’s fancy must have grown morbid, while he looked down into the garden; for the impression which the fair stranger made upon him was as if here were another flower, the human sister of those vegetable ones, as beautiful as they—more beautiful than the richest of them—but still to be touched only with a glove . . .” (97). Here, Giovanni begins his simplified reading of Beatrice; rather than perceiving the possible complexity of her human nature, Giovanni compares Beatrice to the flowers of the garden which have already been noted for their sole connection to the ideal. Instead of understanding her existence in terms of the fountain, with its shattered base and pure water, its intermixture of the

15. As Mitsu Yoshida notes, Rappaccini’s experiment on Beatrice might be seen as his attempt to understand “the mystery of the reproductive system and to control female sexuality, that is, to take over God’s place” (19).

actual and the ideal, Giovanni's point of view remains very limited and very simplified.

After Beatrice arrives at her father's side, he instructs her to care for the purple shrub, to which she readily agrees, embracing and kissing it. The narrator notes that Giovanni, "at his lofty window, rubbed his eyes, and almost doubted whether it were a girl tending her favorite flower, or one sister performing the duties of affection to another" (98). Not only does Giovanni immediately read the scene allegorically, but he reads it from a distance, separated from any intimate contact with what occurs below him. His turn of mind causes him to dream, that night, "of a rich flower and a beautiful girl. Flower and maiden were different and yet the same, and fraught with some strange peril in either shape" (98). As Beverly Haviland explains, the allegorical construction maintains "the difference between text and life" (279); yet, as Haviland does not note, such a construction at the same time suggests an intimate, one to one correspondence between text and life, here, between flower and maiden. More importantly, Giovanni, rather than perceiving the complexity of Beatrice's character, its possible mixture of good and evil, reads it with a single correspondence: flower and maiden are evil. Just as Aylmer had refused to accept Georgiana's human nature, with its perfections and its flaws, Giovanni cannot accept the possibility that Beatrice might also have such a complex nature.

The following morning, Giovanni reads the garden under vastly different circumstances but with the same turn of mind. The narrator notes that "there is an influence in the light of morning that tends to rectify whatever errors of fancy, or even of judgment, we may have incurred during the sun's decline, or among the shadows of the night, or in the less wholesome glow of moonshine" (98). Thus, the sun, a symbol of actuality, provides a corrective to Giovanni's overly imaginative reading of the

garden scene. He opens his window and gazes "down into the garden which his dreams had made so fertile of mysteries. He was surprised, and a little ashamed, to find how real and matter-of-fact an affair it proved to be, in the first rays of the sun, which . . . brought everything within the limits of ordinary experience" (98). Yet, this second perception, like the first, is also a misreading, for, while it concentrates on the actual and not the imaginative side of the scene below his window, this reading also fails to comprehend the garden's true complexity, which, with the fountain at its center, is an intermixture of the actual and the ideal. Giovanni consistently searches for a single allegorical correspondence to his perceptions.

Thus far, the tale has not only introduced the way in which Rappaccini is described as a godlike figure, a rival to God as Creator, but also the way in which Giovanni's reading of the garden scene is strictly allegorical, failing to comprehend the multiplicity of meanings that might exist scattered below him. At this point, Giovanni ventures forth into the streets of Padua to meet a friend of his father's, Signor Pietro Baglioni, who is "professor of medicine in the University" (99). Unlike Rappaccini, who apparently experiments on his plants in his isolated garden, Baglioni is connected to the community of Padua because of his work at the university. With such a depiction, the narrator suggests that Rappaccini and Baglioni represent two different modes of creativity, one which centers on isolation from humanity in its concern for the ideal and the other which centers on connection to the surrounding community and thus on actuality. These two modes become linked to the two types of writers, the Transcendentalists and the pen-and-ink men, who, according to the narrator of the preface, Aubépine falls between.

When Giovanni asks his father's friend about Rappaccini, Baglioni responds that others claim, and he "can answer for its truth," that Rappaccini "cares infinitely

more for science than for mankind. His patients are interesting to him only as subjects for some new experiment. He would sacrifice human life, his own among the rest, or whatever else was dearest to him, for the sake of adding so much as a grain of mustard-seed to the great heap of his accumulated knowledge" (99-100). While the narrator later notes that Giovanni might have taken this information "with many grains of allowance, had he known that there was a professional warfare" between the two doctors (100), because this piece of information corroborates the narrator's earlier description, this portrait of Rappaccini is probably accurate in the sense that Rappaccini apparently does care primarily about science. Giovanni proceeds to ask if Rappaccini's is "not a noble spirit? Are there many men capable of so spiritual a love of science?" (100). Just as Georgiana had mistakenly accepted Aylmer's heartfelt love of science, and come to worship him because of this love, Giovanni here suggests a similar mistaken reading of Rappaccini's character and concerns. Giovanni immediately evaluates Rappaccini in very simple terms: either he is demonic or he is noble.

Influenced by Baglioni's descriptions of Rappaccini's "exclusive zeal for science" (100-101), his concern only with the ideal, Giovanni once again reads the garden using his overzealous imagination. Like references to overindulgence in the imagination in "The Devil in Manuscript," Hawthorne here emphasizes Giovanni's resumed imaginative state with references to inebriation: "Guasconti returned to his lodgings somewhat heated with the wine he had quaffed, and which caused his brain to swim with strange fantasies in reference to Doctor Rappaccini and the beautiful Beatrice" (101). Significantly, Giovanni, in this state of mind, perceives Beatrice in the garden a second time. He notes that he sees an "expression of simplicity and sweetness" in Beatrice's face, "qualities which had not entered into his idea of her character, and which made him ask anew, what manner of mortal might she be" (102).

Giovanni indicates, here, what he considers his central task: to read what type of figure he has found in this garden. And once again, as he begins to read Beatrice, he indicates that such a reading will be allegorical: "Nor did he fail again to observe, or imagine, an analogy between the beautiful girl and the gorgeous shrub that hung its gem-like flowers over the fountain" (102).

During this second garden scene, while Giovanni gazes at Beatrice from his lofty window, several curious incidents occur, including the apparent deaths of a lizard and an insect and the withering of a fresh bouquet of flowers, all from proximity to Beatrice. Because of his distance (literal and symbolic) from these scenes, Giovanni cannot perceive what truly happens and must interpret what occurs below him, which he does under the influence of his imaginative faculties. He concludes: "What is this being?—beautiful, shall I call her?—or inexpressibly terrible?" (103). For Giovanni, whose perceptions have been shown to be rather simple throughout the tale, only one of these two possibilities can exist in his reading of Beatrice. Ultimately, Giovanni comes to view Beatrice as a poisonous, and thus dangerous, being, which leaves him, according to the narrator, essentially two courses of action. He might "have accustomed himself, as far as possible, to the familiar and day-light view of Beatrice; thus bringing her rigidly and systematically within the limits of ordinary experience" (105). This avenue, to emphasize not the imaginative but the actual, parallels what becomes Baglioni's method of dealing with Beatrice. The other course would be for Giovanni, "while avoiding her sight," "to have remained so near this extraordinary being, that the proximity and possibility even of intercourse, should give a kind of substance and reality to the wild vagaries which his imagination ran riot continually producing" (105). The narrator suggests that this second avenue, to emphasize only

the imaginative, would be the least safe because it would allow the imaginative to replace the real.

Like Giovanni, the narrator mistakenly suggests that only two methods of reading Beatrice exist, readings which interpret her as either an angel or as a demon. Rather than comprehending the complexity of Beatrice's human nature, which might be a mixture of good and evil characteristics, the narrator only suggests reading her allegorically. Thus, the narrator's reading of Beatrice, like Giovanni's, becomes suspect from this point forward. The narrator concludes, about Giovanni, that he "had not a deep heart—or at all events, its depths were not sounded now—but he had a quick fancy" (105), again suggesting that Giovanni will fail to read Beatrice from his heart, that is, to interact with her on a level which accepts her complex, human nature, but will rather read her allegorically.¹⁶

At this point, Giovanni ventures forth into the streets of Padua "to assuage the fever of his spirit," his footsteps keeping "time with the throbbings of his brain" (105). During his walk, he is "arrested; his arm was seized by [the] portly personage" of Dr. Baglioni (106). Using his hand to grasp Giovanni's arm, Baglioni reveals that he will begin to experiment on Giovanni. Unexpectedly, however, Rappaccini walks by and fixes his eyes intently on Giovanni, "as if taking merely a speculative, not a human, interest in the young man" (107). Baglioni tells Giovanni that

this man of science is making a study of you. I know that look of his! It is the same that coldy illuminates his face, as he bends over a bird, a mouse, or a butterfly, which, in pursuance of some experiment, he has

16. While the narrator's reading of Beatrice is subject to suspicion, these comments concerning Giovanni, like others describing Rappaccini and Baglioni, have been corroborated in other ways in the tale and thus remain credible. Significantly, only in relation to Beatrice—whom Hawthorne sets up as a text to be interpreted in the tale—are the narrator's comments unreliable.

killed by the perfume of a flower;—a look as deep as Nature itself, but without Nature's warmth of love. . . . you are the subject of one of Rappaccini's experiments! (107)

Giovanni, certain that Baglioni is fooling him, breaks away "before the Professor could again seize his arm" (107). While Baglioni seemingly loses control of Giovanni, he muses to himself that "it is too insufferable an impertinence in Rappaccini, thus to snatch the lad out of my own hands, as I may say, and make use of him for his infernal experiments. This daughter of his! It shall be looked to" (108). Baglioni reveals that his own experimentation, like that of Dr. Rappaccini, will center on Giovanni's relation to Beatrice.¹⁷

When Giovanni returns home, Lisabetta lays "her grasp upon his cloak" and tells him of "a private entrance into the garden" (108). Giovanni realizes that Lisabetta is very probably under the orders of Rappaccini, but this knowledge fails to restrain him. The narrator notes:

The instant that [Giovanni] was aware of the possibility of approaching Beatrice, it seemed an absolute necessity of his existence to do so. It mattered not whether she were angel or demon; he was irrevocably within her sphere, and must obey the law that whirled him onward, in ever lessening circles, towards a result which he did not attempt to foreshadow. (109)

Just after conceding that only two readings of Beatrice exist, Giovanni momentarily wonders if "this intense interest on his part were not delusory . . . whether it were not

17. As Martin Karlow notes, Giovanni vacillates between two types of perception, one based on dreaming and controlled by Dr. Rappaccini and the other based on wakefulness and controlled by Dr. Baglioni (122-28). Karlow does not, however, make the connection between these perceptions and Hawthorne's aesthetic.

merely the fantasy of a young man's brain, only slightly, or not at all, connected with his heart" (109). Again, the tale emphasizes that Giovanni can only read allegorically and that his heart is not connected to his relationship with Beatrice.

As Giovanni descends into the garden, the narrator notes Giovanni's desire to snatch "from her full gaze the mystery which he deemed the riddle of his own existence" (110). While in the garden alone, he inspects the various plants which have the "appearance of artificialness, indicating that there had been such commixture, and, as it were, adultery of various vegetable species, that the production was no longer of God's making, but the monstrous offspring of man's depraved fancy, glowing with only an evil mockery of beauty" (110). When Beatrice enters, she explains to Giovanni that if her father "were here, he could tell you many strange and interesting facts as to the nature and habits of these shrubs, for he has spent a life-time in such studies, and this garden is his world" (111), further developing the way in which Rappaccini, in creating his garden, has rivalled God. When Giovanni claims that "if fame says true" then Beatrice herself knows as much about her father's science, she claims to know nothing: "pray, Signor, do not believe these stories about my science. Believe nothing of me save what you see with your own eyes" (111).

Unfortunately, what Giovanni has seen with his eyes has led him to interpret Beatrice's character as evil. So he tells Beatrice "you demand too little of me. Bid me believe nothing, save what comes from your own lips" (111-12). Beatrice, understanding Giovanni's insinuation, agrees:

I do so bid you, Signor! . . . Forget whatever you may have fancied in regard to me. If true to the outward senses, still it may be false in its essence. But the words of Beatrice Rappaccini's lips are true from the depths of the heart outward. Those you may believe! (112)

Beatrice thus indicates that Giovanni's previous reading, based on the imagination and allegorical in method, fails to comprehend her character because Giovanni has been incapable of accepting a divergence in the inner and the outer aspects of Beatrice's nature. Seeking a direct, one-to-one correspondence in the text he reads, and thus simplifying that text, Giovanni has failed, thus far, to establish a relationship with Beatrice that originates from the heart, one that would accept her as a complex human being.

Giovanni suddenly feels as if "the light of truth itself" beams upon his consciousness, yet he remains reluctant to breathe the air around him, thus suggesting that he has not yet divorced himself of his former misapprehensions (112). The narrator notes that "A faintness passed like a shadow over Giovanni, and flitted away; he seemed to gaze through the beautiful girl's eyes into her transparent soul, and felt no more doubt or fear" (112). Just after Beatrice's admonition to listen to the words issuing from her lips, Giovanni, using his sight as he has done throughout the tale, gazes into Beatrice's eyes and reads her as an angel. Indeed, this ideal reading is emphasized when the narrator notes that Beatrice's "spirit gushed out before [Giovanni] like a fresh rill" (113). Giovanni momentarily wonders at the fact that he now walks beside "the being who had so wrought upon his imagination—whom he had idealized in such hues of terror," a being he now finds "so human and so maiden-like" (113).

Their first interview ends when Giovanni attempts to pluck a blossom from the purple shrub "with extended hand" and Beatrice restrains him (113). She tells him "Touch it not! . . . Not for thy life! It is fatal!" and flees (114). When Giovanni returns to his room, he resumes his consideration of her character, a consideration which, "invested with all the witchery that had been gathering around it ever since his first

glimpse of her," was "now likewise imbued with a tender warmth of girlish womanhood. She was human: her nature was endowed with all gentle and feminine qualities; she was worthiest to be worshipped . . ." (114). While it appears that Giovanni now perceives Beatrice as a human being, and thus reads her with the warmth of his heart, his emphasis on worshipping her suggests rather that he perceives her as an angel and that he still reads her with his imagination. Indeed, the narrator notes that Giovanni's love is "that cunning semblance of love which flourishes in the imagination, but strikes no depth of root into the heart" (115).¹⁸

In the grip of this shallow love, Giovanni receives a visit from Baglioni, who repeats to Giovanni a tale about an "Indian prince, who sent a beautiful woman as a present to Alexander the Great" (117). Baglioni explains that this woman "had been nourished with poisons from her birth upward, until her whole nature was so imbued with them, that she herself had become the deadliest poison in existence. Poison was her element of life" (117). When Giovanni attempts to quell the suspicions which Baglioni raises about Beatrice, Baglioni insists that the tale about the beautiful woman has come true in the character of Beatrice: "Her father . . . was not restrained by natural affection from offering up his child, in this horrible manner, as the victim of his insane zeal for science. For . . . he is as true a man of science as ever distilled his own heart in an alembic" (119). Baglioni explains that Rappaccini's heart, like Aylmer's, has room only for his love of science. Furthermore, Baglioni insists, Giovanni himself is "selected as the material of some new experiment" (119).

When Giovanni refuses to believe Baglioni's explanations of Beatrice's character, Baglioni assures him that it is not too late to rescue her: "Possibly, we may

18. David L. Cowles (14-15), Richard B. Hovey (140-41), and Terence Martin (*Nathaniel Hawthorne* 88-89) note the effect of Giovanni's shallowness of heart on his relationship with Beatrice.

even succeed in bringing back this miserable child within the limits of ordinary nature, from which her father's madness has estranged her" (119). In addition to demonstrating that Rappaccini, whose heart has been purified in an alembic, is concerned in his creativity only with the ideal, Baglioni reveals that his own creativity concerns only the actual—to bring Beatrice out of Rappaccini's "ideal" world and back within the realm of "ordinary nature." Baglioni, like Rappaccini and Giovanni, fails to accept the intermixture of good and evil that constitutes Beatrice's character. After giving Giovanni an antidote for Beatrice, Baglioni departs, "leaving what he had said to produce its effect upon the young man's mind" (119).

As the narrator notes, though Giovanni had once perceived Beatrice as demonic, with her stinging touch and poisonous breath, he had come to reread her, after their many interviews in the garden, as an angel. Yet Baglioni's insinuations begin to infect his mind: "now, his spirit was incapable of sustaining itself at the height to which the early enthusiasm of passion had exalted it; he fell down, grovelling among earthly doubts, and defiled therewith the pure whiteness of Beatrice's image" (120). Giovanni decides that he will test Beatrice once and for all, determining "whether there were those dreadful peculiarities in her physical nature, which could not be supposed to exist without some corresponding monstrosity of soul" (120). Again, Giovanni reveals his allegorical turn of mind in suggesting that Beatrice's spiritual nature must correspond directly with her physical nature. Yet such a reading, as the preface notes, steals away the very warmth of Beatrice's character and any possibility of a true relationship between the two.

In preparation for his next interview with Beatrice, Giovanni buys a bouquet of fresh flowers, only to discover them wilting in his hand. Convinced that Beatrice has

insinuated her poison into his system, Giovanni rushes down to his interview in a state of wrath. Yet "with her actual presence," the narrator notes,

there came influences which had too real an existence to be at once shaken off; recollections of the delicate and benign power of her feminine nature, which had so often enveloped him in a religious calm; recollections of many a holy and passionate outgush of her heart, when the pure fountain had been unsealed from its depths . . . recollections which, had Giovanni known how to estimate them, would have assured him that all this ugly mystery was but an earthly illusion, and that, whatever mist of evil might seem to have gathered over her, the real Beatrice was a heavenly angel. (122)

Significantly, Giovanni does not interpret the feminine and human qualities of Beatrice's character as important in and of themselves to understanding her nature but rather as links to ideal correspondences. Furthermore, the narrator, whose tendency to allegorize was noted earlier, mistakenly supports such a reading in concluding that Beatrice is an angel rather than suggesting an alternate relation, a more human relation, to Beatrice. As John Hazlett has noted, while Giovanni might read Beatrice as a demon and the narrator might read her as an angel, "Both readings are allegorical" (61).

During their interview, Beatrice explains to Giovanni that her father created the shrub at the same time that she "first drew breath": the "plant sprang from the soil, the offspring of his science, of his intellect, while I was but his earthly child" (123). She reveals that her "awful doom" has been "the effect of my father's fatal love of science," a science which has "estranged me from all society of my kind" (123). Giovanni then turns to Beatrice and suggests that she in turn poisoned him: "And finding thy solitude wearisome, thou hast severed me, likewise, from all the warmth of life, and enticed me

into thy region of unspeakable horror!" (124). Giovanni blames Beatrice for the lack of warmth that exists between them and reveals the way in which he will read her: as an evil being who must be reviled. But Beatrice counteracts these charges, explaining that it was her "father's fatal science" that poisoned Giovanni and that her only intention was to love him "a little time" before letting him "pass away" (125). She concludes, revealing the complexity of her human nature which Giovanni has consistently ignored: "For, Giovanni—believe it!—though my body be nourished with poison, my spirit is God's creature, and craves love as its daily food" (125). The words from Beatrice's lips, the words which Giovanni promised to believe, fully reveal her nature.

Yet Giovanni fails, as he has done throughout the tale, to comprehend this nature, and he determines to attempt Baglioni's antidote with the "hope of his returning within the limits of ordinary nature, and leading Beatrice—the redeemed Beatrice—by the hand" (125-26). Giovanni proffers the antidote to Beatrice, who willingly accepts it from his hand, just as Georgiana had accepted Aylmer's draught. After she drinks the antidote, her father enters and "seemed to gaze with a triumphant expression at the beautiful youth and maiden, as might an artist who should spend his life in achieving a picture or a group of statuary, and finally be satisfied with his success" (126). The comparison of Rappaccini to an artist reveals one of Hawthorne's thematic concerns in "Rappaccini's Daughter," a concern with a particular mode of artistic creation. The narrator notes that after the scientist's "bent frame grew erect with conscious power, he spread out his hands over them, in the attitude of a father imploring a blessing upon his children" (126). Rappaccini confirms the claims of both Beatrice and Baglioni that Giovanni has become the object of Rappaccini's science in his desire to control the subjects of his art.

Indeed, Rappaccini tells Beatrice that Giovanni is her “bridegroom”: “My science, and the sympathy between thee and him, have so wrought within his system, that he now stands apart from common men, as thou dost, daughter of my pride and triumph, from ordinary women. Pass on, then, through the world, most dear to one another, and dreadful to all besides!” (127). While several critics have suggested a variety of conclusions about the result that Rappaccini desired from his experiment, what remains clear is that Rappaccini’s desire to be reputed as the creator of a new race, set apart from all humanity, drives his scientific explorations. After explaining to both Giovanni and her father that she “would fain have been loved, not feared,” Beatrice falls to the ground, dying (127). She tells Giovanni: “Thy words of hatred are like lead within my heart—but they, too, will fall away as I ascend. Oh, was there not, from the first, more poison in thy nature than in mine?” (127). Again, Beatrice indicates the complexity of human nature and thus the necessity of more than an allegorical reading in order to understand that nature.

In explaining her death, the narrator concludes that, because Beatrice’s “earthly part [had] been wrought upon by Rappaccini’s skill” so radically, “the powerful antidote was death. And thus the poor victim of man’s ingenuity and of thwarted nature, and of the fatality that attends all such efforts of perverted wisdom, perished there, at the feet of her poor father and Giovanni” (127-28). Suddenly, Baglioni appears at the window and calls forth, “in a tone of triumph mixed with horror, to the thunder-stricken man of science” in the garden below: “Rappaccini! Rappaccini! And is *this* the upshot of your experiment?” (128). In his desire to rescue Beatrice from the ideal world, the realm of Dr. Rappaccini, and to return her to the actual world, his own realm, Baglioni reveals his complicity in Beatrice’s death. In this conclusion, Hawthorne reveals that both creative methods, and by extension both methods of

relating to human beings, are destructive. Just as Aylmer had objectified Georgiana in his experimentation on her, Rappaccini and Baglioni perceive Beatrice as merely an object of their scientific creativity.

On the other hand, in exploring Giovanni's relationship with Beatrice, Hawthorne suggests that artistic works might be read with the warmth one accords fellow human beings in order to comprehend their complex natures. Yet Giovanni is not merely a reader in "Rappaccini's Daughter," for he does come to Padua as a student of science, and thus as an outsetting artist attempting to determine what type of relationship he will establish with his subject. Unfortunately, like the painter of "The Prophetic Pictures," and like both Rappaccini and Baglioni, Giovanni, with his shallow heart and even shallower character, ultimately establishes a merely objective relationship with Beatrice. Failing to comprehend her human nature, Giovanni fails to perceive that he might have adopted an alternative, natural mode of creation with Beatrice.

Several of the artist tales of the 1840s thus reveal Hawthorne's continuing concern with the artist who rises above humanity, not only becoming a godlike figure but also becoming coldly detached from any type of community. Yet in the 1840s Hawthorne's conception of such an artist has become more complex in two ways: first, Hawthorne demonstrates, in direct reaction to the Transcendentalists, that the detachment of the artist might result from an overindulgence in the ideal world; and, second, he suggests that the corrective to such a detachment might come from the artist's ability to establish some type of relationship with a community, and more specifically with a woman. The significant aspect of such a relationship, as both "The Birth-mark" and "Rappaccini's Daughter" suggest, is its ability to temper the strivings of the imagination. Yet while "The Birth-mark" clearly shows that this relationship

must be based on more than simply an "idea," because these tales are negative depictions of artists, neither "The Birth-mark" nor "Rappaccini's Daughter" define the exact nature of the relationship between the artist and the woman so necessary to mitigate the ideal and the real. Such a definition only occurs in tales like "Drowne's Wooden Image" and "The Artist of the Beautiful," the subjects of my next chapter, where Hawthorne depicts artists who establish meaningful relationships with women and thereby successfully create art.

Chapter Six

Tales of the 1840s: The Artist as Human

In the artist tales of the 1840s, Hawthorne squarely confronted the central dilemma that his relationship to his wife, Sophia Peabody, and the Transcendentalist community that surrounded him had raised. In defining a specific type of human love between the artist and a female figure, Hawthorne established a viable resolution to the artist's need of remaining attached to the actual, to humanity, even while depending on the imagination and ascending, like the Paul Pry figure of "Sights from a Steeple," above those to whom his connection is paramount. As Annette K. Baxter suggests, because Hawthorne "felt the ideal artist's function to be the expression of perfection, the more-than-human, he foresaw his necessary detachment from imperfection, from humanity. . . . How to rise above humanity without losing his humaneness appeared to be the recurring problem of Hawthorne's artist" (230-31). Yet critics have summarily concluded that Hawthorne was never capable of proposing such a resolution, that at the moment that his artists and artist-figures become attached to humanity, they necessarily forsake their artistic pursuits. Allen Flint claims that

"marriage, family, and the domestic hearth mark the way for those of Hawthorne's characters who achieve contentment and happiness. At the same time the suggestion recurs throughout Hawthorne's works . . . that such conventional felicity is attained at the price of man's calling, be it art, social reform, or the pursuit of knowledge" (116).

Significantly, Hawthorne's struggle with this dilemma in the 1840s revolves around the relationship between the artist and a woman, who is generally a prospective wife, primarily because, as Rudolph Von Abele has noted, these tales were written during the Old Manse period when Hawthorne experienced "simultaneously the pleasures of artistic work and marriage" (43). Hawthorne's own success in balancing his married and artistic lives suggests, despite what critics have claimed, that he certainly had the experience to envision a resolution to this problem.¹ Indeed because he fully understood the dangers of losing his individuality, and thus his art, in marriage, it would seem that formulating a possible resolution might be an important aspect of his creative productivity in the 1840s. As I hope to show, Hawthorne did successfully struggle with the artist's dilemma—his need to remain attached to humanity while creating art and retaining his individuality—in "Drowne's Wooden Image" and did even posit a specific resolution in "The Artist of the Beautiful." Unlike "The Birth-mark" and "Rappaccini's Daughter," where artist-figures objectify their female counterparts and thus coldly distance themselves from humanity, these two tales depict successful artists who find their inspiration, and their attachment to the actual, in a specific form of deep abiding love that allows them to remain individuated.

1. Rudolph Von Abele concludes that such a balance was impossible for Hawthorne as he "was unable to frame an image of himself as artist and as man without splitting the two and putting them into profound opposition, as though the coexistence of the two sides of himself was always an imperfect and equivocal affair" (*The Death of the Artist* 43).

"Drowne's Wooden Image" (1844), occurring "in the good old times of the town of Boston" (X: 306), demonstrates the necessity of love for true artistic creation. The tale opens on a "sunshiny morning" with Drowne, a sculptor of wood, contemplating "a large oaken log" and discussing "within his own mind" what shape it should take (306). Like the three main characters' discussion of Gervayse Hastings in "The Christmas Banquet," Drowne's contemplation of his artistic image is based on an idea. At this moment Captain Hunnewell of "the good brig called the Cynosure" enters and engages Drowne to sculpt a figure-head for his ship (306). When Drowne suggests several images that he might carve for Hunnewell, all of them copied from Drowne's acquaintances, Hunnewell explains that he desires a truly original and unique figure: "as nothing like the brig ever swam the ocean, so I am determined she shall have such a figure-head as old Neptune never saw in his life" (307). Such a delineation of Drowne's next project hints that it will not be based on mimesis and thus that it will allow the artist to become an original and godlike creator. Indeed, the narrator describes Drowne's status as an artist in similar terms to the description of the godlike painter in "The Prophetic Pictures"; the narrator notes that Drowne was "the first American who is known to have attempted,—in a very humble line, it is true,—that art in which we can now reckon so many names already distinguished, or rising to distinction" (307).

Yet very clearly, as a youth, and even up to this period of his adulthood, Drowne merely imitated what he perceived in nature: "From his earliest boyhood, he had exhibited a knack—for it would be too proud a word to call it genius—a knack, therefore, for the imitation of the human figure, in whatever material came most readily to hand" (307). While his snow sculptures as a youth brought him praise, these figures were "destitute of the native warmth that might have made the snow melt beneath his

hand" (308). Thus Drowne, before the opening of the tale, fails as a true godlike creator because he cannot bestow warmth and "life" upon his artistic productions:

there was no inconsiderable skill of hand, nor a deficiency of any attribute to render them really works of art, except that deep quality, be it of soul or intellect, which bestows life upon the lifeless, and warmth upon the cold, and which, had it been present, would have made Drowne's wooden image instinct with spirit. (308-309)

The narrator explains that Drowne's artistic creations up to this point lack life, suggesting that he cannot be considered a godlike creator. Yet the opening passages make clear that Drowne has the potential for such creativity given the proper inspiration.

Indeed, Drowne apparently finds such inspiration when he begins his project for Captain Hunnewell. The narrator explains that Drowne works on his image alone and at night, yet he is often absent during the day (309). Occasionally, when he would open his shop, spectators would gather to see "that a female figure was growing into mimic life" (309). According to these untrained observers, Drowne's figure will only imitate life, not come alive. Yet Copley, a "celebrated painter," offers a different perspective on Drowne's new project (310). After noting that Drowne's previous work failed to imbibe "the ethereal essence of humanity" because he lacked the "one other touch" which would bring his creations to life, Copley hears Drowne's explanation of his newfound inspiration: "there has come a light into my mind. I know, what you know as well, that the one touch, which you speak of as deficient, is the only one that would be truly valuable, and that, without it, these works of mine are no better than worthless abortions" (310-11). Because his earlier work was uninspired and had no

life, Drowne considers them abortions, much like Aylmer's entertaining illusions in "The Birth-Mark."

Yet Copley discerns Drowne's inspiration in his new project; when he observes the image, he comments: "Here is the divine, the life-giving touch! What inspired hand is beckoning this wood arise and live? Whose work is this?" (311). Drowne responds that it is "No man's work" (311), suggesting that he has transcended his earlier status as a craftsman and become a godlike creator, and perhaps even, as Millicent Bell has suggested, a "transcendental" artist (83). Copley then calls Drowne "a man of genius" and prepares to leave; as he crosses the "threshold" of Drowne's shop, he glances back and

beheld Drowne bending over the half created shape, and stretching forth his arms as if he would have embraced and drawn it to his heart; while, had such a miracle been possible, his countenance expressed passion enough to communicate warmth and sensibility to the lifeless oak. (311-12)

The narrator implies that Drowne's inspiration arises out of love, indeed that his love has allowed him to become the creator of this more-than-lifelike image.² Drowne differs sharply from Hawthorne's other ideal and transcendental artists and artist-figures who fail not only to create out of true love for other humans but also to respect them as humans without objectifying them.

The narrator turns to a detailed description of the image, noting the ear-rings, chains, and ring that Drowne has seen fit to ornament his figure with, "all of which would have been deemed beneath the dignity of sculpture" (312). The narrator

2. Several critics have demonstrated the importance of love to Drowne's artistic endeavor, including Millicent Bell (127-34), Harry H. Clark in "Hawthorne's Literary and Aesthetic Doctrines" (268), Thelma J. Shinn (132-33), and Arlin Turner in *Nathaniel Hawthorne* (162).

suggests that Drowne has forsaken the rules of art yet notes that these ornaments "were put on . . . with as much taste as a lovely woman might have shown in her attire, and could therefore have shocked none but a judgment spoiled by artistic rules" (312). Apparently, Drowne has not simply forsaken the rules governing art but has rather transcended those rules, creating, just as Hawthorne has done in this tale, his own aesthetic. Indeed, when Copley sees the final product, he tells Drowne that if the figure had been done in marble, "it would make an era in the art. It is as ideal as an antique statue, and yet as real as any lovely woman whom one meets at a fireside or in the street" (313). Copley aptly defines Drowne's new aesthetic as a balance of the ideal and the real, a balance which is the basis of Hawthorne's own aesthetic in the 1840s.³ More importantly, the aesthetic is one which, while abrogating artistic rules, satisfies those rules of fashion which are determined by society.

When Copley exclaims that Drowne cannot apply paint to such a unique creation, Drowne replies, explaining both his inspiration and his aesthetic:

I know nothing of marble statuary, and nothing of a sculptor's rules of art. But of this wooden image—this work of my hands—this creature of my heart— . . . of this—of her—I may say that I know something. A well-spring of inward wisdom gushed within me, as I wrought upon the oak with my whole strength, and soul, and faith! Let others do what they may with marble, and adopt what rules they choose. If I can produce my desired effect by painted wood, those rules are not for me, and I have a right to disregard them. (313)

3. While Harry H. Clark suggests in his discussion of "Drowne's Wooden Image" in "Hawthorne's Literary and Aesthetic Doctrines" that "love was to [Hawthorne] the alchemy which enabled the artist to interfuse the actual and the ideal" (268), love, as I have shown, is actually the basis for the actual, for the artist's connection to humanity.

Copley calls Drowne's expostulation "The very spirit of genius!" and notes "How otherwise should this carver feel himself entitled to transcend all rules, and make me ashamed of quoting them" (313). Drowne has indeed transcended all rules of art, but he has replaced these rules with a new aesthetic, an aesthetic based on "human love." When Copley looks at Drowne again, he "saw that expression of human love, which, in a spiritual sense, as the artist could not help imagining, was the secret of the life that had been breathed into this block of wood" (314). Copley thus suggests that Drowne has indeed become a godlike creator in his ability to produce an image full of life, but also that Drowne has remained thoroughly human because a deep abiding love has inspired this creative process. Drowne, unlike those isolated artist-figures Aylmer, Giovanni, and Rappaccini, remains in contact with humanity and with the community around him.

Indeed, after completing his figure, Drowne allows the townspeople to observe and admire his creation. At first the townspeople think the image is alive, a testament to Drowne's creative ability, but "Then came a sensation of fear; as if, not being actually human, yet so like humanity, she must therefore be something preternatural" (314). Because they assume that Drowne could not have beheld "in his sober walk of life" such an image, they think that he could not have imitated her likeness from a model and thus consider his work unnatural (314). The townspeople thus demonstrate in their first impression that the image conforms to communally accepted standards and tastes, but they also demonstrate their inability to accept and understand the image when they discover that it is a unique artistic creation. In the concluding scene, when Captain Hunnewell walks down the street to Drowne's shop with the model for Drowne's image, the narrator notes that the "people knew not whether to suppose the magic wood [of Drowne's figure had been] etherealized into a spirit, or warmed and softened

into an actual woman" (317). A "Puritan of the old stamp" claims that "Drowne has sold himself to devil; and doubtless this gay Captain Hunnewell is a party to the bargain" (317). While Michael Wutz accepts such a condemnation of Hunnewell, claiming that he is a satanic figure whose role is to introduce Drowne to sexuality and sin (102-103), Hawthorne clearly suggests that the criticism of the townspeople is misguided. Indeed, as I will show in "The Artist of the Beautiful," Hawthorne understands that an adversarial relationship between the artist and his community might exist simply because of the original nature of the aesthetic from which the image was created.

Upon arriving at Drowne's shop, the Captain and the image pause on the "threshold" before entering once again the artistic realm (317). The narrator notes that "the aged, whose recollections dated as far back as witch-times, shook their heads, and hinted that our forefathers would have thought it a pious deed to burn the daughter of the oak with fire" (318). When Copley enters the shop a short time later, he sees "no longer any motion in the life-like image, nor any real woman in the workshop, nor even the witchcraft of a sunny shadow, that might have deluded people's eyes as it flitted along the street" (318). Yet he hears Hunnewell's voice "on the other side of a door that opened upon the water" as Hunnewell tells his escort to sit in the stern of their boat (318). Copley then understands, as the townspeople do not, that the image in the street was Drowne's model; he tells Drowne how fortunate he has been to have such a subject: "No wonder that she inspired a genius into you, and first created the artist who afterwards created her image" (318-19). As Copley explains, human love has been Drowne's inspiration, allowing him to become a truly original creator.

Yet after the model departs, Drowne loses his inspiration and becomes again the "mechanical carver" in wood, "never known afterwards to deviate" from "his own

mechanical style" (319). The narrator acknowledges that he does not know how to account for this momentary inspiration,

unless on the supposition, that in every human spirit there is imagination, sensibility, creative power, genius, which, according to circumstances, may either be developed in this world, or shrouded in a mask of dulness until another state of being. To our friend Drowne, there came a brief season of excitement, kindled by love. It rendered him a genius for that one occasion . . . (319-20)

Hawthorne shows, in Drowne's one moment of true artistic genius, that love can not only keep the godlike artist in touch with the actual but that it can also inspire the artist to godlike abilities. As the narrator concludes, using the metaphor of ascent: "who can doubt, that the very highest state to which a human spirit can attain, in its loftiest aspirations, is its truest and most natural state, and that Drowne was more consistent with himself when he wrought the admirable figure of the mysterious lady, than when he perpetrated a whole progeny of blockheads?" (320).⁴

Neal Frank Doubleday claims, in his detailed analysis of Hawthorne's early tales, that "Drowne's Wooden Image," as a "tale of an unconsummated love," is not appropriate to the Old Manse period and thus that "the tale is not a treatise in aesthetic theory" (*Hawthorne's Early Tales* 187, 191). Yet such a claim forgets the dilemma facing Hawthorne during this period, his need to maintain his individuality in marriage along with his need to maintain contact with the actual. Clearly Hawthorne felt in the 1840s that marriage might disrupt his ability to create fiction—even, paradoxically,

4. Indeed, Biyot K. Tripathy uses similar imagery in defining Drowne, calling him "the ideal artist who retains his place in society yet soars high enough to fetch the divine life-giving touch to his work" (70).

while he was writing some of his most elaborate and complex short stories.⁵ Thus Hawthorne's resolution to this dilemma might encapsulate this very paradox. In allowing the artist a relationship with a woman based on human warmth and love, Hawthorne demonstrates the importance of contact with the actual, the community, for true creative genius; yet in refusing the artist the consummation of that love, in this tale, Drowne's marriage to the model, he also demonstrates the artist's need to remain individuated.

Such a paradox is critical to an understanding of "The Artist of the Beautiful" (1844), yet critics have consistently misread Owen Warland's intentions in the concluding scene of this tale, just as they have misread the depths of Hawthorne's irony throughout the tale. Like "Rappaccini's Daughter," "The Artist of the Beautiful" is one of Hawthorne's most complex dramatizations of the artist's status and role in society, a complexity which has led to wide disagreement about the meaning of the tale. Two groups of critics have read the tale either as a condemnation of the isolated artist who rejects humanity in his struggle to achieve the ideal or as a romantic apologia for the ideal artist who transcends earthly concerns.⁶ A third group of critics has attempted to establish the way in which Hawthorne offers a balance in the tale between the ideal and the actual and thus tempers any emphasis on either Owen's apparent isolation or his achievement of the ideal.⁷ Such incompatible readings have led one

5. Hawthorne had good reason for such a fear. As Randall Stewart notes, during Hawthorne's courtship of Sophia, "his productivity fell off sharply. There were other reasons to be sure—his employment in the Boston Custom House and at Brook Farm—but the free play of personal emotion seems to have been incompatible with artistic creation" (49).

6. The first group includes such critics as Nina Baym, who claims that Owen is a "woman-hater" (*The Shape of Hawthorne's Career* 110); Millicent Bell (95-109); Richard J. Jacobson (26-27); Claudia Johnson (37); Terence Martin (*Nathaniel Hawthorne* 60-62); and Rudolph Von Abele (40-41). Those who read Owen as a transcendental artist include Nicholas K. Bromwell (551); James W. Gargano (229-30); and Scott Harshbarger (188).

7. Several critics have suggested that Hawthorne carefully constructs a balance between the ideal and the real, including Lesley W. Brill; Sheldon W. Liebman in "Hawthorne's Romanticism"; and R. A. Yoder.

critic to conclude that Hawthorne is not so much ambiguous in the tale, thus intentionally perpetuating a variety of readings, as he is ambivalent.⁸

Significantly, all of these critics base their readings on the apparently omniscient and bipartisan narrator of the tale; yet because of the complex nature of "The Artist of the Beautiful," a complexity very similar to that of "Rappaccini's Daughter" with its unreliable narrator, such a foundation might be seen as rather questionable and perhaps the very reason for the existing disagreement among critics. Indeed, the narrator of "The Artist of the Beautiful" acts as a foil for the characters of Peter Hovendon and Annie and Robert Danforth, the tale's representatives of society who judge and condemn Owen for his artistic pursuits. The narrator, in opposition to these characters, amply praises Owen for what appears to be his attempt to transcend the actual and become a godlike creator, thus, I will suggest, demonstrating not Owen's but rather his own transcendentalist views. Hawthorne very carefully depicts the artist, in the first two thirds of the tale, as apparently vacillating between two realms: the first of which, the realm of art, is based on the ideal and presents Owen, in creating his art object, as assuming godlike abilities, and the second of which, the realm of the useful, is based on the actual and presents Owen, primarily in working on clocks, as assuming merely human capabilities. Yet Hawthorne also interjects in the tale a series of ironic undercurrents which imply that the characterization of the artist as a godlike figure is not plausible and which deconstruct the ideology that frames this characterization, indeed depicting Owen as a human being even in the midst of creating art.⁹

8. See June Howard (1).

9. An earlier draft of my reading of "The Artist of the Beautiful" was published in *American Transcendental Quarterly*; in this earlier essay, space did not allow me to develop the unreliability of the narrator.

The introduction to "The Artist of the Beautiful" sets up the juxtaposition of the ideal and the actual, in the tale a juxtaposition between the beautiful and the useful. Peter Hovendon and his daughter Annie stroll past the shops of Owen Warland, sometime artist and watchmaker, and Robert Danforth, blacksmith, and contrast their various pursuits. The narrator notes that "on the inside" of Owen's shop "were suspended a variety of watches . . . all with their faces turned from the street, as if churlishly disinclined to inform the wayfarers what o'clock it was" (X: 447). As Peter peers inside, he spies Owen concentrating on a delicate mechanism which "is no part of the machinery of a watch" (447), thus suggesting that Owen has forsaken watchmaking and is in the midst of some artistic pursuit, what turns out to be the creation of a mechanical butterfly. After passing on to Danforth's shop and witnessing his work upon the anvil, Peter remarks: "Now, that is a pleasant sight . . . I know what it is to work in gold, but give me the worker in iron, after all is said and done. He spends his labor upon a reality" (449). Peter suggests here that Owen's labor originates from the imagination and the ideal while Robert's originates from human strength and the actual. Both Peter and Robert then ask Annie what she thinks of "that doctrine," setting her up as a reader, like Giovanni, who must judge which occupation is the most suitable pursuit.

The narrator then provides Owen's background in order to explain the nature of his artistic creativity as well as society's reaction to this creativity. The narrator explains that as a child Owen had a remarkable gift for producing "pretty shapes in wood . . . always for purposes of grace, and never with any mockery of the useful" (450). The townspeople think that Owen "was attempting to imitate the beautiful movements of Nature" in his works: "It seemed, in fact, a new development of the love of the Beautiful . . . which was . . . completely refined from all utilitarian

coarseness" (450). Because these wooden images seem to be a "new development" in the creation of the Beautiful, Owen, like Drowne, is posited as an original creator, a godlike artist capable of creating a heterocosm apart from the natural world. Furthermore, because Owen's works of art tend toward the minute, "the world [is] even more incapable" of understanding his pursuit (450); his relatives, consequently, "bind him apprentice to a watchmaker, hoping that his strange ingenuity might thus be regulated, and put to utilitarian purposes" (451).

As already noted, when the tale opens, Owen has forsaken his duties towards the townspeople in caring for their clocks and watches and has concentrated his attention on his art. After Peter and Annie leave the blacksmith's shop, Owen receives a visit from Robert Danforth, who compares his "vast hand" to Owen's delicate fist and explains that his strength far exceeds Owen's (452).¹⁰ The artist replies that "Strength is an earthly monster. I make no pretensions to it. My force, whatever there may be of it, is altogether spiritual" (453). Again, the tale juxtaposes two types of force: an earthly force which represents the actual and a more spiritual force which represents the imagination. Indeed when Robert, the "earthly giant," leaves his shop, Owen exclaims that Robert "would drive me mad, were I to meet him often. His hard, brute force darkens and confuses the spiritual element in me" (454). In this first section of the tale, Owen is apparently likened to Hawthorne's other artist-figures of this period, such as Aylmer and Rappaccini, who strive only after the ideal to the exclusion of the real.

10. In "A Show of Hands in 'The Artist of the Beautiful,'" John L. Idol, Jr., suggests that Hawthorne uses hand imagery in this tale to develop his characters; yet, as I have developed in earlier chapters, it seems that such imagery is more often used to develop the relationship between characters, and especially the relationship between the artist and his artistic subject.

And when Owen inadvertently destroys his delicate mechanism because of his contact with Danforth, the narrator supports such a reading: "Thus it is, that ideas which grow up within the imagination, and appear so lovely to it, and of a value beyond whatever men call valuable, are exposed to be shattered and annihilated by contact with the Practical" (454). The narrator's valuation of works of the imagination, over and above those that have a useful end, suggests his own ideology, an ideology which critics have accepted as Owen's. The narrator concludes:

It is requisite for the ideal artist to possess a force of character that seems hardly compatible with its delicacy; he must keep his faith in himself, while the incredulous world assails him with its utter disbelief; he must stand up against mankind and be his own sole disciple, both as respects his genius, and the objects to which it is directed. (454)

Using religious imagery to characterize the artist's pursuit, the narrator insinuates the artist's godlike status and consequent isolation from humanity. While Owen merely claims that his strength is based on the spiritual, as opposed to the earthly, the narrator implies that Owen, as an ideal artist, transcends the earthly and the human in his use of the imagination.¹¹

Because of the mechanism's destruction, Owen becomes despondent, and his head sinks into his hands as they lose their creative power. When he finally lifts his face, the townspeople perceive a "cold, dull, nameless change" on his countenance: "Owen now indeed, applied himself to business with dogged industry" (455). Owen turns away from his art and becomes engaged in fixing the town's clocks. To

11. Several critics have accepted the narrator's claims, including Paul Lewis, who reads Owen as "an Emersonian God-in-man" (280), and Hugh Moore, Jr., who claims that Owen "is in many respects an ideal artist, but he is also a presumptuous intellectual who places himself and his aims above others, who attempts to rival God, and who puts aside normal relationships for a goal of dubious value" (278).

acknowledge their indebtedness, "the proper authorities" invite Owen "to regulate the clock in the church-steeple" (455). When engraving initials on silver, Owen uses "the plainest possible style; omitting a variety of fanciful flourishes, that had heretofore distinguished his work in this kind" (455). No longer a creature of the imagination, Owen becomes, like Drowne before and after his brief period of inspiration, a creature of the useful.

Owen's changed character spurs Peter Hovendon to visit him and offer him his support, telling Owen that if he will rid himself completely of his "nonsensical trash about the Beautiful," his "success in life is as sure as daylight" (455-56). Owen can "scarcely lift his head" in Peter Hovendon's presence, so "antipodal to his nature" is Peter's "cold, unimaginative sagacity" (456). When Peter discovers Owen's project, "a mechanical something, as delicate and minute as the system of a butterfly's anatomy," which Owen had been about to resume, Peter exclaims that "there is witchcraft in these little chains, and wheels, and paddles!" (456). Once again, the tale demonstrates the way in which society, "of whom [Peter] was partly a representative," fails to understand the artist's pursuit (457). Significantly, the narrator explains that Peter, and Annie and Robert, are only *partly* representative of society and of those who fail to understand the artist, perhaps unintentionally suggesting his own role as a Transcendentalist who acts as a foil to these unimaginative characters.

As summer advances, Owen grows out of his melancholy and abandons his work on clocks, choosing instead to spend his time "wandering through the woods and fields, and along the banks of streams" (457). He finds "amusement in chasing butterflies" and contemplating their nature; the narrator comments that "The chase of butterflies was an apt emblem of the ideal pursuit in which he had spent so many golden hours. But, would the Beautiful Idea ever be yielded to his hand, like the

butterfly that symbolized it?" (457-58). The narrator depicts Owen as pursuing an ideal to the exclusion of the actual; in forsaking the useful pursuit of clockmaking and turning instead to the creation of the beautiful, Owen apparently becomes once again the ideal artist who isolates himself from the community that surrounds him.

Indeed, when Annie comes to visit Owen in his shop and demonstrates some slight understanding of Owen's project, the narrator comments that "then the thought stole into his mind, that this young girl possessed the gift to comprehend him, better than all the world beside. And what a help and strength would it be to him, in his lonely toil, if he could gain the sympathy of the only being whom he loved!" (459). The narrator suggests that Owen, like Peter Hovendon and Robert Danforth, accepts Annie as the judge of his work, concluding that "To persons whose pursuits are insulated from the common business of life . . . there often comes a sensation of moral cold, that makes the spirit shiver, as if it had reached the frozen solitudes around the pole" (459). The narrator characterizes Owen in terms similar to the depictions of Aylmer and Rappaccini, Hawthorne's isolated artist-figures whose lack of spiritual organization causes them to experiment on their female counterparts.

When Owen suggests to Annie that he might reveal his secret to her, he tells her that she "would estimate it rightly," unlike Peter and Robert who constitute the "harsh, material world" and who reject his work (459-60). But Annie instead attempts to put his "little whirligig . . . in motion" with her sewing needle, ruining his creation for the second time (460). After Owen "seized her by the wrist with a force that made her scream aloud," his head sinks into his hands (460). Owen demands that Annie leave, telling her "I have deceived myself, and must suffer for it. I yearned for sympathy—and thought—and fancied—and dreamed—that you might give it me. But you lack the talisman, Annie, that should admit you into my secrets" (460). The

narrator explains that had Annie "been enlightened by the deep intelligence of love," she might have been able to support Owen; she is instead the cause of his second ruin (460).

While Owen spends his second period of despondency, in direct contrast to the first, "doomed to inutility" (460), he still moves from being a creature of the imagination to one of the material world. Having received a "small inheritance," Owen turns to wine and riot, the "earthly part" of his nature assuming "an influence the more uncontrollable" because his character is "thrown off balance" (461). Yet one magical day, while Owen sits among his riotous companions, a butterfly enters the room and once again awakens Owen to his task. He "resumed his wanderings in the woods and fields," often losing himself in the contemplation of a butterfly (462). The narrator notes that when a particular butterfly "took flight, his eyes followed the winged vision, as if its airy track would show the path to heaven" (462), implying again that Owen has resumed his ideal vision. The townspeople who witness Owen wasting his daylight hours in this manner believe that he "had gone mad" (462).

Each night, Owen returns to his shop to resume his creation of the mechanical butterfly. One evening, while in the midst of his work, Owen receives a visit from Peter Hovendon, who invites Owen to his house in celebration of Annie's engagement to Robert Danforth. With a "stifled outcry," Owen shatters his mechanism (463). He falls, for the third and final time, into a "fit of illness. After his recovery, his small and slender frame assumed an obtuser garniture of flesh than it had ever before worn. His thin cheeks became round; his delicate little hand, so spiritually fashioned to achieve fairy task-work, grew plumper than the hand of a thriving infant" (465). Owen once again assumes a more earthly existence: "It was as if the spirit had gone out of him, leaving the body to flourish in a soft [*sic* for "sort"] of vegetable existence" (465).

Admitting to his companions that he now considers inventions like his mechanical butterfly "mere impositions" upon reality, Owen relinquishes his belief in the world of the imagination (465).

The narrator comments that after such an admission, "in a mysterious way," Owen "would confess that he once thought differently" and believed in the possibility of producing "a beauty that should attain to the ideal which Nature has proposed to herself, in all her creatures, but has never taken pains to realize" (465-66). Apparently, then, Owen has vacillated from a state where he believed in his own abilities to rival God in creating a work of art which would realize the ideal to a state where he not only forsakes such a belief but also becomes thoroughly human. The narrator concludes that "These were the symptoms that he had ceased to be an inhabitant of the better sphere that lies unseen around us. He had lost faith in the invisible, and now prided himself . . . in the wisdom which rejected much that even his eye could see, and trusted confidently in nothing but what his hand could touch" (466).

Owen apparently vacillates, then, between concern with the realm of art, in which he is depicted as a godlike figure who rises above humanity in his ascent towards some ideal, and concern with the realm of the useful, in which Owen is depicted as a human figure who participates in the community around him. Indeed such a vacillation explains the various readings of the tale, each with their different perspective and focus. Yet beneath this vacillation between these two clearly demarcated realms, Hawthorne adds an ironic undercurrent which suggests that these realms are not so distinct as the tale has shown on a literal level and that the narrator's comments, like those of Peter Hovendon and Robert and Annie Danforth, do not represent an accurate depiction of Owen's artistic creativity.

Hawthorne's primary use of irony occurs in his choice of Owen's occupations; for while the townspeople consider Owen thoroughly human during the time that he is caring for the town's clocks, Hawthorne suggests that he might rather be considered as a godlike figure. As Ian Donaldson demonstrates in his article "The Clockwork Novel," a disparity exists between romantic analogies for art, which were drawn from nature, and eighteenth-century analogies, which were drawn from "human craftsmanship: clocks, machines, garden mazes, theatres" (14). Behind the eighteenth-century analogy, Donaldson explains, is the philosophical explanation of the creation of the universe, an explanation which compares God to a watchmaker and which even extends the analogy to a comparison of the artist as watchmaker to God as Creator.¹² When, in the opening of the tale, Peter Hovendon explains to Annie that "A watchmaker gets his brain puzzled by his wheels within a wheel . . ." (449), he inadvertently suggests that watchmaking, as an occupation, is no more isolating and mystifying than is the creation of art.

Indeed, when Owen is invited to "regulate the clock in the church-steeple" during his first transformation, Hawthorne ironically interposes the metaphor of ascent, so important to understanding his artist tales, into the description of watchmaking. While the tale has suggested that Owen attempts to ascend heavenward in his chase after the ideal butterfly, and thus becomes a godlike figure during the creation of his artwork, Hawthorne implies that a similar ascent might be considered to occur during the useful and practical occupation of fixing the town's clocks. Through

12. Dennis Welland notes the anachronistic nature of "The Artist of the Beautiful" as well as its use of clock imagery, though he does not make the connections that I suggest here. Daniel Hoffman suggests that Peter Hovendon's "role surely suggests Hawthorne's aversion to the Newtonian conception of God as the Watchmaker in a mechanistic universe" ("Myth, Romance, and the Childhood of Man" 204) but fails to note that Owen Warland also occupies the position of watchmaker.

the implication that the watchmaker might be considered a god, Hawthorne intends to deconstruct the very ideology that frames the conception of the artist as a godlike figure ascending heavenward in his neglect of the material world and thus to suggest that such an ideology ignores the status of the artist himself. Yet Owen's society fails to understand the hypocrisy of their own conceptions of the artist and the watchmaker; Peter Hovendon admits, when he admonishes Owen to forsake his "trash about the Beautiful," that "I, nor nobody else, nor yourself to boot, could" ever understand the materialization of the Beautiful (455-56).

More importantly, the rather Platonic narrator fails to comprehend the possibility that the artist, in attempting to create his mechanical butterfly, might simply be considered a human being and not some godlike figure. Such a misreading by the narrator occurs on two important levels. First, the narrator fails to understand Owen's purpose in his artistic pursuit, his creation of a mechanical butterfly. During Owen's second period of creativity, the narrator bemoans Owen's desire to materialize his conception of the Beautiful:

Alas, that the artist, whether in poetry or whatever other material, may not content himself with the inward enjoyment of the Beautiful, but must chase the flitting mystery beyond the verge of his ethereal domain, and crush its frail being in seizing it with a material grasp! Owen Warland felt the impulse to give external reality to his ideas, as irresistibly as any of the poets or painters, who have arrayed the world in a dimmer and fainter beauty, imperfectly copied from the richness of their visions. (458)

The narrator in this passage disparages Owen's decision to materialize his conception of the Beautiful, revealing not only his own Platonic conception of art but also Owen's

divergence from such a conception. In creating a mechanical butterfly, as several critics have suggested, Owen desires to balance the actual with the ideal, to give "external reality" to his "ideas" and "visions."¹³ Yet critics have failed to note the way in which the narrator disapproves of such a desire and thus misreads Owen's intentions, an important element in understanding Owen's status in the body of the tale and the meaning of the conclusion of the tale.

On a second level, and perhaps more important for my discussion, the narrator fails to understand Owen's artistic inspiration, his love for Annie. After the opening scene in which Peter and Annie pass Owen's shop and Owen overhears their discussion, Owen claims that he should have known that Annie was approaching "by this throbbing of my heart" (452). He then muses on his love for his childhood friend: "Annie—dearest Annie—thou shouldst give firmness to my heart and hand, and not shake them thus; for if I strive to put the very spirit of Beauty into form, and give it motion, it is for thy sake alone" (452). Significantly, Owen explains that his love for Annie leads him to desire the materialization of his idea of the Beautiful and thus suggests that his love provides a foundation of actuality for his artistic pursuits. On a higher level, Owen desires to give the idea of the Beautiful a material form so that it can be shared with the community that surrounds him.

Such a reading is corroborated in Annie and Owen's discussion of art when Annie comes to ask Owen to mend her thimble. Annie claims that she does not know if Owen "will condescend to such a task" now that he is "taken up with the notion of putting spirit into machinery" (459). Owen replies, explaining the depth of his love for

13. Several critics have noted that Owen's butterfly offers a balance between the ideal and the material, including Thelma J. Shinn (134) and R. A. Yoder (197-98). Significantly, Owen fashions his butterfly on a special anvil made for him by Danforth; in this way, the actual becomes the basis for Owen's creation of art.

and commitment to Annie, that he would do anything for her sake, "even were it to work at Robert Danforth's forge"; he continues: "But that is a strange idea of yours . . . about the spiritualization of matter" (459). Owen suggests in his willingness to labor at the blacksmith's forge that he accepts the necessity of "working upon a reality"; indeed, his surprise at Annie's "strange idea" of combining the ideal and the actual (in the "spiritualization of matter") suggests that before her visit such a conception of art had not occurred to Owen and thus that its inspiration originates in Annie. At this point, as already noted, Annie inadvertently destroys the butterfly and sends Owen into his second period of gloom and despondency. He understands that Annie, as a representative of the material world, lacks the true depth of love necessary to accept his creativity.

A short time later, the narrator attempts to define Owen's inspiration in creating the mechanical butterfly, explaining that Owen had made little outward expression of his love for Annie, confining "its tumults and vicissitudes" within his own imagination (464). Thus, the narrator suggests, Owen's love is one which fails to materialize in the actual world, existing solely in the imagination and ideal world of the artist. The narrator continues: "Forgetful of the time when she had shown herself incapable of any deep response, [Owen] had persisted in connecting all his dreams of artistical success with Annie's image; she was the visible shape in which the spiritual power that he worshipped, and on whose altar he hoped to lay a not unworthy offering, was made manifest to him" (464). While the narrator suggests that Owen merely forgets his earlier disappointment in Annie, the narrator fails to note that Owen has realized, and that he accepts, two different conceptions of Annie, one which concedes that Annie cannot understand his pursuit and one which allows Annie to become his inspiration.

The narrator concludes that Owen "had deceived himself; there were no such attributes in Annie Hovendon as his imagination had endowed her with. She, in the aspect which she wore to his inward vision, was as much a creation of his own, as the mysterious piece of mechanism would be were it ever realized" (464). The narrator, like both Giovanni and the narrator in "Rappaccini's Daughter," assumes that Annie can only have the characteristics attributed to her either in the actual world or in the ideal world. Just as he fails to understand the possibility that Owen's work of art might successfully partake of both the actual and the ideal, he fails to understand that Annie might exist on two different levels. As the tale has demonstrated, Owen has learned that outwardly Annie does not have sufficient love and understanding to comprehend fully his artistic endeavors; inwardly, on the other hand, Owen might conceive of Annie in such a way that she can remain the foundation of his artistic inspiration. In his dual conception of Annie, Owen, unlike Aylmer, does not exploit but rather fully appreciates the complexity of the female figure that inspires his creative abilities.

In such a relationship, Hawthorne resolves the paradox which plagued him in the period of the 1840s, the need to maintain his individuality as an artist even while procuring the beneficial effects of attachment to the actual through love of a woman.¹⁴ His resolution posits the real possibility for the artist to become a creator of original genius, like Drowne, even while remaining a human being connected to the community which surrounds him. Indeed, such an understanding of the artist's role is paramount

14. Significantly, biographical and analogical details support my reading. Several critics have suggested that Owen Warland is based on the painter Washington Allston (see especially C. T. Walters). As M. F. Heiser notes, Allston emphasized in his *Lectures on Art* (ca. 1832) "the individuality of artists as well as the individuality of the objects of art" (151). Similarly, Arlin Turner concludes in his discussion of "The Artist of the Beautiful" that "The story asserts for the artist his necessary freedom from all but his own inner compulsions," an assertion compatible with both Hawthorne's and his wife's thinking, for "each regarded artistic creation as an individual process" (*Nathaniel Hawthorne* 162).

to an understanding of the conclusion of the tale, which depicts Owen not only completing his creation of the butterfly but also moving towards community in his offering of the artwork as a bridal gift. Throughout this concluding scene, it is important to note, the Platonic narrator continues to misread Owen's intentions and to misjudge his achievement. For instance, in discussing the frailty of life for those who have a task to fulfill, the narrator concludes that the "frequent abortion" of these projects because of an untimely death "must be taken as a proof, that the deeds of earth, however etherealized by piety or genius, are without value, except as exercises and manifestations of the spirit" (467). His continual emphasis on the sole importance of the world of the spirit disqualifies him as a reliable commentator on Owen's endeavors.

The final scene occurs after "a long space" of time which the narrator tells us was "succeeded by an instant of solitary triumph" (468). Then, "on a winter evening," Owen visits the Danforth household, seeking admittance to the "fireside circle. There he found the Man of Iron, with his massive substance thoroughly warmed and attempered by domestic influences" (468). The narrator claims that Owen still believes that Annie, with her "finer grace," might be able "to be the interpreter between Strength and Beauty" (468). When Owen arrives, both Robert and Annie greet him warmly as he notices a small child on the floor, "a little personage who had come mysteriously out of the infinite, but with something so sturdy and real in his composition that he seemed moulded out of the densest substance which earth could supply" (468-69). Significantly, no one in the tale suggests that Robert and Annie, who have created a being "out of the infinite," have usurped the role of God—primarily because this child very clearly combines the ideal and the actual, something which has not been realized

in relation to Owen's artwork. Such a description of the child is another ironic undercutting of the depiction of the artist as a godlike figure.

When Peter Hovendon, who is also in attendance on this cold evening, asks Owen if he has succeeded in creating the Beautiful, Owen responds that he has come to the Danforth household "to disclose it":

You shall know, and see, and touch, and possess, the secret! For Annie—if by that name I may still address the friend of my boyish years—Annie, it is for your bridal gift that I have wrought this spiritualized mechanism, this harmony of motion, this Mystery of Beauty! It comes late, indeed; but it is as we go onward in life, when objects begin to lose their freshness of hue, and our souls their delicacy of perception, that the spirit of Beauty is most needed. If—forgive me, Annie—if you know how to value this gift, it can never come too late!
(469)

While the narrator claims that Owen visits the Danforths to allow Annie to judge his achievement of the Beautiful, Owen himself suggests quite a different purpose. He explains not only that he has come to offer his work of art as a gift but also that it is as a gift that it might have value for Annie. Earlier in the tale, Owen had suggested that Annie might understand his artistic pursuit, a suggestion which he quickly retracted in the realization that she did not have the deep intelligence of love that would enable her to do so. Such a realization, Owen clearly explains, has remained with him throughout his creation of the butterfly despite the narrator's suggestion to the contrary.

Owen reveals a "jewel-box" which encases his butterfly and prepares to offer his gift to Annie (469). Significantly, the box as a "jewel" box and the gift as a bridal gift suggest a new relationship between the artist and the female, a relationship which

allows the artist to partake in Annie's marriage to Robert and thus in communally defined rituals. The box is designed with an image of "a boy in pursuit of a butterfly, which, elsewhere, had become a winged spirit, and was flying heavenward; while the boy, or youth, had found such efficacy in his strong desire, that he ascended from earth to cloud, and from cloud to celestial atmosphere, to win the Beautiful" (469-70). While Owen's design suggests, once again, the artist's desire to ascend heavenward in pursuit of some ideal, because the figure on the box is a boy, such an ascent cannot be connected to Owen. In his earlier request to call his life-long friend "Annie," a name he had used in his "boyish years," Owen asserts that he has not only matured but transcended his youthful desire to become a godlike creator.

When Owen releases the butterfly, the narrator comments that "Nature's ideal butterfly was here realized in all its perfection . . ." (470), again suggesting that Owen has usurped the role of the Creator in his artistic pursuit. Yet in light of the Platonic narrator's unreliability throughout the tale, and in light of the fact that Owen perceives the artwork not as an "ideal butterfly" but rather as a "bridal gift," it becomes clear that such a reading of the butterfly misconstrues its true value. Annie, shocked at the lifelike nature of the butterfly, queries "Is it alive? Is it alive?"—to which Danforth replies "To be sure it is" for no "mortal has skill enough to make a butterfly" (470). When Annie remains dissatisfied with her husband's explanation, she redoubles her query; Owen finally responds:

Alive? Yes, Annie; it might well be said to possess life, for it absorbed my own being into itself; and in the secret of that butterfly, and in its beauty . . . is represented the intellect, the imagination, the sensibility, the soul, of an Artist of the Beautiful! Yes, I created it. But . . . *this*

butterfly is not now to me what it was when I beheld it afar off, in the daydreams of my youth. (471; emphasis added)

Owen very clearly explains that two views might be taken towards the butterfly, a view which perceives it only as an ideal artwork, a view to which he subscribed in his youth, and a view which perceives the butterfly as a bridal gift—significantly the view which Owen accepts as an adult.

When Robert Danforth finally acknowledges that Owen has created the butterfly, he exclaims that the butterfly “does beat all nature,” confessing that it goes beyond him: “But what then? There is more real use in one downright blow of my sledge-hammer, than in the whole five years’ labor that our friend Owen has wasted on this butterfly!” (472). Asserting, like the narrator, that Owen’s creation of the butterfly posits the artist as a godlike figure, Robert Danforth suggests that Owen’s work of art has no practical value, demonstrating his inability to comprehend the true value of the work as a gift. The narrator notes that “Owen Warland, meanwhile, glanced sidelong at Annie, to discover whether she sympathized in her husband’s estimate of the comparative value of the Beautiful and the Practical” (472). Very clearly, then, Owen desires the Danforths not to perceive his butterfly merely as an object of Beauty; rather, he wants them to accept his work of art as an object with practical value. The narrator claims to the contrary that Owen has realized that Annie “as the representative of the world” is incapable of understanding his achievement of the Beautiful, and that he must seek his reward for this “high performance” within the performance itself (473); yet the narrator, like Robert Danforth, fails to understand the true value of Owen’s work.¹⁵

15. Rudolph Von Abele concurs with Danforth, concluding that the butterfly “is sociologically without value” (40).

While Owen has realized that society might not understand his materialization of the idea of the Beautiful, such a realization no longer destroys him as it did before because he now understands that his work of art has value beyond that of the merely artistic. The narrator suggests that Owen attains his reward out of a solipsistic pursuit of the ideal, yet the very purpose of Owen's visit to the Danforth household is to share his gift and thus to become not only a part of the community but also to celebrate the marriage of his two close friends.¹⁶ As the narrator admits, "There was . . . a view of the matter, which Annie, and her husband, and even Peter Hovendon, might fully have understood, and which would have satisfied them that the toil of years had here been worthily bestowed" (473). Yet Owen refuses to reveal such a view, understanding that society must arrive at this perspective on its own. Indeed, for the artwork to form the link between the artist and society that Owen desires, and that Hawthorne now defines as the artist's attachment to the "real," the community that surrounds Owen must comprehend, on its own, the value of this work as a gift.

Peter Hovendon suddenly decides to come forth and inspect the butterfly, allowing it to alight on his finger, where the butterfly "drooped its wings, and seemed on the point of falling to the floor" (473). Owen explains that his gift "has been delicately wrought As I told you, it has imbibed a spiritual essence—call it magnetism, or what you will. In an atmosphere of doubt and mockery, its exquisite susceptibility suffers torture, as does the soul of him who instilled his own life into it" (473). Hawthorne refers here to his special sense of the term "spiritual" as Owen explains that the butterfly has been created out of a "magnetism"—that is, a force

16. Ronald T. Curran analyzes the concluding scene closely, concluding that Owen remains "isolated and cut off from the magnetic chain of humanity as well as denied the hearth values and inspiration a husband receives from his wife" (36). Only Lesley Brill (385), James W. Gargano (228), and A. N. Kaul (168) note that Owen, in fashioning the butterfly for Annie as a bridal gift, forms a connection to humanity in the concluding scene of the tale.

which has the ability to draw humans together. He also again emphasizes the importance of society's acceptance of the work, and thus faith in the artist. Annie gives the butterfly to her child, hoping that it might revive; but the butterfly "alternately sparkled and grew dim" as if aware "of something not entirely congenial in the child's nature" (474). Because the child resembles his grandfather, Peter Hovendon, his childish nature only partly redeems him from partaking in the cold understanding of the world.

The butterfly takes flight, soaring upward "as if the ethereal instincts, with which its master's spirit had endowed it, impelled this fair vision involuntarily to a higher sphere. Had there been no obstruction, it might have soared into the sky, and grown immortal"; yet the butterfly brushes the ceiling, an "earthly medium" (474-75). The narrator once again expresses his emphasis on the spiritual and ideal nature of the butterfly; yet its inability to soar beyond the ceiling suggests that the butterfly, like the Danforth child, is comprised of both the ideal and the actual. When the butterfly attempts to return to Owen's hand, he exclaims "Not so, not so! . . . Thou has gone forth out of thy master's heart. There is no return for thee!" (475). Owen again emphasizes that the butterfly's inspiration has derived from his love of Annie and that it is a gift which cannot return to its owner, two facts which the narrator has failed to understand.

The butterfly flutters to "the little Child of strength," who, "with his grandsire's sharp and shrewd expression in his face, made a snatch at the marvellous insect, and compressed it in his hand" (475). Significantly, the motif of hands in "The Artist of the Beautiful" climaxes here with the little child's fist, not Owen's as the narrator had earlier suggested, snatching the butterfly in his material grasp. Annie

screams while Peter laughs scornfully; Robert opens the child's hand with his "main force" to reveal "a small heap of glittering fragments" (475).

And as for Owen Warland, he looked placidly at what seemed the ruin of his life's labor, and which was yet no ruin. He had caught a far other butterfly than this. When the artist rose high enough to achieve the Beautiful, the symbol by which he made it perceptible to mortal senses became of little value in his eyes, while his spirit possessed itself in the enjoyment of the Reality. (475)

Critics have read this concluding passage in many ways, generally concluding that Owen has become a transcendental artist who values only the idea, not the earthly manifestation, of the Beautiful.¹⁷

Yet such a reading fails to account for the unreliability of the narrator who has demonstrated his own Platonic tendencies throughout the tale. The narrator assumes to the end that Owen is a godlike artist who has ascended out of the earthly sphere, losing contact with humanity in his ascent heavenward. But Owen's placidity is not based solely on the acceptance of the ideal realm as the narrator mistakenly suggests; Owen, it must be emphasized, has delivered to Annie a bridal gift, suggesting that he accepts not only the useful nature of his creation but also her decision to marry the man of strength, Robert Danforth. Owen remains calm because he has reached out to the community that surrounds him and has successfully experienced some union with that community. Indeed, when Annie passes the butterfly to her child, she symbolically allows Owen to partake not only in her marriage but also in her ability to reproduce

17. For instance, Mary Sue Schriber concludes that Owen "progresses toward a Transcendental aesthetic. Owen develops from a realist with vague Transcendental yearnings into an Emersonian Transcendentalist" (610).

naturally. In stark contrast to such figures as Aylmer and Giovanni, Owen accepts this natural mode of creation, vicariously taking part in it.

In the character of Owen Warland, Hawthorne provides a resolution to his chief dilemma in the 1840s, a dilemma which he faced in his fiction but which originated in his reaction to the Puritan and Transcendental conceptions of the artist as well as in his own personal life. Owen becomes the creator of a unique and original work of art and thus, according to the Puritan and Transcendental paradigms, a godlike creator; but because his inspiration originates in his love for Annie, Owen remains attached to the community that surrounds him and thus to the actual. Consequently, his creation partakes of both the ideal and the real worlds and he remains thoroughly human. The resolution Hawthorne provides, then, is based on the artist's ability to remain in contact with the actual, a contact that Hawthorne describes, because of his own relationship to Sophia in the 1840s, in terms of the artist's relationship to a woman.

Hawthorne's progression towards this resolution in the 1840s, which began with his own skepticism in the tales of the 1830s, is clearly paralleled in the narrator's description in "P.'s Correspondence" (1845) of Percy Shelley's maturation. The narrator, P., who mistakenly imagines that Shelley is still alive and writing, notes that Shelley's works have progressed from an early religious scepticism to "poetico-philosophical proofs of Christianity" (X: 372). He explains that these works "are like the successive steps of a staircase, the lowest of which, in the depth of chaos, is as essential to the support of the whole, as the highest and final one, resting upon the threshold of the heavens" (372). Significantly, P. imagines that Shelley has matured from the religious scepticism of his youth to an acceptance of Christian beliefs as an adult—much like Hawthorne matured into acceptance of the powers of the

imagination, powers which he felt might be heretical as a youth because of his Puritan heritage. Also like Hawthorne's eventual belief in the powers of the imagination, Shelley's later acceptance of Christianity is founded on his earlier scepticism, as the lower steps of a staircase support its entire structure.

But even more importantly, P. delineates Shelley's maturation as an ascent toward heaven, an ascent which, however, does not exclude him from contact with humanity. The narrator notes:

I consider the productions of his maturity superior, as poems, to those of his youth. They are warmer with human love, which has served as an interpreter between his mind and the multitude. The author has learned to dip his pen oftener into his heart, and has thereby avoided the faults into which a too exclusive use of fancy and intellect was wont to betray him. Formerly, his page was often little other than a concrete arrangement of crystallizations, or even of icicles, as cold as they were brilliant. Now, you take it to your heart, and are conscious of a heart-warmth responsive to your own. (373).

While Shelley's earlier productions were based solely on the imagination, and thus lacked any warmth, in his old age, he has learned to temper his imaginative production with human love, "to dip his pen oftener into his heart." Significantly, Hawthorne clarifies his definition of "human love" and his use of "heart" imagery in this passage, suggesting that love serves as an "interpreter" between the artist and society. Indeed such a suggestion also clarifies the way in which the "real" has become for Hawthorne in the 1840s a communally defined vision that allows for mutual respect and warmth.

Chapter Seven

Tales of the 1850s: Of Artists and Audiences

In his tales of the early and mid 1840s, Hawthorne struggled with and resolved the dilemma that he perceived facing the artist: that the artist, in using his imagination, dangerously soared above humanity and lost contact with the actual. In the figures of Aylmer and Rappaccini, Hawthorne demonstrates how lack of love for the artist's subject (the way in which Hawthorne dramatizes loss of contact with the actual) leads only to isolation in the artist and cold idealization in the artwork. But in both Drowne and Owen Warland, Hawthorne undercuts the implication that isolation and idealization are the only results of artistic creativity and shows how, through a true human love, the artist might not only remain in touch with humanity but also produce a work of art which comes to life. Yet the resolution of this dilemma, which Hawthorne offers through the creation of a new aesthetic, forced him to question directly the relationship between the artist and his audience, for even if the artist creates out of a balance, out of a connection to both the imaginary and the actual, Hawthorne realized that his

audience, which was primarily preoccupied with concerns of the material world, might fail to appreciate such a creation.

Because of such related concerns, Hawthorne turns his focus in the late 1840s and early 1850s from questions about the status of the artist to questions about the role of the audience. Hawthorne began to analyze the role of the audience in such tales as "Rappaccini's Daughter" and "The Artist of the Beautiful," where he demonstrates most poignantly the audience's failure to appreciate fully the artist's work. But the tales of this later period, and especially "The Snow-Image," suggest a resolution to the adversarial relationship between artist and audience remarkably similar to the resolution of the artist's dilemma. Just as Hawthorne suggested that human love would allow the artist to remain in contact with the actual in the creation of an imaginative work of art, in the tales of the late 1840s and early 1850s Hawthorne suggests that the audience also might maintain a balance between the forces of actuality and imagination if their reading and assessment of a work of art was based on love.¹ Only through such a balance could the audience fully appreciate those works of art which Hawthorne's artists (and Hawthorne himself) created, works like Owen's butterfly which were comprised of both the actual and the ideal.² Hawthorne realized, however, that because his audience would not willingly adopt such an attitude towards art that he would need to define the balance which would enable them to truly appreciate his fiction.

"Main-Street" (1849), one of the four tales that Hawthorne wrote during this period, most fully presents the problem of the relationship between artist and audience

1. Hawthorne hints at such a resolution in "Rappaccini's Daughter," where Giovanni's failure is primarily a refusal to love Beatrice, to perceive her as both human and angel.

2. Such a reading supports my contention that Hawthorne's aesthetic provides him with a new perspective on works of art, a perspective similar to Owen's, who perceives his butterfly as, in addition to a work which embodies the Beautiful, a work that is useful. In attempting to connect with his audience, Hawthorne attempted to alleviate the claim, so common to his society, that art was an idle and useless profession.

that resulted from the creation of Hawthorne's new aesthetic. The tale describes the unfolding of a showman's diorama and the criticisms offered of the spectacle by the audience, thus delineating the type of relationship between the artist and audience that Hawthorne had foreshadowed in both "Rappaccini's Daughter" and "The Artist of the Beautiful." Whereas Hawthorne had, in the early and mid 1840s, suggested that the artist and audience might share in the creation of a communal vision, the offering of a mechanical butterfly as a bridal gift in "The Artist of the Beautiful," he came to believe in the late 1840s that nineteenth-century American audiences simply could not understand, and thus would not accept, works of art based on such an aesthetic. Thus, the showman in "Main-Street" critiques in turn one particular member of the audience and thus defines for that audience the perspective that they need to adopt to admire and enjoy his dioramic representation of the history of Boston.

The tale begins with a description of the "faintly-traced path" in the "primitive wood" which existed long before the colonists settled the new world (XI: 50). Immediately, one especially cynical member of the audience objects to the artist's representations, claiming that the objects in the diorama do not correspond to anything in reality. The showman admits that such criticisms may be just, conceding that "Human art has its limits, and we must now and then ask a little aid from the spectator's imagination" (52). Just as both Drowne and Owen realize that their artistic creations must originate from finite and earthly materials, the showman admits the limited nature of his creation, suggesting that the audience's imagination must compensate for what is wanting in the spectacle. The critic responds to the showman: "You will get no such aid from [my imagination] . . . I make it a point to see things precisely as they are" (52). The critic's emphasis on actuality and refusal to participate in the imaginative recreation of the showman's representation of Boston parallels the

reaction of Peter Hovendon and Robert and Annie Danforth to Owen Warland's creation of a mechanical butterfly. As Hawthorne suggests in these tales, nineteenth-century American audiences were unwilling to accept an aesthetic based on the interdependence of the actual and the imaginative largely because of the audience's reliance on a materialistic form of thinking and unwillingness to indulge in the imagination.

Such interchanges between the showman and the critic recur throughout the spectacle. After Anna Gower, Governor Endicott's first wife, enters the scene, the critic ridicules the "pasteboard figure" representing her, for she is purportedly "the prototype of hereditary beauty" (56-57). The showman responds: "But, sir, you have not the proper point of view You sit altogether too near to get the best effect of my pictorial exhibition. Pray, oblige me by removing to this other bench; and, I venture to assure you, the proper light and shadow will transform the spectacle into quite another thing" (57). The showman defines the point of view that the critic must take as one which allows a certain distance from the artistic creation and thus the transformation of the representation into something beyond mere "pasteboard figure[s]." Indeed, later, the showman claims that such a perspective would allow the dioramic spectacle to "assume spiritual life, and the bedaubed canvass become an airy and changeable reflex of what it purports to represent" (63). Yet the man of understanding refuses such an offer: "I want no other light and shade. I have already told you, that it is my business to see things just as they are" (57).

In the gaps between the showman and critic's interchanges, the diorama, with the showman's running narrative, presents the history of Boston by focusing on the Puritan colonists and their system of beliefs—a system which ultimately comes to define the critic's position. The showman notes that after a few generations, the

religious zeal of the Puritan descendants gradually waned, "and then it might be seen, how hard, cold, and confined, was their system—how like an iron cage was that which they called Liberty!" (58). Even if less zealously, the Puritans managed to pass their gloomy system on to their children, influencing many for years to come: "nor, it may be, have we even yet thrown off all the unfavorable influences which, among many good ones, were bequeathed to us by our Puritan forefathers" (68). In these passages, Hawthorne reveals what underlies the showman's critique of his audience; just as he had demonstrated in his tales of the 1830s and 1840s, and stated perhaps most clearly in "The Old Manse," Hawthorne suggests here that the Puritan emphasis on the actual, in direct opposition to the imaginative, continues to be felt in mid-nineteenth-century American society. Such an influence causes a refusal in the showman's audience (and in Hawthorne's) to take the "proper perspective" while watching the diorama, a perspective which intermixes the actual and the imaginative.

"Main-Street" concludes with Hawthorne's own comment on such a system of beliefs. Unexpectedly, the Main-Street of Boston vanishes "out of sight. In its stead appears a wintry waste of snow" (80). All distinctions, every boundary and marker, have been annihilated, "So that now, the traces of former times and hitherto accomplished deeds being done away, mankind should be at liberty to enter on new paths, and guide themselves by other laws than heretofore . . ." (80). With the Great Snow of 1717, the showman suggests the possibility of creating new laws and new systems. Yet beneath the great heaps and drifts of snow, the showman discerns "houses, buried up to their eaves, and with their peaked roofs rounded by the depth of snow upon them" (80). The showman admits, after detecting the continued existence of the town, that the creation of any new system must be founded on the past. Significantly, such a description delineates the nature of Hawthorne's new aesthetic,

an aesthetic based on a balance between contact with the actual (which originated from his Puritan heritage) and indulgence in the imaginary.

At this strategic point, a wire breaks in the showman's diorama and the scene cannot be changed: "The street continues buried beneath the snow . . ." (81). The showman claims that the scenes that followed the Great Snow would have brought the audience up to the present and even into the future, an intention which, like most human intentions, remains unaccomplished. In analyzing "Main-Street," Tom Quirk claims that the failure in communication between the showman and the audience lies in the mechanical diorama's inadequacy to produce an aesthetic response: "Such a contraption has no life of its own; it is, rather, the product of the willful imposition of the creator's idea upon the material world" (223). Yet such an analysis does not read the tale in its larger context which suggests that the tale critiques not the finite nature of the artistic contraption, a critique that Hawthorne had come to terms with in "The Artist of the Beautiful," but rather the literal-mindedness of an audience that demands only realism.³

Hawthorne develops such a concern in "The Snow-Image" (1850), what appears to be one of Hawthorne's most simple and childish tales. Yet this tale, like "Rappaccini's Daughter" and "The Artist of the Beautiful" in the early 1840s, most clearly and complexly defines Hawthorne's aesthetic in the late 1840s and early 1850s. While several readings of the tale do analyze various elements in Hawthorne's aesthetic dilemma of this period,⁴ none have yet demonstrated the tale's complex nexus of the

3. For such a description of the audience, see Nina Baym, *The Shape of Hawthorne's Career* (119-20), and Dana Brand (14).

4. For instance, Darrel Abel, Millicent Bell (85), and Daniel Hoffman ("Myth, Romance, and the Childhood of Man" 202) analyze the creative process of the Lindsey children and their attempts to balance the actual and ideal, while Shannon Burns focuses on the role of the audience, concluding that Mrs. Lindsey represents the proper perspective that Hawthorne so desires (269).

three elements which most concern Hawthorne at this crucial time in his career: the need for the artist to create art out of a balance of the ideal and the actual, the need for the audience to appreciate art from a balanced perspective which includes reliance on the imagination, and the way in which the lack of a proper perspective can corrupt others' views of art.

The tale opens on a late "winter's day, when the sun shone forth with chilly brightness, after a long storm . . ." (XI: 7), suggesting immediately that any artistic creation will occur between the forces of the actual and the imaginative, between day and night. The Lindsey children, Violet and Peony, who live in the city and "had no wider play-place than a little garden before the house, divided by a white fence from the street," ask their mother if they can go outside and play in the snow, which appears to have "a very cheerful aspect" (8). Such descriptions of the garden and snow delineate the play yard as a realm of artistic creation, much like Drowne's workshop, a realm which exists connected to, yet apart from, the city, a representative of the actual. While Dennis Berthold suggests that Hawthorne connects the snow imagery in the tale to art created out of "human folly and pride" (123), he fails to note the way in which the new fallen snow replaces the foliage that covers the trees and shrubs during the summer; the narrator notes that the twigs of the trees and shrubs "were enveloped in the light snow, which thus made a kind of wintry foliage, with here-and-there a pendant icicle for the fruit" (8). The snow's connection to nature incipiently suggests an ironic reversal of the cold/warm imagery in the tale.

Out in the play yard, Violet is suddenly "struck with a new thought": to "make an image out of snow—an image of a little girl" who "shall be our sister, and shall run about and play with us, all winter long" (8-9). The conception of the snow image, an original conception, depicts the Lindsey children as godlike figures who will create a

live being. In support of such a reading of the children's motives, the narrator notes that they "really seemed to imagine that there would be no difficulty whatever in creating a live little girl out of the snow. And, to say the truth, if miracles are ever to be wrought, it will be by putting our hands to the work, in precisely such a simple and undoubting frame of mind . . ." (9). Daniel Hoffman concludes that "faith in the reality of the imagination" ultimately allows the children to achieve their goal, to bring their created playmate to life ("Myth, Romance, and the Childhood of Man" 202). Indeed, the narrator's use of "hand" imagery, so important to the tales of the early 1840s,⁵ implies that the children's role in the creative process is one based on original creativity and reiterates the necessity of undergoing such a process with a belief in the ideal.

Such a description seems to insinuate, as Dennis Berthold suggests, that the creation of the snow image is based solely on the imagination and the ideal without any corrective contact with the actual.⁶ Yet this reading misses the elaborate balance between the ideal and the actual which allows the children to create in the first place. For instance, Mrs. Lindsey, in characterizing her children, notes that Violet "looked like a cheerful Thought, more than a physical reality," while Peony is "as substantial as an elephant, though not quite so big" (9). And while Violet clearly acts as the "guiding spirit" and Peony as the "laborer" in the creative process, the narrator emphasizes that the two children "wrought together with one happy consent" (12). Unlike Aylmer's removal of Georgiana's birthmark, an experiment that proceeds with the aid but

5. See especially my discussion in Chapter Five of "The Birth-mark" and "Rappaccini's Daughter" and my discussion in Chapter Six of "The Artist of the Beautiful."

6. See Berthold, who spends a great deal of time demonstrating that the snow creation must be read ironically as a creation of a cold ideal (120-25), and who suggests that only the common-sense minded Mr. Lindsey offers any contact with the actual, thus representing most fully Hawthorne's perspective (126-30). As I will demonstrate, Berthold misses the irony in Hawthorne's description of Mr. Lindsey's use of the Heidenberg stove to warm the artistic creation—an irony which indeed reverses the import of the cold/warm imagery in the tale.

certainly without the consent of the earthly Aminadab, the children's creation of the snow image occurs when the two unite their various forces.

But, more importantly, the creative process unfolds with the guiding inspiration of true human warmth and love. Just before the children exit the house, their mother "gave them a kiss apiece, by way of a spell to keep away Jack Frost" (8). Hawthorne suggests, here, that love, and especially kisses, will have a magical power to transmute the cold into true warmth. While the mother sits inside sewing, she listens to her children prattling about, making their snow sister, with "a sweet impression that they were in a most loving mood" (10). Indeed, when the image is nearly complete, Violet tells Peony that kissing the image's lips will turn them as red as Peony's cheeks. When this fails, "Violet next proposed that the snow-child should be invited to kiss Peony's scarlet cheek" (14). While Peony outwardly reacts to the snow image's cold kiss, the tale clearly suggests that such an exchange draws the creation into the loving community of the children and their mother. Rather than being excluded from any human warmth as are the creations of Aylmer and Rappaccini, the snow image is brought nearly to life through the love of the children.

Yet one more kiss is needed. As noted earlier, the snow on the trees and shrubs has come to represent nature, and thus from nature must come the final kiss, the kiss that will truly bring the image to life. Immediately after Peony allows the image to kiss his cheek, the narrator notes that "there came a breeze of the pure west-wind, sweeping through the garden and rattling the parlor-windows" (14). In his love letters to Sophia, Hawthorne often represents his love and affection in the image of the west-wind,⁷ an

7. For instance, in a letter dated 17 April 1839, Hawthorne wrote to Sophia from Boston that he hoped that the Spring would "salute your cheek with her balmiest kiss, whenever she gets a chance. As to the East-Wind, if ever the imaginative portion of my brain recover from its torpor, I mean to personify it as a wicked, spiteful, blustering, treacherous—in short, altogether devilish sort of body, whose principle of life it is to make as much mischief as he can. The West Wind . . . shall assume

image which he most fully develops in "The Old Manse," written just four years before "The Snow-Image." In describing the "genial days of autumn," Hawthorne concludes:

It is good to be alive, at such times. Thank heaven for breath!—yes, for mere breath!—when it is made up of a heavenly breeze like this! It comes with a real kiss upon our cheeks; it would linger fondly around us, if it might; but, since it must be gone, it embraces us with its whole kindly heart, and passes onward, to embrace likewise the next thing that it meets. (27)

Thus the breeze from the west wind acts as the fifth and final kiss of the tale, a kiss which brings the image to life. Rather than remaining a cold representation of an imagined ideal, the snow image comes alive precisely because it partakes of the human community which has created it, and thus of the actual.⁸ In this way, the image is created out of a balance and not merely out of an idea.

Yet as I have noted, Hawthorne's concern at the time that he wrote "The Snow-Image" was not only that an artistic work be created out of a balance but also that an audience might properly appreciate such a creation. In the tale, Mr. and Mrs. Lindsey represent opposing perspectives on the successfully created image. Mr. Lindsey is described as "an excellent, but exceedingly matter-of-fact sort of man, a dealer in hardware, [who] was sturdily accustomed to take what is called the common-sense

your aspect, and be humanized and angelicised with your traits of character. And the sweet West shall finally triumph over the fiendlike East, and rescue the world from his miserable tyranny" (XV: 300).

8. Both Darrel Abel and Millicent Bell (85) note the importance of love in bringing the image to life, though neither develops the full significance of the kiss imagery in achieving a balance between the ideal and actual. In an interesting analysis of the language of the Lindsey children, Mary Jane Hurst concludes that Hawthorne's realistic use of children's language provides the force of actuality in the creative process; yet it seems that this element of realism in the tale is merely a part of the backdrop of the tale and not actually an element in the creative process.

That the image partakes of the human community can be seen most fully in its actions after it comes to life when it plays with Violet and Peony as if the three were on familiar terms and had been "playmates during the whole of their little lives" (15).

view of all matters that came under his consideration" (7). Mrs. Lindsey's character, on the other hand, "had a strain of poetry in it, a trait of unworldly beauty, a delicate and dewy flower, as it were, that had survived out of her imaginative youth, and still kept itself alive amid the dusty realities of matrimony and motherhood" (7). Thus, while Mr. Lindsey occupies a position similar to the critic's in "Main-Street," Mrs. Lindsey represents a balance between emphasis on the actual and the imaginative.⁹ The conflict between these two positions lies at the heart of Hawthorne's analysis of the relationship between the audience and the work of art and is most fully developed in the remainder of the tale as the children's parents offer competing reactions to the snow image.

Just after deciding to create the image, Violet tells Peony that "mamma shall see the new little girl. But she must not make her come into the warm parlor; for, you know, our little snow-sister will not love the warmth" (9). While Violet realizes that her mother will be able to perceive the image, she also understands that her mother might mis-perceive it, bringing the child into the warmth of the house where it cannot exist, thus demonstrating the way in which Mrs. Lindsey occupies a middle ground between the forces of the actual and the ideal. Later, Violet notes that "Mamma will see how very beautiful she is; but papa will say, 'Tush!—nonsense!—come in out of the cold!'" (12), again developing the conflict that exists between the perspectives of the two parents. And while the children originally feared that the actual might influence Mrs. Lindsey's perception, she ultimately "listens with her heart" (11) and begins to believe "that the snow-image has really come to life!" (15).

9. Nina Baym, among others, associates the mother with the children and claims that her character is unsuccessful because it, like that of the children's, is stereotyped (*The Shape of Hawthorne's Career* 118). Such a reading fails to note the role of Mrs. Lindsey as a reader of the artistic creation in the tale.

But Mrs. Lindsey is not thoroughly convinced that the children have brought their image to life when she opens the door and stands on the edge of the artistic realm: "the mother stood on the threshold, wondering how a little girl could look so much like a flying snow-drift, or how a snow-drift could look so very like a little girl" (17). She interrogates the children, asking the snow child's name so that she can take her home, but the children remonstrate, telling their mother that she is their "little snow-sister, whom we have just been making!" (17). Like Annie at the conclusion of "The Artist of the Beautiful," the mother cannot quite believe that the image has come to life. While the mother stands on the door stoop hesitating "what to think and what to do," Mr. Lindsey returns home, "wrapt in a pilot-cloth sack, with a fur-cap drawn down over his ears, and the thickest of gloves upon his hands" (18).¹⁰ Mrs. Lindsey, vacillating between belief and disbelief, is suddenly corrupted by the presence of the matter-of-fact Mr. Lindsey. When he sees the child playing in the yard wearing only a "flimsy white gown" (18), Mr. Lindsey, in his surprise, asks his wife whose child she is. Mrs. Lindsey responds: "I know no more about the little thing than you do" (18), surrendering her own perception and adopting his.

The children try to convince their father that the child is their creation, but with his usual "common-sensible way of looking at matters" he tells them that such a claim is nonsense: "Do not tell me of making live figures out of snow!" (19). In direct contrast, because the strain of poetry runs deep within her, when Mrs. Lindsey notices that the snow image is no longer where the children had created it, she tells her husband:

10. Such a description pairs Mr. Lindsey with Dr. Rappaccini, who also wears gloves and thus coldly distances himself from his creation.

There is something very singular in all this. You will think me foolish—but—but—may it not be that some invisible angel has been attracted by the simplicity and good faith with which our children set about their undertaking? May he not have spent an hour of his immortality in playing with those dear little souls?—and so the result is what we call a miracle? (20)

Mrs. Lindsey not only demonstrates her ability to believe that the artistic creation has come to life but also defines the point of view which both the creator and the audience must take toward the work of art, a perspective based on “simplicity and good faith.”¹¹ Yet her close proximity to her husband causes her momentarily to lose her own faith, for she immediately rescinds her statement: “No, no! Do not laugh at me. I see what a foolish thought it is!” (20).

Mrs. Lindsey watches as her husband chases the little image around the yard, noticing the way in which the girl, like Owen Warland’s butterfly, “gleamed and sparkled” and “glistened like a star” (21). She “thought it strange, that good Mr. Lindsey should see nothing remarkable in the snow-child’s appearance” (21), once again revealing her ability to have faith in the imagination. When Mr. Lindsey finally catches the image, he tells her “I have caught you at last, and will make you comfortable in spite of yourself” (21), demonstrating his failure to understand the little girl’s nature. In response to the father’s grasp, the snow image begins to droop and lose her “glow and sparkle,” much like the butterfly’s reaction to Peter Hovendon in “The Artist of the Beautiful.”

11. See Tom Quirk, who concludes somewhat similarly that the artist’s and audience’s imaginations must collaborate “to bring a work of art to life” (225).

As Mr. Lindsey drags the image into the house, Mrs. Lindsey, after all her equivocating, finally proclaims that the little girl "does look strangely like a snow-image! I do believe she is made of snow!" (22). As if to demonstrate that such a reading of the image is indeed correct, suddenly, a "puff of the west-wind blew against the snow-child; and again she sparkled like a star" (22). Mrs. Lindsey finally adopts the proper perspective toward the child. Created out of a love which culminated in the kiss from the west-wind, the snow image as a work of art finds its audience in the character of the children's mother who has the ability to perceive it from a balanced point of view, one which incorporates the forces of both the actual and the ideal.

But such a reading is quickly corrupted; Mr. Lindsey, "drawing the reluctant guest over his hospitable threshold," laughs at his wife, saying that "a good fire will put everything to rights" (22). He places the child before a "Heidenberg stove, filled to the brim with intensely burning anthracite" (23) in order to warm her cold nature. Dennis Berthold concludes that "Mr. Lindsey, with his coal-fire in the Heidenberg stove, performs [the] 'essential' artistic task of humanizing ideal creations," a task which the children and mother were incapable of performing because of their idealism (130). And when the image melts, creating a puddle on the floor which Mr. Lindsey claims is merely a "quantity of snow the children have brought in on their feet" (25), the common-sense man sees nothing amiss. Berthold concurs: that Mr. Lindsey "overdoes it testifies more to the snowmaiden's esthetic insufficiency—the temporality of snow—than to his own carelessness. For without such warming influences, artistic endeavor is pointless and solipsistic . . ." (130).

Yet Berthold's reading fails to perceive two important aspects of "The Snow-Image." First, the tale is less about artistic creation than it is about the perspective of the audience, for Hawthorne had already resolved any conflict that he perceived in the

use of the imagination in the creative process. Indeed, as I have demonstrated, the snow image, like Owen's butterfly and Drowne's wooden carving, is created out of a true love and human warmth that brings the image to life and thus suggests an ironic reversal of the cold/warm imagery in the tale. Second, and more importantly, Berthold misses the irony that Hawthorne clearly associates with the fire imagery so important to understanding the actions of Mr. Lindsey. As the sketch "Fire-Worship" (1843) demonstrates, Hawthorne differentiates between the fire of the open hearth and the fire of the stove, concluding that the stove has obliterated all that is warm and congenial in hearth fires.

The narrator of "Fire-Worship" notes, in describing the impact of the stove, that "In one way or another, here and there, and all around us, the inventions of mankind are fast blotting the picturesque, the poetic, and the beautiful out of human life. The domestic fire was a type of all these attributes, and seemed to bring might and majesty, and wild Nature, and a spiritual essence, into our inmost home . . ." (X: 139). The open fire, according to "Fire-Worship," with its "genial warmth" and "warm heart" (140), has the ability to "thaw the ice about our hearts" (145). But, the narrator notes, such warmth was destroyed when the fire was put in "his iron cage," distancing humankind from its congenial influences (144). The sketch concludes that the open fire "gives the human spirit so deep an insight into its fellows, and melts all humanity into one cordial heart of hearts," while the stove has put an end to such communion and warmth (146). Significantly, this depiction relates directly to the role of Mr. Lindsey, who not only fails to provide any true warmth to the image but also fails to unite with the community that has sprung up around him in his absence.

Thus, Berthold's conclusion that "Mr. Lindsey, not the children and their mother, is the better representative of Hawthorne's position" (130) is a conclusion

very much in line with Mr. Lindsey's own failed insight into the true nature of the artistic creation and his relation to that creation. The tale demonstrates, rather, as Shannon Burns notes (269), that the proper perspective is that of Mrs. Lindsey, for she provides a balance between emphasis on the ideal and the actual. Burns claims that the reader is left at the end of the tale in the "neutral territory" created through this perspective (270). Yet the tale does not end with Mrs. Lindsey's acceptance of the snow image as an artistic creation which has been brought to life through the faith of her children. After Mr. Lindsey brings the image in the house and places her before his stove, he orders his wife to fetch stockings and a shawl for the girl. As the father prepares to look for the child's parents, Mrs. Lindsey "had gone in search of the shawl and stockings; for her own view of the matter, however subtle and delicate, had given way, as it always did, to the stubborn materialism of her husband" (24).

It is precisely this overemphasis upon materialism that brings about the demise of the snow image, causing her to melt into a puddle of water that Mr. Lindsey can then mistake for so much snow tracked in by his children. More importantly, the emphasis upon the material corrupts the proper perspective which Mrs. Lindsey had finally adopted, a perspective which originated from viewing the image with her heart and balancing the forces of the ideal and the actual. The narrator, moralizing at the end of the tale, explains the importance of the audience's perspective: "it behoves [sic] men, and especially men of benevolence, to consider well what they are about, and, before acting on their philanthropic purposes, to be quite sure that they comprehend the nature and all the relations of the business in hand" (25). As the narrator notes, Mr. Lindsey fails to comprehend not only the true nature of the snow image but also the relationships established in its creation (the love between the image and Violet and Peony, its creators, and Mrs. Lindsey, its only true audience), and his failure in turn

becomes Mrs. Lindsey's for she cannot maintain her faith in the midst of such skepticism.

The narrator concludes that "should some phenomenon of Nature or Providence transcend [the] system [of men like Mr. Lindsey], they will not recognize it, even if it came to pass under their very noses" (25). Like the conclusion of "Main-Street," Hawthorne here notes that his new aesthetic not only transcends the older systems but also that audiences will fail to appreciate such an aesthetic because of their adherence to materialistic and common-sense beliefs. Focusing on the role of the audience, "The Snow-Image" suggests that Mr. Lindsey's materialistic perceptions eventually corrupt the more poetic perception of Mrs. Lindsey, the only member of the audience capable of taking the proper perspective toward the created image. Because Hawthorne understands that his own audience—who very much resembles Mr. Lindsey—will likewise fail to share in the "proper" appreciation of his own works of art, he defines the point of view that the audience should take towards his fiction. Like the tales of the 1830s, in which Hawthorne could only analyze and exemplify the dilemma that he saw facing the artist, the tales of the late 1840s acknowledge that a common-sense attitude dominates his nineteenth-century audience and suggest, but only feebly, a remedy to such an attitude.

"The Great Stone Face" (1850), the third of Hawthorne's four tales written and published during the late 1840s and early 1850s, develops the themes of "Main-Street" and "The Snow-Image" in its similar description of the perspective necessary for appreciation of the work of art. Yet "The Great Stone Face" also depicts a utopian vision of the effects that adopting such a perspective will have. Hawthorne shows in this tale that living a balanced life between the ideal and the actual might widen the heart and deepen the sympathies, thus allowing a reciprocal relation between artist and

audience. Indeed, like "The Snow-Image," the tale opens on a late afternoon "when the sun was going down" (XI: 26). Yet Hawthorne clearly indicates that the development of such an inter-relationship depends upon the audience's willingness to found their perceptions on the aesthetic, the balance between the ideal and the real, which he has defined. Only after describing when the tale occurs does the narrator introduce the image of perception so important during this period of Hawthorne's creativity. As a mother and son sit and discuss the "Great Stone Face" imaged in the nearby mountains, the narrator notes that "They had but to lift their eyes, and there it was plainly to be seen, though miles away, with the sunshine brightening all its features" (26).

The narrator develops the necessity of beginning with an acceptance of the proper point of view in describing the villagers of the spacious valley above which the image rises, all of whom "had a kind of familiarity with the Great Stone Face, although some possessed the gift of distinguishing this grand natural phenomenon more perfectly than many of their neighbors" (26). As in "The Snow-Image," a distinction occurs between those members of the audience who more readily perceive the image and those who cannot distinguish its form in the distant mountains. The narrator describes the Great Stone Face as "a work of Nature in her mood of majestic playfulness, formed on the perpendicular side of a mountain by some immense rocks, which had been thrown together in such a position, as, when viewed at a proper distance, precisely to resemble the features of the human countenance" (27). The narrator continues, more fully describing the view of the image from the valley:

True it is, that if the spectator approached too near, he lost the outline of the gigantic visage, and could discern only a heap of ponderous and gigantic rocks, piled in chaotic ruin one upon another. Retracing his

steps, however, the wondrous features would again be seen, and the farther he withdrew from them, the more like a human face, with all its original divinity intact, did they appear; until, as it grew dim in the distance, with the clouds and glorified vapor of the mountains clustering about it, the Great Stone Face seemed positively to be alive.

(27)

As in "Main-Street," where the showman is constantly asking the critic to distance himself from the spectacle, thus limiting any objective analysis and allowing the free play of the imagination, in "The Great Stone Face" that vision which brings the image most alive is one which depends on a certain amount of distance.

After this introductory section, which carefully defines the perspective that the audience must take towards the work of art, the remainder of the tale describes the influence that adopting such a "proper perspective" can have on the audience through a description of the growth and maturation of Ernest, the little boy of the opening scene. The narrator notes that children raised beneath the Great Stone Face are indeed quite lucky, for all its "features were noble, and [its] expression was at once grand and sweet, as if it were the glow of a vast, warm heart, that embraced all mankind in its affections, and had room for more" (27). The key to the image, according to the narrator, is its tie to the affections, its ability to radiate warmth and love. The mother explains to Ernest the prophecy attached to the image, that "a child should be born hereabouts, who was destined to become the greatest and noblest personage of his time, and whose countenance, in manhood, should bear an exact resemblance to the Great Stone Face" (28). In the course of the tale, the villagers put forth three candidates to fulfill this prophecy, and each, in turn, is rejected; meanwhile, the tale

counterpoints each candidate with a description of the growth of Ernest who, it becomes clear, is destined to fulfill the prophecy.¹²

As a child, Ernest lives "in the log-cottage where he was born, and was dutiful to his mother, and helpful to her in many things, assisting her much with his little hands, and more with his loving heart" (29). He is rather pensive, growing up without attending school yet still with more intelligence than most schoolboys, for after work each day, Ernest would go apart and gaze at the Great Stone Face. And the image gazes back at the little boy with kindness: "the secret was, that the boy's tender and confiding simplicity discerned what other people could not see; and thus the love, which was meant for all, became his peculiar portion" (29). Significantly, it is because of Ernest's disposition, his "tender and confiding simplicity," that the Great Stone Face becomes his teacher, imparting its love and wisdom to Ernest.

As a young man, Ernest attracts little notice, working industriously each day and gazing each evening at the image. The people of the valley grant Ernest his "foolishness" because he "was industrious, kind, and neighborly, and neglected no duty for the sake of indulging this idle habit" (33). The narrator notes, again explaining the effects of Ernest's relationship with the image, that these people "knew not that the Great Stone Face had become a teacher to him, and that the sentiment, which was expressed in it, would enlarge the young man's heart, and fill it with wider and deeper sympathies than other hearts" (33). Indeed, such an influence is most apparent in Ernest's outward life when he reaches middle age and becomes a minister to the people of the valley: "he had thought and felt so much—he had given so many of the best hours of his life to unworldly hopes for some great good to mankind, that it seemed as

12. James J. Lynch most fully analyzes the structure of the tale, reading it as an allegory which demonstrates not Hawthorne's aesthetic but rather the "wisdom and humility" that humans can attain in the course of their lives (140).

though he had been talking with the angels, and had imbibed a portion of their wisdom unawares" (37-38). Because of his willingness to adopt a confiding and warm disposition toward the Great Stone face, Ernest receives the image's warmth and love in return, thereby attaining a kind of heavenly wisdom. Still the "simple-hearted man that he had always been" (37), however, Ernest mingles his divine inspiration with a touch of humanity.

Finally, as an "aged man," Ernest becomes well known because of his original and wise thoughts, which he imparts to others with "a higher tone—a tranquil and familiar majesty, as if he had been talking with the angels as his daily friends" (42). In the course of this final scene, Ernest is visited by a poet, whose very genius suggests that he "had come down from heaven with wonderful endowments" (43). His poetry, according to the narrator, provides the world with "a better aspect" as it is "the last, best touch to [the Creator's] own handiwork" (43). When Ernest and the poet come together, their sympathies "instructed them with a profounder sense than either could have attained alone. Their minds accorded into one strain, and made delightful music which neither of them could have claimed as all his own, nor distinguished his own share from the other's" (45). In this relationship, the tale delineates the way in which a mutual interaction, based on acceptance of each other's vision, benefits both Ernest and the poet, allowing them to rise above their ordinary wisdom and create heavenly music.¹³

Ernest, who remains a man of humility throughout the tale, refusing to see that he is the man whom the prophecy has foretold, originally believes that the poet might

13. Tom Quirk suggestively notes that "Ernest symbolizes Hawthorne's conception of the ideal artist, but he is also, in a sense, an ideal reader . . ." (227). Such a reading, for Quirk, resolves Hawthorne's aesthetic dilemma by locating artist and audience in one person, yet this reading would also contribute to a sense of solipsism in the creation and enjoyment of art.

be the one who will fulfill that prophecy, but he realizes, after comparing the poet's visage to the Great Stone Face, that the poet is not that man. Ernest reveals this hope to the poet, which he had held because of the divine nature of the poet's work; the poet responds that his poems might indeed "have a strain of the Divinity You can hear in them the far-off echo of a heavenly song. But my life, dear Ernest, has not corresponded with my thought. I have had grand dreams, but they have been only dreams, because I have lived . . . among poor and mean realities" (46). The poet explains that one must not simply dream the ideal and live in reality but must live the ideal in the real, must bring the two together. Indeed, the lesson that the Great Stone Face has reinforced for Ernest is partly this: to balance the forces of the actual and the ideal in his life.¹⁴

In the very last scene of the tale, Ernest and the poet walk together to a small clearing where Ernest regularly speaks to those who have gathered. At a distance, the Great Stone Face can be seen rising above the valley. The narrator more fully explains, in his description of Ernest's speech, the lesson that the image has taught him: "Ernest began to speak, giving to the people what was in his heart and mind. His words had power, because they accorded with his thoughts, and his thoughts had reality and depth, because they harmonized with the life which he had always lived" (47). The narrator explains that Ernest's ideas have force and reality not because they correspond to some heavenly ideal but because they correspond to the life that Ernest has lived within his community. During the course of Ernest's sermon, the poet discerns that Ernest resembles the Great Stone Face and is himself the man who fulfills the

14. Nina Baym suggests that the tale shows that "Imagination should keep itself pure and have nothing to do with actuality" (*The Shape of Hawthorne's Career* 119); such a reading is based primarily on the life of the poet, who fails to integrate successfully these forces, and not on the life of Ernest, who is certainly the primary focus of the tale and does achieve such a balance.

prophecy. All the others in attendance “saw that what the deep-sighted poet said was true. The prophecy was fulfilled” (48). Appropriately, Ernest continues hoping to the end “that some wiser and better man than himself would by-and-by appear, bearing a resemblance to the GREAT STONE FACE” (48).

Hawthorne’s optimism in the early 1840s that the artist and audience might participate readily in a shared reality, a communal vision such as Ernest establishes with both the Great Stone Face and the people of the valley, is demonstrated most fully in “The Artist of the Beautiful” when Owen Warland offers his mechanical butterfly, his materialization of the beautiful, as a bridal gift to his life-long love. Yet, even during this period, such optimism was tempered with the understanding that the community surrounding the artist was probably incapable of fully appreciating the artist’s work because of their unwillingness to accept the grounds on which it was created, a balance of the ideal and the real. Hawthorne therefore turned, in the late 1840s in a tale like “The Great Stone Face,” first to defining the aesthetic which informs his art and then to suggesting the benefits, the widening and deepening of the sympathies, which the audience might incur through a perception of the artwork based on this aesthetic. Hawthorne’s realization that nineteenth-century audiences could not understand and therefore would not accept works of art derived from an intermixing of the imagination with the actual forced him to both define and defend his ideas about art at the very moment that they matured into a coherent aesthetic.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion: Hawthorne's Developed Aesthetic

Reflecting on his career as a writer in the preface to his last collection of short stories, *The Snow-Image and Uncollected Tales* (1851), Hawthorne concludes that his tales and sketches might be grouped into three periods of productivity: "Some of these sketches were among the earliest that I wrote, and, after lying for years in manuscript, they at last skulked into the *Annals* or *Magazines*, and have hidden themselves there ever since. Others were the productions of a later period; others, again, were written recently" (XI: 5-6). Hawthorne then turns to a critique of the works of these three disparate periods:

The comparison of these various trifles—the indices of intellectual condition at far separated epochs—affects me with a singular complexity of regrets. I am disposed to quarrel with the earlier sketches, both because a mature judgment discerns so many faults, and still more because they come so nearly up to the standard of the best that I can achieve now. The ripened autumnal fruit tastes but little better

than the early windfalls. . . . In youth, men are apt to write more wisely than they really know or feel; and the remainder of life may be not idly spent in realizing and convincing themselves of the wisdom which they uttered long ago. The truth that was only in the fancy then may have since become a substance in the mind and heart. (6)

Such a lengthy self-analysis reveals several interesting features of Hawthorne's thinking during the early 1850s which illuminate the way in which his aesthetic matured and developed over three decades.¹

First, Hawthorne notes that the various tales comprising the three periods of productivity, the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s, represent the "indices" to his "intellectual condition," that is, the ideas which were paramount to his thinking, during the composition of these tales in each decade. He proceeds to claim that the works of the earlier decade, while filled with "so many faults," are as well written as the tales which he composed in his maturity. But, most importantly, Hawthorne concludes that the works of the 1830s utter a truth which he finds himself in the 1850s still trying to accept, a truth which he only imagined in the earlier decade but which has become a part of his "mind and heart" in the later decade. Such a paradox lies at the heart of Hawthorne's self-criticism during this period; reflecting from the perspective of a mature aesthetic, which accepts the workings of the imagination, on the productions of the 1830s that were written from an early aesthetic, which disparaged the use of the

1. The claim that Hawthorne's ideas about art changed and matured over these three decades is, of course, one of the primary findings of my analysis. Yet several critics have suggested, putting aside even Hawthorne's own statements, that no such change occurred during this time. See, for example, Nina Baym, who claims that Hawthorne's basic conception of art did not change until 1850 when he wrote *The Scarlet Letter* (*The Shape of Hawthorne's Career* 1-10), and Jesse Bier, who claims that no change occurred in Hawthorne's thinking during the 1840s and 1850s (17). Such contradictory claims occur, I believe, for two reasons: first, using Hawthorne's 1850s definition of the romance, critics like Baym have compared that definition to all of the works which precede 1850, and, second, focusing on Hawthorne's works of a certain period, critics like Bier do not attempt to establish any relationship between this period and other periods of Hawthorne's productivity.

imagination, Hawthorne reveals a tension which aids in the illumination of his definition of the "romance" stated in the prefaces to his longer works of the 1850s.

This tension is most apparent in the preface to the 1851 edition of *Twice-Told Tales*, a preface which again allows Hawthorne to reflect on his earlier works from his later point of view. The first part of the preface discusses Hawthorne's relation to his audience in the 1830s, which he claims was nearly nonexistent. Referring to himself in third person (to distance himself from these earlier works and this earlier version of himself), Hawthorne notes that "He was, for a good many years, the obscurest man of letters in America" (IX: 3). During his youth, "he had no incitement to literary effort in a reasonable prospect of reputation or profit; nothing but the pleasure itself of composition—an enjoyment not at all amiss in its way, and perhaps essential to the merit of the work in hand, but which, in the long run, will hardly keep the chill out of a writer's heart, or the numbness out of his fingers" (3). Because of his lack of audience, Hawthorne notes that during the 1830s he wrote primarily for himself and the pleasure of the process of composition; yet he admits, using the cold imagery so important to his later productions, that such a solipsistic pursuit, appropriate for the work of the hand (and thus of control), is not appropriate to the warmth of the heart.

This depiction of his career in the 1830s most clearly defines his early aesthetic, for during this period Hawthorne could only analytically exemplify the dilemma of the artist, the separation from humanity caused by the artist's metaphorical ascension into the heavens, without proffering a solution to this dilemma. Yet, he continues, such a dilemma was not solely the responsibility of the artist, for the Public had a "total lack of sympathy" for the artistic works which Hawthorne and his artists produced. He then turns from an analysis of himself and his audience to a criticism of these early works: "They have the pale tint of flowers that blossomed in too retired a

shade—the coolness of a meditative habit, which diffuses itself through the feeling and observation of every sketch” (5). The solitude and propensity to meditation of the author, a result not merely of his own habits but also of his audience’s lack of response, infects the works with a “coolness.” He continues: “even in what purport to be pictures of actual life, we have allegory, not always so warmly dressed in its habiliments of flesh and blood, as to be taken into the reader’s mind without a shiver” (5). These works, Hawthorne concludes, are based primarily on the ideal, and thus result in allegories without any significant reference to the actual, a reference which might have warmed these creations to life.

After such a depiction of himself as an isolated and neglected artist and of his work as the representation of a cold ideal, depictions appropriate to the aesthetic of the 1830s which produced these works, Hawthorne reveals the profound tension that exists between this earlier aesthetic and the 1850s perspective from which he writes this preface in contradicting such a depiction. He claims that these sketches are not “profound,” for “They have none of the abstruseness of idea, or obscurity of expression, which mark the written communications of a solitary mind with itself. They never need translation. It is, in fact, the style of a man of society” (6). Admitting his own contradiction, Hawthorne notes: “This statement of apparently opposite peculiarities leads us to a perception of what the sketches truly are. They are not the talk of a secluded man with his own mind and heart . . . but his attempts, and very imperfectly successful ones, to open an intercourse with the world” (6). While earlier in the preface Hawthorne directly stated that his works of this period were written for his own solipsistic entertainment and not for an audience (largely because one did not exist), he now claims that he was attempting, in these works, to write for others.

Such a tension reveals Hawthorne using a key element in his mature aesthetic, the necessity of the artist's connection to a community, to disguise his very own depiction of himself during the 1830s. Indeed Hawthorne even goes so far as to focus the blame for his lack of connection to humanity on his audience; in describing his works of the 1830s in the second half of this preface, he notes that "Every sentence, so far as it embodies thought or sensibility, may be understood and felt by anybody, who will give himself the trouble to read it, and will take up the book in a proper mood" (6). As in the tales written during this time, the late 1840s and early 1850s, Hawthorne here suggests that responsibility for the lack of communication between the artist and audience resides in members of the audience and in their unwillingness and inability to adopt the proper perspective towards his works. Just as the critic in "Main-Street" and Mr. Lindsey in "The Snow-Image" were incapable of allowing a certain amount of distance in their perceptions of art, Hawthorne's audience, he realizes, is likewise incapable of surrendering their materialistic thinking and of allowing themselves to depend on the powers of the imagination.

Such a conclusion is paramount for understanding not only Hawthorne's definition of the romance as it appears in his prefaces of the 1850s but also for understanding his motivations for constructing such a definition. In the preface to *The Snow-Image and Uncollected Tales*, Hawthorne notes that the writer of the "psychological romance" must burrow "into the depths of our common nature . . . as well by the tact of sympathy as by the light of observation" (XI: 4). This description of the process of writing the romance suggests that the writer must proceed on two levels: first, on the level of analytical observation of his subjects and subject matter, which might possibly lead to an ascent of the artist into the heavens and a cold idealization of the work of art; and, second, on the level of sympathetic communion with his subjects

and subject matter, which mitigates the artist's heavenward ascent through contact with the actual. Significantly, this definition comes in relation to Hawthorne's reaction against the charge of egotism that several critics had leveled against him because of his autobiographical prefaces (and especially "The Old Manse"). Hawthorne is offering, therefore, a definition of his aesthetic as it relates not only to his process of creation but also to his audience, for if he creates out of a balance between the ideal and the actual, then his audience should appreciate his works on a similar level.

Yet as the tales of the late 1840s and early 1850s demonstrate, such an appreciation is impossible for Hawthorne's audience because of their overemphasis on the material world. While Mrs. Lindsey in "The Snow-Image" is ultimately capable of adopting the proper point of view toward the created artwork in the tale, this perspective is eventually corrupted by the common sense view of her husband, a view which dominates and destroys the poetic and fanciful aspect of Mrs. Lindsey's more balanced vision. Hawthorne's awareness of this dilemma plays a key role in his definitions of the romance in the prefaces to *The House of the Seven Gables* and *The Blithedale Romance*. In addition to defining the aesthetic from which he operated in creating these works, Hawthorne realizes that he must define for the audience the perspective necessary for accepting the works created from this aesthetic.²

The preface to *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) opens with Hawthorne's contrast of the Romance and the Novel. He notes that "When a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume,

2. In "Hawthorne's Prefaces and Romantic Perspectivism," Kent Bales attempts a similar reading but focuses on the prefaces to "Roger Malvin's Burial," "Rappaccini's Daughter," and *The Scarlet Letter*; significantly, Bales defines the romantic perspective which the audience must adopt as one based solely on "moonlight"—that is, the ideal—rather than on a balance.

had he professed to be writing a Novel" (II: 1). The Novel, he claims, aims "at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience"; the Romance, on the other hand, "while, as a work 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" (1). While critics have generally observed that Hawthorne bases his definition of the Romance on its latitude, its departure from "the probable and ordinary course of man's experience" and thus from the actual, few have pointed out that Hawthorne intends the Romance to remain firmly in contact with the actual through its adherence to the "truth of the human heart." As "The Artist of the Beautiful" and "The Snow-Image" demonstrate, Hawthorne perceives the human heart and human love as the artist's necessary link, in his process of imaginative creation, to his audience and therefore to the actual.

Hawthorne intends the Romance, then, to partake of the actual and the ideal, the real and the imaginary, of a balance between the two opposing forces from which the artist, according to Hawthorne, must create. Yet Hawthorne understands that the materialistic and common sense thinking of his audience will not allow them to appreciate such a form of creativity, and so he realizes that he must explicitly identify, in the prefaces to his longer works, the position that the audience must adopt in relation to those works. In discussing the setting for the *The House of the Seven Gables*, Hawthorne notes that "The Reader may perhaps choose to assign an actual locality to the imaginary events of this narrative"; but, he continues, he would prefer that his reader avoid such a move: "Not to speak of other objections, it exposes the Romance to an inflexible and exceedingly dangerous species of criticism, by bringing his fancy-pictures almost into positive contact with the realities of the moment" (3). Hawthorne

knows that his audience, like the critic in "Main-Street" and Mr. Lindsey in "The Snow-Image," is likely to compare his Romance to their own experiences in the real world and thus destroy the illusion which the romancer creates. Hawthorne concludes that "He would be glad, therefore, if . . . the book may be read strictly as a Romance, having a great deal more to do with the clouds overhead, than with any portion of the actual soil of the County of Essex" (3).

Such a tension reveals, to a great extent, Hawthorne's intentions in defining the form that he used in his longer works, what he calls the Romance. Fearing that his audience will not read his works from the proper perspective, Hawthorne understands that he must carefully delineate that perspective, a project which necessarily begins with an explanation of the type of work which he has produced. Indeed, the preface to *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) proceeds along similar lines; the opening of the preface describes Hawthorne's reasons for using Brook Farm as the setting for his fictional work: "his present concern with the Socialist Community is merely to establish a theatre, a little removed from the highway of ordinary travel, where the creatures of his brain may play their phantasmagorical antics, without exposing them to too close a comparison with the actual events of real lives" (III: 1). Hawthorne explains that his latest romance will exist somewhere between the actual and the ideal, only a "little removed from the highway of ordinary travel" where, he hopes, his characters will not be compared to the real world. Thus, he proposes to use Brook Farm, "essentially a day-dream, and yet a fact," as "an available foothold between fiction and reality" (2).³

3. Hawthorne implies a similar plea in the preface to *The Marble Faun* (1859); explaining his choice of locale for his last published romance, Hawthorne notes that "Italy, as the site of this Romance, was chiefly valuable to him as affording a sort of poetic or fairy precinct, where actualities would not be so terribly insisted upon, as they are, and must needs be, in America" (IV: 3).

Along with the definition of his fictional creation as a balance between the ideal and the real, however, Hawthorne proffers a definition of the balanced position which the audience must adopt towards his creation:

In the old countries, with which Fiction has long been conversant, a certain conventional privilege seems to be awarded to the romancer; his work is not put exactly side by side with nature; and he is allowed a license with regard to every-day Probability, in view of the improved effects which he is bound to produce thereby. Among ourselves, on the contrary, there is as yet no such Faery Land, so like the real world, that, in a suitable remoteness, one cannot well tell the difference, but with an atmosphere of strange enchantment, beheld through which the inhabitants have a propriety of their own. This atmosphere is what the American romancer needs. In its absence, the beings of imagination are compelled to show themselves in the same category as actually living mortals; a necessity that generally renders the paint and pasteboard of their composition but too painfully discernible. (1-2)

Implied in this contrast between the privileges allowed European writers and American writers is also a clear definition of European and American audiences, the latter of which refuses to allow the artist any latitude in which to create because of its reliance on the actual. As Hawthorne concludes, such a perspective will destroy the romancer's carefully constructed balance between the ideal and the actual.

"The Custom-House" sketch, which introduces Hawthorne's first full length romance, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), acts as an exemplary paradigm for introducing and explaining both the development of Hawthorne's mature aesthetic and the significant elements in that aesthetic. The sketch includes a discussion of the way in which

Hawthorne reacted to his Puritan ancestry and his Transcendental colleagues in developing his ideas about art, ideas which ultimately centered on defining the roles of both the artist and the audience.⁴ In addition to such a discussion, however, Hawthorne demonstrates the way in which such an aesthetic operates through his description of the "neutral territory" so necessary to the artist's creative process. In this way Hawthorne not only defines his aesthetic abstractly for his audience, but he also provides a description of that aesthetic in process, hoping that his audience will thereby read his romance from the proper perspective.

In discussing his Puritan ancestors, all of whom lived and died in Salem, Hawthorne concludes that they had mingled "their earthy substance with the soil; until no small portion of it must necessarily be akin to the mortal frame wherewith, for a little while, I walk the streets" (I: 9). Hawthorne admits that the figure of his first American ancestor, "invested by family tradition with a dim and dusky grandeur, was present to my boyish imagination, as far back as I can remember. It still haunts me, and induces a sort of home-feeling with the past . . ." (9). Accepting the shame of his ancestors' deeds, Hawthorne calls himself "their representative" in the present (10). Such a biographical and historical depiction suggests that Hawthorne indeed feels the influence of his Puritan past far more than most American writers in the mid-nineteenth century. He explains that such an influence began in his childhood with family tradition yet continues to be felt even in his maturity.

4. Roberta Weldon provides a remarkable analysis of the way in which "The Custom-House" creates a dialogue with "The Old Manse" and thus how "The Custom-House" reveals Hawthorne's thinking during three periods of his life, his time spent in the Old Manse, in the Custom House, and then immediately after (while he writes the sketch). Yet, as I have demonstrated with "The Old Manse," the dialogue Hawthorne established extends much further into the past, reaching back to his Puritan ancestry.

The importance of Hawthorne's Puritan influence lies mostly in its relation to his choice of a career as a writer. He notes in "The Custom-House" sketch that his ancestors must think it "a sufficient retribution" for their sins to have Hawthorne, "an idler," as their descendant: "No aim, that I have ever cherished, would they recognize as laudable; no success of mine—if my life, beyond its domestic scope, had ever been brightened by success—would they deem otherwise than worthless, if not positively disgraceful" (10). Indeed, Hawthorne feels this influence so strongly that he even imagines what they might say to him: "A writer of story-books! What kind of a business in life,—what mode of glorifying God, or being serviceable to mankind in his day and generation,—may that be? Why, the degenerate fellow might as well have been a fiddler!" (10). He concludes: "Such are the compliments bandied between my great-grandsires and myself, across the gulf of time! And yet, let them scorn me as they will, strong traits of their nature have intertwined themselves with mine" (10).

Hawthorne's relationship with his Puritan past, so clearly depicted in this sketch, underlies many of his tales of his earliest phase, the late 1820s and early 1830s. During this period Hawthorne often dramatized the conflict which he imagines occurring between himself and his "great-grandsires." For instance, in "Passages from a Relinquished Work" Hawthorne describes the outsetting artist, the narrator of the tale, attempting to escape from his guardian, the puritanical Parson Thumpcushion. And while this escape seems successful in that the narrator ultimately does become a wandering story teller, he does so in the shadow of Eliakim Abbot, a young Puritan divine who becomes the narrator's traveling companion. In "Passages," Hawthorne demonstrates the way in which the drama of the artist's growth unfolds beneath the influence of the Puritan religion, an influence which is more fully delineated in such tales as "Fragments from the Journal of a Solitary Man" and "The Village Uncle."

Demonstrating the possibility that becoming an artist is an idle occupation, these tales suggest that Hawthorne's chosen profession has nothing to do with the real business of life.

Yet the primary question of Puritan influence in the early period of the development of Hawthorne's aesthetic related not so much to the usefulness of the profession but rather to the blasphemous implications of becoming an artist—what “mode of glorifying God” the profession held. Hawthorne's Puritan ancestors believed that the artist, ascending above humanity like the Paul Pry figure in “Sights from a Steeple,” usurped the place of God through the creation of a fictional world. But because the artist was human, and thus fallible, such a creation could not conform to God's created world, and indeed replaced it with an imperfect copy. Incapable of proffering a solution to such a charge, Hawthorne could only analytically exemplify the possibility that the artist might adopt such a role. Such tales as “The Prophetic Pictures” and “Dr. Heidegger's Experiment” depict artists deleteriously assuming a godlike role over their subjects, attempting to control their fate and destiny.

Hawthorne concludes the discussion of his Puritan ancestry in “The Custom-House” with the remark that his connection to the Puritan past, “which has become an unhealthy one, should at last be severed” (11). While he could not proclaim his complete separation from this influence until 1850, Hawthorne's independence from Puritan thinking actually began in the late 1830s when he came into close proximity with transcendental ideas about art and artists. In “The Custom-House,” Hawthorne provides a long list of Transcendentalists who influenced him, including most importantly Emerson, and who allowed him to relinquish his negative, puritanic conception of the artist (25). With the influence of Transcendentalism, Hawthorne came to understand that the imagination was indeed not to be feared, as the Puritans

suggested, but rather could be an essential force in a balanced mode of artistic production. Admittedly, the Puritan fear that the artist might ascend heavenward remained with Hawthorne well into the 1840s, even finding expression in such important tales as "The Birth-Mark" and "Rappaccini's Daughter." But because of the Transcendentalist's positive conception of the artist and the imagination, Hawthorne began to explore avenues in which the artist might successfully create art even while remaining thoroughly in touch with the actual and thus thoroughly human.

The purport of both "Drowne's Wooden Image" and "The Artist of the Beautiful" is the delineation of an aesthetic whereby an artist, acting on the inspiration of love, might create art which comes alive even while the artist remains human. Largely because of his relationship with and marriage to Sophia Peabody (who, significantly, had ties to the Transcendentalists), Hawthorne was able to define a mode of creation in which the artist was able to create from a balance of imaginative and finite materials, the ideal and the real. Indeed "The Custom-House" sketch explains how Hawthorne himself achieved such a balance in the 1840s; after living among the idealisms of the Transcendentalists for several years, Hawthorne admits that "it was time, at length, that I should exercise other faculties of my nature, and nourish myself with food for which I had hitherto had little appetite" (25). And so Hawthorne came to work as a Surveyor of Revenue in the Salem Custom House where his imaginative faculties, because of his duties and responsibilities in the business world, were dulled to such a point that he finds himself incapable of artistic creativity.

Though Hawthorne describes his tenure in the Custom House as indicative of his ability to maintain a balanced life, he also regularly emphasizes his inability to write during this period. He notes: "I looked upon it as an evidence, in some measure, of a system naturally well balanced, and lacking no essential part of a thorough

organization, that, with such associates to remember, I could mingle at once with men of altogether different qualities, and never murmur at the change" (25). Yet during his Custom House employment, literature was of little regard to Hawthorne, who confesses that "A gift, a faculty, if it had not departed, was suspended and inanimate within me" (26). The key to these passages is not the suggestion that Hawthorne's ability to create fiction had departed because of his tenure in the business world, for he proceeded to write his most important work as a result of this experience. Rather, the key is the suggestion that Hawthorne's exposure to the material world of the Custom House was a corrective to his overexposure to the ideal world of the Transcendentalists; taken together, these two experiences allowed Hawthorne to live a balanced life between these two realms, a balance which becomes the key to his mature aesthetic.

But the Custom House experience also allowed Hawthorne to perceive his occupation as a writer externally, from the perspective of those with whom literature is not so very important. He explains that when a literary man steps outside "of the narrow circle in which his claims are recognized" he finds "how utterly devoid of significance, beyond that circle, is all that he achieves, and all he aims at" (27). Such a perspective led to Hawthorne's recognition in the late 1840s that his audience was not only unwilling but also incapable of accepting his fictional works, even though these works were founded on an aesthetic which emphasized a balance between the ideal and the actual. This dilemma became the primary focus of Hawthorne's last short tales, such as "The Snow-Image," where he depicts an audience not able to appreciate artistic works created from the forces of the imagination and the actual. Hawthorne resolved, then, that if he was to write a romance, a worthy pursuit because of its intermingling of forces, he would necessarily have to explain the perspective that his audience would

need to take towards this mode of fiction. As I have demonstrated, such an awareness lies at the heart of Hawthorne's definition of the romance in the prefaces to his longer works.

Indeed, "The Custom-House," as an introduction to *The Scarlet Letter*, is no different. Central to this sketch, as many critics have recognized, is Hawthorne's description of the "neutral territory," which intermingles the actual and the ideal and allows the creation of the romance. In a room filled with moonlight, Hawthorne remarks, objects are "invested with a quality of strangeness and remoteness, though still almost as vividly present as by daylight. Thus, therefore, the floor of our familiar room has become a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other" (35-36). Yet the spiritualizing influence of the moonlight, which causes objects "to lose their actual substance, and become things of intellect" (35), must be balanced with the warming influence of the hearth fire: "The somewhat dim coal-fire has an essential influence in producing" the realm in which the Actual and Imaginary may meet. Throwing its light across the spiritualized room, the "warmer light" of the coal-fire "mingles itself with the cold spirituality of the moonbeams, and communicates, as it were, a heart and sensibilities of human tenderness to the forms which fancy summons up. It converts them from snow-images into men and women" (36).

Like the definition of the romance outlined in the preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*, the neutral territory described in "The Custom-House" intermingles the forces of the ideal and the actual. The moonlight, symbolizing the imagination and the ideal world, causes objects to become distanced from actuality as they are represented to the intellect. Yet the moonlight is countered by the effects of the hearth fire which

warms the images of the intellect to life; symbolizing the heart and the actual world, the hearth allows the artistic creation, even while becoming a heterocosm, to maintain a foothold in the real world. Significantly, Hawthorne undermines his own definition of the romance immediately following his description of the "neutral territory." Indeed, the remainder of the sketch demonstrates the way in which Hawthorne was incapable of accessing such a territory because of the overwhelming influence of the actual world which impinged on him during his tenure in the Custom House.

After confessing his inability to make use of the documents which Surveyor Pue has passed down to him through history, the documents which revealed to him the narrative of Hester Prynne and the scarlet letter, Hawthorne notes that "An entire class of susceptibilities, and a gift connected with them . . . was gone from me" (36). As Hawthorne shows in "The Great Stone Face," the artist must *live* the balance between the imaginative and real worlds in order to create art, not merely conceptualize such a balance.⁵ And because of his duties as a Custom House officer, Hawthorne understands that such a balance is beyond his reach during this short period: "It was a folly, with the materiality of this daily life pressing so intrusively upon me, to attempt to fling myself back into another age; or to insist on creating the semblance of a world out of airy matter, when, at every moment, the impalpable beauty of my soap-bubble was broken by the rude contact of some actual circumstance" (37). Hawthorne reveals the importance of attaining this balanced existence when he notes that most Custom House officers, when they leave their post, do not regain full use of their faculties: "A dreary look-forward this, for a man who felt it to be the best definition of happiness to live throughout the whole range of his faculties and sensibilities!" (40).

5. See Larzer Ziff for a discussion of the relationship between Hawthorne's theory of the romance and his "theory of the good life" (33). Ziff concentrates on the way in which such a connection operates in the text of *The Scarlet Letter*.

But the definition of Hawthorne's aesthetic in "The Custom-House" reaches beyond his depiction of the artist and to a description of the role of the audience. As "The Great Stone Face" demonstrates, a reciprocal relation can exist not only between the artist and the work of art but also between the work of art and the audience. Thus, if the artist creates an artwork out of a balance, the audience should attempt to appreciate that work from what Hawthorne calls the "proper perspective"—one which willingly admits the forces of the imagination into a sphere already based, like the critic's in "Main-Street," on the forces of the actual. Yet, Hawthorne realizes, such a perspective is not readily adopted or understood by his audience, and so he both carefully defines the aesthetic from which his romance is written (in the description of the "neutral territory") and attempts to demonstrate the way in which this romance is founded on the actual, on the historical documents which he has gathered from Surveyor Pue on the second floor of the edifice which represents the material world.⁶

Several critics have suggested that central to Hawthorne's definition of the romance, which lies at the heart of his mature aesthetic, is the way in which it indulges in the imaginary, separating itself from the actual. Terence Martin describes the "neutral territory" outlined in "The Custom-House" as a metaphor for the conditions which allowed Hawthorne "to attenuate in some way the necessary glare of the American present, to remove his fiction—if he was to have fiction—from the tyranny of what he called the 'actual'" (*Nathaniel Hawthorne* 31). Martin concludes that "the central imaginative problem of Hawthorne's career" was the "search to find a 'region' where liberated experience . . . could be fully accommodated" (37). A similar analysis leads Sergio Perosa to conclude in *American Theories of the Novel* that Hawthorne

6. Roberta Weldon concludes similarly but does not provide, as I attempt here, a detailed explanation of the complex relationship that exists between the artist, the artwork and the audience.

viewed the romance "as a kind of 'rival creation' as regards our life and our world" (59). Perhaps most complexly, Michael Davitt Bell concludes that for Hawthorne the romance was a vehicle which allowed him, subversively, to create fiction fully removed from the glare of the real world, to sacrifice the relation between the imagination and the actual.⁷

Such readings, and especially that of Michael Davitt Bell, stem in part from one originating source, Henry James's critique of the romance in his preface to *The American*. Though quite lengthy, this critique is worth quoting in whole:

The only *general* attribute of projected romance that I can see, the only one that fits all its cases, is the fact of the kind of experience with which it deals—experience liberated, so to speak; experience disengaged, disembroiled, disencumbered, exempt from the conditions that we usually know to attach to it and, if we wish so to put the matter, drag upon it, and operating in a medium which relieves it, in a particular interest, of the inconvenience of a *related*, a measurable state, a state subject to all our vulgar communities. The greatest intensity may so be arrived at evidently—when the sacrifice of community, of the "related" sides of situations, has not been too rash. It must to this end not flagrantly betray itself; we must even be kept if possible, for our illusion, from suspecting any sacrifice at all. The balloon of experience is in fact of course tied to the earth, and under that necessity we swing, thanks to a rope of remarkable length, in the more or less commodious car of the imagination; but it is by the rope we know where we are, and

7. Bell argues in *The Development of American Romance* that Hawthorne did attempt to provide what Bell calls a "conservative theory of romance," but that this theory was, in reality, only an attempt to cover up the deeper implications of Hawthorne's subversive theory of romance.

from the moment that cable is cut we are at large and unrelated: we only swing apart from the globe—though remaining as exhilarated, naturally, as we like, especially when all goes well. The art of the romancer is, “for the fun of it,” insidiously to cut the cable, to cut it without our detecting him. (33)

James suggests here that the romance is based on the sacrifice of the relationship between the imagination and the actual, on the severance of fiction from the real world.

Yet, as I have demonstrated, Hawthorne was not primarily concerned in his definition of the romance with establishing some realm whereby his fictional world, as a heterocosm, would take on the appearance of real world. Instead, after acknowledging the importance of the imagination in the creation of his fiction, Hawthorne explained the way in which, through the “truth of the human heart,” his work as a romance would maintain contact with the actual. If the cable was indeed to be cut, using James’s terminology, because of the use of the imagination, Hawthorne simultaneously attempted to establish a new kind of relation to the earth, a relation which, while allowing the artist to indulge in the ideal, kept him firmly in contact with the actual. Through love and warmth for his subject and subject matter, and thus contact with, not “sacrifice of,” community, the artist, Hawthorne maintained, created art based on such a relationship.

Such a balancing act, Hawthorne realized, was difficult to maintain. In a letter discussing *The House of the Seven Gables*, dated 3 November 1850 and addressed to J. T. Fields, Hawthorne provides an alternate perspective on the “general attribute” of the romance: “Sometimes, when tired of it, it strikes me that the whole is an absurdity, from beginning to end; but the fact is, in writing a romance, a man is always—or always ought to be—careering [sic!] on the utmost verge of a precipitous absurdity,

and the skill lies in coming as close as possible, without actually tumbling over" (XVI: 371). As Leo B. Levy concludes about this passage, what prevents the romancer "from 'tumbling over' is his awareness that romance transforms rather than disregards the Actual" ("The Notebook Source" 125).

Significantly, Hawthorne borrows his metaphor for describing the romance in this letter not from the idea of a heavenward ascent, as in James's description of the liberated balloon of experience, but rather from that of an earthly tumble, a distinction which clearly differentiates the two positions. For James, the romancer creates a world which replaces the real world, thus separating his work from that of actual experience. Through the artist's use of the imagination, he separates himself from the community at large and thus isolates himself and those who read his fiction. Yet for Hawthorne, the key to the romance was the precarious link of the ideal world to the real world, a link which the romancer must ever attempt to establish without destroying the balance between the two.

Throughout his career, Hawthorne struggled with the very implications of James's late nineteenth-century, orthodox view of the romance, a view which, as Michael Davitt Bell argues, was prevalent from the beginning of the century. Yet because Hawthorne's struggle progressed through several clearly defined stages, his relation to this orthodox view was not as straightforward as that of some of his contemporaries. Because of his reaction to both Puritan and Transcendental ideas about art, Hawthorne ultimately was able to theorize a mode of fiction, called the Romance, which alleviated the orthodox claim that creating art was a blasphemous act. In the 1850s, Hawthorne was finally able to delineate a theory of art wherein an artist could create a heterocosm, a work of art which came to life, not through the artist's godlike abilities but through his true human warmth and love.

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Vita

Born 29 January 1964 in Austin, Texas, A. James ("Jim") Wohlpart grew up the third child (of five children) and second son (of two sons) of rather gypsy-esque parents. When his father, Alfred (from whence derives the "A." in "A. James") Wohlpart, completed his Doctorate at the University of Texas, Austin, he whisked his family off to Switzerland for a two year stint of post-doctoral studies. From Switzerland, the Wohlpart family moved to Gambier, Ohio, where Alfred Wohlpart taught in the Biology Department at Kenyon College. Jim, meanwhile, did most of his growing up in the small, college town of Gambier, a town exuding an academic and scholarly ambiance, where everyone knew everyone else, and where growing up meant learning about and experiencing life firsthand.

Just before Jim entered high school, the Wohlpart family was off again, this time to Oak Ridge, Tennessee. While Jim finished both high school and college in East Tennessee (attending the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, for his B.A.), he did not consider the "South" his home until he met, fell in love with, and married Susanna Smith. After three years in Colorado (where Jim attended Colorado State University for his M.A. and then taught for a year), Jim and Susanna returned to Knoxville where Jim completed his Ph.D. and where, more importantly, they started their family with the birth of their son, Zachary James, on 4 July 1991.