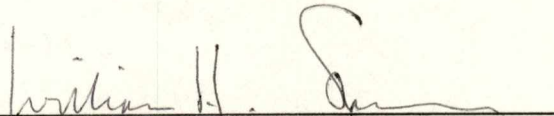
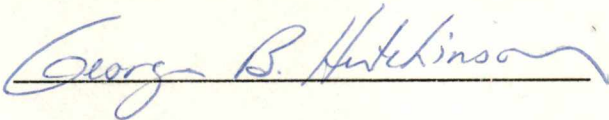


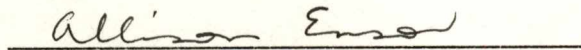
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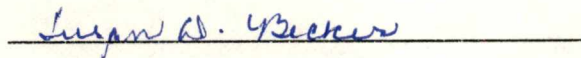
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Major Professor

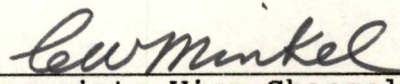
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AUTHORIAL VOICE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR GENDER
IDENTITY IN NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

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

Kathryn McCulloch Nowell

May 1992

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for Lee and John

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ABSTRACT

Nathaniel Hawthorne's works are marked by his own struggle for gender identity, as it is expressed through his major characters. Often this struggle is most noticeable in relation to his strongest and most admirable female characters, particularly Hester Prynne in The Scarlet Letter, Hepzibah in The House of the Seven Gables, Zenobia in The Blithedale Romance, and Miriam in The Marble Faun. These women display not only sex role reversals in their relationships with the male characters, but also androgynous personality characteristics that most interested Hawthorne himself. Yet not only the women, but also many male characters are role-reversed and androgynous; in the case of the men, however, the assumption of feminine attributes tends to detract from, rather than add to, their power. Other characters, representing the very traditional sex roles of the nineteenth century, are less successful and appear as type-figures in the majority of the works.

Hawthorne's tendency to interchange sex roles and include androgynous personality characteristics in his strongest characters, particularly the women, may be traced from his earliest writings through the body of his work. The reasons for the diffusion arise from Hawthorne's own sex role models; his father died during the author's early

childhood, and he was surrounded from then on primarily by women until he left for college.

Although Hawthorne was to grow into successful adulthood, he suffered many problems with his own gender identity and was influenced by these problems throughout his life, particularly in his writing. His chief role model and muse was his mother, with whom he personally identified and upon whom he based his strong female characters. His struggle to disengage from emotional dependence upon his mother is reflected in the lives of the characters whom he most admired but continually defeated in his works.

PREFACE

This study examines Nathaniel Hawthorne's struggle for gender identity as evidenced through his works. Chapter I introduces Hawthorne's early life and examines various critics' theories about Hawthorne's personal development and its effect upon his writing.

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter II discusses gender differentiation theory as it pertains to Hawthorne's early childhood and subsequent development. It also discusses other traditional psychological approaches to early childhood development and literary theory, focusing specifically on Hawthorne.

Chapter III examines Hawthorne's early works, from his first novel, written while he was in college, through works leading up to the time of his courtship and marriage. The mixing of masculine and feminine sex roles within individual characters is identified in these works and is shown to be reflective of Hawthorne's developmental stages at the time.

Chapter IV discusses Hawthorne's courtship and marriage, and demonstrates how these events influenced and were reflected in his works. His continuing relationship with his mother and sisters is discussed also, including the intentional and unintentional influences they had on his writing.

Chapter V examines the effects of Hawthorne's mother's death in terms of his own identity and the subject matter of his novels, particularly The Scarlet Letter, and later The House of the Seven Gables and The Blithedale Romance. Sex role mixing and androgyny are discussed as they occur in these novels.

Chapter VI begins with a short history of Hawthorne's life from 1853 to the 1860 publishing of The Marble Faun. This last novel most clearly demonstrates Hawthorne's career-long allegory of relationships between the sexes, although it probably is the least successful artistically of any of the preceding novels. Coming close to the end of his life, it summarizes his insights regarding the types of characters most typical of his works: the maternal figure, the young radical, the innocent couple representing traditional sex roles and values, and the sinister father figure or outsider.

Throughout his mature works and many stories that precede them, Hawthorne tells the veiled story of his own relationships with women, particularly his mother and his wife. An examination of his life and work together, in terms of gender-related issues, can offer insight into why Hawthorne wrote as he did and why his strongest characters are among the greatest in American literature.

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CHAPTER I

HAWTHORNE'S CHILDHOOD AND THE CRITICS

The works of Nathaniel Hawthorne are characterized by recurring themes relating to sex and gender, which carried unusual significance for their author. When examined in terms of Hawthorne's upbringing and subsequent later life, these themes suggest concerns which often govern the works and which apparently haunted the writer: the roles the sexes play in relation to each other and society, the identification each gender assumes, and the possible diffusion of these attributes within an individual.

For Hawthorne, a sensitive and introspective man, writing provided an outlet for emotional conflicts within himself that he could address in no other way. Often he was aware of these conflicts, but they were so interrelated as to defy his analysis of them by reasoning alone. Writing provided a catharsis. It enabled him to express, through characters and thematic material, the very concerns which defied head-on confrontation and which, in some instances, denied Hawthorne full, normal participation in life. Through his writing, he was able to experience vicariously the situations, thoughts, and feelings of fictional characters who expressed the workings of his own psyche; in this way, he was aided in working through conflicts as both creator and observer of the characters patterned after

aspects of himself. This process was at times upsetting and even frightening for him, but it was a safe means of confronting from a distance his own personal demons.

One of the conflicts apparent in Hawthorne's work involves the author's anxiety about gender. Writing about Hawthorne's use of his somewhat headstrong daughter Una as a model for Pearl in The Scarlet Letter, T. Walter Herbert, Jr., notes:

Hawthorne's perplexity illustrates a leading feature of the cultural construction of gender, the way in which perceptions of human reality are concerted--and disconcerted--by the systems of meaning through which gender is construed. Hawthorne's mind was the arena, in this respect, of an unresolvable contest of significations. The conceptions of gender informing his consciousness proposed womanhood and manhood as complementary opposites, in keeping with the domestic ideal emerging in the early nineteenth century. . . . Hawthorne's anxieties were easily aroused on these issues because he felt his own character to be anomalous in relation to the prevailing standard of masterful public manhood. (285)

Herbert adds that Hawthorne's agonized reticence in public may be seen as a "feminine" trait, and that contemporary observers, such as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, recognized a pronounced feminine side to Hawthorne (285): ". . . to converse with Hawthorne was like talking with a woman" (Lathrop 559). One of Hawthorne's recent biographers adds,

There was . . . something indefinably feminine about Hawthorne's nature. Oliver Wendell Holmes complained that talking to Hawthorne was like "love making." Hawthorne's

"shy, beautiful soul had to be wooed from its bashful prudency like an unschooled maiden." (Mellow 28)

Even Professor Samuel Phillips Newman, upon recalling years later Hawthorne's bearing as a student at Bowdoin College, remarked upon "Hawthorne's reluctant step and averted look . . . and girlish diffidence" (Turner, NH 39). Male characters such as Dimmesdale and the Gentle Boy, seeming strangely more feminine than masculine in sensibility, appear throughout Hawthorne's works; at the same time, strong, independent, free-thinking female characters--often, at least on the surface, much more interesting and admirable than their male counterparts--appear more frequently and are by far the most successfully drawn of Hawthorne's creations. Strong masculine characters such as Chillingworth, Aylmer, and Rappaccini usually are rather flat, although deadly, while conventional feminine characters like Priscilla and Phoebe are too sweet to be either interesting or believable.

Much of the strength in Hawthorne's writing is derived from the psychologically plausible mixing of masculine and feminine traits in his most admirable and most disturbing characters; tellingly, the majority of his most brilliant and compelling characters, such as Hester, Zenobia, and Miriam, are female. However, Hawthorne generally either reforms these characters by dashing their hopes for a new order, as in Hester's becoming a selfless community "angel"

after the death, or by literally killing them off, as in Zenobia's sordid suicide in the stock pond. The apparent, but too simple, message is that women's place is not in the reshaping of traditional and accepted cultural mores, but rather in being pure and supportive of ongoing societal values.

Much has been said by various critics about the model for these characters, and at least in terms of the aggressive and assertive qualities, Margaret Fuller appears as the most obvious choice; "she disturbed [Hawthorne], and he disliked her" (Urbanski 17). Fuller and Hawthorne were together at Brook Farm, and in his conversations about her he refers to her in terms of a "transcendental heifer" that she contributed to the farm's livestock: "She [the heifer] is very fractious . . . and, in these traits of character, she resembles her mistress" (Hawthorne to Sophia Peabody, qtd. in Urbanski 17). Fuller's outspoken views on women's rights, her lack of social refinement, and her scorn of those whom she saw as intellectually inferior left Hawthorne with the impression of a woman lacking the most admirable female qualities, while trying unsuccessfully to emulate the finer qualities of men. None of Hawthorne's strong female characters physically resembles Margaret Fuller. On the contrary they, particularly Hester and Zenobia, are handsome, sensual, and alluring on both physical and intellectual levels. The sublimated sensuality

that Margaret Fuller finally was able to express with her lover, Ossoli, paled in comparison with the luscious descriptions of Hawthorne's characters; and more importantly, none of these characters could ever be reduced or dismissed as summarily as Hawthorne does in his remembrance of Fuller:

[T]here appears to have been a total collapse in poor Margaret, morally and intellectually; and, tragic as her catastrophe was, Providence was, after all, kind in putting her and her clownish husband and their child on board that fated ship. There never was such a tragedy as her whole story,--the sadder and sterner, because so much of the ridiculous was mixed up with it, and because she could bear anything better than to be ridiculous. (Hawthorne, qtd. in J. Hawthorne 1:255-256)

Since Hawthorne's writings first appeared, however, scholars have remarked upon the ability of this particular author to draw such unique, but astonishingly psychologically correct, female characters. Nina Baym attributes this ability, in large part, to the unusually close relationship Hawthorne had with his mother ("NH and His Mother" 2). Though admittedly speculative, her conclusions are derived from biographical information about the author's childhood and the powerful influence his mother continued to exert upon him, even after her death. Although many writers, notably Hawthorne's sister Elizabeth, his son Julian, friends and contemporaries of the author, and later biographers, have described or, like Baym, speculated upon Hawthorne's early life, surprisingly

little information about his mother and his early life under her influence, other than that of a general nature, is available. Important dates and recalled anecdotes are recorded, but except for Hawthorne himself, who often is regarded by some critics as a questionable authority, few writers have given much attention to Hawthorne's early childhood. Arlin Turner devotes fewer than two full pages to it in his biography (NH 16-18) and James R. Mellow, in Nathaniel Hawthorne in His Times, includes six pages on the author's life to age nine (13-18). Although it is understandable that a limited amount of material would be available from those early years, it is remarkable that so few writers have given any but the most cursory thought to the importance of that time period and its family influences, in terms of the author's later development.

Several critics have remarked upon possible causes for the recurring themes found in Hawthorne's writing, particularly those relating to sex role and issues of gender. Gloria C. Erlich notes:

Eric J. Sundquist concentrates upon "a cluster of psychological themes--primal scene speculation, search for origins, genealogy, home, incest, repetitions of and atonement for ritual murders of the father. . . . (xv)

Sundquist, however, ignores the experiential aspect of these themes in Hawthorne's life and concentrates instead upon the fiction itself as related to the landscape of the country. Philip Young speculates that incestual experiences

in both Hawthorne's ancestral past and his own youth caused the strong sense of guilt that permeates some of the stories that touch upon sex and gender related themes.

Erlich (Family Themes ix-xi) offers an interesting chronology which traces the male and female influences in Hawthorne's life, particularly in terms of his maternal and paternal relatives, and especially his mother's family, the Mannings. Even Erlich, however, covers only the dates of Hawthorne's father's death and the birth of his sister Louisa before the removal of the family to the Manning house in the author's fifth year. In addition, Erlich centers her contentions upon her conviction that incest with his uncle Robert was the cause for Hawthorne's perceived discomfort with sexual topics. Although this work, as well as others such as Frederick Crews' Sins of the Fathers, deals with Oedipal conflict in Hawthorne's writings, even it does not focus strongly upon the author's earliest years, whence the conflict arose; this brief dismissal of early influences implies that the only salient fact is the death of the father during Hawthorne's childhood, leaving him without the paternal figure needed to work through normal Oedipal feelings. It disregards the fact that not only the death but also the family life before and after the father's demise are pivotal to understanding Hawthorne's outlook and his writings.

In speculating upon possible events in his early life, all these critics ignore or minimize the effect of events that are known to have occurred and that offer more than sufficient reason for Hawthorne's pervasive sense of gender and sex roles as problematic. Advances in psychological theory, however, offer another way of looking at Hawthorne's writings in terms of his own experience. In particular, a recent theory of gender differentiation, which relates the early development of both males and females to their later gender identification and behavior, can be applied to Hawthorne's life and works. This theory, which will be discussed in depth in the following chapter, bases future development, perceptions, and relationships upon actual events in an individual's early childhood. Hawthorne's childhood, though scantily recorded, offers more than enough evidence to account for his adult actions, perceptions, and relationships with both women and men. In terms of gender differentiation theory, Hawthorne's later problems, and the sex and gender related issues in his writings, may be accounted for by his earliest experiences and the effects these had upon him.

The early absence of Hawthorne's father is significant because of its scope. As a mariner, his profession kept him from home most of the time; and as a deceased parent, his loss continued to be felt in a myriad of ways by the entire household. He was more an everyday reality to the family

when he was gone than when he was in residence. In order to understand the ramifications of his absence, it is necessary to reconstruct as closely as possible the conditions under which young Nathaniel spent the four years before his father's death and the following few years, after he and his mother and sisters moved next door to the Manning house.

Hawthorne was born July 4, 1804, in his father's parents' house on Union Street in Salem, Massachusetts; Salem at that time was still in its "prosperous days" (Mellow 9), from the wealth accrued by sailing and merchant families dependent upon the trade made possible through Salem harbor. He was the son of Nathaniel and Elizabeth Manning Hathorne (the author himself added the "w" to his name), and he was the second of three children, the other two being sisters Elizabeth ("Ebe," born in 1802) and Maria Louisa (called Louisa, born 1808--the year of the father's death) (Erlich ix). The family was descended on both sides from prominent New England ancestors; and the young Nathaniel was intrigued by accounts of the early days of Salem and the nation and the role played by various Hathornes and Mannings. In particular, he was fascinated by the "interwoven" nature of his family's history with that of Puritan Salem (Turner, NH 5). One of the Hathorne ancestors was a prominent judge in the Salem witch trials, and he was to figure largely, if indirectly, in Hawthorne's

later interest in the Puritans and their concerns during the early days of the colonies.

Apparently the Hathorne household into which the author was born was fairly typical of homes in Salem at the time. The father, himself the son of a ship master and owner, was a seafaring man who of necessity was absent for long periods of time. In a town like Salem, this would be the norm rather than the exception for families associated with maritime interests. It would also place a great deal of responsibility upon the wives of the men at sea, as they would have to manage not only house and children, but also family finances and business affairs, as well as any emergencies that arose while their husbands were away. Any woman who married a sailor of whatever status would know that life would be lived more often than not without the head of the house; she would therefore have to assume all responsibilities at home, knowing that each time her husband returned home might very well be his last. Seafaring, while improved in terms of knowledge, equipment, and expectation of success, still was a risky business. Storms, accidents, disease, and even occasional mutinies and encounters with unfriendly natives could be expected to take their toll. Ships left harbor on even the most benign and predictable of voyages, never to be seen or heard of again. Small, square, rooftop porches, bordered by white wooden fences, were commonplace in harbor towns; grimly

known as "widow's walks," these were lookout posts from which families of sailors could gaze out to the open sea, in sometimes futile hopes of glimpsing their absent loved one's ship cresting the homeward horizon. Death at sea was commonplace; and sailing families, while steeled to that fact, hoped for the best and went on with their daily lives.

Elizabeth Manning, herself a native of Salem, was aware of the dangers of the sea when she married Nathaniel Hathorne in 1801 (Erlich ix). His vocation was already set, and the vast majority of the time from the date of his marriage to his death was spent at sea. He did manage, however, to father three children--the first, Elizabeth, born seven months after the wedding, and the third, Louisa, born the year of her father's death. The children, therefore, had scanty recollections of their father, Ebe being only six when he died and Nathaniel only four. They, especially Ebe, did remember some things, however, and their memories probably were augmented by what was told them by their mother, other relatives, and friends and acquaintances of their father. As would be natural, they clung to these reminiscences as the only images with which to build a concept of their father in their own minds. He was only thirty-three, and their mother only twenty-eight, when he died. During the seven years of their married life, the elder Nathaniel had spent "little more than seven

months in Salem" (Baym, "Speculation" 9). Although similar in situation to other households in the community, the Hathorne family did have some notable qualities. The home into which Elizabeth Manning moved upon her marriage was also occupied by her husband's mother, who was widowed, and his two unmarried sisters; his brother, Daniel, also lived at the family home when he was not on a voyage himself (Baym, "Speculation" 8). The residence, therefore, already contained three women who were joined by the elder Nathaniel's new wife, who probably was pregnant at the time of her marriage. Although extended families were common under one roof at that time, it is not difficult to imagine that there would be some adjustments to be made both by the Hathorne women and by their new sister- and daughter-in-law. The fact of her advanced state of pregnancy would not have been likely to endear her to them, even if relations at the beginning had not already been strained. The house, by the time young Nathaniel was born, contained five women: his paternal grandmother, two spinster aunts, his mother, and a slightly older sister. With the birth of his younger sister, Louisa, Hawthorne was literally surrounded by females, and the two other male residents of the house were gone, Daniel already having died and the children's father, then at sea, to die in Dutch Guiana only a few months later.

This then was the situation existing in the home while the young Nathaniel spent his earliest years and formed his first ideas about gender-specific roles. The household consisted exclusively of females, with the exception of himself and the occasional short visits by the elder Nathaniel and his brother until their deaths. With no males consistently in residence, the future author was left to model his behavior and his role expectations on the other members of his family, all of whom were female. This is not to say that there were no other male influences of any kind; Elizabeth Manning's family lived around the corner from the Hathornes on Herbert Street. The family consisted of nine children--five boys and four girls, all of whom were living in the Manning house at the time she married, and all of whom were single. This arrangement was still the case in 1808 when she finally returned to her own home place, bringing her children with her and increasing the number in the household, including her widowed mother, to fourteen.

At the time Hawthorne's father died, however, he and his mother and sisters lived with the Hathorne women, with such visits from his mother's brothers and sisters as occurred. It is more likely to imagine Hawthorne's mother visiting her family than the other way around. There is reason to suspect some discomfort existing between Elizabeth Hathorne and her in-laws, partly because she had

married in, partly because she was almost certainly pregnant at the time of her marriage, and partly because the Hathornes historically were of a slightly higher social class than the Mannings, although the Mannings were definitely on the ascent (Baym, "Speculation" 9). Young Nathaniel's contacts with his uncles, therefore, probably were somewhat limited; young wives and their children at the time were expected to associate more with their father's side of the family, particularly in cases where they were residing with the paternal relatives (Alcott, Husband 52). Widespread was the belief that setting up married life with the husband's family was the ideal, despite the stresses it often entailed. In addition, the Manning uncles were involved with businesses of their own and would not have had the leisure nor the expectation to engage in frequent social calls upon their married sister.

In any case, as Mark Van Doren has pointed out, "Most of [Hawthorne's] days were spent . . . in the company of women" (8-9). He was thought by his sister Elizabeth to have been "a very handsome child, the finest boy, many strangers observed, whom they had ever seen" (Stewart 320). On another occasion, Ebe also remarked that he was "both beautiful and bright" and was "particularly petted, the more because his health was then delicate and he had frequent illnesses" (Van Doren 8). Julian Hawthorne, the author's son, prefaces his aunt Elizabeth Peabody's written

recollections of Hawthorne with remarks that may have had as their origin any, or several, members of the family:

He was a healthy, happy, handsome child, with bright curly hair. The early death of his father, and his mother's conduct thereupon, must have produced some effect on him; but he had a sense of humour and a vein of light-heartedness and mischief, which did much to counteract the influences of graver matters upon his imagination. He was strong, active, and calm tempered, though capable, when justly moved, of exhibiting tremendous wrath and unmitigable sternness. (Pearson 259)

Although Julian's "gross deficiencies as a responsible editor" of family information (Bassan 274), may make his accounts somewhat suspect, there is little reason to doubt him here; this gentle portrait of his father as a young child is supported by other family members, notably Ebe, his father's older sister. The child Nathaniel appears from these accounts to have been a normal, active little boy, the somewhat spoiled pet of his mother, sister, and other relatives. His otherwise happy childhood may be seen to have been marred only by the death of his father, a father whom he must have known very slightly. He is described by his sister Ebe, whom Randall Stewart calls a "reliable reporter" (317), as having had instances of dizziness at a relatively young age: "Madame Hawthorne said that N.H.'s head, at two or three years old, used to be dizzy sometimes" (Bassan 276). Other than this, until a severe foot injury at about age nine, his health was considered normal. He was not a difficult child and so may be assumed

to have enjoyed the enviable position of only son and heir to the family name.

But what would this have meant to Hawthorne? To be sure, as a small boy he may have heard references to himself as his parents' only son and male namesake. He would have had little understanding of the concept as a child in the Hawthorne home and during his earliest years in the Manning house. Surrounded as he was by women, he may well have had a very unclear image of what maleness was supposed to be; not that that was great cause for concern for him at that age, but later, when differentiating between male and female roles and identities was important, it may well have caused him considerable confusion. To be male was enigmatic. He knew best what he experienced: the nature of the female. In addition, he was left much on his own to reason things out for himself. Another of Ebe's recollections reflects this freedom:

No one ever thought to ask him how much . . . he understood. I think it was one of the happiest circumstances of his training that nothing was ever explained to him, and that there was no professedly intellectual person in the family to usurp the place of Providence, and supplement its shortcomings in order to make him what he never was intended to be. His mind developed itself. Intentional cultivation would have spoiled it. He used to invent long stories, wild and fanciful, and to tell us where he was going when he grew up, and of wonderful adventures he was going to meet with, always ending with "and I'm never coming back again." That, perhaps, he said that we might value him all the more while he stayed with us. (Stewart 321)

This reminiscence was written about Hawthorne at about his sixth year, and it likely would have been valid for his earlier experience as well. He was left to his own resources for entertainment and interpretation of his experiences. The somewhat poignant promise to head off to great adventure, never to come back again, was most certainly an echo of what he felt his father and his uncle Daniel had done. In the spirit of play in which these words were probably spoken, the child does not seem to be expressing any particular grief, but rather to be mimicking what in his experience grown men did. He must have felt this keenly and remembered it, for much later as a young man contemplating vocational choices, he was to write to his mother that he wished he were a daughter so that he should never have to leave her: "Why was I not a girl that I might have been pinned all my life to my mother's apron" (Turner 26). His school vacations with her in Maine were like "a second Garden of Eden" (30). To be male was to leave home; to be female was a preferred role, to remain at home with loved ones and familiar surroundings. Of course, Hawthorne did eventually effect a compromise by becoming a writer and working at home. But until that decision solidified, and even for some years afterward--the years of Hawthorne's greatest creativity--the haunting question of what it was to be a man remained, for him, largely unresolved. His very choice of profession indicates psychic leanings of an

androgynous sort: Karen Horney . . . asks if men's "impulse to create" is due to their

feeling of playing a relatively small part in the creation of living beings, which constantly impels them to an overcompensation in achievement." Gershon Legman applies this theory specifically to the male birth metaphor, which he calls a "male motherhood of authorship," an archetypal fantasy of great power and persistence determined by largely unconscious fear and envy of woman's sexual and reproductive powers. Elizabeth Sacks expands on this "womb envy" to say that the male metaphor serves as "an essential outlet for the unconscious or repressed elements in the masculine psyche." (Friedman 84)

Hawthorne's own diffused sense of sex role differentiation, resulting from his childhood experiences and coupled with the womb envy of male authors, as posited by Horney, Legman, and Sacks, would predict the strong tendency toward nontraditional male and female characters that are indeed found in his work.

The age in which Hawthorne lived fostered a very structured sense of the differences between the sexes. Economically, socially, morally, politically, and even spiritually, broad lines were drawn separating the roles each sex should play. Even on the frontiers and in towns such as Salem where much of the day-to-day work fell to the wives of absent husbands, these social boundaries were strictly observed. The concept of "women's work" as opposed to "men's work" was as strong as it had ever been in this country; increasing prosperity only increased these strictures, so that, in general, the roles expected of each

sex were strongly impressed upon people from childhood. Children learned by example, primarily from their parents. Harvey Green, in describing the lives of nineteenth-century women, states:

Women were sequestered from the so-called evils of commerce and production in homes where they were to be guardians of morality and cultivation, especially for their female children. Yet the comfort and status displayed in the home were inextricably linked to success in the marketplace, and it was an irresponsible mother who did not see to it that her male children were prepared for the competitive world of their father. . . . The roles of women and men in the family and society became more distinct, and remained so until the 1960s. (7,9)

For Hawthorne, however, sex roles early on became blurred. His mother was at a disadvantage in not having her husband present as a role model for her young son. Although the elder Nathaniel's absence and death forced her into more traditionally male roles within her family, her social self still would have been closely dictated by traditional societal expectations for women. From her assumption of normally male roles, her son would have seen a woman acting outside the expected norms; and from her adherence to feminine mores, he would have observed the socially accepted behavior of a woman of the times. For him, she embodied all; and the most prevalent, the feminine side, affected him the most. In "The Cult of True Womanhood," Barbara Welter notes,

The attributes of True Womanhood [in the nineteenth century], by which a woman judged herself and was judged by her husband, her

neighbors, and society could be divided into four cardinal virtues--piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. Put them all together and they spelled mother, daughter, sister, wife--woman. Without them, no matter whether there was fame, achievement, or wealth, all was ashes. With them she was promised happiness and power. (372)

Virginia Ogden Birdsall sees Hawthorne's reverence for this kind of woman translated into a specific form in his writing:

There can be little question, of course, that Hawthorne saw this type of woman as functioning in a specific way with reference to the world around her. In her he envisioned a purity which existed nowhere else except in children. Through the medium of her soul the world might be seen and comprehended more clearly. Through her love, a man might find his place in the chain of humanity. (250)

These were the "sexually anesthetic females to whom he officially paid homage" (Rahv 369). They were also women with whom Hawthorne could hardly have envisioned any sense of the sensual; they were "mother" and "sister" and, by association, partly "self." Because he was in contact almost exclusively with women during his youth, he identified with them and assumed for himself the behaviors and expectations that he observed in women. This identification with the feminine became quite useful later in creating psychologically plausible female characters; but it also restricted Hawthorne's understanding of the male psyche and made sensual relationships with women particularly difficult for him.

The nineteenth century was a time of great restriction between the sexes in America, and it was especially so for women. Not only in behavior, but also in outward signs such as demure bearing and even style of dress, did women of this era strive to adhere to the socially accepted codes:

The corsets and petticoats which have survived from this period make it clear that movement was difficult for women who dressed in fashion. But the cinched waist was more than simply uncomfortable; it was loaded with cultural meaning and information. In a society that valued display, restriction of movement was a signal that a woman did not have to endure the demanding physical labor of housework because her husband made enough money to pay for domestic help. Moreover, the restricted movement imposed by tightly laced corsets, metal stays, heavy petticoats, and high-heeled shoes was a kind of control over women. They paid the price of social censure if they rejected fashion for freer movement or participation in the male world.
(Green 3-4)

One need only recall the reaction of little Pearl to Hester Prynne's letting her hair fall free and flinging away the societally-imposed scarlet letter while in the forest with Dimmesdale, to acknowledge Hawthorne's understanding of this symbolism. In one of the popular self-help guides of the time, The Young Wife, or Duties of the Woman in the Marriage Relation, William Alcott remarks upon the roles of the sexes. It was up to the woman, who was seen as physically "inferior" to the man, to tame and socialize the man's coarser and more "natural" inclinations (Wife 28, 81). "Say what we will . . . God in nature must have imposed on [woman] a physical inferiority. She is thus

obviously fitted to be an assistant to her husband in the work of self-improvement, and the improvement of others" (28). Indeed, it was seen as the responsibility of woman to develop the moral and spiritual qualities in her husband, for she was assumed to possess a higher degree of these innately:

Every young wife may have a delicate and modest husband. But in order to this, he must first have a wife of true modesty and delicacy. She may not indeed transform him in a day or a week; but her ultimate success, if she persevere, is certain. (81)

In "The Cult of True Womanhood," Barbara Welter comments that spiritual qualities were therefore nurtured and praised in women, so that they might attain the highest feminine ideals--to be good wives, friends, and mothers. Rather than "competing" on an intellectual or worldly basis with their husbands, they were to encourage their husbands' spiritual growth--guiding them to "the enjoyment of Celestial Happiness in the life to come" (Welter 373).

Mrs. S. L. Dagg, writing from her chapter of the [Young Ladies' Literary and Missionary] Society in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, [remarked], "As no sensible woman [would] suffer her intellectual pursuits to clash with her domestic duties" she should concentrate on religious work "which promotes these very duties. . . ." Women were warned not to let their literary or intellectual pursuits take them away from God. Sarah Josepha Hale spoke darkly of those who, like Margaret Fuller, threw away the "One True Book" for others, open to error. Mrs. Hale used the unfortunate Miss Fuller as fateful proof that "the greater the intellectual force, the greater and more fatal the errors into which women fall who wander from the Rock of Salvation, Christ the Savior. . . ." (Welter 373)

Other "duties" seen as essential to wives during this period were submission, kindness, cheerfulness, confidence, sympathy, friendship, love, delicacy and modesty, love of home, self-respect, purity of character, simplicity, neatness, orderliness, punctuality, early rising, industry, domestic economy and reform, sobriety, discretion, forbearance, delicate habits and manners, sensible dress and personal habits, attendance to the sick, love of infancy and childhood, advice-giving, self-government, intellectual and social improvement, moral and religious improvement, and positive moral influence on the husband (5-13); these attributes were not only for the well-being of the woman herself, but they were emphasized as making her more fit to be a "'help-meet'--an assistant" to her husband (26).

This distinction is recognized throughout the Bible. Man is always considered as the head of the family, and woman as the helper. The man is not created for the woman--so the matter is represented--but the woman for the man. (27)

Concerning the household in which Hawthorne was born, the question arises: how could woman function as "help-meet" to a man when the man is seldom present? During the time when the elder Nathaniel and his brother were at sea, the women in the house would have carried on their own homely tasks and, temporarily, the necessary business functions the men would have assumed when at home; although day-to-day living would have seemed "normal," it would have

proceeded against the backdrop of the ideal of normalcy-- the times when the men would be at home to complete the family.

Of course, the ideal itself, in a seafaring family, was outside the "norm." The men were seldom in home port, and when they were, it was usually for a short time to recuperate from the previous voyage and prepare for the next one. Fathers and uncles would be infrequent visitors to their children; and young wives, while pining at first for their absent husbands, would eventually become accustomed to their men's absences and carry on with their daily lives. It is easy to imagine the stresses that may have occurred when a man was at home--his upsetting the balance of power that his wife had achieved for herself as temporary head of the family, and his being vied for, himself, as the center of attention not only by those of his children who remembered him, but also by all the women in the household. The man's return, therefore, often would have been cause for not only rejoicing but also disturbance and even strife; it is small wonder that many men saw the open sea as both vocation and escape. There is no indication in the writings about the Hathornes, by those who were either members or friends of the family, to indicate the situation within the home when the elder Nathaniel was in home port; but the fact that Elizabeth Manning Hathorne resided there constantly with only her

husband's mother, his two spinster sisters, and her own children, indicates that she probably was relieved whenever he arrived. The elder Hathornes had always considered the Mannings to be socially beneath them; they had in all likelihood bitterly resented the "premature" arrival of Elizabeth's first child (indicating, of course, her supposed disregard for purity, modesty, delicacy, and the Hathorne reputation); and they probably saw her as an interference between themselves and her husband while he lived, and as an interloper and a drain on the family finances after he died.

Aunt [Elizabeth] Peabody in her recollection to Julian Hawthorne wrote that Elizabeth [Manning Hathorne] "was not happily affected by her husband's family--the Hawthornes being of a very sharp and stern individuality--and when not cultivated, this appeared in oddity of temper." (Baym, "Speculation" 10)

It is no surprise then that, after her husband's death, the young widow soon moved her little family across the street to the home of her childhood. In addition, there appears to have been a break in relations with the Hathornes following her move to the Manning home; no record exists of any Hathorne financial support for the young family, individually or collectively, after this move, and young Nathaniel was to owe both his college education and his "ten unencumbered years for writing" after college entirely to the generosity of the Mannings (Turner, NH 47).

For more than his first four years, however, young Nathaniel had lived under the same roof with these "very sharp and stern" female individuals, having ample opportunity to experience their "oddity of temper." He would have sensed, even at such a young age, the effects of their rigidly disapproving natures upon his mother in particular and possibly upon himself and his sisters as well; recollection of this negativism may well have fired his fascination with the stern Hathorne judges from whom he had descended, and the treatment he was to give such characters in his later work.

While the elder Hathorne women might well have exhibited piety, purity, industry, orderliness, domesticity, thriftiness, and sobriety--cardinal virtues of "true womanhood"--they probably were singularly lacking in others considered equally important--cheerfulness, sympathy, submissiveness, forbearance and, particularly, charity. It was primarily from them that he learned at an early age of the female's capacity for steely determination, dominance, and fiercely individual independence--traits, he was to learn later, that were more cultivated and accepted in the behavior of males. In fact, these very traits in a female appeared to rule out the capacity for the softer womanly qualities; a woman with them was somehow unsexed and ultimately doomed, for the two sides seemed as alien to each other as oil and water.

Hawthorne's mother, the unwelcome victim of her in-laws' sterner traits, seems to have kept her distance after returning to the Manning home:

[A]fter she left them Elizabeth Hathorne made little effort to keep up contacts, notwithstanding their continued proximity. Nor is any effort at relationship recorded from their side. On an occasional Sunday young Nathaniel went over and read the Bible in his grandmother's parlour, and the difference between the that household of sharp and stern eccentrics, and the cooperative Mannings must have been imaginatively striking. The failure of the Hathornes to pursue a relationship with Elizabeth seems stranger than her defection from them, for in losing her they lost grandchildren who bore their name. But perhaps Elizabeth's misstep had disqualified her children as Hathornes in their eyes. Perhaps they viewed her as a social interloper, a female conniver using a woman's age-old trick to entrap a husband. Perhaps their old-fashioned piety led them to perceive her as sinful and fallen. Perhaps the causes of the falling-out were banal. But however it came about, it is impossible that Nathaniel Hawthorne could have absorbed any other perspective on this rift than that of his mother. Through his later readings in New England history he came to associate the early Puritans with the Hathornes, and this association may go far to explain the severity with which he turns their judging nature back on themselves. The Puritans versus a defenseless woman equalled the Hathornes versus his mother. (Baym, "Speculation" 10)

Nonetheless, Hawthorne's mother seems to have managed to circumscribe life to her own unusual liking. Once back in the bosom of her parental home, she kept a degree of widow's seclusion. She preferred her own company and did not venture out into the world. Elizabeth Peabody describes her

as if she had walked out of an old picture, with her ancient costume, and a face of lovely sensibility, and great brightness--for she did

not seem at all a victim of morbid sensibility, notwithstanding her all but Hindoo self-devotion to the manes of her husband. (Pearson 267)

In fact, Hawthorne himself described his mother as someone who took tea with himself and his younger sister in a private parlor of the house, but who ate alone in her room, never having "sat down to table with anyone since [his] father's death" (266). Even though this period was when they were grown but living at home, Hawthorne claimed he often did not see his older sister for months at a time, as she secluded herself as well. This self-imposed retreat from the world, that the Hawthornes maintained, was not healthy; he said: "It is no life at all--it is the misfortune of my life. It has produced a morbid consciousness that paralyzes my powers" (266-267).

Possible reasons for his mother's isolation upon returning to her natal home are several: the socially expected seclusion of widowed women; an innate shyness, possibly encouraged by embarrassment over the financial and emotional need to return home; and, later, sadness over the deaths of her mother and most of her brothers and sisters. Hawthorne's reference to their rooms in the Manning house as "Castle Dismal"--the children probably taking unspoken keys for their own behavior from watching their mother--very likely derives from a specific early cause: his mother's grief over the loss of her husband, and her need

to get away from the oppressive elder Hathornes and to reconstruct her life:

If any individual live too much in relations, so that [s]he becomes a stranger to the resources of [her] own nature, [s]he falls, after a while, into a distraction, or imbecility, which can only be cured by a time of isolation which gives the renovating fountains time to rise up. (Margaret Fuller, qtd. in Olsen 248)

This would account for the fact that, despite her penchant for solitude, an "active, outward-looking disposition" could still be observed in Hawthorne's mother, not only by Elizabeth Peabody but also throughout her own letters to her son (Van Doren 9). She could appear somewhat mysterious to her son and those around her because of her quiet habits, but could still retain qualities of spirit that drew others to her. In fact her seclusion, after having lived for so long under the simmering resentment of the Hathorne women, may have resulted from a steeled resolve never to suffer under such surveillance again--even in the benevolence of her own family; retirement was the simplest form of passive resistance, and it required no excuses.

As time passed and his mother remained in some degree of mourning and withdrew into what became for her a lifelong seclusion, he saw daily the contrasts of grief in the presence of happiness [the Manning household], isolation in the midst of company. He began observing in his mother a character that remained to him in several ways inscrutable until her death forty-one years later. (Turner, NH: An Introduction 4)

This was an image forcefully recalled, almost immediately after the death of Elizabeth Hathorne, in the opening scene of her son's The Scarlet Letter. As stated by R. W. B. Lewis,

It was the tableau of the solitary figure set against the inimical society, in a village which hovers on the edge of the inviting and perilous wilderness [and also the sea]; a handsome young woman . . . confronting in silence and pride a hostile crowd [the world] whose menace is deepened by its order and dignity; a young woman . . . standing alone, but vitally aware of the private enemy [her husband's unforgiving family] and the private [and equally guilty] lover . . . who must affect her destiny But if [she] has sinned, she has done so as an affirmation of life, and her sin is the source of life. . . .
(73)

Hawthorne's son, Julian, in his account of his father's life, draws largely from both his aunt Elizabeth Peabody's and his parents' own recollections when he states, "It is saying much for the sanity and healthfulness of [the three Hathorne children], that their loneliness distorted their judgment, their perception of the relation of things, so little as it did" (I: 4-5). The older sister, Ebe, "grew up into a strikingly independent, only partially socialized woman, much as though she had been exempted from normal social expectations by those entrusted with rearing her" (Baym, "Speculation" 9). Louisa, the youngest, became the most outgoing of the three, delighting in joking with her older brother.

Hawthorne himself, on the other hand, seems to have embodied along with a sense of quiet playfulness, an "aura

of mystery--of the uncanny--that accompanies so many 'adult doings' in his fiction . . ." (11). As a small child, he would not have realized the untimeliness of his mother's first pregnancy, nor would he have associated it with the elder Hathornes as the probable reason for his mother's alienation from them; but he would have felt deeply their sense of disapproval and unwelcome, and would have assumed, in typical childlike fashion, his own guilt--either by fault or by association--in their dismissal. In any event, his earliest years were spent in the company of the three disapproving Hathorne women, his mother, and his two sisters. If association and example can be presumed to most effectively instruct the young, then the nature of Hawthorne's earliest education and identity was almost exclusively female.

But within the sphere of "female," which the child would have assumed to be not only normal but also universal, since it was his sole experience, there were contradictions. There were stern, independent, dominating, disapproving, "mannish" females--the Hathornes--and there was the lonely, youthfully attractive, kindly and giving female--his mother, who later nursed him attentively during a long childhood convalescence, took him on idyllic vacations to the woods of Maine, and refrained from pushing him out into the world during his twelve-year self-imposed seclusion of reading and writing at home, after his

graduation from Bowdoin--along with his sisters, who could hardly serve as role models, but who were still females. Like the contrast between the angry, judgmental God of the Old Testament, and the gently forgiving God of the Good News, these women's aspects could only be symbolically reconciled by the intervention of a mediating savior; years later, Hawthorne's "extraordinary dependence on [his wife] Sophia and his tendency to immerse himself in recording the trivia of their family life show that Hawthorne approached marriage almost as a therapeutic program, a means of getting a firm hold on reality at last" (Crews 13). The success of his marriage to a woman of sweetness and gentleness, like his mother, affirms his final assumption of a male identity, despite the often "violently ambivalent" attitudes toward women that Frederick Crews has observed in his writing (104). But the reconciliation of his conflicting feelings toward women in general, and within his own identity in particular, began to spell a death knell for his powers of concentration and his writing. Whereas the supposed unhealthiness of "Castle Dismal" had earlier "produced a morbid consciousness that paralyze[d] [his] powers" (Pearson 266-268), the reconciliation of conflicting self-identities, effected by the blossoming of his relationship with Sophia, produced much the same result:

It is significant that during the courtship of nearly four years his productivity fell off

sharply. There were other reasons to be sure
. . . but the free play of personal emotion seems
to have been incompatible with artistic creation.
(Stewart 49)

Although his greatest work, The Scarlet Letter, was published a few years after his marriage--the result of a frenzy of writing after the death of his mother, and a tale of adultery at the time of his greatest marital happiness--Hawthorne's literary powers never again reached such a height of excellence. He continued to publish novels and short stories during the final fourteen years of his life, but their mastery never equalled that of his most powerful story; as the happiness of his marriage and family grew, his drive and indeed his ability to write suffered a steady decline. When he died, having complained recently to his friend William D. Ticknor that the "damned mob of scribbling women" writing sentimental prose was killing the market for serious literature, he left several works unfinished, having despaired of his own faded powers (CE, XVII: 304).

Hawthorne's writing was closely tied to his life. Both his themes and his characters can be attributed to influences in his early life and the people closest to him. In fact, much of the strength in his writing is derived from such personal issues as the absence of his father and his unusual closeness to his mother; but this authorial strength emerged through Hawthorne's struggles to find himself as a man and as a writer. The absent father had to

be confronted psychologically, and the mother had to be separated from before Hawthorne could hope for a life of his own. But like all emotional ties, his with his parents were complex and required years to successfully resolve. The nature of these ties, and how Hawthorne worked to free himself from them, will be explored in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II

GENDER DIFFERENTIATION AND HAWTHORNE'S DEVELOPMENT

The unusual and disturbing treatment Hawthorne gives many of his female characters invites more explanation than the somewhat facile justification offered by the stories themselves. Why would he allow such a powerful and admirable figure as Hester Prynne to be publicly exposed, first and last, and then made to serve the community, in sorrow for her loss, for the rest of her life? Why cause Zenobia, whom he had drawn as womanly beautiful but also as forward-thinking and intelligent, to drown herself in the muck and stagnation of a farm pond? The simplistic answer--that both these women had sinned (primarily sexually) against society's Puritan mores (mores that Hawthorne himself called into question)--has more in common with the sentimental, edifying literature of the day than with the important and compelling themes that drove Hawthorne's imagination. Not only Hester's sin, but also her refusal to implicate her guilty accomplice, damns her in the eyes of the accusing community. Zenobia's likeness to Margaret Fuller, in her progressive, crusading push for greater human freedom, does not justify her sordid suicide, despite Hawthorne's personal fascination with and distaste for Fuller. In some ways, Zenobia more closely resembles the beautiful and accomplished Fanny Wright, founder of the

utopian community Nashoba, many of whose ideals of "practical equality" (Egerton 13) Hawthorne admired; the name "Zenobia" is quite similar to "Nashoba." But the resemblance of the characters to these women, despite the untimeliness of their causes or Hawthorne's doubts about their practicality, does not in itself seem justification for the harsh finality of their punishment in the novels. Ellen Glenn, in The Androgynous Woman Character in the American Novel, states:

Hawthorne represents very well the American author who seems to recognize the limitations of the female sex role yet refuses to accept his own characterizations of women who defy the stereotype to become androgynous. When Hawthorne chooses to use a socially realistic form for his novels, he is choosing a form which will circumvent his ambivalence about androgynous women because the realistic social structures preclude a woman from transcending gender-defined behavior. (Glenn iv)

Keys to the characters and their fate may be found in the author's own background: in his perceived gender identity, in how that identity expressed itself, in his concept of sex roles, and in his perceptions of women, men, and their relations with each other. Hawthorne's childhood, despite the limited amount of available information about it, is well suited to traditional Freudian interpretation: the almost total absence of the father during the first four years of the author's life, when gender identity becomes established; the subsequent death of the father; the paternal household inhabited entirely, with the

exception of the boy Nathaniel, by females; the removal of the family to the original maternal residence, which housed in addition a collection of older aunts and often-absent uncles; the general retirement of the mother; and the solitary ways of young Hawthorne himself lend themselves to Freud's theories about male development. In addition, more recent gender differentiation theory, which suggests that social factors override physiological ones in human gender development, contributes compelling insights that can be applied to Hawthorne; tellingly, the theory posits that "in boys, strong early identification with their mothers result[s] in particular vulnerabilities in the establishment of masculine gender identity" (Fast, Gender Identity: A Differentiation Model 2). Freud established a theoretical base for understanding the interplay of masculinity and femininity in the development of personality. He was aware of the existence of both components within the personalities of both sexes but saw the early feminine strivings in males to be organically based: the wish to bear children, the anxiety-causing feminine strivings when sex difference becomes recognized, and the assumption of a female role in the context of a negative Oedipus complex (Freud VII: 219-220); however, Freud saw this stage as quite limited, with the development of males being directed almost exclusively to masculine characteristics and desires:

In this formulation all developmental influences in the boy's pre-oedipal period are seen as tending toward the establishment of his masculinity. Anatomically, the boy is male. His instinctual aims, when they arrive during the phallic period, are masculine. His first relationship (to his mother), by its cross-sex character, predisposed heterosexuality. In his experience there is only one sex, the male one. He uncritically assumes that everyone is, like himself, altogether male and masculine. To him sex difference means only possessing or not possessing a penis. When the boy sees that the girl has no penis he assumes that she had one and lost it. Castration anxiety expresses the fear that it might happen to him as well. The Oedipus complex occurs when the boy begins to feel rivalry and hostility toward the father in relation to his passionate interest in the mother and his wish for exclusive possession of her. The central oedipal struggles . . . are resolved when, in the context of castration anxiety, the boy gives up his rivalry with the father, identifies with him, and in the acceptance of his values takes a major step in the formation of the superego. (Fast 48-49)

A limitation of Freud's theory is that it presupposes two conclusions that are incompatible. One formulation posits that all biological influences predispose the boy to be male, to have a penis, and to desire and assume exclusively masculine behavior, despite the danger of possible castration; the other recognizes boys' innate desire for attributes and capabilities of females--specifically, the ability to have babies--and implies another sort of loss: the necessary suppression of desires associated with femininity and the recognition that the females' lack of a penis carries with it with capability of bearing children. The contradictory implications of these two formulations were never satisfactorily resolved by

Freud himself (XXI: 105-106); and genetic evidence does not support Freud's contentions of an early, biologically-based bisexuality in young boys, although bisexuality in men, which cannot be supported by Freud's developmental theory, has been clinically observed. In addition, Freud's theory does not allow for the now generally recognized early personal identification of young boys with their mothers.

More recent data, however, suggest an integrative reformulation of the developmental process of gender identity in boys. In terms of biological influences, current scientific knowledge indicates that anatomy and physiology do, in fact, influence boys' development toward masculinity (Stoller 1968), refuting Freud's position concerning biologically-based femininity in boys. Consequently, the development of feminine and additional masculine orientations in boys must be accounted for in terms of social and intra-individual influences:

Possible bases for a social and developmental formulation exist in broadly accepted data and perspectives concerning the boy's earliest development. It is well documented that from the time of sex ascription at birth the boy's caregiving environment (perhaps centrally the mother but certainly also the father) treats him in ways that foster his development in the direction of his society's notions of masculinity. . . . Within psychoanalytic psychology it is now generally accepted that the father plays a significant role in the boy's early development . . . and that with respect to the mother the boy not only forms a relationship that predisposes him to heterosexuality but also forms a broad range of identifications, among them identification with her in the capacity for child bearing. . . . If the boy develops in a

masculine direction but also, by identifying with his mother, assumes for himself attributes of his mother that cannot be his (among them her procreative capacities) then the groundwork is laid for an interplay of the masculine and feminine in his personality. (Fast 50)

The gender differentiation perspective asserts that the boy's earliest gender experience is undifferentiated; anatomically the boy is male and is predisposed to masculinity in terms of his biological processes. From birth, his caretaking environment underscores the societal expectations of male development. His subjective view of himself, however, is as yet undifferentiated in terms of the realities of his own sex; the limitations inherent in a single-sex identity, those that he will come to define as male and female, are not recognized, in that he senses in himself all the possibilities that he sees in others. Not until approximately two years of age will he begin to recognize sex differences and to understand that with these differences come limits. At that time, the limits he sees will not be perceived as universal to males, but rather as personal limitations that involve relinquishing possibilities he has assumed, by identification, were his. In assuming the designation "boy," he begins to understand that while he must relinquish for himself the assumption of certain capabilities associated with females, he may still have the female and the feminine accessible to him through relationship. During the oedipal period, which usually occurs at approximately six years of age, the

differentiation processes continue. The boy views his mother as specifically feminine and his father as specifically masculine, and these perceptions enable him to test and further define his own understandings of these terms. The parents provide the primary reality context through which he is able to establish firm sex and gender categorizations. In particular, the father provides a model for the child's assumptions about masculinity. The boy observes in his father qualities such as assertiveness, withdrawal, cruelty, kindness, success, or failure, and integrates them into his conception of masculinity; similarly, he forms ideas about relations between males and females as he observes the interaction of his parents. As he views characteristics common to both parents, he integrates his growing masculine identity with the notions he received earlier through identification with his mother, into a groundwork for later fatherhood and other broadly generative interests (Ross 327-347).

Problems arise when there is incomplete separation from the mother during the individuation process which occurs when the boy is approximately two years old. This disruption in development can be caused by a variety of reasons: overprotection of the child, family or childhood trauma, or absence of the child's father. The boy does not properly develop a sense of autonomy appropriate for his age, and problems persist in his individuation from his

mother. Rather than learning to master his environment, he continues in a sense of passivity, of being acted upon. Instead of behaving in the normally active, differentiating pattern of a two-year-old, he persists in identifying with his mother and refraining from seeing her as a separate individual. Upon recognition of sex difference, new difficulties arise; he must not only begin to view his mother as a separate person, but he must also see himself as being male and therefore unalterably different from her. He must therefore renounce for himself the femininity he attributes to her. If the boy does not successfully resolve issues of gender differentiation, within the context of incomplete self-other differentiation, he may "elaborate within himself a femininity that bears the stamp of the earlier bond to the mother (passivity) and of the incomplete gender differentiation (femininity)" (Fast 69).

The man (or boy) in whom such a passive femininity exists may perceive with some accuracy that it represents the infantile or immature in himself, in an incomplete development of autonomy and mastery, tendencies toward over-dependence on the mother, and a lack of masculinity (a castrated state). His attitude may be one of contempt and repudiation. (69)

In Hawthorne's case, all of these influences seem to be at work. His strong attachment to his mother is evident not only in his comments about wishing to be "a girl" and to "never leave," but also in his decision to return home after college and lock himself away in the little room near his mother to write; even in the country at Brook Farm he

was unable to find the kind of seclusion "which [had] always been essential to [his] power of producing anything" (qtd. in Olsen 177). Of course, at Brook Farm, Mother was not also in her own seclusion a few doors away. With Mother close at hand, he could, like her, be generative:

In patriarchal western culture, the text's author is a father, a progenitor, a procreator, an aesthetic patriarch whose pen is an instrument of genuine power like his penis. (Gilbert and Gubar 6)

During his long engagement, which he tried to hide from his mother and during which he was finally struggling to differentiate from his mother, his procreative powers retreated--except as they expressed themselves in soulful letters to Sophia, to whom he was to transfer part of his maternal attachment.

That Hawthorne declared himself ideally happy in marriage and was relieved to move from private phantasms to a common, solidly "real" tranquility with Sophia is a fact that has been much sentimentalized by his biographers. His extraordinary dependence on Sophia and his tendency to immerse himself in recording the trivia of their family life show that Hawthorne approached marriage almost as a therapeutic program, a means of getting a firm hold on reality at last. (Crews 13 n.)

From the time of his birth, Hawthorne was predisposed to have an underdeveloped understanding of men and difficulties with women, whom he understood all too well. Nina Baym's assertion that his mother's role in his life "must have been very large indeed" underlines the particular closeness of their relationship ("NH and His

Mother" 4). The nature of his life with the Hathorne women, including the influence of the second-class status accorded his mother there, pervaded the emotional life of the family. Hawthorne's mother would naturally have turned to her children for her own sense of identity and fulfillment, and her vulnerability would certainly have made itself felt in the youngsters. As the only boy, Nathaniel would naturally have been petted and spoiled, as his older sister later affirmed; and he would have been held especially close to his mother, being representative of his absent father. Under the stern eye of the paternal mother and sisters, the young family would have felt an unusual closeness to each other as they clung together against the disapproval of the older women. And being bright and attractive, young Nathaniel would have offered even more appeal to his mother, thus endearing himself still further. Psychologically, she may have grown to depend upon him as the "little man" of the house, investing him with her love and her hopes from the beginning.

With this kind of start in life, it is little wonder that Hawthorne for years afterward kept returning literally and figuratively to Mother. Her return to her original family so soon after her husband's death is striking enough, particularly during that time period, but equally noteworthy is the absence of subsequent close relations between the Hathorne women and her children. Although Ebe,

Nathaniel, and Louisa were quite small when they moved in with the Mannings, there is almost nothing recalled or recorded by them about their father's family. Ebe was later to remember her brother, at six, spending "half the afternoon in a large chair, saying not a word, silently enveloped in . . . reading" in his grandmother Hathorne's house (Hoeltje 27); this comment was made not because it referred to visits to the grandmother, but rather because it shed light upon the young Nathaniel's reading habits. If the children recalled warm, pleasant, or amusing moments with their father's family, they never wrote about them. Even the early history of the Hathornes that is referred to obliquely in many of his tales was learned, through reading on his own, years after Hawthorne had moved from the Hathorne home.

Similarly, the author's knowledge of his father came largely from stories about his trade in the Dutch East Indies and from accounts of voyages recorded in a logbook that Hawthorne inherited and particularly treasured; his father, like the other Hathornes, was said to be stern, moody, and solitary. According to Manning Hawthorne, these traits, along with his father's appearance, imagination, and manner of thinking and feeling, young Nathaniel got from his father; his practicality and sense of humor, both of which would serve him well, he received from his mother (Stewart 3-4). Other than reading and hearing about his

father, however, Hawthorne would have had little sense of him as a person, and certainly not as a real man to learn from. While he might read voraciously from his father's journals; listen attentively to anecdotes about him; claim as a youngster that he was, like his father, planning to go away and never come back; and much later, dig voraciously into early family history for understanding of who he and his people were, he had no flesh and blood model upon whom to base his identity, behavior, or outlook. The move to the Manning house provided him with a large and welcoming family to live with, but his father was an empty space whose role had already been filled by his mother. His gender identity was set by age four, and it was predicated, along with his concept of sex roles, on the parent he had.

This identity, however, brought with it problems. Although affording him an unusual closeness with his mother and other female members of his family, it made for confusion. For one thing, never were sex roles more strictly delineated in this country than in the nineteenth century. Men had the privilege and responsibility of certain roles, implying assertiveness, drive, and freedom of choice, but they were also expected to achieve within specified sex-specific boundaries. Women also were bound by societal expectations that were even more structured than men's. For men, the possibilities were wide open, so long as they retained their masculinity. Although appreciation for

the arts and literature, preference associated at the time with refined women, was becoming more socially acceptable for successful, well-educated men, there was a fine line between what a man could or could not do and still remain "a man." In speaking of Hawthorne in this context, Alfred Habegger states:

One main reason that Hawthorne became the American writer generally agreed to be our one undoubted classic in the three decades after his death in 1864 is that he gave full expression to the unhappy position--the hypocrisy, self-doubt, and marginality--of the cultivated man. To some extent, the man who was so often noted for being shy, withdrawn, and weird, made it respectable to be a sissy. (Gender, Fantasy and Realism in American Literature 239)

Hawthorne's identification with his mother undoubtedly precipitated personal crises, the first being his realization of the differences between his own body and hers. Although it is very unlikely that he ever saw his mother undressed, it is not so unlikely that he viewed his sisters; the information that they, as well as the Hawthorne women, were all girls and were therefore different in appearance from himself must have come as a shock. The practical implications of this realization would have arrived gradually, but one of the first would have been in terms of roles: women stay home and have babies, and men go off to work. Although he would have patterned his expectations superficially on what men such as his father did, his experience aligned him with the women. Also the physical differences between himself and his sisters, and

by extension his mother, would have caused curiosity, some confusion, and possibly fear. Philip Young has touched upon the possibility of incest between Hawthorne and his sisters, particularly Ebe; there had been documented cases of incest in earlier generations of the family, and Young's contention is that the "secret" Hawthorne alludes to in much of his work is grounded in the guilt precipitated by this relationship. Although discounting Young's thesis, Gloria Erlich discusses the later possibility of an incestuous relationship between the young Hawthorne and his uncle Robert Manning, with the attenuating guilt of that liaison as the root of the elusive "guilty secret." Gordon Hutner, however, discounts both arguments, claiming that, in using secrets in his stories, Hawthorne is merely utilizing a standard narrative device:

Hawthorne's exploiting of a secret to propel his plots is linked to one of narrative's fundamental features, the covert communicating of special knowledge or sacred wisdom through the telling of a tale, which, in turn, suggests an implied message that the careful interpreter is supposed to recover. (4)

If Hawthorne carried an early secret concerning experimental childish sex play, or the much less likely homosexual relations with his uncle, it is not inevitable that his most powerful writings would be driven by the memories. Although a certain amount of guilt would have ensued over the remembered early curious explorations of young siblings, it would not be likely to consume the

author for the rest of his life, particularly since he lacked the religious piety that would have equated such actions with mortal sin. Much more likely would have been a pervasive, long-term influence that was gradually and only partly understood. In speaking of underlying meanings in Hawthorne's works, Gordon Hutner observes:

Even the short stories which would seem to hinge on the revelation of a secret--the meaning of a black veil, the truth behind Dr. Heidigger's experiment or of Goodman Brown's experience, the nature of the bosom serpent--demonstrate that the secrets finally affixed do not answer the several kinds of questions Hawthorne's tales raise and elaborate, as if to suggest that our understanding is destined to be always partial.
(5)

Beyond the disturbance of his discovery of sex difference, Hawthorne proceeded normally for his situation; but his situation itself was not the "normal" one. Having moved to the Manning house at the age of four, he would have been living there about two years before the usual age of onset of the oedipal period. By that time, his mother would have firmly established her habits of seclusion; while she was less accessible, she did spend time with her children. Although Hawthorne recalled that they never had meals together--his mother and his elder sister taking theirs in their rooms--they did stay in close contact, even as the children grew to maturity:

[T]he strange reserve, in regard to matters of feeling . . . has always existed among us. We are conscious of one another's feelings, always; but there seems to be a tacit law, that our deepest

heart-concernments are not to be spoken of. (Love Letters II: 78)

In addition, although the four Manning uncles were in and out of the house, none of them took sole responsibility for the Hawthorne family or was particularly close to Elizabeth. Her sisters, who were unmarried and stayed at home with her and the children, had the most contact; therefore, there was no male figure against whom Nathaniel had to rebel for his mother's attentions. In his experience, there was no need to play out this stage of development because he had no rival. If his mother was more withdrawn, then there was the accommodating attention of his four aunts and his Manning grandmother. He was the pampered darling of the household (Hoeltje 28).

A personal crisis in his ninth year further emphasized both his physical delicacy and his love for reading and solitude; it also offered the opportunity for him to be further coddled by his family and worried over by his mother. He injured his foot while playing ball, and for the next year during a protracted convalescence, he was the object of special care and concern. Upon recovery, he left with his mother and sisters to join one of the Manning uncles in Maine, with prospects of moving there permanently. Although this plan did not come to fruition, Hawthorne later recalled his boyhood days in Maine as among his happiest. Maine was his "second garden of Eden" with his mother, a place where they could be together without

either the strict and eccentric Hathorne relatives or the numerous elder Mannings.

By his fifteenth year, Hawthorne was obliged to leave this Edenic setting and return to Salem in preparation for college. This was the beginning of his break from home, but he shied away from it, telling Ebe first that he expected to die young, that he probably would never go to college, and finally that, though he was resigned to attending college, he still rejected the traditional professions in medicine, theology, and the law that were open to well educated young men. In addition, he told his mother, college would not be so bad because he would be near the family home in Raymond, Maine, and could spend vacations with her; though he was in college and considering a profession in writing that he could practice anywhere, he still looked toward home. At Bowdoin, though Hawthorne formed several close friendships, none of his companions felt that they knew his inner self. Although his best friend, Horatio Bridge, was less troubled than most by Hawthorne's "unsettling silences" (Mellow 28), even he refers early in his recollections to Hawthorne's "peculiar character" (Bridge 2). Other friends, though they liked him and enjoyed the quiet but irrepressible spirit of play that he sometimes exhibited, still saw him as reserved and quite feminine in manner. Professor Newman's comment that he was as reticent as a girl, despite the fact that he could write

compositions "which no man in his class could equal," indicates that even when performing his best at what he enjoyed most, he was almost embarrassed about his success (Turner 39). Polite modesty could be expected from a well bred young man; feminine abashedness was so unusual that Newman was able to recall it more than fifty years later.

Hawthorne's reserved nature during college is understandable when seen in relation to the difference between the life he was then experiencing and the one he had previously known; this was the first long, significant time that he had ever been solely in the company of men outside his family. His reticence can be understood in the context of his solitary nature, but also and more importantly in his lack of familiarity with men as friends and peers. The feminine in his personality seemed so striking that, years later in retrospect, it was one of the qualities most often remembered by teachers and acquaintances alike. Hawthorne was not being secretive so much as keenly observant, absorbing ways of thinking and behaving that, for the others, had long been second nature, but for him were new and yet to be learned. In addition to sorely missing his mother, he was also becoming aware of social and emotional gaps within himself. His discomfort, manifested in a quiet, distant courtesy to these men, indicates his realization that he lacked a basic understanding of them. Associating with uncles and teachers

during his childhood would not have given him the understanding or the social skills to move easily among men his own age who took him at face value; nor did it prepare him to function freely on his own, without the comforting presence of his mother. His comportment was modelled on that of the people he was emotionally closest to: the women of his family.

Because Hawthorne never underwent a classic oedipal conflict, his behavior and role expectations were not radically modified to align themselves with traditionally defined male models. Rather than clashing head-on with a father or surrogate during the usual oedipal period, young Hawthorne continued uneventfully, with his early identification with his mother largely intact. Unlike Freudian theory, which supposes that boys assume male roles following fear of castration by and reconciliation with their fathers, the differentiation paradigm sees the oedipal period as an involvement of two aspects: a bodily focus and a social one. Therefore, it is normal for children to develop a genitally-focused identity and a separate socially-focused identity. The first aspect concerns an intensification of genital interest in gender terms, with the complex set of anxieties and reorientations that accompanies the physical designation "male" or "female." The second involves the social expectations and roles, within a given culture, that are attached to the

terms "masculine" and "feminine." Although a child may develop a sexual orientation that is appropriate for him biologically, he may, because of circumstances in his upbringing, assume social qualities that his culture associates with the opposite sex (Fast 81). This was the case with Hawthorne. Although he developed physically into a normally functioning boy and man, his social identification locked him substantially into the feminine. The identification, based largely upon his observations of his mother, handicapped him somewhat in relations with others. Though charming, he appeared odd to them, and he felt odd himself; sensing the others' disconcertedness, he withdrew further until people began remarking that they did not know what to make of him. During his junior year at Bowdoin, he wrote to the sympathetic Louisa that he was "almost dead of homesickness" and was "apprehensive of serious injury to [his] health if [he were] not soon removed from this place" (Mellow 32). Even after three years, he did not feel comfortable at school and longed for the acceptance of home.

The cure for this homesickness was to take form a year later in the form of an extensive respite back in Salem. For the decade after graduation from Bowdoin, Hawthorne was to spend what he came to call his "long seclusion" in a room "under the eaves" in the Manning house, where he would undergo his apprenticeship as a writer, "behind the family

walls" (Mellow 36). He seems to have been of two minds concerning this period of his life, referring to it on the one hand as a time of cheerfulness and health, and on the other as "a form of limbo, a long and weary imprisonment" (36). He was isolated by choice from the community, taking his exercise outside by himself, and reading books brought to him from the library by Ebe. He wrote tales and sketches that he published anonymously or pseudonymously and published Peter Parley's Universal History, and Twice-Told Tales (Erlich x). But despite his literary output, he felt removed from the world and still had difficulty finding an identity for himself. He had published his first novel, Fanshawe, at his own expense in 1828, but was so embarrassed by this early effort that he withdrew all the copies he could find. His manner to outsiders was characterized by the shyness and quietness that could be expected of one in seclusion. Though pleasant and amusing, he carried an air of mystery that people never felt able to see through to the real man.

Hawthorne was not just trying to find a profession; he was trying to find himself. He had returned to the comfort and acceptance of home, but he seemed unable to get beyond it. The period of seclusion marks the beginning of his process of differentiating from his mother. His years at Bowdoin had formed a hiatus from home and mother that prepared him for the break, but even at Bowdoin his

identity was tied too closely to his roots. By the time he was able to return home, however, awareness had begun that a fuller life was available out from under the maternal wing. This awareness accounts for the restlessness he was to feel during the seclusion. Although he was overjoyed to be home, his biological maturity, his artistic strivings, and his realization of a loneliness that mother could not assuage began to gnaw at him. At the same time, he was not ready to make the break; his feelings about his mother were "too sacred to be openly examined or discussed" (Mellow 39).

In 1838, thirteen years after he began his seclusion, Hawthorne was introduced to Sophia Peabody and within the same year became engaged to be married to her. This single influence is what finally enabled him to break free of his overweening identification with his mother; but the differentiation became a long process, lasting many years and ultimately giving him his freedom but also causing a loss of mastery in his profession.

Hawthorne was markedly ambivalent about marriage during his years "under the eaves." Ebe did not believe that he would ever marry, and on the surface this appeared to be a valid observation. Although he had had mild interest in a few young women, he was such a solitary individual and so tied to home that he seemed to lack the interest to make that kind of commitment. His writing

described a "redemptory woman, a chaste and idealized love" (67). Mother, the all-loving and all-accepting angel of his younger years, could certainly fit that description; but Hawthorne felt the need for another kind of redemption--a saving woman that would allow him to escape from his partly self-chosen imprisonment in childhood and allow him to live in the fullness of manhood. For this purpose, Sophia Peabody, a gently bred semi-invalid, was the answer. When he met her, Hawthorne was thirty-five years old.

Almost at once, they saw each other as kindred spirits. Hawthorne wrote impassioned letters to Sophia, envisioning her as a blessed spirit but also as a much-yearned-for lover. He referred to her as "wife" and "sister" and "dove":

Oh, my dearest, I yearn for you, and my heart heaves when I think of you . . . heaves and swells (my heart does) as sometimes you have felt it beneath you, when your head, or your bosom, was resting on it. At such moments it is stirred up from its depths. Then our two ocean-hearts mingle their floods . . . Dove, come to my bosom--it yearns for you as it never did before. I shall fold my arms together, after I am in bed, and try to imagine that you are close to my heart. Naughty wife, what right have you to be anywhere else? How many sweet words I should breathe into your ear in the quiet night--how many holy kisses would I press upon your lips . . . We have left expression--at least such expression as can be achieved with pen and ink--far behind us. (Gay, Senses 456-457)

The engagement, however, dragged on for four years. Chief among the reasons for delay was Hawthorne's refusal

to tell his family of his impending marriage. He offered all sorts of excuses:

We [he and his family] are conscious of one another's feelings, always; but there seems to be a tacit law, that our deepest heart-concernments are not to be spoken of. I cannot gush out in their presence--I cannot take my heart in my hand and show it to them. . . . And they are in the same state as myself. (Turner, NH 141)

In a family as closely interwoven as Hawthorne's, this rationale carries a hollow ring. Surely, he knew that his mother and sisters must eventually know of his engagement. Sophia pressed innumerable times for him to discuss it with them, but he could not. Finally it fell to his fiancée herself to write of the news to his family. Ebe's reply indicates not only the dismay of learning of the engagement only a month prior to the wedding, but also the sharpness that Hawthorne may have dreaded would be the reaction to the news:

Your approaching union with my brother makes it incumbent upon me to offer you the assurances of my sincere desire for your mutual happiness. With regard to my sister and myself, I hope nothing will ever occur to render your future intercourse with us other than agreeable, particularly as it need not be so frequent or so close as to require more than reciprocal good will, if we do not happen to suit each other in our new relationship. I write thus plainly, because my brother has desired me to say only what was true; though I do not recognize his right to speak of truth, after keeping us so long in ignorance of this affair. But I do believe him when he says that this was not in accordance with your wishes, for such concealment must naturally be unpleasant, and besides, what I know of your amiable disposition convinces me that you would not give us unnecessary pain. It was especially due to my mother that she should long ago have

been made acquainted with the engagement of her only son. (141)

Although Ebe's resentment is understandable, she does indicate that earlier notification from her brother should have been expected; and this sentiment is at variance with her brother's explanation to Sophia that they did not speak their most intimate thoughts within the family. A reasonable conclusion could be drawn that Hawthorne was not only afraid of his family's reaction, but that he was, despite his ardor, ambivalent about the marriage himself. A delay in notifying the family would further delay the setting of the wedding date. Nina Baym interprets Hawthorne's reticence in telling his family as reluctance to let them know early on that he was involved with Sophia, and how deep the involvement was, and that he would now have to confess to Sophia his "misrepresentation" of his family as "Hindoo"-like in seclusion; one concealment led to another ("Speculation" 16). This, however, ignores the fact that he must have had a very strong motivation for thus hurting his mother: he was having trouble disconnecting himself from her.

Baym does point out that Hawthorne blamed his mother for the long years of "enchantment" he endured with her in the house on Herbert Street where they moved during his seclusion; in freeing himself to enjoy his sexual maturity, Baym theorizes that he had to symbolically "kill" his mother (17). Although his dreaminess and exuberance, by

turns, in his correspondence with Sophia have an adolescent quality of agonized yearning and religious fervor, it certainly is true that he would have felt his love for Sophia to be an infidelity to his mother. It is not, however, the mother that he would need to defeat, but rather his own lifelong fusion with her that was exacerbated by his never having experienced normal oedipal conflict and resolution. The struggle within himself mimicked an oedipal conflict, but his internal adversary was the person heretofore the most important in his life: the mother that he had had "all to himself." She was a rival to his affection for Sophia, and she had the first and the longest claim. As rival and parent, she assumed the position his father would have had during his oedipal period. As Peter Gay observes in The Tender Passion,

The finding of a love object, as Freud would put it succinctly . . . is always a refinding. There are those who never undergo the great experience of loving anyone other than mother or father. . . . Indeed, among those who venture into the world to satisfy their erotic needs, many discover that their loves uncannily resemble the parent they thought they had outgrown. "A man shall leave his father and his mother--according to the Biblical precept--and cleave to his wife," Freud wrote. . . . "Tenderness and sensuality are then united." But that, as he knew better than anyone, was the ideal. "A husband is, so to speak, never anything but a proxy, never the right man," he noted rather sardonically some six years later, "another man has the first claim to a woman's capacity for love, in typical cases the father; he, at best, the second." And what holds true for the husband, though Freud does not say so here, holds true for the wife. She, too, is partly a substitute. (21-22)

During the courtship, as Leland Person has noted, he was feeling changes "within himself that must have seemed like a rebirth" (213). Even so, his love letters to Sophia have a decidedly feminine quality:

[your letter's] effect was very blessed, even as if I had gazed upward . . . and beheld my wife's sweet face looking down upon me from a sun-brightened cloud. Dearest, if your dove-wings will not carry you so far, I beseech you to alight upon such a cloud sometimes, and let it bear you to me. (Love Letters I: 44)

His procrastination in announcing his engagement to those closest to him, particularly his deferral of the task to his "painfully sensitive" fiancée (Gay, Senses 456), indicates what a wrenching experience it was. He was, during the four-year engagement, practicing to be a husband. He had had no familial models for this role. He already referred to himself and Sophia as husband and wife, he engaged in some furtive intimacies with her (apparently just short of sexual intercourse), and he carried on protracted conversations with her by writing--the form of communication he practiced best. In conversing animatedly with her and keeping his mother in the dark, he was consciously trying to separate from his mother, and he felt very guilty about it.

In the end, he was able to carry out his plans to marry, and the ceremony was performed on July 8, 1842. "Nathaniel and Sophia Hawthorne's marriage was an ecstatic union of two kindred spirits, as gratifying physically as

it was mentally" (Gay, Senses 456). All, however, was not well; nor was the "mother issue" over for the new husband or his wife. Elizabeth Hathorne did not attend her son's marriage, but following their return from the Old Manse, Nathaniel and Sophia and baby Una stayed several months with her on Herbert Street while looking for a house of their own. Ebe and Louisa were also in residence there, and a letter from Sophia to her mother indicated that there were tensions among the women (J. Hawthorne, Hawthorne and Wife I: 307-308). However, when the young family did find a home of their own, the three Hathorne women moved in with them; fortunately, the rooms were separated in such fashion that Hathornes and Hawthornes could meet only when they chose. Even so, despite Sophia's complimentary letters to her mother about her mother-in-law (I: 314), there still are indications that tensions remained. Years later, Ebe was to write to a relative, "I might as well tell you that [Sophia] is the only human being whom I really dislike. Though she is dead, that makes no difference. I could have lived with her in apparent peace, but I could not have lived long; the constraint would have killed me" (I: 124-125). Though Elizabeth Hathorne reacted with benevolence toward her son's marriage (despite his perfidy in not telling her about it sooner) and though Sophia was to refer to her delicacy and kindness when they all were living together, there still may have been residual resentments

which were never spoken of for the sake of peace. These very possibly were never settled during Elizabeth Hathorne's lifetime. When she died suddenly at about the time her son lost his position at the Salem custom house, Hawthorne was left holding an emotional bag of confused and unresolved issues. While he had managed to separate enough from her to transfer much of his allegiance to Sophia, father a family, hold a job, and publish Mosses from an Old Manse and other works, he still had residual conflicts within himself that involved his mother. He tackled these in the only way he knew: by writing about them. When, in a frenzy so pronounced that it frightened his wife, he embarked on The Scarlet Letter, he was attempting to exorcise his remaining demons. He was to continue this practice through his later stories, until finally the furor scribendi was to leave him and the genius that drove it failed. The progress of his psychic development can be traced through his work, in the striking identity and differentiation phases that find expression in the diffused sex roles of his most remarkable characters.

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY PHASE: 1825-1838

In her 1971 article "Hawthorne's Women: The Tyranny of Social Myths," Nina Baym makes the following statement concerning the majority of Hawthorne's works:

The protagonist is poised between alternatives, one of which means fulfillment and freedom, the other death- in-life. Woman is the vehicle of liberation. But the hero of the stories is imprisoned in his self, and needs to tear through his egotistic envelope into contact with the world. (256)

According to Baym, it is the conflict between the natural/social attributes of woman and the purely social identity of man, who has lost his natural self and must redeem it through woman, that forms the crux of the action in the stories. Although she sees the roles of the sexes as crucial to Hawthorne's themes, Baym does not identify Hawthorne's own development as the moving force behind his treatment of these roles in the characters. To him, woman must mean both death-in-life and liberation. The early phase of his career--the secluded years between his graduation from college and his engagement to Sophia Peabody, when he was "consider[ing] what pursuit of life [he] was best fit for" (Mellow 36)--Hawthorne wrote several short works and one novel. Some of the stories and perhaps the novel were begun in college, while he was hopeful and confident, and before he had encountered disappointment in

his proposed profession. These tales show the influence of the writers of whom he was most fond--Shakespeare, Milton, Spenser, and Walter Scott--and they also contain elements of the gothic romance: mystery, suspense, brooding or changeable landscapes, dire occurrences, and supernatural happenings. In addition, they have references to American localities and events, such as "a village in the Valley of the Connecticut" ("An Old Woman's Tale," CE XI: 241) and an Indian attack ("Alice Doane's Appeal," (CE XI: 273). They are, in the beginning, entertaining but simple tales that show the author's familiarity with witch trials and other elements of local history; and they resemble in tone and subject matter some of Washington Irving's then recently published and widely acclaimed works, notably "Diedrich Knickerbocker's" History of New York (1809) and The Sketch Book (1819-1820).

By following the stories in the approximate order in which they were written, it is possible to trace developments in Hawthorne's treatment of his male and female characters, their roles, and their ultimate outcomes. Several of these early tales were compiled into a collection called Seven Tales of My Native Land, which Hawthorne destroyed, at least in part. Of them, only perhaps "Alice Doane" (later revised as "Alice Doane's Appeal"), and possibly "The Hollow of the Three Hills" and "An Old Woman's Tale" remain (Baym, Career 24). Also from

the period through 1834 are stories which were published either in The Token or later in Twice-Told Tales, Mosses from an Old Manse, or The Snow Image: "The Battle Omen" (1830); "Sights from a Steeple" and "The Haunted Quack" (1831); "The Wives of the Dead," "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," "Roger Malvin's Burial," "The Gentle Boy" (1832); "The Seven Vagabonds," "The Canterbury Pilgrims" (1833); "The Story Teller" and "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" (1834) (CE XI: 484-485). All these stories were written during Hawthorne's early years in seclusion, and although they include some of his career's most notable, specifically "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" and "Roger Malvin's Burial," both of which show the dark side of human duality, they are products of a relatively stress-free period in Hawthorne's life. He had inherited "some slender means of supporting" himself, but still had chosen to return home to decide upon a profession and try his hand at writing (Mellow 36). These early tales contain themes and treatments--such as hidden motivations, blighted innocence, and secret sin--that were to characterize Hawthorne's later and more compelling writing, but they do not have the forcefulness of his best and most mature work; nor do they seize the reader with the sense of urgency that is evident in the later novels, particularly The Scarlet Letter. Many of these stories are related by a narrator, and they seem to be written for their own sake, for the

popular market or for entertainment, rather than for any larger literary or authorial end.

Not surprisingly, the sex roles of the characters in these early works are those culturally expected in nineteenth-century fiction. Both the characters and the works are stock types for the period, although typical Hawthorne touches are in evidence: supernatural doings, gothic settings, reversals, references to old times and old wrongs, mysterious endings, manipulative or ineffectual doctors, and even a bit of humor. "Alice Doane's Appeal," which probably was reworked into its present form, is a frame story concerning the unusual closeness of a brother and sister, and the murder by the brother of his evil doppelganger, who has taken cruel advantage of the sister's natural attraction for him and has ruined her; the dead young man's face resembles horribly the face of the brother and sister's father after his death in an Indian raid. It is the sister's appeal that wins her brother's absolution, despite the machinations of the wizard who had had a hand in it all. The sister--the pious, innocent victim--behaves in the socially proscribed manner; though wronged, she acts as the selfless angel who wins the salvation of her brother. The villains in the tale, the wizard and the brother's look-alike, are powerful, ruthless, and dominating--characteristics traditionally associated with males. "The Battle-Omen" contains only two male characters

who "imagine" they hear the cries of the dead rising up as a portent to the Revolution. As men, it would be within their sphere to sense portents of war, which traditionally would be seen as the ultimate men's work; women, the peacemakers, would be excluded in this story because they would not feel stirred by calls to war and might actively oppose the conflict.

"The Hollow of the Three Hills" features a lovely but bereft young woman who engages an "evil crone" to conjure up images from her shameful past; the witch later chuckles at the sorrows she has heard. As expected, the woman's sins are of a sexual nature--the ultimate downfall of a virtuous woman. Men do not actively share the blame because society winked at the sexual peccadilloes of the masculine sex, while exhorting the women to treasure their virtue at all costs or take the consequences. The old woman takes the traditional role of witch but also functions as the younger woman's confidante and fellow inheritor of the fall of Eve.

Another old woman is narrator of "An Old Woman's Tale," which relates the financial woes of two cousins who lack the money to marry, but who evidently locate buried treasure at the spot where they have seen or dreamed of the brief return of people long dead; the young man is the initiator in the digging, but his fiancée, who is "a sensible little girl," urges him on (CE XI: 250). Once again, the man takes the initiative, while the woman offers

the traditional encouragement. "The Haunted Quack" pokes fun at the medical profession, particularly at its training, certification, and ability to concoct worthless nostrums to sell to the silly and unsuspecting (most of whom recover in spite of the cure, but many of whom succumb because of it). This tale has a laugh at not only Doctor Ephraim Ramshorne, who has inadvertently poisoned his own bride with one of his doses, but also at the terrified Hippocrates Jenkins, who believes he has similarly killed one of the neighborhood hypochondriacs. Once again, the males have the knowledge, take the initiative, and use the power despite the havoc they cause. The women are recipients of the action and are predictably victims.

These tales display imagination and cleverness, but except for foreshadowing elements and themes Hawthorne was to bring his full powers to, years later, they are merely entertaining. One facet that appears in three of these early tales, however, is the evocative power of women. In "Alice Doane's Appeal," it is the sinned-against Alice who requests and obtains forgiveness for her guilty but also victimized brother. In the "The Hollow of the Three Hills," the younger woman has caused sorrow for herself and her loved ones, while the crone is able to call forth the images of that sorrow. In "An Old Woman's Tale," it is an avaricious old woman who has buried the money the young couple supposedly finds. The ailing nag in "The Haunted

Quack" goes into such fits after taking Jenkins' remedy that she accuses him of trying to kill her and nearly causes her husband to be hanged for the supposed murder of the fleeing charlatan. Although these are flat characters in predictable female roles, they foreshadow the power later to be seen in Hester Prynne, Zenobia, and Miriam. "Strength [is] as essential to genuinely feminine as to genuinely masculine social and intellectual structures . . ." (Douglas 124). The positive female strength at this point, however, is seen only in the traditional role of Alice Doane, the victim of one man and savior of another; and in the young woman in "An Old Woman's Tale," who urges her lover to action. In the other stories, the women have stereotypical negative power: in "The Hollow of the Three Hills," infidelity, disruption, and shame, despite her regret, in the sorrowful woman--and cruel, conjuring power in the old crone; in "An Old Woman's Tale," greediness, even beyond death in the treasure hoarder; and in "The Haunted Quack," the nagging hypochondria of the older wife.

Fanshawe, written probably about 1825, was Hawthorne's earliest attempt at long fiction. The action occurs in the vicinity of a college not unlike Bowdoin, and centers upon two young male students, a female ward of one of the professors, and a malevolent stranger of about their same age. The plot is standard melodrama, with the kindly professor, histermagant wife, the near-orphaned girl, the

two young men who both love her, and the nefarious villain who is still capable of comforting his dying mother. The heroine, Ellen, brings sunshine to everyone who knows her because she has "the gaiety and simple happiness, because the innocence, of a child" (CE III: 341). Her eventual mate, Edward Wolcott, is

certainly much superior, in most of the particulars of which a lady takes cognizance, to those of his fellow students who [have] come under Ellen's notice. (343)

He is tall, handsome, manly, dignified, scholarly, playful, and rich. He marries Ellen after she is saved by Fanshawe from the clutches of the devious Butler, who falls to his death; Wolcott withdraws his courtship of Ellen because he thinks she loves Fanshawe, and Fanshawe in turn steps aside for Wolcott to marry her because he himself has not long to live. Although Hawthorne refers throughout the story to "females" and the delicacies of their sex, he still gives Ellen a good deal of common sense and the courage to strike out on her own to help her father. In addition, he makes the love between her and Edward Wolcott grow out of friendship that seems, from the beginning, on an equal footing:

With this youth Ellen Langton became familiar, and even intimate; for he was her only companion, of an age suited to her own, and the difference of sex did not occur to her as an objection. (343)

Her husband, however, seems to be chosen for her by the two young men themselves, rather than by her; Robert Sattelmeyer notes:

Fanshawe and Edward Wolcott are particularly interesting . . . for the care Hawthorne takes to set their moments of nobility in the context of disinterested benevolence. Fanshawe rescues Ellen only after he has denied himself any claim to her love, and Wolcott's only moment of glory comes when he selflessly retires from the field to give Fanshawe a chance to win Ellen after the rescue. The highest sphere of moral action . . . is that of benevolence which contains no hint of self-interest And although the picture of the rival suitors' excessive self-effacement strains probability, the situation has a psychological and moral justification in contemporary theory: the highest aesthetic and emotional effects arise only from the sublimest human morals and actions, of which disinterested benevolence is perhaps the chief. Hawthorne may well have had this prescription in mind while plotting his first novel. (203-204)

Both men are proven worthy of Ellen's love, and she has proven her womanly worthiness of them by being modest, self-sacrificing, and loving; but she also is independent, courageous, and sex-blind in regard to friendship. She is a typical Hawthorne heroine in terms of her physical attractiveness, her naturalness, and her affectionate personality (Baym, "Women" 252), but she demands nothing for herself, and so is deserving of the "best" (in this case, the healthiest) man. In this early work, the sex roles are those culturally prescribed, with slight variations: the assertiveness of Ellen and the slightly effeminate, almost monastic solitude of Fanshawe; interestingly, the story is named for him. Wolcott combines

the milder attributes of both, and it is he who gets the girl. But even this early in his career, sex role issues and Hawthorne's typical reaction to them, can be observed. Ellen takes the initiative of escaping by night to help her father, although she recoils from the idea of marrying Butler and works to avoid it; but the two male characters who take manly action, the studious Fanshawe and the evil Butler, are doomed by the author to early deaths: Butler by crashing onto the rocks, and Fanshawe by succumbing to a mysterious ailment that snuffs out his youthful promise. The eminently "safe" Wolcott survives to live happily ever after in married bliss. Hawthorne was working on other tales at the same time and during the next several years, many of which were included in Twice Told Tales. Others, although they were written and first published--often in The Token, the New England Magazine, and the American Monthly Magazine--at about this same time, were not included in subsequent collections, if they were "collected" at all, until years later. Among these early stories are several which treat upon the themes of sex role identity, reality, and their consequences, which were to become more urgent issues in Hawthorne's later works: "The Wives of the Dead," "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," "Roger Malvin's Burial," and "The Gentle Boy."

"The Wives of the Dead" centers upon the wives of two young men who, it has been reported, have recently died.

They attempt to comfort each other in their sorrow; and each, upon hearing by messenger during the night that her husband is in fact alive, refrains out of kindness from awakening the other with her own good news. Here Hawthorne displays the traditional picture of woman as bereft upon loss of her husband, but also as comforting in another's loss and sensitive enough not to intrude upon the other's grief with joy of her own. This sense of self-sacrifice and nurturing love, whether directed at a man or a female companion, was one of the most valued qualities expected of nineteenth century women. "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" shows another side of the traditional picture of woman: that of the saucy young prostitute who tries to lead Robin away from his search for his powerful relative. Her actions are openly criticized later by Robin himself, but he fails to acknowledge his own attraction to her or his initial willingness to follow her inside; he sees her only in negative terms without admitting to his susceptibility to her. In "The Image of the Father," Simon O. Lesser states that the story is metaphorically divided, in that it "says one thing to the conscious mind and whispers quite different to the unconscious" (376):

To the conscious mind "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" is a story of an ambitious youth's thwarted search for an influential relative he wants to find. To the unconscious, it is a story of the youth's hostile and rebellious feelings for the relative--and for the father--and his wish to be free of adult domination. (381)

The kinsman who has promised to protect Robin is shown to be suffering the ill effects of his own divided loyalties. Therefore, the gentleman who befriends Robin in the street asks him, "May not one man have several voices, Robin, as well as two complexions?" Robin, thinking of "the seductive tones" of the young woman, answers, "Perhaps a man may; but Heaven forbid that a woman should!" (CE X1: 226). In both these stories, women and men are seen in the simplistic terms of the traditional standards for behavior, but the theme of uncertainty unites them. The young widows in "The Wives of the Dead" vacillate in terms of their own actions and identities (are they truly widows? what is their proper behavior? what is real and what is illusion?); Robin searches for his own identity and finds that, unlike the women's, it is not dependent upon others.

"Roger Malvin's Burial" continues this theme of uncertainty all the way through to its tragic end. Reuben is unsure of Roger Malvin's death, neglects to send a search party, and marries on the basis of a falsehood. He is unsure where the bones lie, is unsure what is moving in the bushes, and is unsure where his son is when he shoots. This vacillation is indicative of character weakness that is anything but "masculine"; Hawthorne roundly rejects Reuben's behavior, but he also allows Reuben to reject the blameless Dorcas, who is the very soul of selfless, womanly demeanor and whose heartbroken death becomes Reuben's

salvation. Nina Baym comments that Reuben's rationalization is a strategy by which, like many others among Hawthorne's male characters,

[T]he hero separates himself from the woman both conceptually and in spatial fact, declares himself her superior, and then punishes her for her imperfection. These rationalizations conceal or justify an animus against women, and Hawthorne shows the underlying murderous impulse to be rooted in frantic sexual fear. ("Women" 252-253)

This sexual fear may well have been playing through the author's own mind, in his search for personal and sex-role identity. The women in these stories have a much stronger sense of themselves than do the men; at least for the woman, there is a verifiable reality: the "wives of the dead" are not really widows, and they can resume their wifely identities upon news of that fact. Hawthorne's sense of women's psyches was much stronger than his sense of men's, so the separation of sex-related roles and identities was a difficult issue for him and was rooted in uncertainty. He may have begun to move toward the "crucial insight" that J. Gerald Kennedy refers to in regard to Hemingway: ". . . that androgynous doubling inevitably entails a splitting" ("Hemingway's Gender Trouble" 205). If so, then fear of division, with its requisite losses and unknown gains, would have played a significant role in Hawthorne's fiction, particularly during the time of seclusion when he was struggling for personal autonomy, as well as professional success.

"The Gentle Boy," with its very feminine main figure, shows the blending of both the male and the dominant female characteristics within the little boy. Ilbrahim's parents, being Quakers, have been sentenced to death by the Puritans for their beliefs, during a time of mutual fear, cruelty, and persecution. Ilbrahim becomes completely dependent for his survival upon the kindness of a Puritan couple who adopt him. In this story, as in many others, the Puritan faith takes the stern, punitive, active, "masculine" role, while the Quakers are characterized by more feminine qualities: forgiveness, gentleness, pacifism (despite the fact that the child's mother, who has survived, is as violently embittered as the Puritans). The "gentle" boy embodies those qualities indicative of his faith and traditionally feminine qualities, and he is doomed because of them. It is not enough to say that Hawthorne allows Ilbrahim to die because he is of a political and denominational minority; the boy's feebleness, kindliness, sweetness, devotion, and most of all, passivity in the face of persecution, ensure that he cannot survive in the vindictive world. He must return to his outcast mother, the only creature in the world with whom he feels truly at home, and die peacefully in her arms. His mother, hardened by the world's mistreatment of everyone she has loved, is tempered by the gentle spirit of her dead child; so that the feminine in the child becomes a saving grace to the

thwarted tenderness and embittered fanaticism of the mother, and further extends to cast a blessing upon the whole community.

As Peter White points out, the "true religion" which Ilbrahim's mother learns by her son's death is "the recognition of the sanctity of motherhood, the importance of maintaining the 'magnetic chain of humanity,' and the necessity of keeping a balance between personal ambition and human compassion" (178). In the reversal of traditional sex roles, the mother's fierce, "masculine" attributes of sternness, ambition, and intractability are tempered by her son's "feminine" qualities. An illustration for The Gentle Boy: A Thrice Told Tale (Boston: Weeks, Jordan and Co., 1839) underscores the young boy's feminine qualities by giving him a beautiful, cherubic face and even picturing him in a skirt. The child becomes the saving instrument for the mother, foreshadowing the redemption of Hester Prynne by the fatherless little Pearl.

All four of these stories were first published in 1832, in The Token. However, with the exception of "The Gentle Boy," which appeared later in Twice Told Tales, they were not published again until years later, in Mosses from an Old Manse or The Snow Image. Also at about 1829, Hawthorne began a collection of stories entitled Provincial Tales--now known as The Story Teller--which he hoped to publish as a group but which came out separately in various

periodicals through 1835; because of this fragmentation, it is impossible to reconstruct the original order of the stories. It is possible, however, to arrange them according to the "progression of Oberon's moods" from youthful optimism to the later bleakness and despondency evidenced by "Passages from a Relinquished Work," the introduction to The Story Teller: "Mr. Higgenbotham's Catastrophe," "A Rill from the Town Pump," "The Vision of the Fountain," "Old News," "The Gray Champion," "Graves and Goblins," "The White Old Maid," "The Devil in Manuscript," "The Ambitious Guest," and "Wakefield (Baym, Career 47-48). In the writing of The Story Teller collection, which also spans the time frame up through about 1834, Hawthorne began touching more frequently upon the serious concerns of the human heart. Again, these stories were partially experimental, to see what subject matter would work most successfully into stories and to find his own authorial voice. If considered in the order that follows their narrator, Oberon's, progression into despondency and gloom, they reveal a distinct pattern. In "Passages from a Relinquished Work," Oberon, the former ward of a stern New England minister, traces his life from the point at which he, "being heir to a moderate competence, had avowed [his] purpose of keeping aloof from the regular business of life" (CE X: 407). He soon learns that

This would have been a dangerous resolution, any where in the world; it was fatal, in New-England.

There is a grossness in the conceptions of my countrymen; 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)

Although Oberon looks back upon his life and works from the point of view of a wiser and more cynical older man, he describes in this passage the situation of Hawthorne himself during the writing of The Story Teller. The stories in the collection begin with youthful enthusiasm and humor, particularly in "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe," and progress from the beginning through tales of history and fantasy. Christian K. Messenger notes that Hawthorne "was the first great American author to firmly sense play as a response to the human need to move out of the tormented self" (36). This is what several of these tales do; in particular, "A Rill from the Town-Pump" and "The Vision of the Fountain" speak of old times, and fantasize about what life was like then and how one might enter into those times through the imagination. "Old News" simply retells local history, and "The Gray Champion" recounts the local legend of a kind of American King Arthur who might rise again in defense of his country. "Graves and Goblins" and "The White Old Maid" (which prefigures Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily") are gothic tales involving fantasy, mystery, and death; the former involves a young man who dreams of a beautiful spirit and deathless love,

while the latter recounts the meeting years later of two rival young women who have pledged to return to the scene of their former lover's death. The sex roles of the characters in all these stories are traditional, and though they become increasingly morbid, the tales themselves are unremarkable. Hawthorne was still trying to find his authorial voice and a story that would engage himself as well as his audience. Like Oberon, however, he sensed that this gothic, escapist writing functions as escapism and lacks the strength of conviction. In "The Devil in Manuscript," Hawthorne allows Oberon to fling his collection of stories into the fire with disgust, much as Hawthorne himself claimed to have done. "The Ambitious Guest," even darker in tone, features a young man who dreams instead of acts, and who is crushed by life's realities in the form of an avalanche. "Wakefield" touches upon the pathological withdrawal from reality of a man who perversely moves out of his own house in order to watch the effects of his absence; for twenty years, in the grips of his cruel joke, he becomes the main victim of his own persecution, emasculated because of his refusal or inability to act. As Andrew Schiller has noted, the character Wakefield

has committed the sin of detachment, of observing from without the workings of another heart, of attempting to change another life [his wife's]-- but without sympathetic participation in it. . . . Wakefield detaches himself to observe, but in doing so without benefit of Chillingworth's

motive power--his intellectual diabolism--he looses the tie that held him to the whirling world, and he is flung centrifugally outward forever. Hence the symbol of Wakefield getting leaner with the passing years and his wife getting stouter. For the tie that held him to the world was his wife, his home, and the small business circle--the tenuous everyday things that link us to the world by sheer force of custom. He breaks this centripetal force of custom and is destroyed. (115)

Like Chillingworth, Rappaccini, Ethan Brand, and others, he detaches himself, sees other people as objects for his own machinations, and becomes a victim himself. Neither alive nor dead, he is caught up in a limbo of suspension between the world he observes and the world of participation. When he finally does learn to apprehend the life he might have had, it is ironically closed to him. The story's ending and moral, which Hawthorne leaves open for the reader to guess at, is obvious; Wakefield, who has perversely waited twenty years for the world to grind to a halt in his absence, no longer fits in with the world that has moved along well enough without him. Hyatt H. Waggoner sees this story as one of Hawthorne's efforts to reveal a truth more powerfully through fiction than through fact: "In his fiction, he said, he could apprehend 'more of the various modes of truth' than he could by 'direct effort'" (117). Wakefield, by withdrawing from life and relinquishing his prerogative for masculine action, becomes less an actor than one acted upon; his wife flourishes and, after a time,

becomes so "well conditioned'" that she can no longer recognize the haunted waif her husband has become.

During the writing of these stories, Hawthorne continued his self-imposed exile from the world in his sanctuary under the eaves. His best work continued to develop themes of isolation, intellectualism, victimization, and secret guilt. At the same time, he was revealing to himself the truths that emerged from the stories: that isolation and intellectualism can result in victimization and secret sin. Although he also wrote lighthearted tales such as "Little Annie's Ramble," the general tone of the works was becoming darker. In none of these stories does the male persona find or assert a truly "masculine" identity. Hawthorne was becoming himself the victim of isolation and its resultant narrow vision. As James R. Mellow comments, within the "high-souled youth" of "The Ambitious Guest," Hawthorne saw some aspects of himself:

The tone is melodramatic, but the implications are clear: Hawthorne, with a perverse severity, had savaged his own bright dreams in those of his ambitious young man. (52)

Part of Hawthorne's problem was the lack of involvement he describes in "Wakefield"; but another element was his inability to separate himself from home and mother. He was unable to become emotionally intimate with another person, particularly a woman, because of his unusually close psychological ties with his mother; and the "enchantment"

or "imprisonment" he felt was not necessarily due to external forces, but rather due to his inability to shake off his own identity with her. Randall Stewart refers to several casual flirtations Hawthorne engaged in, but none of them became serious; they found themselves expressed in the dreamy female characters of some of his lesser fiction (Biography 43). His inheritance had provided him with a means of sustenance, so he was not forced financially to stay with his family. Likewise, there is no indication that home--the "Castle Dismal" referred to by himself, his wife, Elizabeth Peabody, and others--held any special attractions. Only some powerful need, overriding even comfort and volition, could have compelled him to stay on for more than a decade; and this need further infused his stories with the gloom and despair by which the greatest of them are driven.

By 1836, Hawthorne had been in seclusion for more than ten years. His work continued to grow in urgency, power, and bleakness. With few exceptions, the remaining works to be published in Twice Told Tales contain a rather negative picture of human motivations, intertwined with the same brooding image of individual isolation. "The Wedding Knell" is similar to "Wakefield" in the cruel joke played upon the elderly bride by her groom, who appears at the church in his shroud. "The May-Pole of Merry Mount" allows the young betrothed couple to be joined only when they have been

forced to see the dark side of the human condition. "The Minister's Black Veil" separates a young couple for the rest of their lives. In each of these stories, death, separation, and isolation intrude upon relationships between women and men. Hawthorne seems to be saying that there can be no happiness between the sexes without misery; but even with the misery, his outlook for happiness is bleak indeed. Richard Harter Fogle, who often interprets Hawthorne's work in terms of the author's Christian heritage, sees the "dreamlike, phantasmagoric atmosphere" with which scenes in these three stories are infused as representative of unreality and longing: as a desire to return to Eden or the Edenic state of childhood (Light and Dark 68). Hawthorne was in fact suspended in childhood, and he was seeing through his fiction that he could not remain there forever. In referring to "The Maypole of Merry Mount," Gloria Erlich points to the "unmistakable implication of sexual ambiguity" and states,

Indulgence runs amok, allowing the author license to revel in the pleasures of unrestraint before closing in with the forces of repression. . . . The triumph of discipline was inevitable; few can imagine adult human life as endless play. Revelry must end, children must grow up, Edens must be forfeited for a world of sober work. And . . . the polarities do represent two genuine aspects of human nature, neither of which can be totally denied. . . . (15)

One means by which Hawthorne gradually develops emotional maturity, while he ironically tries to hold it at

bay, is through the use of his imagination. As Nina Baym points out,

In this group of narratives, Hawthorne shows the inevitable consequence of an act of separation to be an increasing subjectivity leading ultimately to insanity. The inherent drift of the mind toward madness must be constantly opposed by bringing oneself into contact with other minds and with everyday actuality. Unremitting effort is required to stay sane because the mind naturally tends toward total self-enclosure. Thus, a single isolating act can have extreme consequences. There is, then, in these fictions a regular tension between the uncorrected and the corrected, or the regulated and the unregulated imagination. (Career 56)

Like Oberon from The Story Teller, he allows his imagination full play and comes to realize that the isolation of both his protagonists and himself results in negative thinking and, sometimes, action, bordering on madness. This particular group of stories often features a man who, through isolation and insensitivity, becomes an instrument of destruction. Hawthorne was aware that his own isolation, despite its stated purpose, further precipitated a brooding nature and enforced his separation from others. At the same time, the obsessive quality and habituation of his seclusion prevented him from breaking free and becoming a differentiated individual; his attachment to his mother was too strong for any but an overwhelming influence to disrupt.

These early stories, wherein "the obsession of the male protagonist is judged by the damage it does to the trusting female partner" (Baym, Career 57), typically

feature the sexes in the traditional roles expected by the reading public. The power is derived from the nature and severity of the obsessions themselves, as in "Roger Malvin's Burial," and "The Minister's Black Veil." In each of these, the men create an artificial barrier between themselves and their women; and the innocent women emerge as more noble--not out of sentimentalization of their sorrow but because they are stronger people than the men. Hawthorne obviously recognized and respected the strength of his female characters, but he also was unsettled by it. In tale after tale, he crushes them, only to have them become not victimized but victorious. His maternal attachment, while it functioned as both goad and muse, was destroying him; and his fear and resentment found voice in his work.

The stories completed during 1837 and 1838 continue in the same vein as others in Twice Told Tales, but as a group they are not as powerful. Many, such as "Peter Goldthwaite's Treasure," "The Prophetic Pictures," and "Lady Eleanor's Mantle," carry on the gothic mode or, like "Endicott and the Red Cross," "Howe's Masquerade," and "Edward Randolph's Portrait," draw upon local history. Most of these were obviously written for market or entertainment value, but several show a deepening of Hawthorne's fear of both isolation and the consequences of action. "David Swan" depicts a young man who, asleep by a roadside spring,

unknowingly avoids true love, wealth and success, and violent death, by turns, at the hands of the passers-by. "Fragments from the Journal of a Solitary Man" speaks again of Oberon, whom the narrator describes as a man "merely skimming the surface of life," who fears for his solitude that he will die "unwept, unhonored, and unsung" (CE XI: 314-315). "The Man of Adamant" and "Peter Goldthwaite's Treasure" show men whose isolation has driven them to a kind of madness, and "The Prophetic Pictures" and "Dr. Heidigger's Experiment" carry this personal isolation to the point of manipulating and destroying other people; the consequences of solitude affect not only the solitary individual, but reach out, as well, to influence and injure those around him.

In conclusion, isolation within society is clearly a controlling theme in Twice Told Tales, the stories written from Hawthorne's earliest days under the eaves, through 1838--a period of some thirteen years. In general, the men and women depicted in them fit within traditional sex roles and expectations. With few exceptions, the women are typical of fictional female characters of the period. The men, however, show a marked leaning toward reticence and withdrawal from the world, which traditionally is associated with feminine personality traits. Robin, Reuben Bourne, Ilbrahim, Oberon, Wakefield, the Ambitious Guest, the grooms in both "The Wedding Knell" and "The Shaker

Bridal," the veiled minister, David Swan, the Man of Adamant, Dr. Heidigger, Endicott, and Peter Goldthwaite all show signs of self-imposed isolation from the human community. In the mildest cases, these characters negatively affect only their own lives; in the most severe, they cause either unintentional or deliberate pain to those closest to them.

Hawthorne continued writing in his sanctuary under the eaves; but the consequences of his isolation--the fear of madness and evil impulses--emerged all the more in his work. Both secure and ensnared within the home he called "Castle Dismal," he struggled with a sameness edged with desperation. In a letter to Longfellow upon the publication of Twice Told Tales, he mused,

I can assure you that trouble is the next best thing to enjoyment, and that there is no fate in this world so horrible as to have no share in either its joys or sorrows. For the last ten years, I have not lived, but only dreamed of living. (Mellow 79)

His dreaming, however, was soon to take a decidedly different turn; and with it, the center of his identity was to be severely shaken and threatened. For the next four years, he was to waver between the security of home with mother, and the frightening but yearned-for fulfillment of his dreams. In early November of 1838, he was to meet Sophia Peabody and begin the struggle for a life of his own.

CHAPTER IV

COURTSHIP, MARRIAGE, AND IDENTITY

Hawthorne's meeting of Sophia Peabody was the single most influential event, to that time, in his adult life. He had spent more than a decade in authorial seclusion, writing and compiling the stories that were to appear in his first two collections. As Randall Stewart notes, however, he had not been shut away in monastic solitude; he enjoyed short journeys and the society of friends (NH 46-47). But on a deeper level, he considered himself a solitary, even lonely, man who never ventured too far from home. His unexpected introduction to the woman who was to become his wife produced a strikingly visible effect upon him. Stewart further notes Elizabeth Peabody's recollection of that meeting:

he rose and looked at [Sophia] intently--he did not realize how intently. As we went on talking, she would frequently interpose a remark in her low, sweet voice. Every time she did so, he would look at her again, with the same piercing, indrawing gaze. (51)

It was a cataclysmic event. Sophia, a semi-invalid who had been beset since puberty with violent headaches, had ventured downstairs in her white wrapper to meet Hawthorne and his sister Elizabeth. Whether enthralled by the ethereal vision of this young, delicate woman meeting company in her robe or by the quality and manner of what she said, Hawthorne was immediately smitten. Julian

Hawthorne further recounts his Aunt Elizabeth Peabody's remembrances of his parents' first meeting, by noting the aunt's reaction to it: "I . . . thought, 'What if he should fall in love with her!' and the thought troubled me; for she had often told me that nothing would ever tempt her to marry, and inflict on a husband the care of an invalid" (I:179). Hawthorne's reaction to Sophia, particularly from one as admittedly shy as himself, must have been as obvious to onlookers as it was stunning to him.

Similarly impressed was Sophia herself, in her own ways as prone to the "seclusion" and "eccentricity" her sister Elizabeth saw in the Hawthorne family. Early in their courtship, she referred to his "brilliant" appearance, his "beautiful smile," his "celestial expression," his "sweetness," his "extremely handsome" face: "he looked like the sun shining through a silver mist when he turned to say goodbye" (Stewart 51). Julian Hawthorne adds, however, that his mother at first was somewhat frightened by the force of his father's initial reaction to her:

[H]is presence, from the beginning, exercised so strong a magnetic attraction upon her, that instinctively, and in self-defence as it were, she drew back and repelled him. The power which she felt in him alarmed her; she did not understand what it meant, and was only able to feel that she must resist. By degrees, however, her resistance was overcome; and in the end, she realized that they had loved each other at first sight. (I:180)

His shyness and reticence seemed to disappear when they were alone together; he seemed able to open his heart to her in ways that had never been possible for him with any other human being.

At the same time, however, he kept secret from his family the love that he felt for Sophia. Because he often visited her, the situation was less a mystery to the Peabodys, but even so he and Sophia refrained from expressing to those around them the closeness they felt for each other. Given the solitary, retiring nature of them both, it is little wonder that they saw in each other a kindred spirit; indeed, it is difficult to imagine either of them falling in love with any other type of person or in a way other than completely, from the very beginning. By the end of 1838 they were thoroughly in love, and by spring of 1839 they had arrived at a commitment. Their love letters trace an account of their love from its early days, when Hawthorne took a job at the Boston Custom House, to the time when in July of 1842 they were finally married.

But Hawthorne's letters to Sophia, while in many ways typical of those of a young lover, reveal also the curious nature of his feelings for her. For one thing, he was no longer particularly young; he was nearly forty years old. The 102 surviving letters, however, express the almost adolescent quality of his devotion to her. He refers even in the very first letter to the otherworldly quality of

their love: "the communion . . . which my spirit holds with yours has something of religion in it" (Love Letters I:5). Later in the same letter he observes the "angelic guardianship" that she has assumed over him:

No one, whom you would deem worthy of your friendship, could enjoy so large a share of it as I do, without feeling the influence of your character throughout his own--purifying his aims and desires, enabling him to realize that this is a truer world than the feverish one around us, and teaching him how to gain entrance into that better world. (5)

The maternal nature of the pure, celestial guardian who will lead him into a truer, better world is strikingly clear in this passage. His references in this same letter to Sophia as his "Dove" and life with her as a "Paradise" continue the religious, ethereal imagery which was to continue throughout the three years of their courtship. The traditionally pure, Madonna-like image of motherhood has been recognized as a universal, if not archetypal, quality. It was particularly venerated as the ideal of true womanhood during the nineteenth century; the concept of the "angel in the house" was based upon it. Therefore, the images of sacred purity and loving guardianship in Hawthorne's letters are even more striking when in reference to Sophia. Hawthorne was beginning to transfer the devotion he felt for his mother to the woman he now wanted to be his wife.

For him, however, the transition from mother love to the mature, fully realized love of adulthood could be

neither easy nor smooth. So emotionally reticent and retiring was he that he possibly would have benignly rejected the idea of marriage, had not love taken him so completely by surprise. In addition, he was still thoroughly tied to his mother. This is seen not only in the manner in which he carried on his courtship, but also in the fact that he put off telling his mother of his engagement until almost the day of the wedding, three years later. Sophia would have to remain ethereal and unreal for him, at least for a considerable amount of time, so that he could adjust his new feelings over against his lifelong ones. To Elizabeth Peabody he said, "[Sophia] is a flower to be worn in no man's bosom, but was lent from Heaven to show the possibilities of the human soul" (J. Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife I:181). Because of Sophia's own reticence and her feelings that she should never marry, she appeared a particularly unthreatening woman. But even so, Hawthorne still--while at the same time feeling a strong physical attraction--kept her foremost in his mind as a creature of fleshless, otherworldly goodness. While the physical component of his love eventually asserted itself strongly enough to firm his resolve to marry, for a significant length of time he had to keep Sophia somewhat emotionally distanced, to delay the inevitable conflict within himself between her and his mother.

Nina Baym's interpretation of the situation is this:

Sophia was to save him from and substitute for his mother. The image of the one woman annihilates the image of the other; on the inner stage, where the image is the person, to let Sophia rescue him is to kill his mother. . . . [T]he narrative Hawthorne projected derives (to the extent that it is sincere) from his own emotions and not fact. The narrative suggests--what the belated adolescent quality with his mother tends to confirm--that his attachment to Elizabeth was so deep and pervasive that he experienced his love for another woman as doing some kind of violence to her, as a killing infidelity. At the same time, if Hawthorne blamed her for his long years of "enchantment" in the Herbert Street House while the world of adult sexual relationships passed him by, then he must assuredly have wanted to kill her to gain his freedom. ("Speculation" 17)

While Baym is certainly correct in her assertion that Hawthorne was still childlike in his attachment to his mother, it is unlikely that he would have blamed her for his reluctance to move out on his own. His mother was not solely dependent upon him for her support, and, as has been noted, he had income outside of what he earned from writing. The conflict--and a terrific one it was--was almost entirely within himself. He had always identified so closely with his mother that he had never seriously considered being away from her longer than was absolutely necessary. The family's move from the Hawthornes' house to the Mannings', where all his mother's grown siblings still resided, had set a precedent. Except for occasional trips to Maine and his years away at Bowdoin, Hawthorne had never been away from his mother; and he had made it clear on

numerous occasions that he did not want to be separated from her. He had never had to seriously compete with anyone, particularly any other male, for her attention and affection. His mother was so much a part of himself that he could not imagine life without her. Sophia, with her quiet, irresistible pull on him, was a direct threat to not only that relationship, but also to his own sense of identity.

His initial response to Sophia, striking as it appeared to her sister Elizabeth, led him to begin courting her. He was so completely infatuated that he began calling upon her almost immediately, without any apparent hesitation. His letters to her, however, display not a conscious reticence, but rather a celebration of a love of the souls--a spiritual, otherworldly love that, though immensely satisfying on an emotional level, ignores or avoids the physical passion that marks their later correspondence. One explanation for this could be the expected tentativeness of early love; but in Hawthorne's case, particularly because the spiritual quality continued for years through his letters, another explanation is likely. By keeping their love on an exalted, fleshless plane, he could avoid both the torturous splitting away from his mother and the assumption of the roles and responsibilities of mature sexuality.

Hawthorne had stated earlier that the world of the mind was always easier than the real world for him to

understand; he could learn about life by writing about it, second-hand, as it were. In his letters to Sophia, he was learning about love. He was more open to her about his feelings, however, and so the rush of emotion that is apparent in his correspondence is full of both conviction and wonder. At the same time, its fervent flights are often so unguarded and ingenuous that they are amusing to the reader:

Oh my dearest, I yearn for you, and my heart heaves when I think of you--(and that is always, but sometimes a thought makes me know and feel you more vividly than at others, and that I call "thinking of you")--heaves and swells (my heart does) as sometimes you have felt it beneath you, when your head, or your bosom, is resting on it. At such moments, it is stirred up from its depths. Then our two ocean-hearts mingle their floods. (Love Letters I: 24-25)

In general, however, the letters appeal to a higher emotional state and a conviction that the two of them were intended for each other:

True it is, that I never look heavenward without thinking of you, and I doubt whether it would much surprise me to catch a glimpse of you among those upper regions. Then would all that is spiritual within me so yearn towards you, that I should leave my earthly encumbrances behind, and float upward and embrace you in heavenly sunshine. (I: 44-45)

In keeping with this theme, Hawthorne from the beginning called Sophia his guardian angel and especially his "Dove"; when doing so, he often referred to her in third person, much as one would a child: "And so my poor Dove is sick, and I cannot take her to my bosom. I really do feel as if I

could cure her" (I: 34). But even then, he used the metaphor to elevate the nature of their love: "Oh, my Dove, I have really thought sometimes, that God gave you to me to be the salvation of my soul" (I: 40); ". . . we have met in Eternity, and there our intimacy was formed" (I:14).

By July of 1839, the relationship had progressed to the point of Hawthorne's calling Sophia "Wife":

[M]y soul yearns for the friend whom God has given it--whose soul He has married to my soul. Oh, my dearest, how that thought thrills me! We are married! I felt it long ago; and sometimes, when I was seeking for some fondest word, it has been on my lips to call you--"Wife"! I hardly know what restrained me from speaking it--unless a dread (for that would have been an infinite pang to me) of feeling you shrink back, and thereby discovering that there was yet a deep place in your soul which did not know me. Mine own Dove, need I fear it now? Are we not married? God knows we are. (I: 38)

This state of affairs progressed, with growing fervor, for the next three years. Julian Hawthorne, in his discussion of the courtship, comments upon the length of the engagement:

Sophia was Hawthorne's true guardian and re-creating angel. . . . A strict secrecy was maintained by them respecting their engagement during nearly the entire three years of its continuance; and the reason of this concealment was a somewhat singular one. (Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife I: 196)

According to Julian, the primary reason for not announcing the engagement was Hawthorne's belief, apparently brought about by Ebe's warnings, that his mother would suffer grievously--perhaps fatally--from the news. Julian himself

discounts this possibility severely, for he notes that Hawthorne's mother was quite fond of Sophia; he comments also that it was Ebe who feared her brother would marry--partly out of concern that Sophia would never be well and also because of her own dislike of Sophia. He also, however, notes that Ebe knew her brother would pay her little attention in this matter, if he truly wished to marry, and that another more pressing reason for delay was Sophia's own concern about her health (I: 196-98).

Another legitimate reason for postponing marriage was Hawthorne's financial prospects. Although he had some personal income, the financial responsibilities of marriage provided real challenges. He had recently taken a job with the Boston Custom House, to supplement income from writing and other sources, but he had not yet had time to amass savings of any real magnitude. This concern, along with Sophia's fragile health, could be seen as a major impediment to impending marriage. But judging from Hawthorne's very real love and passion for Sophia Peabody, health and finances are not likely to have provided an insurmountable barrier in his mind. He "worshipped" her (Love Letters I: 234). More likely a barrier was his continuing attachment to his mother and his inability, despite his conscious exertions, to free himself from identification with her. As Vernon Loggins has observed,

Hawthorne was "born to lean upon someone," and his loss of his father, exodus from the Hathorne house, and his childhood illness only served to increase that dependency (265). His growing love for Sophia, Ebe's jealousy, and Elizabeth Peabody's enthusiastic encouragement of his writing created a number of tensions that he, accustomed as he was to his formerly uneventful life, found difficult to master. He was able to retain control by not really changing anything significant. Despite his new job and the deepening of his epistolary relationship with Sophia, he declined to make any major changes; he did not move out of his mother's house, nor did he set a date to be married. He seemed content, despite the fervor of his letters, to carry on the courtship indefinitely and to assume a spiritual marriage where there was none in fact. His writing dropped off markedly. As Randall Stewart has noted,

It is significant that during the courtship of nearly four years 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. (NH 49)

Still, Hawthorne took refuge, as usual, with his pen. Sophia--a quiet, secluded semi-invalid as he himself had once been--served as muse; the letters became, as Mark Van Doren has pointed out, "his masterpiece of the next three years" (100). Newton Arvin also states, in his introduction

to The Heart of Hawthorne's Journals, that Hawthorne even "diverted into his letters to [Sophia] the energy that would otherwise have gone into his journal" (viii).

The intensity of the letters themselves is remarkable. Full of adoration, wit, humor, supplication, and insight, they were Hawthorne's outlet for all the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of his secret self. He could express all these emotions freely to Sophia and be rewarded by her responses, as Van Doren notes:

Her letters must have been remarkable too; few survive, because when he went to England he burned them. But in one that survives she says: "Thou art a necessity of my nature as well as a crown of perfection and voluntary grace. It is astonishing how much more I love thee every day." This was the tone both took. It was a seraphic tone. . . . (100).

Indeed, there is a religious element in the language of their love. From the first, Hawthorne recognized that quality in his feelings for Sophia, and his letters express it not only through references to heaven and other religious metaphors, but also in the archaic pronouns "thee" and "thou," usually reserved for references to God. He often thought of himself and Sophia as a new Adam and Eve, and his letter of 21 April 1840 expresses a longing for the bliss enjoyed by the first pair:

Dearest wife, thy poor husband is sometimes driven to wish that thou and he could mount upon a cloud (as we used to fancy in those heavenly walks of ours) and be borne quite out of sight and hearing of all the world;--then, at last, our souls might melt into each other; but now, all the people of the world seem to come between us.

How happy were Adam and Eve! There was no third person to come between them, and all the infinity around them only served to press their hearts closer together. We love [one] another as well as they; but there is no silent and lovely garden of Eden for us. Mine own, wilt thou sail away with me to discover some summer island? --dost thou not think that God has reserved one for us, ever since the beginning of the world? (Love Letters I: 183-84)

His longing in this passage is exquisite, but still he is living in the world of dreams. Although he often gave accounts of his day-to-day activities and concerns in the letters, he rarely spoke of practical matters with Sophia. Any troubles were masked with oblique references that he assumed she would understand. Few specific plans for marriage were mentioned, although he early took the liberty of referring to themselves as "already married" and to her as "Sophie Hawthorne." His venture at Brook Farm convinced him that it was not the place for them and that any talents he had for making a living lay elsewhere than in agriculture. Eventually, passion and impatience won out, as is expressed in his letter of 20 January 1842:

We have left expression--at least such expression as can be achieved with pen and ink--far behind us. Even the spoken word has long been inadequate . . . but, bye and bye, our spirits will demand some more adequate expression than even those.
(II: 74)

Within his own family, however, there was the same reticence that prevented him from sharing the news of his engagement; this was expressed to Sophia in a letter during February of 1842, only a few months before their marriage:

Belovedest, I have thought much of thy parting injunction to tell my mother and sisters that thou art her daughter and their sister. I do not think that thou canst estimate what a difficult task thou didst propose to me--not that any awful and tremendous effect would be produced by the disclosure; but because of the strange reserve, in regard to matters of feeling, that has always existed among us. We are conscious of one another's feelings, always; but there seems to be a tacit law, that our deepest heart-concernments are not to be spoken of. (II: 77-78)

Finally, however, in June they were informed--in a letter from Sophia--and the marriage took place in July.

Hawthorne's mother indicated that she "had seen how things were, a long time ago," and that she offered "her fullest blessing and concurrence" (Turner, NH 141). His sisters, Ebe and Louisa, also outwardly accepted the union.

By this time, Hawthorne had prepared himself to make the break. It is telling, however, that three years after he began calling Sophia "wife," he was still unable to even speak of their love to his mother. Even more striking is his inability, even at the last, to be the one to tell her of their engagement. Sophia's final decision, out of courtesy and frustration, to write to her, says volumes about Hawthorne's inability to face his mother even on the eve of the wedding. Family reticence aside, this withdrawal from the one person who had always meant everything to him smacks of abnormal fear and even cruelty. He may have hoped that his mother had, in fact, "seen" the development of the romance and favored it; but his so completely shutting her out of his confidence raises questions about whether he

felt either of them would survive the break. Not wanting to strike the possibly fatal blow to their relationship (if not the literally fatal blow to his mother), he left it to his "new" mother, his guardian, his wife-to-be, to perform the coup.

Hawthorne's relinquishing the dominant role in this instance is a striking illustration of the gender reversal his relationship with Sophia sometimes involved. Here he is forcing her to take the dominant, aggressive role against his own mother, who, by all accounts, was anything but a threatening or vindictive woman. In childlike fashion, he hides behind the skirts of his lover rather than face his mother himself with news which normally would seem cause for celebration. The indication is that his mother represented not only someone to whom he had been a "bad boy" by not being forthright about his engagement; she carried for him also the terrifying power of a father to be wrestled with during the oedipal separation he had never, to that point, undergone. The power his mother represented must have seemed overwhelming. It embodied his oedipal attraction to her, his own identification with her as one from whom he had never completely individuated, and the frightening taboos inherent in the unresolved rivalry with his dead father. His fleeing to Sophia was full of both anxiety and relief. In a letter of 20 December 1839, he asks her to "manage [his] share of [their] correspondence,

as well as [her] own" (CE XV: 388). She not only had the power to make him "be," but also to make him write. As Leland Person notes,

In inviting Sophia to "manage" both shares of their correspondence from a privileged position in his "inmost regions," Hawthorne does more than simply invoke a conventional muse. . . . He resigns control over his own interior space and invites her to take his place, speaking and writing in her own voice after reading his thoughts. The imagery he employs, furthermore, is striking for its suggestion of gender reversal. Instead of penetrating Sophia, Hawthorne himself is penetrated and virtually--verbally--impregnated. ("Hawthorne's Love Letters" 223-24)

In investing Sophia with male power, Hawthorne would not be far from creating a persona for her that could do battle for him against the threat represented by his mother. In relinquishing to her his duty of informing his mother of the engagement, Hawthorne forced Sophia not only to face his mother but also literally to remove him from her without his seeming to take the initiative. In asking her, though in jest, to take over his part of the correspondence, he was also asking her to become himself and in effect take the place of the mother with whom he over-identified. He wished to make the separation without taking the blame, but he also wanted to transfer his own identity immediately to another woman. Sophia, though embarrassed, wrote the necessary letter to Hawthorne's mother; his mother, offering felicitations through Ebe, pleaded sickness and did not attend the wedding.

The early years of Hawthorne's marriage were to prove the happiest he was ever to experience. In the old manse which they took as their first home, he and Sophia kept a journal which they wrote in together, alternately, each commenting upon the other's entries. In the first weeks of married life, however, Hawthorne was so contented that he did not write at all, even in the journal, and was only led to do so by Sophia's prodding (Mellow 205). They saw themselves as the new Adam and Eve and, living by themselves in Concord, they were able finally to be together away from daily contact with either of their families. Hawthorne's journal entries and Sophia's letters to her mother indicate the deep happiness both felt (204). As Gloria Erlich notes, Sophia, "[h]aving qualities continuous with his earliest needs and fantasies . . . served as his ideal anima figure, helping to direct these into more adult channels of sexuality and creativity" (100).

During this time, Hawthorne was at work on Mosses from an Old Manse, which was published in 1846. Mosses contains some of the author's most mature, powerful, and intriguing work, which is not surprising, considering the blissful working conditions he was enjoying. Of note, however, is the strength of the dark thematic material and imagery in some of the stories, which would seem incompatible with the joy of early married life. "The Birthmark," "Young Goodman

Brown," "Rappaccini's Daughter," and "The Artist of the Beautiful" speak of hopelessness, despair, lost or ruined love, and the awful mysteries of the human heart. There appears nothing in Hawthorne's life at the time that would give rise to such gloom. Indeed, these themes are much the same as those in earlier works; however, they are most vividly and precisely expressed in the Mosses collection perhaps because of Hawthorne's newly found confidence, in addition to his need to support his wife and himself through his writing.

On the other hand, there may have also been more compelling reasons for the bleakness of mood and the power with which he wrote of deliberate cruelty, manipulation, and morbid secrecy. In addition, there must have been unspoken strain between Sophia and Hawthorne's mother and sisters, which, though not a critical issue because of their distance from one another, must still have been a problem. Nina Baym notes that "Sophia never became a favorite with the three women, nor did she greatly care for them" ("Speculation" 18). In fact, as Arlin Turner states, following her marriage, Sophia did not see Hawthorne's mother and sister Ebe until November 1844, eight months after the birth of their first child, Una. This separation occurred despite the fact that Hawthorne himself had made numerous trips to Salem during that period and had stayed with his mother and sisters while there (154). Hawthorne

cannot have wished any untoward dislike between his wife and his family, but he may not have encouraged particular closeness among them because of his own guilty discomfort in the presence of all of them together. His internal conflict must have been terrific. Involved were his still active attachment to his mother, his sexual yearnings for Sophia, and his knowledge that all of them, including his sisters, held him accountable for a rather awkward situation. Considering his feelings for each of these women, he seemed ready enough to keep them at a distance from each other--and at least some of his feelings entirely to himself.

Most of his stories from the period, apart from those already mentioned, were "pedestrian . . . moralizing, sermonizing, generalizing . . . prose" (Mellow 233) that would please the public and give rise to no controversy, not even within himself. He seemed determined, in both his public and his private life, to walk a safe middle ground, outwardly, for the sake of peace.

"The Birthmark," "Young Goodman Brown," "Rappaccini's Daughter," and "The Artist of the Beautiful," however, are different. Unlike "Mrs. Bullfrog," "The Hall of Fantasy," "Feathertop," and others in the collection, these four stories are among Hawthorne's greatest works. They have in common not only psychological verity, but also introspection into the dark side of human motivations. "The

Birthmark" is striking in that it is a study in reversals. Georgiana, who possesses perfect beauty with the exception of the mark on her face, appears to be doomed not only in beauty but also in her married life. She seems to be the victim of circumstance and also of her husband's obsessed machinations. In reality, the reverse is true. Georgiana is not particularly bothered by the mark until her husband becomes driven by an ambition to obliterate it; she has had the mark all her life, and it is "natural" to her. To Aylmer, on the other hand, the tiny handprint is most unnatural, reminding him of sin, mortality, and death. The irony is that Aylmer himself commits the sin and brings on death in his ambition to obliterate what he finds distasteful. The birthmark, however, as Harry C. West has pointed out, is the source of Georgiana's beauty, revealing as it does "by contrast the perfection of her other features" (254). It has, therefore, tremendous power in that it not only emphasizes Georgiana's unaffected loveliness; it also seizes her husband with an obsession that causes him to destroy the one thing he holds most dear.

The reversal reveals that the one who has the most power from beginning to end is not the logical, ambitious Aylmer, but rather his seemingly passive wife. As Nina Baym has noted,

In crossing the threshold of Aylmer's laboratory,

Georgiana has violated a taboo designed to protect his weaker male sphere from her strength. But what is this force? Ultimately, it is woman's ability to create life. ("Hawthorne's Women" 253)

Georgiana is influenced by her love of her husband, but she is neither obsessed nor driven by it. Even though she becomes his victim, she does so willingly--realizing more clearly than even her husband what the outcome will be. It is she, the outwardly submissive woman, rather than the dominating Aylmer, who has the real power. The fact that in killing his wife he becomes a victim of his own greed for knowledge, gains him little sympathy. From the beginning he has been a less admirable figure than she because of his central concern only for himself.

With this story Hawthorne actively acknowledges woman's power, and he also acknowledges the male ambition to seize that power himself. The creating, or procreating, power must seem a blight to those who do not possess it; and therefore, in trying to control it, man destroys the quality he most desires. In addition, the desire to obtain "forbidden" knowledge is expressed in the desire to possess the unattainable. Guilt, secret sin, and death come not in aspiring to the possible but rather in trying to be what one is not; in Hawthorne's case, the unattainable is the ability to possess what is exclusively female.

"Young Goodman Brown" also features a man who, outwardly in control, loses control because of the rashness

of his own actions and the determined naivete with which he approaches life. According to Robert E. Morsberger,

In Goodman Brown, Hawthorne did conceive of a disillusioned Puritan, but Brown's tragedy is not the loss of his simple faith; rather that his faith is too simple to begin with. He is, of course, aware of evil from the start But at this stage in his development, evil is still a notion; he may believe in it intellectually as a dogma, but he has not yet experienced it. . . . His trip to the forest is indeed a bad one, so traumatic that he concludes by disbelieving in any goodness. (178)

Both Goodman Brown and his wife, Faith, are presented as equal heirs to mortal sin: his name, "Brown," represents neither the white of spotlessness nor the blackness of iniquity. Faith, with her pink ribbons, is neither totally innocent nor totally "scarlet." She is a matron, and as such is appropriately represented by a hue between maidenly virtue and wanton lasciviousness. William V. Davis has commented,

As Faith's ribbons represent a hue between the white of innocence and the black of depravity, so the color brown represents a hue between red and yellow (for all practical purposes equally red and white, thus paralleling Faith's pink) or, perhaps more obviously and more importantly, black and white. (193)

Once again, however, it is the aggressive male who goes looking for trouble. Faith, who also is tested in her long night of waiting for her wandering husband, rejoices upon his return in the morning; he, however, having pushed his simple assumptions too far, has lost both faith and Faith. His foolishness is not in having untried beliefs, but

rather in trying them beyond his own ability to preserve them. Barton Levi St. Armand notes that Goodman Brown is not the only one who experiences a "Walpurgisnacht of the soul" (190):

By going into these dark woods, he is testing [Faith] as well as himself and, like Dante, undertaking a journey which could restore such "Faith" in a more genuine and strengthened form. (187)

Faith, however, does not waver; though she does not deliberately set out to test her own (or his) resolve, she is forced to do so by trusting in a husband who goes proudly looking for trouble. While both Goodman Brown and his wife start out theologically on the same footing, as equal inheritors of original sin and candidates for election, only Faith emerges unscathed because she has had from the beginning a healthy respect for the power of evil; nor does she haughtily proclaim, like her husband, "I will yet stand firm against the devil!" (CE X: 32). Hawthorne shows Faith not to be the Victorian ideal of the pious woman who saves her husband from waywardness; Goodman Brown too thoroughly and deliberately damns himself through pride and then despair. But he does show Faith as one who, healthily rooted in both heaven and earth, survives the fearsome night and welcomes the morning with joy. Faith is triumphant because she faces her trials reluctantly but squarely, and proves herself the more stalwart of the two. As in "Wakefield," the wife is forced into the role of

victim by her husband, but it is primarily the husband who suffers because he willingly and rapidly embraces the emasculation of defeat. As Morsberger says, "Goodman Brown is like the person who from perverse curiosity experiments once with LSD and has a bad trip" (178).

Goodman Brown, like Hawthorne, has a problem with his own identity. Unable to discern the "good" people from the "bad," Goodman Brown gives up in despair and assumes the whole world to be evil. He is unable to see people as complex creatures with both good and bad in their natures; to him, the slightest stain upon the character of some exemplary soul is a mark that discolors all other qualities. He himself, therefore, cannot hope to win election because he has had a glimpse of a totally depraved world. Hawthorne, too, had difficulties with identity, only his were of a different sort. Like Goodman Brown, he came to see himself as under some sort of doom from which he could not be extricated. This feeling was directly related to his identification with his mother. Unable to envision himself as truly distinct from her, he felt under the curse of such a strong identification with her that he knew it to be abnormal and crippling of his efforts to become a fully functioning individual. His marriage to Sophia helped to drive a wedge between himself and his mother, but he felt guilty about it because he felt it denied his mother. At the same time, his decision to move his mother and sisters

permanently into his and Sophia's Mall Street house, after living with them for a time on Herbert Street, suggests that no matter how much he thought he wanted his freedom from her, he never let his mother get too far from sight. Like Goodman Brown, he did what he ultimately wanted with his situation.

"Rappaccini's Daughter," like "The Birthmark" and "Young Goodman Brown," presents another case of male downfall in the attempt to manipulate a less aggressive but stronger and more admirable woman. Beatrice Rappaccini is acted upon, either directly or indirectly, by every man in the story, from her father, to her father's rival, to her own lover. Beatrice's strength comes not only from her own beauty, but also from a sense of innate goodness not possessed or even completely understood by the men. Like Georgiana and Faith, she understands her own position and the dangers in it; and like them she subjects herself willingly to the men's manipulations. She is destroyed out of her father's misplaced ambition, Baglioni's professional envy, and Giovanni's impulsive spite. Her insight into the reality of her situation both dooms and, in a larger sense, redeems her. There are limited outward controls that she has; but she can control her own actions and reactions. Her redeeming quality, and that of Faith and Georgiana, is that she loves unselfishly and is willing to put her life on the line for that love. Aylmer, Goodman Brown, and Rappaccini

are not only testing God and their human limitations, but they are acting out of basically selfish motives; they are defeated because they have dishonored themselves and, tragically, have harmed those they love in the process.

Hawthorne, too, hurt those he loved. He hurt his mother by not confiding his engagement to her; and he hurt Sophia by placing her in a false position with his family--a position that he knew would cause a rift between them and keep them apart from each other. He introduces the poison of suspicion between the women because of his own machinations. Both his mother and Sophia--innocent and loving--are vulnerable because of his ambition to have them both, but only on his terms. He is in control, but it is he who stands the most to lose; in this way, he functions as all three of the men in the story, all of whom have selfish agendas that victimize the good and generous in the female.

"The Artist of the Beautiful" is similar, but it has redeeming differences. Dean Bethea notes that Nina Baym, Frederick Crews, and others see Owen Warland as manipulating his environment and withdrawing from the real world, in favor of the artificial world of his own creation:

Owen, like Aylmer in "The Birthmark," Giovanni in "Rappaccini's Daughter," and Ethan in "Ethan Brand," commits Hawthorne's "unpardonable sin": the voluntary separation of the head and the heart, the intellect and the soul. (23)

Owen, however, is more complex than this; and here may be seen a key to Hawthorne's previous three stories, as well as a new direction for his perspective on relationships between the sexes. In this story the protagonist, Owen Warland, strives to create an object of perfect beauty, first for its own sake and then for the sake of one he loves. He meets with frustration time and again, and finally is able to marshal the strength and resolve to complete the project. The exquisite mechanical butterfly becomes a gift to the woman he has secretly loved for years. She has since married a man who, like herself, her father, and her child, is insensitive to the artist's diligence and achievement. Though the butterfly is impulsively crushed by the child, in the same way these people have taunted and crushed his hopes, the artist is still triumphant; the act of creation has been its own reward.

"The Artist of the Beautiful" reverses the roles and the motivations of the previous three stories and indicates changes that were taking place in Hawthorne's sensibilities. Though the artist shuts himself away from the world, he does not try to manipulate other people; he creates for them. Though his creation is destroyed, he still has the satisfaction of knowing he himself achieved it.

Owen Warland is pictured in this story as decidedly feminine in both physical appearance and sensibility. "His ears are as delicate as his feelings," says Annie, who, like her father, prefers the brawny and haughty blacksmith Peter Hovenden (CE: X, 449). Annie, Owen's beloved, is much more masculine in outlook than many of Hawthorne's female characters. She has little sympathy for Owen or his talents, and although she marvels at the butterfly, she is neither greatly grieved nor remorseful when her child destroys it. Owen, however, knows the value of both his work and his creation. He does not get the girl nor attain symbolic immortality in the survival of the butterfly, but he achieves a sense of transcendence through having created the Beautiful.

Hawthorne finally seems to be integrating his feminine, creative self with the ability to create unselfishly. Written in 1844, two years after his marriage, "The Artist of the Beautiful" demonstrates how the procreative processes can be used in a giving, rather than a controlling or manipulative fashion. By directing his powers outward, in a gift for his beloved, Owen Warland achieves transcendence even though his creation is destroyed. The ability to create--on his own--is the creator's reward. Hawthorne had finally managed to produce without the sense of haunted guilt or fear that pervades the other stories. Owen Warland's name is significant. It

expresses the conflicting influences that form a truce within Hawthorne's own mind as a clear, multi-faceted identity begins to take shape for him.

What is to be made of these four stories, in the light of Hawthorne's life and increasing maturity as an artist? For one thing, he was beginning to focus his considerable abilities in his work and, by further developing themes touched upon in earlier works, he gave them fuller and truer expression. In "The Birthmark," "Young Goodman Brown," and "Rappaccini's Daughter," a strong but innocent woman is wronged by the man who loves her, but she emerges as triumphant through both love and will. In "The Artist of the Beautiful," the reverse is true; but the young man who triumphs is able to work out his salvation by himself without harming anyone else, particularly those he loves.

During the writing of the first three stories, Hawthorne was entering into the guilt-tarnished happiness of early married life. He saw himself as a not particularly forthright man whose subterfuge and selfishness had caused the unhappiness and threatened the well-being of those closest to him--first and most importantly his mother, secondly his beloved Sophia who was forced into a false position with his family, and finally his two sisters who also counted on him for a measure of support. Although he saw himself as outwardly in control of events, he also recognized that the real power lay with the women,

particularly his mother who wielded enormous symbolic power on at least three different levels. The power reversal, from male to female, reflected his perception of the way things were. Of course, he probably was not aware on a conscious level of all the ramifications of this perception; but the power and psychological veracity of the stories indicate that he inwardly recognized where the real creative power lay: with the female. By the time he wrote "The Artist of the Beautiful," Hawthorne had become more settled in his marriage, had fathered his first child, and was able to be with his mother and sisters on a frequent basis. His earlier internal tension had lessened, and he was able to reinterpret the theme by placing a man in the position of gentle achiever--a much better integrated persona than the previous ones. Here was a male character, with decidedly female attributes, who could transcend circumstances despite over-whelming opposition that included an uncaring world; a psychologically castrating woman; and the knowledge that he was competing with his beloved's own creation, her son. Owen Warland could be seen as a composite character embodying aspects of Hawthorne's mother (with all her psychological power), his wife (to whom he had transferred some of this power, in addition to the power she had in her own right), and particularly--the artist--himself (who, as both "artist" and "son," had been literally at war with himself). Hawthorne was finally

learning, as William Shurr aptly puts it, to "walk with care in Rappaccini's garden" (13). This maturity would serve him well when, three years later, he was to suffer the greatest setback of his life: the sudden death of his mother.

CHAPTER V

CRISIS AND CATHARSIS

Prior to Hawthorne's appointment as surveyor of the port of Salem in 1846, he and Sophia and their daughter Una had moved into the Herbert Street house with his mother and two sisters. Sophia wrote to her mother in January of 1846 that she should not like to remain long in the house:

Madame Hawthorne and Louisa are too much out of health to take care of a child, and I do not like to have Una in the constant presence of unhealthy persons. I have never let her go into Madame Hawthorne's mysterious chamber since November, partly on this account, and partly because it is so much colder than the nursery, and has no carpet on it. (Baym, "Speculation" 18)

As to this remark, Nina Baym comments, "It seems clear that a major goal on Sophia's part was to preserve the autonomy of her own new family" (18). Another reason for Sophia's reticence may well have been her discomfort in the presence of the Hawthorne women, particularly her husband's mother and Ebe, who actively disliked her. In addition, she may have been influenced by Hawthorne's awareness of the similarity between this situation and the one in which he had spent his earliest years with his mother, her aging mother-in-law and his father's two spinster sisters. It had not been an ideal arrangement then, and this new situation likewise was far from ideal. Hawthorne's mother, who also probably recognized similarities between the living arrangements of her own early married life and that of her

son, apparently said nothing but in any case was secluded much of the time. It could be that her own unhappy experiences had made her sensitive to the needs of young couples and determined not to be a problem to her son and his wife. Nonetheless, when Hawthorne was able to find a new house for his family on Mall Street, his mother, Ebe, and Louisa moved in also on a permanent basis.

Hawthorne must have felt the pressures of being under one roof with all four women, but he recorded none of his overt thoughts about these tensions in his journal. In view of his having hidden from his mother the news of his impending marriage, he probably felt somewhat exonerated by the fact that he could now welcome her into his home and take care of her for the rest of her life. He seemed to have everything he could wish for: a house, a wife and children (Julian was born later in 1846), his mother and sisters, and a job to support them all. He had been able to find some peace within himself concerning his earlier treatment of his mother, and now he could have both her and Sophia with him always.

Then suddenly in 1849, everything came crashing in upon him. In July of that year a change in administrations caused him to lose his position as surveyor at the Salem Custom House. He had been unable to write for publication while working, and his family desperately needed money. In addition, it was apparent that his mother was rapidly

succumbing to her terminal illness. The entire household, including little Una and her young brother Julian, gathered at the bedside of the dying woman. As James R. Mellow notes, Hawthorne recorded the actions of the family and his own feelings "with a kind of dumb awe" (297). On July 29 and 30 the children, whose activities were circumscribed due to the death watch in the upper rooms of the house, began dramatizing their grandmother's demise in role play by themselves. Hawthorne, observing them, remarked in detail upon their exchange of roles, particularly when Julian played the part of the dying Elizabeth (CE VIII: 430). Julian had never seemed as close to his father as Una; in fact, Sophia remarked upon this fact not long after Julian's birth, despite the fact that the little boy bore a striking resemblance to his father:

His father declares he does not care anything about him because he is a boy, and so I am obliged to love him twice as much as I otherwise should. (Bridge, Personal Recollections 187)

Despite the likelihood that this disclaimer expressed the pride of new fatherhood, it is true that Hawthorne always felt closer to his daughters, particularly Una, than to his son. At the same time, he was in awe of Una's apparent lack of fear and her "comprehension of everything," never so striking as during the twenty-four hours preceding his mother's death:

Una takes a strong and strange interest in poor mother's condition, and can hardly be kept out of the chamber--endeavoring to thrust herself into

the door, whenever it is opened. . . . There is something that almost frightens me about the child--I know not whether elfish or angelic, but, at all events, supernatural. She steps so boldly into the midst of everything, shrinks from nothing, has such a comprehension of everything, seems at times to have but little delicacy, and anon shows that she possesses the finest essence of it. . . . In short, I now and then catch an aspect of her, in which I cannot believe her to be my own human child, but a spirit strangely mingled with good and evil, haunting the house where I dwell. The little boy is always the same child, and never varies in his relation to me. (CE VIII: 430)

Obviously, for Hawthorne to be aware of such vivid and mixed emotions for Una at that particular moment, he must have seen her as symbolic of something much greater than she actually embodied. Upon the death of his mother, he again linked images of his mother and his child:

I found the tears slowly gathering in my eyes. I tried to keep them down; but it would not be--I kept filling up, till, for a few moments, I shook with sobs. For a long time, I knelt there, holding her hand; and surely it is the darkest hour I ever lived. Afterwards, I stood by my open window and looked through the crevice of the curtain. . . . I saw my little Una of the golden locks, looking very beautiful; and so full of spirit and life, that she was life itself. And then I looked upon my poor dying mother; and seemed to see the whole of human existence at once, standing in the dusty midst of it. (CE VII: 429)

As Nina Baym concludes, this melding of the two images is no accident:

Hawthorne . . . permits the depths of his grief to come to light. Connecting Una to his mother through himself, and making this linked chain of three comprise the whole of human existence, he effectively expunges Sophia from the record, makes Una his mother's child, and hence makes his

mother both wife and mother to him. ("Speculation" 20)

Una, in this way, would indeed seem supernatural and, at least symbolically, the fruit of an "evil" and unnatural union. Hawthorne, however, does not consciously see her that way, any more than he sees Pearl in The Scarlet Letter as evil in and of herself. Both Pearl and Una represent a love that was on one level forbidden but not regretted in the least: a love that had, as Hester Prynne says, "a consecration of its own" (CE I: 195). By the beginning of the summer of 1849, Hawthorne had The Scarlet Letter in mind. Its genesis had already been suggested to him by the reading of Rousseau's Julie; ou, La Nouvelle Héloïse, a story of how "a deep and beautiful attachment between a man and a woman may be frustrated by the conventions of a highly complex society" (Loggins 280). Hawthorne, however, changed the story to reflect the turmoil he was experiencing during the loss of his position and the illness and death of his mother. In Rousseau's tale, the young wife of an old, rational intellectual is thrown daily and deliberately, by her husband, into constant contact with her former lover. She and the young man still feel strongly for each other but act nobly in spite of their love, leading the husband to feel that his wife's restraint proves the triumph of rationality. His is a hollow victory, however, because Julie soon dies after rescuing one of her children from drowning, having lost her will to live.

Hawthorne had long since learned that as "an artist of the beautiful, he possessed a sure means of escaping wretchedness"; Ebe had remarked to him that "If a book is great, the author is in mental pain when he writes it" (Loggins 281-82). During the days following his mother's death, Hawthorne's pain and grief drove him to the point that Sophia became afraid for his health, and he began writing with fevered rapidity. With Rousseau's story as his general guide, he began to weave a tale of forbidden love, fierce loyalty, determination in the face of certain defeat, and the salvation that can be effected through deathless devotion. The Scarlet Letter became his memorial to his mother--an acknowledgement of his love for her, an apologia for her life, and a means of keeping her alive and with him always.

One striking characteristic of the novel is the defiance with which Hawthorne allows Hester Prynne's cause to stand in relation to the nailed-tight conventions of society and even the arguments of her lover in regard to her immortal soul. Throughout the story he stands squarely in support of her, despite opposition of every kind. Artistically, he chooses this stance in order to demonstrate the strength of Hester's claims. On a personal and more compelling level, however, he advocates her position out of necessity to acknowledge the depth of his attachment for his dead mother. Hester is dead at the time

the story is narrated,' and this is a significant factor; it serves to eulogize not only her but also Elizabeth Hathorne. In addition, the story--the work of Hawthorne based psychologically on the life of his mother--is his creative offspring with her, functioning to effect salvation in much the same way that little Pearl, who sees her mother only in relation to herself, is able to bring about the salvation of her mother:

Some of the resemblances between Hester's and Elizabeth's stories [are] already . . . evident from the account provided of her life: the questionable circumstances of their children's births, their repudiation by those assigned society's judging function, the absence of spouse and abandonment of the child entirely to the mother. Facing down Hester's critics and overcoming presumed reader resistance to her, Hawthorne goes beyond forgiveness to complete acquittal. . . . Essentially, too, Pearl is her mother's child only. Though society and Hester are aware that a man participated in the act, Pearl has no sense of this necessity and hers is the view the reader is forced to adopt. . . . Autobiographically speaking, Hawthorne identifies himself once and for all as his mother's child. (Baym, "Speculation" 23)

The discomfort Hawthorne felt during the writing of this story, in conjunction with his observations on Una's strange behavior, is probably due to his identification with her and with Pearl. Neither Una nor Pearl, though possessing feminine beauty, demonstrates typically feminine personality traits. Not only are they disruptive, aggressive, and "strange," but they also are seen as supernatural--as composed of wildly conflicting aspects of good and evil. Such would be expected of a child of

unnatural or forbidden love. Hawthorne psychologically saw Una as the child of his first and strongest love, despite the reality of her biological parentage. The same is literally true of Pearl, the fruit of her mother's true love and a man forbidden to her. The masculine and feminine traits exhibited by Una and Pearl reflect not only the young child's lack of sexual stereotyping, but also the complicated psychological makeup to be expected of one born under such circumstances. Whether or not others saw in Una's behavior anything out of the normal for a healthy, headstrong child, Hawthorne believed he did; and he incorporated the most extreme and disturbing of her characteristics into the personality of Hester's daughter.

Hester Prynne especially demonstrates androgynous characteristics which are responsible for much of her strength. Although she is strikingly beautiful in a feminine sense, she also exhibits courage, determination, and defiance to a degree traditionally associated with males. In contrast to both her husband and her lover, she is by far the most powerful, despite the fact that her cause is the more "feminine" ideal of romantic love, as opposed to the traditionally masculine interests represented by Chillingworth's intellect and Dimmesdale's religious dogma. As Ellen Walker Glenn has observed, Hawthorne gives Hester (as well as Zenobia in The Blithedale Romance and Miriam in The Marble Faun) "a

characterization marked by independence, assertiveness, self-reliance, courage, and strength of personality . . .

[that does] not conform to any stereotype of feminine behavior and attitude" (28-29). The primary males in the story, however, function almost as types: Chillingworth as the cold, calculating intellectual whose obsession for vengeance likens him to a fiend, and Dimmesdale, who must have had admirable qualities in order to attract Hester in the first place, but who now wallows in religious self-loathing to the point that his personality is effaced. Chillingworth and Dimmesdale either strip themselves of sympathetic feeling or else immerse themselves in it and direct it inward, thereby diminishing their stature as men. Concerning Dimmesdale, Kristin Herzog has noticed,

[He] lacks the strength which had borne up Hester under the burden of the scarlet letter (171), and he begs her, "Twine thy strength about me! Thy strength, Hester" (253). In contrast to her, Dimmesdale is often described in feminine terms. He "kept himself simple and childlike; coming forth . . . with a freshness, and fragrance, and a dewy purity of thought, which, as many people said, affected them like an angel" (66). "The creator never made another being so sensitive as this" (171). Dimmesdale himself admits his weakness in the forest scene: "Think for me, Hester! Thou art strong. Resolve for me!" (196). And she urges him desperately: "Preach! Write! Act! Do anything, save to lie down and die!" Although Dimmesdale agrees to flee with Hester, he returns immediately and guiltily, "pitiably weak" (215), to his public duties after their meeting. (13-14)

Not only does this scene exemplify the typical role-reversal situation in which Hester marshals her strength to

steel her lover to action; it also echoes Hawthorne's appeal to Sophia's strength, soon after he decides to marry her and is trying to transfer his maternal dependency to her. Like Dimmesdale, however, Hawthorne cannot effect a complete break with his past, and he retains his most basic attachment to his mother.

The model for Hester's actions throughout the novel is set at the very beginning when she stands in dignity with her child, outside the prison door, and refuses to name the baby's father. Although she is completely aware of the social and religious rules she has broken, Hester refuses to view her relationship with Dimmesdale as anything but pure love for which she has no shame and no regret. She is willing to go into public disgrace and to jail rather than renounce that love. The sharp-viewed women of the community revile her, and no one but Chillingworth, who appears upon the scene at just that moment, realizes how truly alone she is. Even Dimmesdale indicates to her that she is better off with her public penance than he who must suffer in guilty silence. Isolated as she is, Hester forms for herself a moral code which is not based upon the prevailing social or religious mores, but which supports her personal integrity.

In Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and the Dark, Richard Harter Fogle points out that

[Hester's] crime . . . is of all crimes the most excusable, coming of passionate love and having "a consecration of its own." Yet the sin remains real and inescapable, and she spends the rest of

her life in retribution, the death of her lover Dimmesdale having finally taught her that this is the only way. (105)

For Hawthorne, the crime "most excusable" was the terrible strength of his lifelong love for his mother. His grief at her death propelled him into a frenzy of work as catharsis; writing had always enabled him to hide from reality, while explaining the real world to him. Now his mother was dead, and he was left, distraught, to sort out his tangled feelings. He shut out the world, even his wife and children, and plunged into his mother's eulogy as an attempt to come to grips with her loss. As Nina Baym notes, however, the tangled relationship remained:

[E]ven as he strives to provide Hester with an independent existence as the center of her own world, Hawthorne maintains a double focus. Events in The Scarlet Letter never work themselves free of the constant voice of the narrator. We are always aware that the character Hester depends for her reality on the act of narrative generosity which is creating her. Here, Hawthorne reverses the biological relation of mother and child and becomes the creator of his mother. . . . [S]uch a reversal . . . responds to a specific set of wishes in the particular author writing at this particular time--the wish to be free of lifelong maternal power, and the wish to have one's mother all to oneself (even if the possession can be attained only after death). ("Speculation" 21-22)

Baym goes on to state, however, that Hester serves as the creating force which enables the author to write about her in "The Custom House":

Thus there is a transcending symbiosis of symbol and artist, mother and son--each created by the other and each dependent on the other for artistic life: the artist dependent on the image

which inspires him, and the image dependent on the artist for representation. . . . There is, finally, an inevitable gap between the image and the being it represents; the image is the refraction of the mother's influence in the son's psychic world. And so the work becomes an ambitious attempt to give his mother her own reality and bring life to her image in his mind as well and somehow keep these distinct. . . . Hawthorne as narrator creates a structure in which the identities of the two subjects alternately assert themselves independently and then merge into a large unity. The unity is best symbolized in the icon of mother and child--Divine Maternity--which is thrust on our attention in the first scaffold scene of The Scarlet Letter. ("Speculation" 22)

It is highly symbolic that Hester should be pictured in this first scene with not a male child but a female--a "Pearl of great price." In creating this story, Hawthorne would have felt himself entirely too revealed by giving his fictionalized mother a son; besides, a son might have been expected to look more like its father than would a daughter, and thus reveal its guilty parent by mirroring his image. Hawthorne also may have been acknowledging his mother's first child, the "premature" Ebe, in the sex of little Pearl. But the driving force behind his giving Hester a girl was his fierce identification with his mother and his woefully incomplete differentiation from her. Despite his relative happiness in his married life, he still had managed never to be far from his mother--finally having arranged first to move back in with her and then to have her move in permanently with him. Pearl was representative of himself as his childlike psyche yearned

to be: a girl like his mother, tied to her apron strings, never to leave home.

Hawthorne, however, could not have it that way. He was a man, and his mother as Hester was the product of his imagination as well as his inward yearnings. The androgynous characteristics displayed by Hester represent not only the traditionally male roles his mother was forced to assume with his father gone, but also his own masculine characteristics that he attributed or transferred to his mother. Therefore, Hester becomes a character who can never fulfill her own wishes, however "excusable," because they are the results of an unnatural union. In addition, as Ellen Walker Glenn notes, Hawthorne

seems unwilling to create a society in which [Hester] could assume stature in [her community] or be admired as ideal womanhood. Instead he supports the stereotype of women . . . described [as] passive, dependent, subjective, gentle. (28)

Hawthorne knew that his allegiance must lie now with his wife, Sophia--the type of woman embodied in his "passive, dependent, subjective, gentle" heroines--but his deepest affections still lay with his mother. While the later novels include and sometimes seem to favor these symbols of chaste selflessness, The Scarlet Letter features only one major female character, the "fallen," rebellious Hester. Hawthorne argues her cause throughout the novel, despite the mannishness of her ways of thinking.

Hester's development of a moral standard in opposition to that of her community is the result of the action that caused the community to shun her. As Frederic Carpenter has observed, she "[achieves] a mature wisdom beyond that of her contemporaries" (262). Because of her forced isolation, she must rely only upon herself for her livelihood and for a reason to live. Ellen Walker Glenn remarks upon Hester's growth as both a mature individual and an androgynous character:

Because of her isolation and her wisdom, Hawthorne can create a woman who can develop androgynous qualities very naturally and very gracefully. Hester is best described as courageous, self-reliant, strong, assertive, and independent. In her dealings with the people of Boston she demonstrates her assertiveness by defining the terms of the relationship. She chooses to live independently on the outskirts of the community; she speaks to no one in the town, especially in relation to her charitable deeds. When she hears that Pearl might be taken from her she courageously opposes the magistrates and wins her case. She earns her own living and, though unassuming, she is identified as a woman of dignity. Throughout the novel Hester becomes more androgynous. (31)

In dealing with both Chillingworth and Dimmesdale, Hester approaches them as equals. Although neither is her equal in moral courage or understanding, both respect her for what she has been able to achieve in assertiveness and strength of character. Both also, in agreement with the larger community, value the softer, more womanly qualities that Hester seems in danger of losing as she becomes increasingly independent:

Those "manly" qualities are also the very qualities which both make Hester Prynne attractive and condemn her: "Sturdy force," "courage and consistency," "truth," "Self Reliance,"--attributes diametrically opposed to those of Sophia, qualities which in a woman cannot preserve the community, but would destroy it. (Fryer 74)

At the same time, Hester must preserve within herself the qualities that sustain life and give life meaning. She must support herself and her child, and she must also keep alive her love for both Dimmesdale and little Pearl. In her essay "Thwarted Nature," Baym remarks that Hester, though literally outside of the community, "remains very much in the world, whereas Chillingworth and Dimmesdale at the very center of society are totally immured in their self-absorption" (73). In addition, Hester's continuing love for Dimmesdale is greatly overshadowed by her love for little Pearl--"the supersession in her portrait of sexual love by maternal love" (73). Thus, the maternal attachment is the one Hawthorne stresses, although he does not completely discount adult, sexual love. Hester remains in Boston and, throughout her remaining years, does work that wins her a place of respect within the community. She has seen her child grow up, marry successfully, and achieve a normal, happy life. At this point, Dimmesdale has been dead at this point for years. But Hester remains and, despite her outward appearance of compliance with community morality, she carries within her a passion for the man whose love changed her life. It is for this reason that she does not

make her home in Europe with Pearl; she has remained faithful, and finally she is buried next to the man who shared it all. As Fogle has observed, Hawthorne finds in these events a felix culpa that denotes a kind of transcendence over sin; but at the same time there is the darker message that "sin remains real and inescapable" (104-105). James G. Janssen notes that earlier in the story, Chillingworth has suggested to Hester that the elders are considering allowing her to remove the scarlet letter from her breast; she assures him, however, that they do not have such authority and that if she were worthy to let the letter be removed, "it would fall away of its own nature, or be transformed into something that should speak a different purport" (CE I: 169). In the final chapter it becomes clear, as Janssen notes, that Hester will never willingly allow the letter to be removed, and that

in taking it up in understanding and sympathy, albeit with sorrow, she has transformed it into as hopeful a purport or prophecy as possible in a dark world where cemeteries, prison doors, rosebushes, and heraldic grave epitaphs symbolize man's ambiguous moral nature. (246)

The maternal image that Hawthorne had internalized within himself was still alive and active. In burying Hester, he had tried symbolically to lay to rest his identification with his mother so that he could take up his life with Sophia, unencumbered by the past. The past, however, was too much a part of Hawthorne's identity to be dismissed. The androgynous qualities so apparent in Hester

represent his veneration of his mother personally and also his psychological identification with her. The burial of Hester next to the lover she could not have was Hawthorne's attempt at burying his maternal fixation. He had buried his mother, but part of him went with her. He had eulogized her; but part of her remained alive within him, carrying a mixed heritage of yearning and guilt. Hawthorne was not able to work through his grief or the complexity of his feelings for his mother through The Scarlet Letter, but this was the closest he ever came to doing so. In later novels she reappears--always present, but usually in a strange disguise--and his treatment of her becomes bizarre as he tries to exorcise his overweening attachment to her.

Within six months after his mother's death, Hawthorne moved his family to the village of Lenox in western Massachusetts. He had remarked that he did not want his children to "take root in Salem" (Loggins 284), and, encouraged by the enthusiastic reception of The Scarlet Letter, he had begun writing The House of the Seven Gables. Nina Baym, in "Hawthorne's Women," states that The House of the Seven Gables is unique in its treatment of women, "for it makes the life-force inhere in a man--Maule--on whom all the other oppressed characters, Phoebe included, must depend for their ultimate vitality" (258). Nonetheless, as Dorothy Yost Deegan has remarked, this is "the first notable American novel in which a single woman is a major

character" (40). Hepzibah Pyncheon, though referred to by William L. Vance, among others, as "ludicrous" and "comic" (245), is the primary character of the novel. This is true even though other characters, and seemingly the ghosts of still others, are more involved in the action of the story. As Kristin Herzog notes, Hawthorne has given to Hepzibah a quaint, old-fashioned name, but he does not further adhere to the stereotype of the wizened, ridiculous spinster figure (17):

The characterization of Hepzibah is not at all a parody or an abusive portrait, as some critics have suggested. Hawthorne refuses to bestow on Hepzibah the dignity of a tragic heroine, which could easily have led to a sentimental or glorifying characterization, but he gives her dignity by making us aware of the truly human quality of her heart and by indicating that the social context of the Pyncheon family and her society at large made her what she is. (18)

The proof of this statement can be found by noting that, in the beginning of the story, not everything is as it seems. Judge Pyncheon, who appears kind and generous, is neither; and Hepzibah, whose lugubrious sighs make her seem slightly absurd, is in fact the heart of the house. Hepzibah is caught between the earlier days when her family's name was prominent in town, and the present when she in her old age has to set up a "cent shop" to support herself. Necessity has forced her to lower herself to the workaday world, so that, like Uncle Venner, she is a lonely outsider. But at the same time, she is described as having "warmth of heart" (CE II: 95), "much love" (96), "tenderness" (101), "natural

dignity, mingled with deep emotion" (113), "heroism (133), and "courage" (228). These attributes seem evenly divided between the masculine and the feminine, but the way in which she uses them makes her decidedly a type of hero in the classic mold. She protects her helpless, childlike, artistic brother Clifford against his evil cousin like "the dragon which, in fairy tales, is wont to be the guardian over an enchanted beauty" (126). Though, as Herzog notes, she "is occasionally described in mock-heroic terms" (25), she does battle as mightily as she is able for those she loves, "having gnashed her teeth against human law" (85). Her determination to stand up for her brother, in the face of cruel poverty and at the expense of her own health, may render her "a kind of lunatic" (209), but it also elevates her into a kind of pathetic sainthood.

Phoebe, the sunny, too-innocent country cousin has "neither the great flaws nor the tragic depth of Hepzibah" (Herzog 23). She brings light and beauty to the old house but is too simple to be a truly successful character. She is an Edenic figure, full of health and efficiency and normality, but she fails to engage the reader because of her simplicity. Clark Griffith notes,

Significantly, she knows little concerning the family's past, has forgotten most of what she once was told, remains profoundly incurious about Clifford's identity, Jaffrey's motives, the meaning of Maule's curse. (387)

The past does not tie Phoebe down as it does the other characters whose heritage is so intertwined; but then she is not a "true" Pyncheon and so, Hawthorne indicates, she has managed to escape the ramifications of the past that bind all the others. She brings a breath of fresh air to the old house, "as when an early breeze moves the foliage" (CE II: 70). Her union with Holgrave, who may have "a law of his own" (85), signifies the hope that the past has been put to rest, even as they are journeying to another Pyncheon house to live.

The men in the story, despite their power, often are types in the same way that Chillingworth and Dimmesdale function in The Scarlet Letter. Like Chillingworth, Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon can appear sympathetic while in reality he is just the opposite. He causes Clifford and Hepzibah untold anguish because of his cruelty and greed. Matthew Maule the "wizard" vows retribution upon the Pyncheon clan because they cheated him, and his grandson the carpenter is the instrument of revenge by mesmerizing the proud Pyncheon beauty, Alice. Clifford, in his imbecility, serves as the main reason Hepzibah holds out against the Judge and, in fleeing, allows Phoebe and Holgrave a chance to pledge their love to one another. Of the male characters, only Holgrave--the jack-of-all-trades, photographer, and resident radical--changes during the course of the action. Tempered by the events and by his love for Phoebe, he

becomes more conservative and even a bit of a snob, in his wishing the new house had been built of expensive stone. Unlike the sybaritic Clifford, this artist is cold, disdainful, intellectual, and detached; it takes Phoebe's gentle sunniness to make him more human, just as it takes the darkness of the house and its secrets to temper Phoebe's naive optimism.

In terms of Hawthorne's inner progress, The House of the Seven Gables is a logical progression from The Scarlet Letter. He and his young family had finally moved out on their own, away from "Castle Dismal" and all successors to it. His sisters had found other lodgings, and in his elation over the popular success of The Scarlet Letter, he chose to write about a final escape from a house with too many memories. The characters, too, show progression. Introduced now is a representative of Sophia, whom he often called "Phoebe" in his letters and journals. The Phoebe of The House of the Seven Gables shares many qualities with Sophia, in her innocence, sunny disposition, and efficiency. The dark qualities of cold intellectualism, insensitivity, and isolationism that Hawthorne had perennially sensed and feared in himself, as personified in the worst of both the Pyncheon and the Maule men, are either tempered or defeated. The effete, selfish weakness of Clifford is understood and controlled, so as to avoid the "wearing away [of] all human affections" that Hawthorne

always feared in an artistic temperament (Matthiessen 147). But most of all, the courage and determination of the sixty-year-old Hepzibah (whose name resembles "Elizabeth") are admired by the author. Isolated, old-fashioned, and often misunderstood, Hepzibah is the true focus of the story; Hawthorne's mother has returned in another disguise. She is in reduced circumstances but is fiercely loyal to those whom loves. She lives in the shadow of past family prominence, and she has to overcome it. She is the catalyst for all the action in the story; and even though Hawthorne distances himself--and to some extent his readers--from her by adding comic details to her description, she is still the main focus of the story, easily eclipsing Phoebe and even Holgrave.

Diffusion of sex roles is not pronounced in this work. Only Hepzibah and Clifford exhibit androgynous characteristics; but in Hepzibah, those traits only add to her admirable qualities, and in Clifford they demonstrate the sybaritic childishness inherent in artistic excess. Nina Baym draws parallels between the Maule and Pyncheon families and Hawthorne's own:

[The House of the Seven Gables] tells a tale of the submersion of individual identity and total loss of happiness and freedom in a male-ruled household. The reason why the alternatives of Pyncheon and Maule can provide no resolution to the excesses of the other is that each remains in essence a patriarchy. Eliminating Pyncheon, the hero Holgrave has nothing to substitute but--himself. One can interpret the families of Pyncheon and Maule as Hawthorne and Manning

respectively, the run-down aristocrats and the rising laborers, and recall that neither permitted Elizabeth to be mistress in her own house. From another point of view, the Pyncheon house can be seen as an amalgamation of both Hathorn and Manning into a composite picture of hated family oppression, an overwhelming symbol of patriarchal usurpation. In sum, the repudiation of father and fathers imaged forth as a minor point in The Scarlet Letter as it defended Hester's priority here becomes the central autobiographical statement. ("Speculation" 25)

Phoebe cannot be seen as the "savior" in this situation because she is incapable of completely understanding or defeating the powers with which she has come into contact; Baym continues that "Hawthorne . . . is here beginning to realize, or at least to signify, that Sophia was having far less efficacy in his life than he had originally imagined" (25). Moreover, when Phoebe and Holgrave move to their new house in the country, Hepzibah goes with them; "Castle Dismal" has been left behind, but not its "heart." Hawthorne "leaves us with only a qualified and personal hope" (Brodhead 72) that in exchanging one house for another, too much of the past will not impinge upon the future; but as is evidenced by the position of Hepzibah in the story, Elizabeth Hathorne is still the central figure in her son's inner life, despite her disguise as an androgynous, sometimes ridiculous, but valiant old maid.

The years 1851 and 1852 brought several changes for the Hawthornes. Their third and last child, Rose, was born; and in addition to The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne

published The Snow Image and True Stories from History and Biography. Next the family moved to West Newton, Massachusetts, to house-sit for Sophia's sister and her husband Horace Mann, who were on business in Washington. Hawthorne, now in a centrally heated house and no longer plagued by the colds he had suffered in Lenox, wrote a campaign biography for Frankin Pierce, another story book for children, and his third mature novel, The Blithedale Romance, all of which were published in 1852.

The Blithedale Romance is notable in that it features both the "fair maiden" and the "dark lady" that critics have come to associate with Hawthorne's writing. As Frederick I. Carpenter has remarked,

[S]ince about 1840 have bloneness and darkness come to connote distinct types of character. In the mid-nineteenth century golden hair became an attribute of the pure and innocent maiden; while dark hair suggested the woman of passion and experience. (253)

Hawthorne had featured a dark lady before as Hester in The Scarlet Letter, and a fair maiden as Phoebe in The House of the Seven Gables, but not before had he featured a single novel incorporating them both, as it were, at odds with each other. In The Blithedale Romance and The Marble Faun he included both. Typically, the dark lady is by far the more interesting of the two. As Carpenter notes, she is "impetuous . . . ardent . . . and passionate," while the maiden with blonde hair and blue eyes "is invariably innocent, good, and pure" (254). The dark lady's attraction

stems from her worldly experience, strength, and independence. She is equally at home with both sexes, and generally is outspoken and high spirited as only a man could be and still appear respectable.

In The Blithedale Romance, Zenobia is described as "truly a magnificent woman" with great "queenliness of presence" (CE III: 44). Except for her rich, oriental beauty, however, the very qualities for which she is admired are not typically feminine but are rather masculine. Because of her financial independence and her presence in a supposedly egalitarian utopian community, she is allowed the freedom not only to assert her intellect, but also to stress her beauty by wearing daily a fresh flower in her hair. Priscilla, on the other hand, represents the fair maiden in this novel; as Coverdale says, she is like "the shadowy snow-maiden, who, precisely at the stroke of midnight, shall melt away in a pool of ice-cold water." This image, while pretty, denotes a withdrawal from the life of passion that Zenobia represents. Virginal, poor, and pale, Priscilla is in her own way as mysterious as Zenobia. Yet, as Nina Baym points out,

Priscilla is not a pure woman, for all her resemblance to the disembodied angel of Victorian sensibility. Her two vocations--the deviser of intricately fashioned purses with hidden openings, much sought after by fashionable men about town; and the chief performer, as the "Veiled Lady" . . . are replete with sexual innuendo. Her veils and concealments are more

provocative to the warped male imaginations of Blithedale than Zenobia's frankly sexual allurements. And one of the ways in which the men punish Zenobia--the fatally telling way--is to fail to respond to her allurements and prefer Priscilla. ("Thwarted Nature" 70)

Of the two, Priscilla is the symbol of the male ideal of womanhood: the "gentle parasite," the angel in the house; though ostensibly innocent, she carries the hint of and potential for sexual participation. Zenobia functions as the compellingly attractive but "fallen" counterpart to this ideal--the woman with a past. Zenobia, however, has too many overtly masculine characteristics, and so she is dangerous as well as alluring.

On the other hand, Hollingsworth, who nurses Coverdale back to health, is seen by James R. Mellow as

almost feminine. Despite his uncouth personality, Hollingsworth has "a tenderness in his voice, eyes, mouth, in his gesture, and in every indescribable manifestation, which few men could resist, and no woman." There is, as Coverdale reveals, "something of the woman moulded into the great, stalwart frame of Hollingsworth . . ."
(399)

But Coverdale himself has characteristics that can be seen as more feminine than masculine. The story is told through his eyes, but he has limited narrative vision. He lacks confidence in his work, is unassertive in his avowed love for Priscilla, and is mocked by other characters, particularly Zenobia and Hollingsworth. As Richard Harter Fogle notes,

[He] is always trying to see the truth [but] his vision is continually being impeded by one kind

of veil or other. He looks deep within, or far upward, forever caught between his imaginings of the physical world as symbol and contrarily as deceptive appearance--veil beyond veil within veil. ("Priscilla's Veil" 60)

Westervelt serves in this story as a manipulative type-character, similar to Chillingworth and the mesmeric Matthew Maule--ominous in his use of others and in his masculine detachment. His is the purely masculine ego that Hawthorne feared in its ability to inflict needless pain; and as such he is used primarily to emphasize the complex, androgynous nature of the other major characters.

The Blithedale Romance is the story of two half-sisters, one who at the beginning has everything but dies in despair, and the other who begins with little more than her virtue but wins the coveted man. The doomed woman--the dark lady--however, is far more admirable than the fair maiden; and despite the protestations of the male characters, they think so, too. In this novel,

we find a plot that chronicles not simply the mistreatment and casting off of one woman, but also her supplanting by a second. The second woman is used by the men in the story to obliterate the first. (Baym, "Thwarted Nature" 70)

Hawthorne was again attempting to banish by force the image of his mother in favor of Sophia. His fervent admiration and love for his mother, as represented earlier in Hester Prynne and Hephzibah, here resurfaces in the form of Zenobia. His mother, like Zenobia, had been married and so was sexually aware and attractive. Her life, although

not opulent and openly passionate, was still complex and mysterious to her son. Though a person in her own right, she still had been prey to the masculine expectations of her time, her husband, the Hathornes, the men of her own family, and--in his own imagination--her son. Zenobia likewise is humbled by the masculine egotism of the man she loves:

Hollingsworth had boldly uttered what he, and millions of despots like him, really felt. Without intending it, he had disclosed the well-spring of all these troubled waters. Now, if ever, it behooved Zenobia to be the champion of her sex. But, to [Coverdale's] surprise, and indignation too, she only looked humbled. (CE III: 123)

Still, Zenobia is the central figure of this novel, and she is by far the most admirable, strong, and focused. Priscilla is weak, and the men are either insensitive or ineffectual. Once again the melding of masculine and feminine characteristics produces the most compelling character, the one Hawthorne most identified with and admired.

But Hawthorne finally merges with Hollingsworth at the end of the story. It is Hollingsworth who precipitates Zenobia's death by drowning in suicidal despair, but it is Hawthorne's own desperation that can be read in the act. He had been haunted by the memory of pulling a young woman, dead of lost love, from the river near his house on his and Sophia's first anniversary; the event was appalling and, even then, symbolic of the destructive power of displaced

affection. The agony and horror in Zenobia's rigid body merges this portentous memory with Hawthorne's image of his mother's reaction, even in death, to his betrayal of her love:

"You have wounded the poor thing's breast," said [Foster] to Hollingsworth. "Close by her heart, too!" . . . And so he had, indeed, both before and after death. (CE III: 235)

Hawthorne was trying to wrench himself from his mother once and for all, and to turn his allegiances entirely to Sophia. In particular, he was trying to reassure himself, as well as Sophia, that his greatest affections were for her. But in thus attempting to lessen his attachment to his mother, he was inflicting a greater loss and a deeper wound upon himself. He failed, in the same way that Coverdale (whose name implies both his inability to see the truth and his preference not to) fails as an artist.

At the end of the story, Coverdale declares, "I--I myself--was in love--with--Priscilla!" Although this statement is in the form of disclosure for the reticent Coverdale, it rings false. Not reticence, but desperate insistence, can be read in that sentence. Like his Blithedale characters, Hawthorne is caught in a kind of bondage; as Nancy Joyner says, "[H]e seems to make the point that individual freedom is limited by the individual's willingness to be bound" (231). Hawthorne was trying to force his affections to where they "should" lie; but where they still, in fact, did lie was an entirely

different matter. Seven years later when his last novel, The Marble Faun, was published, Hawthorne was still in emotional bondage.

CHAPTER VI

CAPITULATION

By the time Hawthorne completed The Marble Faun in 1859, seven years had passed since his last publication, and much had occurred. In 1852 he had published A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys, the Life of Frankin Pierce for his old school friend who was campaigning for the Presidency, and The Blithedale Romance. From 1852 to 1853, he and his family lived at The Wayside in Concord, and in July of 1853 tragedy struck when his sister Louisa was killed in an explosion and fire on a Hudson River steamer. Pierce, successful in his bid for the Presidency, appointed Hawthorne to the consulship at Liverpool during that same year, and the Hawthornes moved to England where they stayed until 1857. From 1857 to 1859, they traveled on the continent and lived in Rome and Florence, where tragedy struck again. Una, the eldest daughter, contracted Roman fever and was desperately ill for nearly six months. Broken in health, she was to continue to suffer malarial relapses for the rest of her life. In 1859 the family was back in England, where Hawthorne completed The Marble Faun, which was published in 1860. He had been unable to write during his consulship, but he was inspired to set the action of The Marble Faun in Rome, where he had sensed the depth of the eternal city's historic and artistic heritage. By that

time, however, he was looking older than his years and had begun the decline that would lead to his death four years later. He was finding it increasingly difficult to write.

The Marble Faun has been called the least successful of Hawthorne's major works. Hyatt H. Waggoner states that it

ought to have been Hawthorne's finest novel. His career had pointed to it from the beginning. In it the heart imagery that is implicit in "The Hollow of the Three Hills" has become the underground world of Rome, the catacombs, the tomb or dungeon of the heart and of dreams. In it Robin's initiation has become consciously archetypal, to be seen in the dimensions of its largest significance. In it the implications of "Earth's Holocaust" and "The Celestial Railroad" have been combined within the framework of man's basic myth. The most persistent preoccupations and the recurrent images of a lifetime of writing have been brought together in what ought to have been a definitive recapitulation. Instead, the novel is clearly inferior to The Scarlet Letter and even . . . to The House of the Seven Gables. Richer in many respects than Blithedale, it is less consistently interesting: there are frequent stretches of it one wants to skip. ("The Marble Faun")

Roy R. Male agrees, commenting that "The Marble Faun must finally be reckoned the least successful of Hawthorne's finished works" ("Transfiguration" 104). Male also notes that Hawthorne himself was of the same opinion: "'The thing is a failure,' he said, in a mood of despair; yet he also called The Marble Faun his 'best work'" (104).

Hawthorne was not always the best judge of his own work, but in this case he was right. There are great artistic flaws in the novel, so that in terms of literary

quality The Marble Faun is significantly weaker than the preceding novels and many of the short stories; plot and scenery too often are separate from each other, and descriptions of art or setting frequently detract from the tale itself. According to James R. Mellow,

The Marble Faun is the same high allegory on the "fortunate fall," the loss of innocence, the bitter wisdom of sin, that Hawthorne had written of before in many of his tales and romances. . . . Yet The Marble Faun represents the cleanest and most philosophical exposition of Hawthorne's obsessive theme. (521)

It is for this reason that Hawthorne considered this final novel his best work; the theme of the fortunate fall had been pervasive in his writing precisely because it expressed the most compelling drama in his own life: his relationship with his mother.

In terms of artistry, The Marble Faun repeats familiar patterns. The characters resemble those in two previous novels, The House of the Seven Gables and The Blithedale Romance. Mellow comments:

The dramatis personae of the story were rather similar to the casts of characters in [the previous novels]--two men, two women, and a sinister interloper. Kenyon and Hilda, his American artists, are simply more talkative, more passive versions of Holgrave and Phoebe, Coverdale and Priscilla. Miriam, like Hester and Zenobia, is a woman with a shadowy past; though innocent, she has been involved in a "mysterious and terrible event." (521)

Once again, the strong woman is by far the most interesting and complex of the characters in the story. Miriam is similar to Hester and Zenobia in that she is mysterious,

sensual, and physically beautiful. She has luxuriant dark hair and a rich, oriental attractiveness that hints at the possibility of mixed blood. Hawthorne himself indicates as much, stating that she might be partly Jewish or even African. This mixed heritage functions in several ways: it lends to Miriam an air of mystery, it makes her seem both seductive and forbidden, and it gives her a universality--a linkage with all womanhood, from Eve to the Virgin Mary to successive generations of women. As Frederick I. Carpenter has noted, she is also "the very symbol of passionate suffering" ("Puritans Preferred Blondes" 265). This identity emphasizes her linkage with the matriarchy Hawthorne celebrates in all his novels; though not a mother herself, Miriam is symbolically associated with the first mother, Eve, and also the Stabat Mater, the suffering mother of Christ. In fact, in more than one instance she functions as a maternal figure, particularly when she comforts the distraught Hilda after Hilda has emphatically shunned her. Hilda not only is innocent and immature, but she also appears childish in her retreat from full participation in life, including her own sexual maturity and its implications; she uses her obsessive dependence upon Christian piety to flee from real life and the fact that she too is mortal, fallen, and "stained." Miriam, on the other hand, embraces full feminine maturity and glories in it. In fact, Miriam's behavior is more Christ-like than

the pious Hilda's, in that Miriam selflessly reaches out to others rather than merely looking out for her own spiritual well-being. According to Nina Baym, she is "the most beautiful and appealing woman in the world (and quite probably the best)" ("Thwarted Nature" 72).

At the same time, Miriam has what Kristin Herzog calls "aboriginal power" (54), and this kind of power most often receives cultural approbation only when it appears in men. Miriam is independent, lives on her own, and has iconoclastic views about art, life, and religion. As Hawthorne describes her, she has "freedom of thought," "force of will" (CE IV: 430), and "remarkable power" (CE IV: 43). As Herzog notes, she also is indirectly compared to a "tigress," like Kenyon's statue of Cleopatra (43). She has relinquished her name, her place in society, and her wealth in order to live a life of her own. In addition, as Roy R. Male points out, Miriam is a rebel ("Transfiguration" 111). She has exempted herself from her family by revolting against her father and refusing a contracted marriage to a mad kinsman. All these qualities and actions, in a man, would seem understandable and even admirable, but in a woman they are suspect and even dangerous. The very mystery that surrounds Miriam arises out of her true name, which is connected with a scandal in which she had no part, and the fact that she is assuming male prerogatives. Frederick Crews states that "The mystery over her family

background and personal troubles is well calculated to reinforce Miriam's aura of sexuality" (221). Hawthorne obviously wanted to present Miriam, like Hester and Zenobia and to a lesser extent Hepzibah, as possessing the most admirable qualities of both sexes. Like them, however, she becomes a figure apart and is defeated. As Roy R. Male says, "After rebelling against her destined role as woman, Miriam discovers her bond with time and the specter of guilt" (110):

Legally innocent but morally guilty [of the death of the sinister monk], affianced to satanic evil [in the form of the same monk, who probably was the cousin she was engaged to], Miriam obviously bears more than casual resemblance to Eve after the first depravity. Her original crime, like Eve's, was rebellion against the father ("Miriam" originally meant "rebellion"). Like Hester and Zenobia, however, she is linked not only to guilt but also to the vessel of purification; she is potentially a second Eve (again her name is significant: "Mary," of course, derives from Greek "Mariam," Hebrew "Miryam"). (Male, "Transfiguration" 111-12)

Despite her vitality, her admirable qualities, and her strength, Miriam is thwarted. Hawthorne obviously admired this character--she is by far the most attractive in the novel--but he does not destine her for happiness. After Donatello's murder of the monk, which Miriam silently encourages, Miriam and Donatello consummate their passion for each other and then withdraw to consider the ramifications of all that has passed. Donatello is saddened and matured by this process, but Miriam suffers most. Nina Baym says,

A woman who resists [the] distorting process [of patriarchal approbation] is, as we see in Miriam's example, warped. . . . Inevitably she is placed under one form or another of house-arrest. Miriam, who has in some unspecified way resisted the patriarchy (in all probability she has rejected an arranged marriage with an elderly, mentally unstable man), suffers a persecution which in its sadism and relentlessness outdoes anything meted out to any Hawthorne heroine. Her life in Rome is completely overseen by the authorities, her every move watched and reported. The inhuman and unflagging surveillance drives her to the verge of madness. . . . [I]n no other work does [Hawthorne] offer so many images of the sadism of the patriarchy as it systematically destroys the free spirit and tramples on simple human self-respect. Miriam herself, guilty of no crime, is the apotheosis of feminine beauty and virtue. Lacking Hester's stateliness and reserve, she has instead a delightful vivacity and spontaneity, is flexible and various in mood, and has an impulsive generosity of nature that is her most winning trait. . . . Yet this glorious woman is haunted by the tedious specter of guilt from which no "free" woman, in a culture fixated on virginity, is ever free. ("Hawthorne's Women" 269-70)

Once again, the "woman with a past" is considered too dangerous. But Hawthorne does not seem so much concerned with her past as with her power, her appeal, and her potential influence on the future. It is this last fear that most troubles him and that accounts for his final treatment of Miriam and all strong women like her. She, the matriarchal figure, must be educated by sorrow and loss, and then must be supplanted by a young, innocent, and naive woman who embodies the Victorian code for feminine virtue.

Hilda, the pious, young virgin who supplants Miriam in this story, is of Puritan stock and, predictably, is a

follower rather than a leader. Though she too is an artist, she does not have Miriam's creative originality or artistic vision; she is a very good copyist. In life as well as art, Hilda follows the dictates of the patriarchy, rather than thinking for herself. Though she tends a lamp dedicated to the Virgin Mary, she balks when Miriam remarks upon the Roman Catholic implications of her shrine-tending. Hilda counters with the argument that women of all Christian persuasions may surely pay homage to the mother of God. But it is the virginal quality of Mary to which Hilda pays primary devotion. She lives alone in a tower with her shrine and her resolute virtue, until she becomes affected by the action in the story and lets the lamp of virginity go out in favor of marriage to Kenyon. Her life is controlled by her complete internalization of nineteenth-century values for her sex. Nina Baym remarks that

Hilda's devotion to chastity is not supported by philosophical and moral argument. Under stress, however, she reveals that her true motive is less a conviction of the beauty of chastity than it is to be good, to be obedient. "I am a poor, lonely girl, whom God has set here in an evil world and given her only a white robe, and bid her wear it back to Him, as white as when she put it on" (IV, 208). The ruling passion of her life is to be approved and therefore loved by father. Her rhetoric, loaded with references to spots, stains, and discolorations, indicates that she has absorbed the male point of view to the extent of sharing its abhorrence of female sexuality. A portrait made of her represents "Hilda as gazing, with sad and earnest horror, at a blood-spot which she seemed just then to have discovered on her white robe." The artist entitles this picture "Innocence, dying of a blood-stain" (IV, 330). It seems clear, despite the fanciful and irrelevant

explanations--Hawthorne's characteristic red herrings--that this is the blood of female sexuality. Hilda's sadness and horror come from the fact of her sex. . . . Recognizing her shared nature with Miriam, Hilda repudiates her friend immediately after witnessing the crime. ("Hawthorne's Women" 268-69)

Hilda associates Miriam with the fallen nature of woman and is terrified of becoming stained by association with Miriam. What Miriam did was in fact wrong, but it was impetuous and understandable; in no way did it implicate or reflect upon Hilda's virtue. Quick to condemn, however, Hilda shrinks from her friend, only to run back to her for comfort later. Hilda's steely innocence serves a function, though; it comforts Hawthorne. Hyatt H. Waggoner says,

In [Hawthorne's] own person as narrator, he pays Hilda lavish, and tiresomely repetitious, tribute, and as Kenyon he marries her and asks her to guide him home. . . . It is true that Hilda thought right and wrong completely distinct, never in any degree mingled or ambiguous--the error of judgment that Hawthorne's innocent young men have to grow out of, the idea they have to unlearn by painful experience. But Hawthorne thought such an error--if indeed error it was, as he would have said--charming and admirable in innocent young girls. . . . His century placed women on a pedestal just because, in their role of guardian of values that were being threatened, they knew nothing of the world. If their innocence rendered them helpless to deal with reality, it was nevertheless to be both protected and admired, for reality was very nasty. If they did not truly partake of the human condition, it was a good thing that they didn't. ("The Marble Faun" 173-74)

Hilda's direct opposite in this story is the faun-like Donatello, who is both scion of an ancient Roman family and the embodiment of man's primitive nature, connected as

closely to nature itself as to humanity. Donatello is a delightful free spirit, childlike and adoring of Miriam, whom he shadows and practically worships. Though extremely attractive and seductive, he, like the idealistic Coverdale and the sybaritic Clifford, has something of the feminine in him that is at odds with the modern code for masculine behavior. But Donatello loves Miriam and, in fact, associates himself with her as closely as does the sinister Capuchin monk. When Donatello shoves the monk over the edge of the precipice, he becomes forever linked with Miriam not only in the monk's fall but also in a reenactment of the fall of Adam and, more specifically, in their own fall from grace. Though the act was unplanned and impulsive, it forces Donatello to look upon the world as it really is, not as some idyllic Acadia. He must face life as a man and not as a playful, attractive child. Rather than freeing them to be together, as their rapturous joining immediately after the murder would suggest, the murder condemns them to live their lives apart. Only Kenyon and Hilda, the over-socialized couple who represent traditional values, are destined to be together.

Kenyon himself is the least complicated of the main figures in this narrative. He is, according to James R. Mellow, "the 'type' of artist who, in his art and opinions, most nearly expresses the author's views" (523). He also is the "most believable but least emotionally involved of the

characters [and] represents a more charitable response [than Hilda's] to Hawthorne's paradoxical moral drama" (524). His artistic medium, marble, is capable of rendering only static subjects that Kenyon says are in a "moral standstill." Symbolically, marble is also representative of his beloved Hilda, who is herself at a moral standstill; innocent herself, she has little sympathy or understanding for those less pure than she. It is apparent that Hawthorne intended Kenyon to find Hilda transformed somewhat after her experience in the confessional; the "slightly corroded" statue of Venus represents a less rigid, more humanized Hilda. By the same token, Kenyon himself is presumed changed when Hilda disappears and he is left to wander the streets of Rome. He becomes caught up in the carnival and is covered with lime dust by the seven-foot figure of Eve, signifying his vulnerability to the earthly, the sensual, and the mortal.

But Kenyon does not significantly change. He has warned Miriam and Donatello that their love is not for earthly happiness, but rather for mutual support. He cannot condone a marriage between them. It is he who repeats Miriam's question about the nature of sin:

"Here comes my perplexity," continued Kenyon. "Sin has educated Donatello, and elevated him. Is Sin, then--which we deem such a terrible blackness in the Universe--is it, like Sorrow, merely an element of human education, through which we struggle to a higher and purer state than we could otherwise have attained? Did Adam

fall, that we might rise to a far loftier
Paradise than his?" (CE IV: 434)

The question indicates a searching after truth in Kenyon's mind--an openness to the possibility of sin as an instrument toward higher understanding. But Hilda, who has not been significantly transformed by the tragedy of Miriam and Donatello, immediately rejects this possibility as morally shocking, and Kenyon quickly recants:

"Forgive me, Hilda!" exclaimed the sculptor, startled by her agitation; "I never did believe it! But the mind wanders wild and wide; and, so lonely as I live and work, I have neither pole-star above, nor light of cottage-windows here below, to bring me home. Were you my guide, my counsellor, my inmost friend, with that white wisdom which clothes you as with a celestial garment, all would go well. Oh, Hilda, guide me home!" (CE IV: 460-61)

Here Kenyon seems to throw over all that he has learned from Miriam and Donatello, and to retreat into a world of fireside bliss. As Roy R. Male says,

Kenyon, who apparently but not convincingly has suffered through a tragic experience, is now content to distill life in his art and in his Hilda, who has her refined sculptor and her religion, which, like her art, is borrowed. ("Transfiguration" 115)

He is tied to this woman who, Hawthorne says, has been "instructed by sorrow," but as James R. Mellow notes, "Her rigorous morality has scarcely been mellowed by the experience" (524). The fact that Kenyon still clings to her as a kind of "household Saint" says much about him. As Hyatt H. Waggoner says,

[T]o the modern reader Hilda is either ridiculous or, if we can take her seriously, self-righteous and uncharitable. She is not only a far less impressive character, as a literary character, than Miriam, she is far less attractive and even "good," as a person. Throughout most of the course of the novel her chief concern is to protect the spotlessness of the innocence assumed by her and asserted by Hawthorne. She finds everyone else's faith and everyone else's conduct corrupt. ("The Marble Faun" 173)

Kenyon in the end must embrace this view as well if he is to have his Hilda. But his choice has less theological than emotional significance. Nina Baym sees it not as a step forward toward mature happiness, but rather as a retreat to rigid, immature idealism:

Kenyon's election of Hilda, the dove transmuted into a steely virgin, is equivalent to retreat from the complexities of an adult world. Hilda's cutting simplifications and platitudes masquerade as a world view which the sculptor, finding himself unable to deal with the implications of adult relations between the sexes, gladly espouses. The babyland to which Kenyon and Hilda are returning at the end of the romance is nothing like the ageless forest presided over by . . . Venus, [who] has been rejected by Kenyon on the campagna in favor of Hilda. ("Speculation" 26)

As a novel, The Marble Faun is less successful than any of the others that preceded it. There are large gaps between what Hawthorne seems to intend and what he actually achieves. As Waggoner says, "Hawthorne failed with Rome, and he failed with Hilda, and both were essential to the achievement of his intention" (173). The story is subverted by mysteries that are never completely explained, such as the crime in which Miriam is implicated but of which she is

innocent. The identity of the sinister monk is never fully revealed, although he obviously has been linked in the past to Miriam; therefore, the meaning of his death is never quite clear, other than the fact that it links Miriam and Donatello and serves as the agent of their loss of innocence. Hilda and Kenyon are the most traditional of the characters, but they are not satisfying to readers. Kenyon capitulates to Hilda's stern beliefs and returns with her to America, to take up a rather stuffy life of protestant respectability. Of the two most interesting characters, Miriam goes into seclusion, and Donatello goes to jail. But for Hawthorne himself, Hilda and Kenyon do not fail; they triumph.

Once again, Hawthorne seems to reward the conventional and disappoint the more flawed but more alive. This is not simply a case of giving all the good lines to the devil; it continues a theme that Hawthorne repeated from his earliest writing to the very last, as the characters represent types that are recognizable throughout the body of his work. Miriam is the magnificent but flawed matriarchal figure who embodies as many male as female personality traits; this melding of characteristics gives her much of her strength and appeal. She is both independent and maternal, but she has a shadowy past and is associated time and again with Beatrice Cenci, the supposed victim of paternal incest. Miriam rebels against male directives, and she is involved

in the killing of a father figure; in fact, she directly precipitates it. But it is her assumption of male prerogatives that both frees and condemns her. She cannot continue to live her independent life without her past being questioned and her motives being suspect. The fact that she, a woman, questions the nature of sin instead of accepting it in all its rigor like a "good" woman, makes her all the more dangerous. She must be humbled, and most importantly, she must be denied a life with Donatello because, as Kenyon says, "'There would be no holy sanction on [their] wedded life.'--'None,' said Donatello, shuddering. 'We know it well.'--'None,' repeated Miriam, also shuddering.'"

Miriam represents Elizabeth Hathorne in yet another guise. These same qualities have appeared in Hester, Zenobia, and to some extent Hepzibah. Always there is the magnificent, illusive, maternal figure which is celebrated and then defeated, desired and yet disappointed. She embodies the best qualities of both sexes but is never rewarded with fulfillment.

Donatello does not simply represent primitive, Acadian man; emotionally, he is a child. Specifically, he represents Hawthorne's childlike anima in relation with his mother as she informs, directs, and literally gives life to his work. His mother has been the primary controlling force in his writing, and the evolution of his internal

relationship with her can be traced in his treatment of the maternal figure in his work, particularly in the novels. Whereas Miriam has repudiated "father," Donatello symbolically kills him with Miriam's approbation. Donatello worships Miriam until he finally possesses her (in Hawthorne's case, he so fully internalizes his mother that she becomes the constant, controlling image in his work), and then he abandons her in revulsion. Later, when Kenyon warns that a marriage between Miriam and Donatello could not be, both shudder in recognition; it would consume and destroy them both. Hawthorne's childlike Donatello, the supplanter of the father and adorer of the matriarchal figure, must be thwarted and controlled. Elizabeth, as Miriam, is not blamed but is forced into submission and seclusion, supposedly so she can do no more damage.

Kenyon, Hawthorne's "mature" nature, takes a wife closely resembling Sophia and representing art, piety, and purity. Hilda's conditions are severe, but they are the only conditions under which she can keep Kenyon, who also must go into submission. He cannot be allowed oneness of mind with Miriam. As Nina Baym observes,

The dove is left in command of the field. But the survivors of the battle are merely the walking wounded, and her lifelong task is to nurse and guard them--a parody of the matriarchy. . . .
("Speculation" 26)

In terms of sex roles, the apparent is deceiving. Miriam's feminine beauty belies a determination to live life on her

own terms, submissive to no one; it is when she assumes her feminine role by falling in love that she is defeated. Donatello, though sensual and independent, is so innocent and appealing as to appear almost feminine in his childishness. Kenyon, though representing masculine maturity, submits to Hilda's steely piety; and so their roles are reversed as well. Hawthorne was once again symbolically attempting to set aside his obsession with his mother, and in this story he even goes so far as to involve the theme of incest. As the mature artist, he, as Kenyon, embraces the exclusive love of a fair maiden, but the victory has a hollow ring; the readers are disappointed in it, and they suspect Hawthorne is, too. The true vitality and meaning in his life had come from his relationship with his mother, and in putting away that relationship, he assumed a more "mature" but certainly less credible and satisfying union in its place. In Hawthorne's Secret, Philip Young states,

In Kenyon, the sculptor of The Marble Faun, there is little life of any kind. He directly represents Hawthorne, speaking right out of the Italian notebooks, paraphrasing sentiments or reproducing the sightseeing: it is as if in assuming his own character the author never thought to create one for the artist. Hilda, moralistic New England copyist, is another version of Sophia, a fair lady who has fairly lost her appeal. Mrs. Hawthorne objected to the identification, but Hilda and Kenyon marry, and as unflattering refractions of their originals they more or less deserve each other. It seems much as though the author, in the gloom that was beginning to gather about him, was tiring of

himself as romancer, and of his wife as well.
(80-81)

Hyatt H. Waggoner agrees:

The effect on the reader of all this inert material is to suggest that Hawthorne was not sufficiently interested in his story--an effect reinforced by his embarrassed and coy protestations at the end, in the added conclusion, when he refused to make more than a slight gesture toward clearing up the mysteries of his plot. What he is saying in his "Conclusion" is that he doesn't care whether Donatello had furry ears or not or who detained Hilda, and we the readers shouldn't either. But he had cared about Hester, and Hepzibah, and Zenobia, cared about them as people and not merely as allegoric or mythic symbols. Despite the elaborate density of its background, it might well be argued that The Marble Faun is more allegorical than any of the three preceding romances. ("The Marble Faun" 174-75)

During his last decade, 1853 to 1863, Hawthorne produced an amazing volume of written work in the form of letters, notebooks, journals, and drafts for new novels, but as James D. Wallace points out, only The Marble Faun and Our Old Home were actually completed ("Hawthorne and the Scribbling Women Reconsidered" 208). In an 1855 letter to editor James Ticknor, Hawthorne angrily denounced the American reading public and the authors who catered to its appetite for trash:

America is now wholly given over to a d----d mob of scribbling women, and I should have no chance of success while the public taste is occupied with their trash--and I should be ashamed of myself if I did succeed. (CE XVII: 304)

Not long after this, however, Hawthorne wrote again to Ticknor concerning a book by Fanny Fern, one of the women authors he had recently condemned:

I have since been reading "Ruth Hall"; and I must say I enjoyed it a good deal. The woman writes as if the devil was in her; and that is the only condition under which a woman ever writes anything worth reading. Generally women write like emasculated men, and are only to be distinguished from male authors by greater feebleness and folly; but when they throw off the restraints of decency, and come before the public stark naked, as it were--then their books are sure to possess character and value. (CE XVII: 307-08)

According to Wallace, Hawthorne's ambivalence is due to the fact that "the indecorous exposures of the personal, the familial, and the bodily that he condemned in [the women writers] were preoccupations of his own art, [representing] the bodily, the mutable, the mortal that he sought both to purge from and to embrace in his own work" (203). This ambivalence is seen in all the novels after The Scarlet Letter, as if in each one he is attempting to repudiate or control the figure Hester represents.

In terms of his relationship with his mother, the progression of this denial may be seen to intensify from The Scarlet Letter to The House of the Seven Gables and then on to The Blithedale Romance and finally The Marble Faun. In The Scarlet Letter, Hawthorne celebrates his recently dead mother as muse, attributing to Hester numerous characteristics of both his mother and himself, and creating the splendid androgynous creature that was to

reappear in all his subsequent works. In The House of the Seven Gables, he tries to disarm this powerful image by presenting it in the guise of the ostensibly silly Hepzibah; but Hepzibah, for all her fussy ways, is the strongest and most admirable character in the story, even eclipsing the lovers and the resolution of an ancient feud. In The Blithedale Romance, Hawthorne again presents a magnificent androgynous woman in Zenobia, but he emphatically defeats her by having her drown in a sordid suicide over disillusionment and lost love. But the image of Elizabeth Hawthorne refused to die.

In his last work, Hawthorne creates the truest allegory of his life's most compelling drama. By this time, he is old and sick and has abandoned trying to expunge his mother from his work; he cannot write without her. So even though The Marble Faun fails as a novel, it is in fact his "best work" in that it tries poignantly to settle his internal affairs by educating the characters in the story. Donatello and Miriam, as Hawthorne and his mother, cannot live their lives together but can provide "mutual elevation" and "encouragement" for one another; Kenyon and Hilda, as the married Hawthorne and his Sophia, can become somewhat tempered by experience and then live together forever in homely bliss.

But did Hawthorne really believe this? The indications are strong that he did not. Once again, Miriam is the most

believable and compelling character; Donatello is dismissible, and Hilda and Kenyon are caricatures of their types. As Nina Baym says, "The sculptor (artist) denies his subject, and it deserts him" ("Thwarted Nature" 72). Hawthorne's real life was in relationship with his mother, and once he tried to replace her with Sophia and characters like Phoebe, Priscilla, and Hilda, his art became false and progressively failed. Hawthorne's sadness at the end of his life, the reason he could no longer write as if the devil were in him, comes directly from his denial of his true nature. He had come close to making peace with that nature in "The Artist of the Beautiful," but soon after he wrote the story, his mother died. In anguish and terror he memorialized her in The Scarlet Letter, and then he was on his own. Without her, he could not write as he had; and as the years progressed, the more his muse failed and the greater became his anger and desperation, as can be seen particularly in his treatment of Zenobia. No disdain for Margaret Fuller or any of the "scribbling women" could ever have precipitated the spleen he vented upon this character or on Miriam later.

Hawthorne only triumphed as an author with the truly androgynous characters representing his relationship with his mother. Though the "good girls and boys" in his novels may succeed on the surface, the more compelling characters tell quite a different tale. Nina Baym comments:

The saddest thing about the sadness of The Marble Faun, when the work is put in the context of Hawthorne's own writings, is that the circle had once been broken. Hawthorne had triumphantly transcended the terms of his art in The Scarlet Letter. One cannot say that in that story there are no traces of the fantasies that had seemed at once to empower and limit Hawthorne in his other writings. On the contrary, the traces of these fantasies testify all the more to the achievement of the romance in breaking their grip. We can only guess how this achievement might have originated in Hawthorne's life. We do have an account of it in "The Custom House" where, we observe, the Hawthorne narrator accepts the woman's story as his subject and, putting her scarlet letter on his own breast, loses his identity in hers. In return for this giving of himself, "Hester" gave Hawthorne the fullest command of his artistic powers that he had yet known. And, as events proved, the fullest command he was ever to know. ("Thwarted Nature" 72-73)

To the end, Hawthorne was his mother's child. The interchanging of sex roles and gender-specific attributes in the characters of any given work is an indicator of where the heart of his meaning lies. When he finally died on May 18, 1864, at the age of fifty-nine, he had long despaired of ever again writing with the force or conviction of earlier years. Though he had never been a particularly pious man and in earlier works had often attacked the stringent faith of his forefathers, he indicates through the character Kenyon that there is comfort to be found in the "celestial garment" of religious faith. Hawthorne had been sick and knew he was dying, and like Hester Prynne, he had "gone through a mighty trouble." Yet it is not likely that he went to his death in despair, but rather, echoing Hester, in the

firm belief, that, at some brighter period, when the world should have grown ripe for it, in Heaven's own time, a new truth would be revealed, in order to establish the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness. (CE IV: 215)

Possibly this hope would also be realized for mothers and their sons.

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