Use Authorization

In presenting this dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree at Idaho State University, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for inspection. I further state that permission to download and/or print my dissertation for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Dean of the Graduate School, Dean of my academic division, or by the University Librarian. It is understood that any copying or publication of this dissertation for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signature _____

Date _____

The Caverns of the Heart:

The Existential Themes of Nathaniel Hawthorne

By Derik O Robertson

A dissertation

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of English and Philosophy

Idaho State University

Spring 2014

To the Graduate Faculty:

The members of the committee appointed to examine the dissertation of Derik Robertson find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

_____
Name, Terry Engebretsen
Major Advisor

_____
Name, Hal Hellwig
Committee Member

_____
Name, Carl Levenson
Committee Member

_____
Name, Patricia Terrell
Graduate Faculty Representative

For Morgan

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Terry Engebretsen for agreeing to work on this project with me. From his initial skepticism to his insightful comments and questions, his feedback has been vital to the shaping of this argument. By questioning some of my assumptions, he ensured that the final product blends more of the philosophical with the historical than it might have done. I owe much of this dissertation's final strengths to his questions and challenges.

I also thank Dr. Hal Hellwig and Dr. Carl Levenson whose questions and thoughts also gave guidance to this project. Hal's love of *The Blithedale Romance* and Carl's love of all things existential reminds me that the greatest purpose of both philosophy and literature is to bring joy.

To Suzette, Paula, and Brian: thank you for your support from my time as an undergraduate all the way to the present. I am blessed to have had each of you as teachers and colleagues. The many conversations in your offices have done more good than you probably realize. Thank you.

A special thanks to Eric, Josh, Brian, and Bruce. Even though you had no idea what I was talking about most of the time, you listened. You watched over me and my family. You showed through your kindness and friendship that the interpersonal relationships we each have are what really matters.

I know it is not nearly as much as they deserve, but I would like to thank my parents, grandparents, siblings, and in-laws who all kept tabs on me and my project. Each

shared my frustrations, and I hope each will share my satisfaction. And above all, I thank my wife and my children who have gone without a husband and daddy through much of this process. To my children: thank you for your patience and your many invitations to play even if I didn’t accept them. And to Morgan: many eternal, unspeakable thanks.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract

This project examines Nathaniel Hawthorne's four major romances to show how his ideas prefigure the systematic philosophies of European Existentialism. Drawing upon the insights of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Buber, Sartre, de Beauvoir, and Tillich, this study suggests that Hawthorne's ethics and faith should not be viewed in a traditional Christian manner; rather, Hawthorne's use of ambiguity and his insistence of maintaining "neutral territory" should be viewed as an implicit argument for an intersubjective authenticity.

The introduction defines Existentialism before tracing the historical tendencies of Hawthorne studies. Critiquing the assumption of Hawthorne as a historical writer, the introduction then traces historical and thematic connections between Hawthorne and Existentialism.

Chapter one argues that Heidegger's phenomenological understanding of art clarifies Hawthorne's aesthetics and style. As Hawthorne manipulates his syntax, allegories, and symbols, he does so to set up veils that act in ways similar to Heidegger's concept of world: they try to bring being into unconcealment.

Chapter two maps Hawthorne's skepticism in order to show how he advocates for an openness to the world. By showing how Hawthorne's ideas mirror those of Nietzsche, this chapter argues that Hawthorne understood the world to be multifaceted, and that it could only be approached within an individual perspective.

Chapter three shows that Hawthorne's ambiguous treatment of the individual's relationship to society is really an implicit argument for intersubjective authenticity. Using insights from Heidegger, Sartre, and Buber, this chapter argues that Hawthorne

sees intuitive sympathy as the main way an individual can find an authentic self through interaction with the Other.

Chapter four examines Hawthorne's ideas of Providence and faith to show Hawthorne engaging in an existential theology that focuses on suffering and sin to offer individuals the chance to change their being. The argument further shows to what extent Hawthorne agrees with the theological concepts of the Fortunate Fall and John Hick's Soul-Making Theodicy.

Chapter five offers an existential theory of education. The essay concludes by applying the theory to some practices and policies that might be found in literature classroom teaching *The Scarlet Letter.*

Introduction: Connecting Nathaniel Hawthorne and Continental Existentialism

Existentialism and What It Is

In 1946 Jean-Paul Sartre took it upon himself to publicly defend existentialism in his classic essay "The Humanism of Existentialism." He begins with a brief sketch comparing the theistic and atheistic branches of the movement. After his brief survey, he comes to the bedrock claim of all existentialists: "Thus, existentialism's first move is to make every man aware of what he is and to make the full responsibility of his existence rest on him" (Sartre, "Humanism" 36). For the existentialist, individuals can go through their lives without ever knowing who they are or taking responsibility for their choices, actions, or desires. The lives of these individuals, no matter how sincere or good they might think themselves to be, are less than what they could be; they are inauthentic. However, the responsibility that is required to become an authentic individual, fully aware of who and what one is, is almost overwhelming.

The existentialists describe this overwhelming feeling as anxiety and despair. Kierkegaard was the first to talk about the universal nature of despair. As he observed Europe developing toward the mid-nineteenth century, he saw a culture that was increasingly industrialized and free from traditional social structures. The result of these changes was an increased awareness for the individual that each had the power and responsibility to shape her own life. With the awareness of an increasingly open future, the individual begins to feel the challenge of choosing the best options in achieving her best future. When the individual also realizes that every choice is irrevocable and bound to change the future landscape of choices, then the responsibility for making the best decision becomes heightened. The heightened responsibility that the individual feels

when she realizes that her future rests entirely on her choices is what Kierkegaard calls despair. He sees despair as the natural state of the self. However, Kierkegaard observes that individuals try to cover up their despair by hiding the fact of their freedom. They hide their freedom amid commonalities and social norms. In a way they try to turn their self-creation over to society. When he says the fact that the self cannot be eradicated "precisely is the reason why he despairs…because he cannot consume himself, cannot get rid of himself, cannot become nothing. This is the potentiated formula for despair, the rising of the fever in the sickness of the self" (*Sickness* 151). Even if the self could be rid of despair, it would mean "one must annihilate the possibility of every instant" (*Sickness* 148). Heidegger elaborates upon Kierkegaard's concept of dread in his concept of anxiety. He claims that what sets human Dasein (the "being there" of Being) apart from others is the aspect of care (*Time* 227). However, care is based on the more basic concept of anxiety for "anxiety makes manifest in Dasein its *Being towards* its own inmost potentiality-for-Being – that is, its *Being-free for* the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself. Anxiety brings Dasein face to face with its *Being-free-for* …the authenticity of its Being" (*Time* 232 italics in original). For both Heidegger and Kierkegaard, the feelings of anxiety and despair are ways for human beings to finally realize their potential and freedom. Many times, the natural inclination of the individual experiencing this dread brought on by existence's potentialities is to run away into a delusion created either by the self or the Other. This delusion is what most people accept as the everyday lived experience along with all the social values and belief systems that go with it. It is the delusion of the nine to five job. It is the idea that the meaningless actions in which we unthinkingly engage everyday have an inherent meaning. However,

every once in a while, life breaks through the delusions that we set up to show us the meaningless nature of our actions. As Albert Camus writes in *The Myth of Sisyphus*

> It happens that the stage set collapses. Rising, street car, four hours in the office or the factory, meal, streetcar, four hours of work, meal, sleep, and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday according to the same rhythm– this path is easily followed most of the time. But one day the 'why' arises and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement. 'Begins' – this is important. Weariness comes at the end of the acts of a mechanical life, but at the same time it inaugurates the impulse of consciousness. It awakens consciousness and provokes what follows. What follows is the gradual return into the chain or it is the definitive awakening. (12-13)

When one steps back from the "daily grind" of life, Camus suggests that she will see that the only meaning in the routine is the perilous meaning given by habit. The individual makes no conscious decision to say this mode of life is meaningful. She is simply engaging in the cycle of rest, work, and recreation because it is simply what one does. The individual is caught in a cycle of externally imposed, manufactured meaning. The value of existential questioning, if there is a value, is that it pulls back the curtain of manufactured meaning. There is an inherent skepticism in the existential mode of inquiry that demands to know where the foundation of meaning should be placed. The existential answer to this skepticism is that meaning should rest with the individual. Individualism, to a greater or lesser extent, is a common thread that runs throughout the widely diverse thoughts and writings of the existential thinkers. However, it is not a cheap individualism

that simply exists to buck conformity. Rather, the existentialists' individualism is one that requires a strong personal responsibility. For this reason, self-awareness is absolutely essential to enter existential thought.

The idea of self-awareness coupled with responsibility is not new. The existentialists can point to ancient Greek philosophy and Socrates with such axioms as "the life which is unexamined is not worth living" as an existential mantra (Plato 37-8). Furthermore, the intense religious convictions of Christians like Augustine and Blaise Pascal intrigued many of the existential thinkers[1] as these Christian philosophers focused on an intensely individualized religious experience to justify their faith and choices.

However, even though the responsibility that Socrates saw the individual having and the personal faith that Augustine and Pascal taught do align with some of the movements of existential thought, they themselves could not be called existentialists or even proto-existentialists. Their concept of individuality is remarkably different from the individuality of the existentialists. Socrates saw an objective reality that the individual is acquainted with. Both Augustine and Pascal found in philosophical idealism a ground that they could rest their faith upon. In all these situations, their individuality grew out of a metaphysics that rooted them in immovable, objective values. Objective values and meaning is roundly rejected by each of the existentialists. Even for an existentialist like Kierkegaard, a devout Christian, faith and truth, he argues, must be rooted in subjectivity. Rather than a universal meaning, the only meaning that truth can have is a personal one.

With the nuances of individualism and subjective meaning placed before us, we can now attempt a definition of existentialism. Existentialism is a philosophical position

[1] St. Augustine, for example, plays a prominent part in Albert Camus's graduate thesis.

that is most concerned with becoming one's authentic self through commitment to the world and one's perspectives of it. This definition should make it clear that by saying *becoming one's authentic self* instead of *be one's self* there is no recognized center or recognized self. The individual creates herself. There is in this belief a claim that "a person can change radically; that he may at some point or points in his life effect so total a reorientation in his relations with the world that he makes what Sartre calls 'a new choice of being'" (Barnes 294-95). Along with the radical change in who one is, comes the personal responsibility for that change. Every aspect of the world, all meaning, comportment, and engagement, stems from the individual and no one or nothing else.

Literary Connections to Existentialism

Existentialism began with the writings of the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) then moved into Germany where it was further developed through the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), Martin Buber (1878-1965), Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) before moving into France with Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), and Albert Camus (1913-1960). From these origins, it was able to move out to the rest of the world. However, the picture is not complete if Existentialism is simply left to the professional philosophers. This list ignores the literary contributions that were being made to the movement as well. Albert Camus was influential in introducing the thought and works of Franz Kafka into France because Camus saw and understood the deep existential[2] strains that permeate Kafka's work.

[2] Camus rejected the title existentialist as applying to his thought or that of Kafka; rather, he preferred the term Absurdist. However, due to themes of authenticity and personal meaning making he holds in common with Nietzsche and Sartre, it is fair to join him to the loose grouping of thinkers labelled existentialists.

German authors such as Thomas Mann and Herman Hesse each explore existential themes throughout their novels. Earlier, Nietzsche read and reacted to the works of Dostoevsky going so far as to state that Dostoevsky was the only one to teach him anything about psychology (*Twilight* 110). And Tolstoy's *Death of Ivan Illych* remains one of the greatest literary examples of the existential dread associated with death that there is. It is no wonder that many of the Existentialists turned to literature to illustrate and explore the implications of their ideas. As critic Jean Bruneau observes in his discussion of Sartre's work, "'only in the novel is it possible to evoke the primordial gushing-forth of life in all its concrete, particular and temporal verity.' Such a position abolishes the distinction between philosophical treatise and literary work" (66). However if we merely add European literature, the picture remains incomplete. There is an American influence on the existential movement in Europe that often, in America at least, goes overlooked. But this shouldn't be the case. As Bruneau stated in 1948, "Existentialism is the first French literary movement on which the modern American novel has exercised a strong and acknowledged influence" (66). It is worthwhile to look at a few of those influences.

Famously, Albert Camus refers to Melville's *Moby Dick* as belonging to the list of "some truly absurd works" (*Myth* 113). In Camus' thought, this is not to be taken as a criticism that the work is nonsensical; rather, it is a commendation that the work is representative of human reality. For Camus, the realization that reality is fundamentally devoid of meaning is the crux of what he calls the absurd, and the work of art is one that can take the void and make it artistic. The absurd work of art "must give the void its colors" (*Myth* 114). Like the Existentialists before him, Camus believes that meaning

cannot be found simply by studying reality. Meaning must be made by engaging with the meaningless, absurd reality. Only the strivings of the absurd hero, or one who engages with reality in order to find meaning for life, can be seen in a positive, existential light. Camus sees in Ahab an absurdist hero because Ahab is able to sense the meaninglessness to life, yet he charges with the full force of his being into the very meaninglessness symbolized by the whiteness of the whale. Camus' commendation of Melville fits his larger praise for the "admirable American efflorescence of the nineteenth century [novel]" (*Rebel* 265n). For in the American novels of the nineteenth century, especially as found in Melville, Camus sees characters striving for a unity between themselves and the world they inhabit even though, at some level, they know that such unity is impossible (264-65). Specifically, Camus praises Melville for writing books "in which man is overwhelmed, but in which life is exalted on each page" ("Herman" 293-94). For Camus, the characters that continue to live in spite of the absurdity of nature are the characters to celebrate.

Moving to a twentieth century author, we see the veneration that Sartre and de Beauvoir had for William Faulkner. In his review of Faulkner's *Sartoris*, Sartre remarks that "Faulkner's humanism is probably the only acceptable kind" ("William" 83). It is a humanism that wishes to show life as it is, in its ever present moment. ("On *The*" 85). As a result, there is an emphasis on action "which for the Existentialist constitutes the unity of life" (Bruneau 67). As Faulkner experimented with both time and action in his novels, Sartre remained largely impressed by the technique and overall art of Faulkner.

Although none of the major existential philosophers specifically mention Nathaniel Hawthorne, they acknowledge influence and agreement with two prominent

American authors who have strong connections to Hawthorne[3]. It is surprising, then, that more has not been done to study the thematic connections of Hawthorne to Existentialism. As will be shown below, this exclusion in Hawthorne studies comes from the tendency to view Hawthorne as primarily a psychological or a historical writer.

History of Hawthorne Studies

The critical attention given to Nathaniel Hawthorne's works has been considerable. Ever since he first started publishing, critics have never stopped giving Hawthorne's works attention (Cohen vii). The early reviews and critics set the stage for much of the criticism that was to follow them. Many early reviews "make it clear… that the terms for assessing Hawthorne and his writing are historically grounded" (Person 187). Evert Duyckinck, for example, praises Hawthorne as a writer of "tales of the old colony time, of the era of the Province House, [and] of the terror of the Salem Witchcraft" (6). Duyckinck claims that it is Hawthorne's focus on the past that gives him his power. For, he says, it is "from the depths of New England, the culture of her old history, her domestic faithfulness to simple-hearted living, amid the repulsive anti-poetical tendencies of the present day, [that] the soul of a young man speaks to us in fanciful reveries, a passionate sense of life, in words of gloom and sorrow" (7). These assumptions have continued through to the present. As Leland S. Person points out,

---

[3] Although the connection between Hawthorne and Melville is often celebrated and much discussed, the connection between Hawthorne and Faulkner hasn't received as much attention. In an address given at the University of Virginia, Faulkner exhorted his audience to learn from the "masters" one of whom he identified as Hawthorne. A full transcript of his speech can be found at http://faulkner.lib.virginia.edu/display/wfaudio23_1read. For an analysis of the similar themes that Hawthorne and Faulkner explore, see Randall Stewart's "Hawthorne and Faulkner" from *College English* 1956, and more recently, Robert Martin's 1998 article "Haunted by Jim Crow: Gothic Fictions by Hawthorne and Faulkner" in *American Gothic: New Interventions in a National Narrative*.

"Albeit in different ways, from the beginning, scholars have seen [Hawthorne] as a historical writer" (187).

Beginning around the turn of the twentieth century, critics began to focus on Hawthorne as a profoundly moral and Christian writer, although with strong psychological themes. As critic Paul Elmer More comments, "The loneliness of the individual…needed but an artist with the vision of Hawthorne to represent this feeling as the one tragic calamity of mortal life, as the great primeval curse of sin" (143). This thought was picked up and expanded by T.S. Eliot as he reviewed Hawthorne's works. Eliot praises Hawthorne for his psychological turn and commented specifically about *The Marble Faun* that Hawthorne is able to "establish a kind of solid moral atmosphere" despite the fact that he only had a "granite soil," or a poor artistic tradition, to draw upon (161, 163). The moral aspect of Hawthorne that Eliot alludes to became a major focus of Hawthorne studies in the 1930s and 40s as can be seen in articles by writers Vladimir Astrov and Clarence Manning trying to find similarities between Hawthorne and Doestoevsky's Christian morality. However, it was F.O. Matthiessen who cemented the notion of Hawthorne as a psychological moralist.

In his influential book *The American Renaissance,* Matthiessen claims that one of the reasons for Hawthorne's longevity as a canonical author is his tragic vision. Drawing upon Hawthorne's dark family past, Matthiessen writes, "[Hawthorne] broke through the individualism of his day to a reassertion not of man's idiosyncrasies, but of his elemental traits. It is no exaggeration to say that his recognition of the general bond of sin brought him closest to universality" (370). It is this gloom in Hawthorne, the tragic vision, which Matthiessen focuses on. It leads him to claim that one of Hawthorne's biggest

weaknesses is the fact that "Hawthorne was incapable of sustaining the balance of great tragedy, that he could portray the horror of existence but not its moments of transfiguring glory" (374). It was with this reading that Hawthorne became the dark moralist. Sin became, in Matthiessen's treatment of Hawthorne, a psychological necessity. This remained the definitive view of Hawthorne until the 1960s when psychoanalytic criticism became the main mode of literary criticism.

The 1960s focused on psychoanalytic criticism in Hawthorne studies with such works as Richard Fogle's *Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and the Dark.* However, as Leland Person argues, only Frederick Crews' book *The Sins of the Fathers: Hawthorne's Psychological Themes* can claim to be the "most significant book on Hawthorne in the 1960s" (185). In his book, Crews argues forcefully that Hawthorne is not, as previous critics have mentioned, "a dispenser of moral advice. His plots…follow a logic of expression and repression that bypasses or undercuts moral problems: he is more concerned with psychological necessity than with conscious virtue" (*Sins* 27). And although Crews rejects the notion that Hawthorne was a historian in any objective sense, he does claim that Hawthorne was "obsessive" about history as it related to an "interest in fathers and sons, guilt and retribution, instinct and inhibition" (*Sins* 29). He continues, "only by immersing himself in Puritan history could Hawthorne satisfy his interest in buried impulses while at the same time remaining more or less loyal to outward fact" (*Sins* 29-30). Hawthorne's obsessive treatment of the Puritans ultimately stems from the fact that as much as he might despise and condemn them in his writing, on some level, "Hawthorne is his ancestors" (*Sins* 32). The resulting picture of Hawthorne is one of a

deeply divided and troubled individual who had, for his psychological well-being, to "rewrite the past in the language of his own ambivalence" (*Sins* 43).

Crews' assertion that Hawthorne was a divided individual created a critical tendency in the early to mid-1970s that aimed to show that Hawthorne, and his writing, could be seen as a comprehensive whole. However, in order to show Hawthorne's work as a complete whole such books as Roy Male's *Hawthorne's Tragic Vision* ended up reverting to a more or less Mattheissenian thesis that lacked a solid notion of sin. Others such as Edgar A. Dryden's *Nathaniel Hawthorne: The Poetics of Enchantment* took the approach of focusing on only one thematic element that could be traced throughout Hawthorne's work. However, around this time, a new wave of criticism was taking over Hawthorne studies as Marxist criticism of all sorts began to dominate literary criticism.

Nineteen-seventy-six saw the publication of Nina Baym's *The Shape of Hawthorne's Career* which focused attention on Hawthorne's treatment of gender issues and sexuality. In her book, Baym claims that Hawthorne identifies with his female characters in a type of secret revolt against his patriarchal system. This launched a debate amongst critics about whether or not Hawthorne and his writings are feminist or misogynist. Most recently Roberta Weldon's book *Hawthorne, Gender, and Death: Christianity and Its Discontents* offers a complex argument that calls the dichotomy of feminist/misogynist into question. She argues that the mode of Christianity that Hawthorne worked in required that the reality of death be denied. However, for this to be done in Hawthorne's fiction "the male protagonist is frequently willing to overlook, reject, and sacrifice women… [Hawthorne] writes the text of his immortality narrative on the female body" (4). However, Hawthorne, more than any of the other male authors of

his time, also invites the readers to "consider the condition of women, women hurt and pained by men, oftentimes dead women. The suffering of these women is so intense and unjust that it forces analysis of its cause and cure, and prompts us to ask, 'To what purpose?'" (4). Inherent empathy is ultimately what makes the dichotomy break down for "his novels assert the dominance of the male order at the same time that they invite a dialogue with suffering and dead women" (4). Weldon's argument becomes so forceful because she is able to synthesize some of the best criticism to come out of the feminist school and the New Historicists.

As Person points out, by the early 1990s scholars began to focus more and more on Hawthorne in his context and time as a person of the mid-nineteenth century (188). David S. Reynolds gives a masterful analysis of just how much a product Hawthorne is of his time in his book *Beneath the American Renaissance*. Reynolds is able to show Hawthorne using and subverting many of the tropes, genres, and received ideas of his day. Reynolds also shows how others were also subverting those same genres and tropes. However, Reynolds cannot – nor does he choose to – explain how or why Hawthorne manipulated the genres of his day, most notably allegory, better than most of his contemporaries.

Starting in the late 1990s and moving into the present, Hawthorne studies took a decided turn toward the political. Along with this move, Hawthorne's racial ideas and prejudices were looked at critically. As a result, Hawthorne's reputation as a moral writer has suffered damage. To respond to this growing voice of criticism a new wave of criticism is beginning to emerge that grounds Hawthorne's pacifist politics in a complicated morality. Hawthorne's moral pacifism is treated extensively in Larry J.

Reynolds' book *Devils and Rebels: The Making of Hawthorne's Damned Politics.* This thread of thought is then picked up more recently by Clark Davis in his book *Hawthorne's Shyness: Ethics, Politics, and the Question of Engagement*. In his work Davis argues that Hawthorne's ethics can best be understood in light of Levinas' ideas of the face and the Other. He argues that the passive ethics of his fiction should be translated to his politics. When this is done, we can see that there is nothing hypocritical in Hawthorne's noninvolvement with abolitionist movements or patriotic condemnation of the South during the American Civil War.

Clark Davis makes a point that should not be overlooked. He argues that Hawthorne should be seen "in the company of romantic skeptics (Emerson and Thoreau) and postromantic philosophers, both continental and pragmatist" (30). Of course, the continental postromantic philosophers would include individuals such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, and Levinas. Davis is not the first one to place Hawthorne into this philosophical grouping. It is the pervasive darkness in Hawthorne that led others like Jean Normand, in 1970, to comment in passing that "If one wishes to seek for a philosophic tendency in Hawthorne's work, then it is not toward Transcendentalism that one must look. Hawthorne's position is decidedly existential – not out of any intellectual conviction, but instinctively" (332).

The theoretical concern for most of Hawthorne criticism has been to see him as a historical writer – who either derived his sense of tragedy from historical study or one who could be best understood by understanding the historical situation that produced him. In one way or another, he has been viewed as the fruit of a history and culture (i.e. Eliot's remark about the "granite soil" that produced him). However, fruit will always

hold the seeds of futurity within itself, and ideas of any given movement can be seen, if only in infancy, in the work of writers preceding it. It is for this reason that I will show how Hawthorne's treatment of history becomes problematic if he is seen as a strictly historical writer. However, by seeing Hawthorne's writings through the lens of Existentialism those same problems begin to clear.

Some Problems with Traditional Views of Hawthorne

As a supposed voice of New England, Hawthorne is an authoritative author for individuals who want to talk about Puritans, Transcendentalists, and the culture of mid-nineteenth century New England. For, it was Hawthorne himself, as critic Joel Pfister points out, who "punned on 'customs' when he portrayed himself as a Surveyor of Customs" (35). As the Surveyor of Customs, Hawthorne set himself up to be seen as a mere cataloger of history and customs stretching from his present to his past. However, the accuracy of Hawthorne's portrayals of the Puritans, Transcendentalists, reformers, and Yankees in general must immediately be brought into question. Looking at a brief survey of his representations of these groups, we can see that Hawthorne does not give, nor does he even attempt to give, an accurate historical representation of the groups; rather, he caricatures and stereotypes the groups in order to fulfill his purposes. Because of his many inaccuracies, his standing as a historical writer must be criticized.

As a supposed historical writer, Hawthorne is most often associated, due to several of his short stories as well as *The Scarlet* Letter, as an expositor of Puritan society. But this is problematic. As a people, Hawthorne consistently characterizes the Puritans as "iron" people who are inflexible and unfeeling. Although Puritans were in fact a stern society, as a people they were not as iron as Hawthorne chose to portray

them. As historian E. Brooks Holifield points out, the theological debates within the Puritan community were many and frequent (42). There was no monolithic, "iron" social structure that kept everyone and everything in its place. In fact, to take just one example, the split in Puritan communities between the "orthodox" and the followers of Anne Hutchinson over some of the basic assumptions of Calvinism became so heated that a great publishing boom and public debate erupted among the Puritan colonists and clergyman (Holifield 44). The Hutchinson faction, known as Antinomians were allowed to grow under the governorship of Henry Vane until the controversy became so heated that it eventually led, in some instances, to open revolt. As Holifield narrates, "At one point the dispute became so intense that the magistrates disarmed Anne Hutchinson's Boston followers. It was so politically charged that it led to the defeat of Governor Henry Vane" and to the Governorship of conservative John Winthrop (44). So although Hawthorne characterized the Puritan people as an iron people "amongst whom religion and law were almost identical" effectively merging the moral and social spheres into the same uncompromising ideal, the fact remains that Puritan society maintained a character that allowed for some public debate of both policy and doctrine that could grow heated. Puritan society refused to be as orthodox as Hawthorne characterized it.

Likewise, the way that Hawthorne portrays the Transcendentalists and the New Englanders in his fiction is historically flawed. Throughout his fiction Hawthorne presents the Transcendentalists as a group of people who live constantly in the abstract realm of ideas disconnected from reality. In his retelling of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress,* Hawthorne switches out the two giants, Pope and Pagan, who guard one end of the Valley of the Shadow of Death with only one giant named Transcendentalist. The giant

Transcendentalist fattens travelers with "meals of smoke, mist, moonshine, raw potatoes. And saw-dust" (x: 197)[4]. Just as he cannot feed his "guests" with anything of substance, the giant also lacks substance. As Hawthorne quips in "The Celestial Railroad,"

> as to his form, his features, his substance, and his nature generally, it is the chief peculiarity of this huge miscreant that neither he for himself, nor anybody for him, has ever been able to describe them. As we rushed by…we caught a hasty glimpse of him, looking somewhat like an ill proportioned figure, but considerably more like a heap of fog and duskiness. He shouted after us, but in so strange a phraseology that we knew not what he meant. (x:197)

It is a favorite tactic of Hawthorne to show the insubstantiality to the Transcendentalists. But this ignores the fact that many of the Transcendentalists were active in social reform movements such as Elizabeth Peabody in education, Margaret Fuller in women's rights, George Ripley in aspects of socialism, and most of the Transcendentalists in the abolition movements. Even within the Transcendentalist community, there were disagreements and tensions that Hawthorne overlooks in order to paint every Transcendentalist with the same tones.

Equally problematic is Hawthorne's treatment of the New Englander whom he often refers to as Yankees. Hawthorne's Yankees are not admirable people. They are obtuse. They may be hardworking, but it is to a fault because they cannot tolerate any sort of rest except for "on Sunday, the Fourth of July, the autumnal cattle-show,

---

[4] All of Hawthorne's works in this dissertation are taken from *The Centenary Edition of The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*. For this reason, all of Hawthorne's works will simply be cited using the volume number as indicated by the Roman numeral and the page number.

Thanksgiving, or the annual Fast" (iii: 138). They can only think about commerce and always prefer "the better bargain for the worse" even to the point that they will continually listen to music that they don't like as long as the music is free (ii: 51, 294). His most forceful condemnation of the Yankee mentality came in *The Marble Faun* when he writes, "It is the iron rule in our days, to require an object and a purpose in life. It makes us all parts of a complicated scheme of progress, which can only result in our arrival at a colder and drearier region than we were born in. It insists upon everybody's adding somewhat…to an accumulated pile of usefulness…We go all wrong, by too strenuous a resolution to go all right" (iv: 239). By focusing on the "iron rule" of his age, Hawthorne draws parallels between his Yankees and the "iron" Puritans. Both groups are unchanging, and both groups are cold and unfeeling. If Hawthorne is the voice of New England as he portrays its people, he is a critical voice. He boils every group that populates New England into a caricature. This should be a major reason to quit seeing Hawthorne as a historically accurate author.

In his discussion of Hawthorne's treatment of history, J. Hillis Miller sums up Hawthorne's approach to presenting history as "a parable presented in the form of a memorial record of a pseudo-historical event" (109). Perhaps the reason that so many of Hawthorne's stories are seen as historical is because so many of them reference real people and actual events. We must acknowledge that Hawthorne had actually done his research. He studied history extensively and knew how historical events actually unfolded. However, none of the historical events or people he includes in his writings stay true to the source. Since this is the case, Miller continues that Hawthorne would see history and the portrayal of historical events as "not representable but performative"

(114). It is through the performance of the historical event that Hawthorne is able to create his parables and explore the themes that occupy his attention. His propensity to engage in performative telling of history should lead us to reject the label of historical writer. However, if we recognize that Hawthorne is not trying to write a history, we need to ask what he is doing. We can grapple with many of Hawthorne's representational problems in a comprehensive manner if we view him primarily as a philosophical writer.

Despite the criticisms that Hawthorne seems to have for the Puritan, transcendental, and New England communities, it must be acknowledged that he is still a product of each of these communities. However, it would be a mistake to believe that Hawthorne could be completely explained by only looking at the communities, whether historical or contemporary, that produced him. As a voice critical of each of the communities he writes about most frequently, he should be viewed as belonging to yet another community. Whereas most commentators and critics focus on Hawthorne as one of the last members of the antebellum American communities, I am arguing that many insights can be found about Hawthorne, his art, and his ideas, even his historical inaccuracies, by seeing him as a forerunner of the Existentialists.

The Hawthorne, Emerson, and Nietzsche Connection

The most celebrated connection between the Americans and the European Existentialists comes from the direct link between Ralph Waldo Emerson and Nietzsche. Nietzsche saw in Emerson and in Emerson's ideas someone to be studied at great length. Just sampling what Nietzsche had to say about Emerson does much to illustrate Nietzsche's enthusiasm: "Much more enlightened [than Carlyle], more roving, more manifold…above all, happier. One who instinctively nourishes himself only on

ambrosia…a man of taste" (*Twilight* 86). Although typically known for his effusive style, there are other evidences to point to the fact that Nietzsche really did hold Emerson in high regard. As critic Herman Hummel points out, Nietzsche always had a copy of Emerson with him in his travels and was constantly buying new translations of Emerson as they were made available (73). It should come as no surprise, then, that so many of Nietzsche's ideas can find some precursor in Emerson's. As George Stack shows, many of Nietzsche's key ideas such as fate, the individual, the evolutionary superman, and the eternal recurrence can be found hinted at or explicitly developed in Emerson's essays (10-11). Some critics go so far as to say that in Emerson, Nietzsche saw one of the forerunners of his Zarathustra (Hummel 68). It becomes clear that "Emerson's conception of the human condition, his prescriptions of excellence, as well as many specific aspects of his evocative, insightful reflections passed directly into the stream of European existential thought by way of Nietzsche's extensive absorption of [Emerson's] bold and illuminating observations and imaginative theories" (Stack 11). It was Emerson's overriding optimism that the self could find truth that proved to be Nietzsche's intoxicant. However, Nietzsche was not the only one to gravitate toward this thought. Among those most closely associated with Emerson were William Ellery Channing and Thoreau. Both men adhered to some of the key tenets of Emersonian Transcendentalism and to some degree became proselytes for the movement. Both of these men were also friends with Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Nathaniel Hawthorne moved to Concord, the heart of the Transcendentalist community, right after his marriage to Sophia Peabody in 1842. There he rented a house from Emerson. While in the house, Hawthorne ended up buying Thoreau's boat which he

renamed Pond Lily. Hawthorne then used Pond Lily to take Ellery Channing fishing and Thoreau rowing. He would share his love of long walks with Thoreau and, on occasion, Emerson himself. On excursions with these men, they would undoubtedly talk about the ideas that were at the heart of the Transcendental movement. Many times, the talking between Hawthorne and the Transcendentalists became so one sided that, as Emerson commented, "It was easy to talk to him – there were no barriers – only, he said so little, that I talked too much, & stopped only because – as he gave no indications – I feared to exceed" (qtd. in C. Davis 33). But his interactions did not stop with Emerson. He would go on walks with Margaret Fuller in which they would talk about "matters of high and low philosophy" (viii: 343). Hawthorne would go on rowing trips with Henry David Thoreau where he and Thoreau would talk about nature, history, and literature; it is in chronicling one of these trips that Hawthorne observes that Thoreau is "a healthy and wholesome man to know" (viii: 354-55). In conjunction with the intimate connections that he had with the inner group of Transcendentalists, he also frequently read their publication *The Dial* where he would read their formal thoughts (see viii: 355, 368, 371, 374). With all of these intimate connections, it is impossible to believe that Hawthorne never heard the ideas that would eventually slip into European Existentialism. It is even harder to believe that at some level, he didn't believe some of those ideas himself. At his core, Hawthorne did sympathize with some of the ideas of Transcendentalism; however, his exploration of those ideas made him more akin to the Existentialists. We must quickly look at some of the center pieces of transcendental thought to see how Hawthorne uses those ideas to push him closer to an existential outlook.

In transcendental fashion, Hawthorne saw in nature a great teacher, or at least a place that he could quietly order his thoughts. His notebooks are telling in this regard. His *American Notebooks* are curiously silent on many "important" life events such as his engagement to Sophia, his wedding day, his graduation from university, his firing from the Salem Custom House, his children's births, and so on. Rather, his notebooks are full of his observations of nature. He uses nature to reflect on the parts of the human condition that intrigue him. In a typical notebook entry recorded on October 14, 1837, when he climbed Browne's Hill, Hawthorne records,

> The prospect from the hill is wide and interesting; but methinks it is pleasanter in the more immediate vicinity of the hill than miles away. It is agreeable to look down at the square patches of corn-field, or of potato-ground, or of cabbages still green, or of beets looking red, - all a man's farm, in short, - each portion of which he considered separately so important, while you take in the whole at a glance. Then to cast your eye over so many different establishments at once, and rapidly compare them, - here a house of gentility, with shady old yellow-leaved elms hanging around it; there new little white dwelling; there an old farm-house; to see the barns and sheds and all the out-houses clustered together; to comprehend the oneness and exclusiveness and what constitutes the peculiarity of each of so many establishments, and to have in your mind a multitude of them, each of which is the most important part of the world to those who live in it, - this really enlarges the mind, and you come down the hill somewhat wiser than you go up. (viii: 159-60)

It is clear by his language that Hawthorne sees the insights he gained as attributable to what the perspective on the hill can teach him. It is not, however, the hill itself that is teaching Hawthorne anything – nor the trees, sky, or fields. As W.C. Brownell has remarked Hawthorne, "did not find sermons in stones. He had the sermons already; his task was to find the stones to fit them" (qtd. in Milder, "Beautiful" 5). However, unlike the sunny disposition of Emerson, in nature Hawthorne sees truths of a darker hue. As he records, on October 11, 1845, "Nothing comes amiss to Nature – all is fish that comes to her net. If there be a living form of perfect beauty…why it is all very well, and suits Nature well enough. But she would just as lief have that same beautiful, soul-illumined body, to make worm's meat of, and to manure the earth with" (viii: 272). This ambivalence about nature is then reflected in his writings where, as Debra Johanyak observes, Hawthorne uses his forest settings "in ways that are often ambivalent; sometimes Nature projects celebration and joy, while at other times it depicts the evil characteristics and threatening gestures of menacing invaders" (363). Although, he did find nature capable of illuminating truths, the truths that it often illuminated were ambivalent and resistant of interpretive certainty. Hawthorne's nature is not one that consists of any universal meaning. Instead, Hawthorne's nature is one that allows an exploration of perspectives and personal interpretations.

With the focus on the need of perspective and personal interpretation of nature, Hawthorne departs ways with the Transcendentalists and moves closer to the Existentialists' thought. As opposed to the Transcendentalists, Hawthorne does not see in nature a beneficent teacher; rather, Hawthorne sees in nature a contradictory, ambivalent, and apathetic reality. This conception of nature ultimately means that unlike

Transcendentalists who take meaning from the lessons of nature, Hawthorne sees nature as incapable of such a transcendental feat. Rather, Hawthorne creates meanings and lessons from his own existence and uses nature to illustrate his own personal meanings – "his task was to find the stones to fit them."

Perhaps what the Existentialist and Transcendentalist have closest in common is the focus on the self. The Emersonian brand of Transcendentalism teaches that the self can be readily known through reflection and action. Existentialism claims, on the other hand, that the self is more enigmatic. Simple reflection might not be able to reveal the self as it is subsumed in larger structures that remain out of control of the individual (Heidegger's Das Man and Sartre's bad faith). Moreover, despite both the Transcendentalists and the Existentialists placing great importance on the self, the fundamental structure differs. Emerson, and those who followed him, see in the inmost self something absolute. Emerson effuses, "there is no screen or ceiling between our heads and the infinite heavens, so is there no bar or wall in the soul where man, the effect, ceases, and God, the cause begins…We lie open on one side to the deeps of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God" ("The Over-Soul" 387). Even if not all Transcendentalists followed Emerson as deeply into his pantheism, there remained with them the notion that the thoughts and actions of the individual are absolute and immortal ("The Over-Soul" 400). The meanings of life for the Transcendentalist are found in the eternal nature of the self. That absolute, immortal nature of the self is hard to find among Existentialists. Most see an ever changing self that must be chosen. The real or authentic self, for the Existentialists, is rare and difficult to achieve. A walk in nature cannot reveal the authentic self nor can creative reflection. Furthermore, the self cannot transcend its

everyday reality. For the Existentialists, that everyday reality is where the self creates meaning.

Hawthorne rejects the transcendental idea of an unobstructed communion between the self, or soul, and God along with the idea of immortal thoughts and actions. Instead, Hawthorne gravitates toward existential concepts of authenticity. In one passage of his *American Notebook*, he seems to be foreshadowing the thought of Camus quoted earlier. Hawthorne writes, "a perception, for a moment, of one's eventual and moral self, as if it were another person, - the observant faculty being separated, and looking intently at the qualities of the character. There is a surprise when this happens, - this getting out of one's self, - and then the observer sees how queer a fellow he is" (viii: 178). Self-knowledge becomes a hallmark for Hawthorne, much as it does for the Transcendentalists. However, Hawthorne continually gravitates to the idea that the self is just another actor on a stage. He seems unable to leave alone the idea about what makes a self true. "Insincerity in a man's own heart must make all his enjoyments, all that concerns him, unreal; so that his whole life must seem like a merely dramatic representation. And this would be the case even though he were surrounded by true hearted friends" (viii: 166-67). Insincerity to the heart ties directly to what is true in an individual. Hawthorne wishes to highlight this aspect by exploring the metaphor of life as a "dramatic representation." For this reason veils, masks, false names, and false identities fill his stories. He acknowledges the fact that obtaining knowledge is fundamentally linked to the self, but the self can remain hidden from its own inquiries. In fact, it seems that the only way to know the self is through the interaction with the Other. Herein is the seed of the largest disagreement that Hawthorne has with Emerson and the other

Transcendentalists. The mask and the veil suggest that Hawthorne holds a deep skepticism about obtaining any certain knowledge of the world or the self.

By positing that an individual, if forced to look at his behavior from another perspective would be forced to admit that he is a "queer fellow," Hawthorne calls into question any transcendental claim about the self. The actions and thoughts cannot be immortal nor can they transcend the given circumstances of the individual. However, the lived experience of the individual does have meaning, but the meaning comes through the lived experience. Putting it simply, in the self, for the Transcendentalists, all meanings are found; through the self, for the Existentialists, all meanings are made.

It is easy to see how, on many points, Hawthorne would agree with the Transcendentalists. He agrees that nature is important for truth finding, and he also agrees that knowing the self is important. For these reasons, Hawthorne is often counted among the transcendental community. However, as I have briefly pointed out, Hawthorne parts company with the Transcendentalists in significant ways. It is his disagreement with and skepticism about their ideas that pushes him closer to existential thought.

This skepticism is visualized throughout Hawthorne as he explores darkness. But it is also this same skepticism about the power of the individual to transcend the self that brings Hawthorne into closer alignment with the Existentialists. As the self becomes trapped in the world with no recourse of escape or transcendence, all aspects of reality must be confronted. Whereas many philosophies tend to focus on the positive side of life, the Existentialists bring focus to the darker aspects in order to show that darkness is an integral part of existence. On this account, Hawthorne is in agreement.

The Parallel of Ideas

"Darkness" and its synonyms permeate Hawthorne's fiction. "The Man of Adamant" escapes into a dark and gloomy cave, Goodman Brown heads into the dark forest at night, Hephzibah inhabits the dark and foreboding house of the seven gables, Allymer works in his dark laboratory, and Dimmesdale sequesters himself among his books in his dark and musty study. However, for each dark description used to describe environment and nature, there are several more used to describe the inner environments -- the hearts and minds -- of the characters who inhabit Hawthorne's stories. As Henry Fairbanks observes, "Hawthorne's imagery and vocabulary are impressively dark. Of the images used to describe the heart, *prison, tomb,* and *cavern* are among the most frequent…of the adjectives, *dusky, dim,* and *gloomy* are among the favorites" (986). It would be incredibly easy to simply label Hawthorne a pessimist who "discerns sin everywhere – in the open sinner and, almost exultantly, in those whom men deem good and holy" (qtd. in Fairbanks 986). There is no denying that Hawthorne is preoccupied with moral darkness. But his treatment of the dark and troubled side of human nature is handled for very different reasons than other contemporary writers such as Edgar Allen Poe. Poe looked toward the dark and macabre in order to produce an effect of beauty in his readers. As he declares in his famous essay on composition, the most beautiful topic is "unquestionably" "the death…of a beautiful woman" ("Philosophy" 643). Hawthorne, on the other hand, was trying to figure out what the darkness could teach him. In this regard, darkness became a means of finding meaning in the world. In large part, it is this treatment of darkness that leads me to see in Hawthorne a precursor to the Existentialists

who will come after him, for the Existentialists saw in the dark side of human life a more complete picture of human reality.

One movement that most Existential make is to move from the dark to the light. This movement takes place from anxiety to life or from death to authenticity. Hawthorne fully engages with this trend in thinking. He is not simply infatuated with the darkness; he wants to use darkness to move into the light. More concretely outlined, Hyatt H. Waggoner wrote for the *Hawthorne Centenary Essays*,

> [Hawthorne's] "theology"… is very much like that of the religious existentialists of his own time and ours. With Kierkegaard, he moves from doubt and despair to faith; with Marcel, from alienation to reunion. Like Tillich, he "psychologizes" the faith, not in the sense of explaining it away, but in making it inward and personal, in refusing to externalize or objectify it. Like Buber, he thinks religiously by exploring the implications of symbolic images, moving always in the opposite direction from that in which Bunyan moved, moving from existential experience to the transcendent… even the atheist existentialists could find in Hawthorne a kindred spirit: he explored the depths of existential anxiety, then countered Kierkegaard's "Dread" and Heidegger's "Nothingness" with "Commitment" ("Art" 185-86).

While Hawthorne never elaborated a systematic philosophy, he consistently explores those philosophical themes that are most important to him in his stories and novels. These same ideas are also talked about at length in notebooks and his letters to friends. Hawthorne's themes of death, identity, suffering, confession, guilt, and morality align

themselves closely with the writings of the Existentialists. This is a connection that, more recently, Clark Davis has noted when he describes Hawthorne as a part of the "romantic and post-romantic tradition that moves from Emerson and Thoreau through Nietzsche, Heidegger, Levinas, and Cavell…Traditionalist though Hawthorne was in many respects, his work, particularly his theorizing of the romance and its approach to representation, places him squarely in this skeptical, philosophically radical company" (48). This is not to say that Hawthorne himself would abide by some of the tenets of the French existential school of thought, which is commonly the school that most people think of when they are asked about Existentialism, but when viewed from the perspective of the French and German Existentialists, some of Hawthorne's ideas of self and community come into sharper focus.

Others have made related claims before me. In 1949 Jorge Borges delivered a lecture on Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Wakefield." In the lecture, he described the motivation and the actions of the title character as Kafkaesque and presented the tale as a precursor to Kafka, who is largely seen as an existential novelist. In many ways "Wakefield" used masses of people to hide the individual and the story largely involved the actions of the mundane being made extraordinary. However, Borges gave a strong defense to why it was appropriate to compare the nineteenth-century American's tale to that of the existential Kafka. Borges argues that "'Wakefield' prefigures Franz Kafka, but Kafka modifies and refines the reading of 'Wakefield.' The debt is mutual; a great writer creates his precursors. He creates and somehow justifies them" (85). For Borges, it is stories such as "Wakefield" that pave the way for the development of writers like Kafka. However, it takes a Kafka to be able to look back and read new light into "Wakefield."

Once Kafka has made his themes and motifs explicit, a reader can see those same themes and motifs in embryo in earlier writers such as Hawthorne. This is exactly what Borges saw as happening between the two writers. Using this same reasoning, we could point to stories such as "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" or the fragmented ending of *The Marble Faun,* to show how they lead to existential and postmodern ideas. However, it takes the existential and postmodern writers to make their themes of alienation and perspectivism explicit before we can see them clearly in earlier works. It is this precise idea that informs the current study.

Although the principle theoretical Existentialists wrote in the twentieth century, their ideas and writings share a remarkable affinity with the themes and philosophical underpinnings of Hawthorne's greatest works. When applied to Hawthorne, concepts such as Heidegger's Das Man and authenticity as well as Sartre's bad faith (the surrender of one's projects to the Other) can snap Hawthorne into a brighter and clearer focus. These concepts refine and shed light on Hawthorne's ambiguity which has been at the center of Hawthorne criticism for much of the past one hundred years (Person 187). At the same time, an existential reading of Hawthorne also works to add some clarity and context to the existential philosophers and writers because their Romantic genealogy can be seen all the more clearly. The debt is mutual. This justification that each gives to the other can show to a greater extent an American presence in the mostly Eurocentric existential movement as well as bring a great deal of insight into one of the most quintessential American writers.

It is with the subject of writing that this introduction will end. No study of Hawthorne can be complete without taking a close look at his writing style. Chapter one

will be an in-depth look at his aesthetic techniques to show how they are functioning along existential grounds. For now, I will simply focus on some large criticisms that have been leveled at Hawthorne's style to show how his strategies largely parallel those of the existential writers.

A Brief Account of Existential Writing Strategies

Although Borges saw a thematic resemblance between Kafka and Hawthorne, he didn't mention a stylistic one. In fact, one of the greatest criticisms that Borges has for Hawthorne is on stylistic grounds. Borges tries to figure out Hawthorne's style of composition and eventually settles on the fact that "Hawthorne first conceived a situation, or a series of situations, and then elaborated the people his plan required" (82). This creates a flaw in Hawthorne's aesthetics for Borges. Instead of complex, dynamic characters, Hawthorne is filled with superficial, flat characters who are simply one step away from being mere symbols. Although Hawthorne was a writer who was supposedly interested in human psychology, Borges saw that many of Hawthorne's human characters lack a complex psychology and thus lack a basic humanity. By focusing on the situation instead of fleshing out characters, Hawthorne's situations suffer from another flaw in Borges's view; they are mixed too much with the unreal. With this claim, Borges is not faulting Hawthorne for the dreamscapes of his narratives; rather, Borges claims that there is no psychological consistency, no realism carrying the characters from one scene to the next. Because of this lack of continuity between the scenes, he only sees in Hawthorne "a series of situations, planned with professional skill to affect the reader, not a spontaneous and lively activity of the imagination" (89). It is the lack of psychological realism that

Borges objects to. He would rather see a narrative that is bounded by a common thread grounded in a solid and realistic continuity.

Borges is not the only one to notice Hawthorne's favoring of the psychological situation in favor of psychological consistency. Theo Davis also remarks that "Hawthorne has little truck with character, psychological motivation, and physical life. Hawthorne both figures and asks his reader to figure an experience of affect that is essentially an abstraction" (107). It is this apparent fascination with the abstract experience of affect that has drawn condemnation on Hawthorne from some realists. Hawthorne is too concerned with exploring an abstraction – mostly emotional or psychological – that doesn't necessarily create itself in everyday existence. His stories are not those of the everyday. There is a symbolic quality to them that, coupled with the aforementioned propensity to loose narratives of scenes, drives his narratives to studies of allegory and symbolism.

The consensus seems to be that Hawthorne cannot escape the use of allegory. This criticism was raised by Poe, continued through Borges, Mattheisen, and on into the present. However, there is also a counter-strain to Hawthorne criticism that attacks the notion of the allegory as found in Hawthorne[5]. Theo Davis argues that Hawthorne is not in the process of making allegories, but he is trying to make emblems that will lead the reader from an abstraction to an "emblematic reality" (81). Others, such as Leon Chai, see in Hawthorne a movement away from the allegorical to an embracing of the symbolic (39). As Terence Martin argues, one of the chief reasons for Hawthorne to move away

[5] These criticisms seem to stem more from the critic's own taste or underlying assumptions about the nature of art and allegory's inclusion in the arts. However, it would seem to be ridiculous to fault a painter for painting. As Hawthorne is an admitted allegorist, it seems puzzling to criticize him for writing allegories.

from allegory into symbolism was to "invest an object with moral significance…that defined for him the texture of the human condition" (68). But what all of these interpretations have in common is the idea that Hawthorne is not primarily focused on a realistic interpretation of reality as it is commonly experienced. He is more concerned with "[illuminating] a general truth of the moral world" (Martin 67). For many of these critics, although a master Romancer, Hawthorne enjoys dabbling in the conventions of allegory (such as fantastical situations, symbols, and ambiguities) too much to be considered a great novelist; allegory tends, as Eliot suggests, to be "a lazy substitute for profundity" (160).

But Hawthorne is not Borges or Eliot, and he does not aim for their psychological realism; rather, Hawthorne uses characters to highlight different psychological states depending on disparate circumstances. This tactic is why, for example, he explores Hester's thoughts by placing her on a scaffold in front of the public, in a garden with the governor, at home alone, and in the woods with Dimmesdale. He doesn't particularly care to explore the psychological states in between the scenes in which he places his characters; rather, he moves from scene to scene in order to see how the psychology of his characters will adapt to new and dramatically different circumstances. Simply surveying many of the chapter headings in Hawthorne's novels such as "The Market-Place," "A Forest Walk," "The Minister in a Maze," "A Day Behind the Counter," "The Arched Window," "Clifford's Chamber," "The Supper-Table," "The Wood-Path," "Eliot's Pulpit," "The Virgin's Shrine," "On the Edge of a Precipice" and "A Scene in the Corso" can show that he is interested in first establishing a scene and then populating it with characters. But it is this very quality in Hawthorne that make his inclusion in an

existential line of thought all the more fitting. For, as Richard Calhoun points out in his discussion of the novels of Sartre, Kafka, and Camus, the existential novel is a novel of

> extreme situations. This heightened literature is not interested in realistic portrayal of individual characters. In fact, it moves away from realism towards myth and archetype, and its plots are determined by the literary and philosophical theory behind them as the novelist seeks to fulfill his purpose of throwing new light on the basic human situations and suggesting the possibility of new choices. (7)

Existential novelists heighten the possibility of failure and death by creating "extreme situations" for their characters. This type of writing can be considered to be a literary equivalent to Heidegger's being-towards-death, or the state in which one is able to make an authentic choice only by realizing one's utmost possibility: failure and death. By placing characters in situations that would tax all of their normal psychological functions, such as Hester on the scaffold, the veneer of the everyday gets stripped away. The reader, if not the character, is able to see what is most "real" or authentic in the characters.

Camus uses extreme situations in all his novels in order to have his characters realize the truth about their lives and the realities they inhabit. Meursault in *The Stranger* finds himself condemned to die. On the day of his execution, he awakes early to realize every rule and societal relationship that he followed no longer mattered. He feels "ready to start life over again" (154). It is with the freedom that comes when death is near, that he recognizes for the first time "the benign indifference of the universe" and what he needs to do to be happy (154). He hopes to walk to his execution to be greeted by "a huge crowd of spectators" who would fill the air "with howls of execration" (154). Meursault

realizes that it is only in this manner that he would ever "feel less lonely" (154). But these thoughts are very much at odds with the thoughts and feelings he has at the start of his story. At the beginning he does everything he can to please people, becoming friends with pimps and even agreeing to marriage all because someone else wishes it. He sees no reason to disagree with any request. However, this changes with his death sentence. As Jacob Golomb points out, "when Meursault acts according to [societal] values, the result is mechanical, almost automatic behavior, that allows for no exception or compromise…[However] he becomes aware of the short-comings of this ethic, and, while in prison, turns to his own self and to an authentic pathos that emerges in the face of his impending death" (182). Camus realizes that the change that comes upon Meursault emanates from his circumstances and surroundings. For this reason, in his other novels, rather than give his characters a reprieve in an escape to everyday living, Camus simply introduces his characters to another situation with new challenges and new opportunities to discover who they are. Hawthorne utilizes this pattern as well as will be explored in-depth in chapter three. However, we must address Borges's other concern – Hawthorne's propensity for allegory of all types – in order to show that although it might be a weakness in realistic writing, allegory is a strength for an Existentialist.

Allegory becomes a strength in the existential aesthetic, for the scenes must test the characters in varying and unique ways. At the same time, the characters must themselves become symbols for larger swaths of humanity. The existential novels of Kafka eventually took this idea to an extreme, so characters began to lose their names and identities until Kafka simply labeled the protagonist of *The Castle* as K. K. is not a name; it is simply a stand in for all who read the novel. In this way Kafka is able to say that K.'s

plight is humanity's plight. Likewise, Albert Camus' novel *The Fall* consists of two characters, Jean-Baptiste Clamence and the unnamed individual who is being spoken to. Clamence is the one who is searching for clemency in the novel while at the same time passing judgment on all he talks to. Through his talking with strangers, his ultimate goal is to convince everyone that they are just like him – guilty parties in need of clemency. It is the unnamed individual who remains at the heart of the novel. For that unnamed individual must be, by necessity, the reader. As a result of this move, the entire book is trying to convince the reader that he is a guilty. Hawthorne's fiction is filled with such symbols: preachers, dark women, fallen individuals, fiends, and the weak of the earth. Thus by creating characters who serve as stand-ins for readers and symbols for greater ideas, the Existentialists invite introspection as they construct existential myths.

There can be no question that Hawthorne moves into the realm of myth and archetype, for allegory, symbol, and emblems all inhabit that world. If we view Hawthorne's aesthetics through this lens, we are able to see in Hawthorne not an artist who relies on a flawed method of delivery but an artist who is using an allegorical method to explore deeply existential topics of the self and the self's relationships with the world. We should not be so concerned that his characters are not fully developed or historically accurate or that his plots are segmented, for the existential reading is more concerned with the situations that the author is presenting. Within this framework, we can look at the extreme situations – whether it be the murder of a monk in *The Marble Faun*, the public punishment of an adulteress in *The Scarlet Letter,* the extortion and manipulation rampant in *The House of the Seven Gables,* or the enslavement through mesmerism or personality of others in *The Blithedale Romance* – and piece together how

Hawthorne is thinking about the "basic human situation and suggesting the possibility of new choices" (Calhoun 7).

Although I would agree with Borges that Hawthorne thought "in images, in intuitions…not with a dialectical mechanism," I do not think that this implies that there is no uniformity to Hawthorne's thought (80). The fact that he stayed mostly consistent in his attacks and criticisms on Transcendentalism throughout his career shows that he did have a philosophical foundation that he was able to build on even if it was never explicated systematically. Whereas Borges wanted Hawthorne to begin speaking about an objective reality that could be grasped and dealt with as the realist writers did, through theories and concepts, Hawthorne didn't see reality as the realists did. Hawthorne, unlike Emerson or Melville or many of the realists, did not view truth as a product of the theoretical realm. Rather, truth belonged to the realm of praxis or the practical. When it comes to the practical, intuition can often serve better to guide one's actions than a "dialectical mechanism." There is ample evidence in both his personal and published writings that Hawthorne's worldview couldn't align with the objective certainty – no matter how abysmal or jaded – of the realist writers because objective certainty requires the theoretical or, at least, the metaphysical to buoy it up. Once the theoretical aspect of truth is ignored, then the messy reality or sometimes contradictory truth of the world can open itself up to the individual. It is to figure out what the intuitions of Hawthorne are really about that this the goal of this work.

Chapter Outline

This work will begin to parse out some of those images and intuitions that fill Hawthorne's work in order to show Hawthorne writing in a profoundly existential world.

In order to argue this claim, I will be using the insights of the existential philosophers in order to shed light on the germs of ideas that are scattered in Hawthorne's texts both published and private. The chapters of the dissertation will cover large existential themes in order to clarify Hawthorne's thought as it is found throughout his major romances and notebooks.

Chapter one will show how Hawthorne's literary style reflects the epistemic world that he portrays often in his art and in his notebooks. By looking at his syntax, irony, and engagement with the readers of his romances, the chapter will show how Hawthorne is able to use his language as a mask that will both invite engagement with the reader as well as refrain from projecting a definitive authorial meaning onto the works of his art. This chapter will further show how Hawthorne's art is a continuum of the philosophical ideas that inhabit his worldview as he merges, in a Heideggerian manner, aesthetics and epistemology.

Chapter two will look at the nature of the world that Hawthorne found himself in. Because he lived in a society that was in the midst of major epistemic shifts in religion, culture, politics, and science, Hawthorne realized that certainty was a rare commodity in antebellum America. However, rather than escape into the blinding light of transcendental subjectivism or the pessimism that would later claim writers like Twain, Melville , and Crane, Hawthorne chose a different route. His view of reality is one in which truth is not absolute and where reality is anything but constant. His approach to reality and epistemology is one that can be characterized by an openness and a negativity. By looking at Hawthorne's uses of veils, masks, and negative space and style, chapter

two will show how Hawthorne is able to create an openness that both invites and inhibits interpretation.

Chapter three will be an examination of the self as it is found in Hawthorne's writings. It will examine Hawthorne's conception of the self and its relation to the Other. This chapter will look at Hawthorne's ambivalence toward society and societal relations and how those play into the function and formation of an individual self. Put into context of the Transcendental and Romantic movements, scholars are puzzled why Hawthorne has a pessimistic view of the self. His views of the community have often been interpreted as an escape into conservatism – especially when applied to his political leanings. However, I will show that the need for community that appears in Hawthorne is not an argument for a conservative politics but a fundamental need in the shaping of an existential self that can move and operate in a real world.

Chapter four will look at the use of faith in Hawthorne's work. As critics such as Waggoner have pointed out, Hawthorne could be considered as a theistic Existentialist; however, the function of God and sin remains obscure and vague in many of his works. Drawing upon the concepts outlined in previous chapters, this chapter will show the choice that is behind any act of faith. Using insights from Dostoevsky, Kierkegaard, and Tillich, this chapter will show Hawthorne engaging in a quasi-soul-making theodicy as he explores the function of sin and suffering. Hawthorne sees sin and suffering as needed elements to humanize individuals and build a lasting sympathy.

The final chapter is on the existential method of teaching literature in a college classroom. This chapter will first address a broad existential theory of education that would highlight the interplay between the self and the Other. The chapter will then

present methods for teaching literature existentially in a manner that will both highlight the thought of the Other as well as allow students to engage with the text and their selves in order to create their own meaning and interpretation within a world.

Through each of these chapters it will become clear that it will be difficult to talk about one of these subjects without drawing on the insights of the others, for how can one talk about the reality of the existential world without talking about the nature of the individual? And how can one talk about the nature of the authentic individual without talking about the Other and community? These were the very problems that Heidegger faced as he began his work with *Being and Time*. The existential worldview is not one of straightforward explication. It is one that is embedded in an intuition for and certain openness to the world around the individual. For this reason, Heidegger often circled back to previous ideas throughout his work modifying concepts as he went along. And so it will be here. Although chapter two will highlight the fragmented and disjointed nature of the world that Hawthorne saw which will go far as to giving a philosophical justification for his style that will be discussed in chapter one. However, the ideas in chapter two should be understood in the light of important qualifications that chapters three and four will add to Hawthorne's worldview as he addresses faith and, more importantly, sympathy.

Chapter 1: Hawthorne's Prose as the Veil that Conceals and Unconceals: A Heideggerian Approach to Hawthorne's Aesthetics and Epistemology

As the focus of both praise and derision, there is no doubt that Hawthorne's style is unique. Popular myth tells us that Hawthorne holed himself up in his room for twelve years in order to teach himself writing. Although this account is an exaggeration and Hawthorne did spend much of that time traveling and interacting with the world, it is quite clear that his self-made apprenticeship paid off. Hawthorne's published writing voice developed into a distinct style leading his own son Julian to say, "the impression produced by his notebooks is oddly different from the romances – a difference comparable in kind and degree to that between the voice in ordinary speech and in singing" (qtd. in Milder "Other" 560). As Robert Milder analyzes Hawthorne's writing in the notebooks, he remarks that "the most surprising fact about them is how unHawthornean their author seems to be" (560). The assumption behind this phrase is a telling one. The real Hawthorne, the assumption runs, is the published writer and the Hawthorne of the notebooks is an "unHawthorne" or one who is Hawthorne in name only.

The Hawthorne of the notebooks is unpolished. He is more candid. His natural prejudices, concerns, and questions float to the surface of his notebook writing. However, these are all repressed or changed in his published writing. Hawthorne creates a highly stylized prose that ends up obscuring and burying many of the ideas and themes that he explicitly explores in his notebooks. Whereas Milder states the Hawthorne of the notebooks is a different Hawthorne, I see a fundamental sameness. In the act of writing polished prose, Hawthorne throws a veil over his material. He covers and hides himself in

order to distance the reader from himself in order to entice the reader to discover more about the truths being presented in the stories. It is the goal of this chapter to show exactly how the veil of Hawthorne's prose functions to estrange the reader and then entice the reader into a relationship of intuitive sympathy.

In chapter two, we will look at Hawthorne's philosophical outlook on the world to see how he viewed and understood truth. Truth, I argue, is seen as something that must be uncovered intuitively. Truth remains hidden behind an incredibly complex reality that cannot be boiled down to simple propositional statements. Truth, for Hawthorne, is something that could come in degrees that could both conceal and unconceal reality. This means that truth, for Hawthorne, is capable of deception (viii: 62). In this manner, Hawthorne shows himself to be a thinker very much aligned with Nietzsche and Heidegger. As we look specifically at Hawthorne's art, we can see a Heideggerian philosophy emerging, for Hawthorne, like Heidegger, saw in art another way of getting at the truth. We will need to spend some time looking at Heidegger's notion of art, for out of the major existential writers, he was the one who created the most systematic way of discussing art. Art, for Heidegger, must be grounded in being, and as such has a fundamental relation with truth. For, according to Heidegger, "art is truth setting itself to work" ("Origin" 165).

World and Earth

In his most famous treatment of the nature of art, "The Origin of the Work of Art," Martin Heidegger coins two terms that help to explain how he views the function of art: earth and world. That is to say, like much of Heidegger's philosophy, he picks common words and then gives them novel uses and meanings. In this instance, the earth

is the entity from which the work springs forth. “What this word says is not to be associated with the idea of a mass of matter deposited somewhere, or with the merely astronomical idea of a planet. Earth is that whence the arising brings back and shelters everything that arises as such” (Heidegger, “Origin” 168). The earth “shelters” the “mere things” that the work draws forth. If we were to talk about painting, the mere things would be the color used in the painting. For architecture or sculpture, the mere things would be stone or wood. For writing, the mere things are words. The earth draws those mere things into itself and prohibits them from being fully understood. As an example, Heidegger talks about the “mere thing” of color. In his discussion, he says “when we analyze it in rational terms by measuring its wavelengths, it is gone. It shows itself only when it remains undisclosed and unexplained. Earth thus shatters every attempt to penetrate it” (Heidegger, "Origin" 172). A scientist could argue that the color blue consists of a wave length measuring 450-475 nanometers with a frequency of 631-668 terahertz. In the name of objectivity, the color is lost. This mathematical measurement while it tries to define blue obliterates any notion of color. The only way to experience blue is to stop looking at numbers and see it in its "undisclosed" state.

However, mere things, when in the earth, are not noticed. It is only when those things are brought into a world that they begin to be for the first time. The world is the organizing viewpoint that tries to bring the mere things of the earth forward and give them a structure by placing them in a context of other mere things. As Heidegger describes the Greek temple,

> Standing there, the building rests on the rocky ground. This resting of the work draws up out of the rock the obscurity of that rock’s bulky yet

> spontaneous support. Standing there, the building holds its ground against the storm raging above it and so first makes the storm itself manifest in violence. The luster and gleam of the stone, though itself apparently glowing only by the grace of the sun, first brings to radiance the light of the day, the breadth of the sky, the darkness of the night. The temple's firm towering makes visible the invisible space of air. ("Origin" 168)

Each of the mere things that surround and comprise the temple (stone, light, space, storm) are only recognized for what they are when compared to the reality of the temple. It is the world that the temple creates that brings the mere things forth and gives them a meaning. However, it is impossible for a world to structure the entire earth. So a world takes a fragment of the earth and shows it in a world. In his famous example of a Greek temple, Heidegger explains that when stone is brought into the world of the temple, it becomes stone for the first time. When a part of the earth, individuals would pass it over and wouldn't think about it, but when brought into the world of the temple, the stone springs forward and becomes noticeable. In fact, all of the properties of the stone spring forward once brought into the world of the temple. The weight of the stone is first realized when it is supporting a column of the temple. The heft and solidity is seen as it adds form and structure to the sacred space. Whereas, as a part of the earth, those qualities were not apparent as they were covered by the earth

In the art of writing, a word belongs to the earth in that it is simply "there," unnoticed. However, once brought forward and placed into the world of a story, poem, or other artistic creation, the word shows its meaning for the first time as it stands next to other words and objects of the world. The word takes on an importance and a meaning

that can only show itself in the context of the world that it inhabits. This helps to explain how a symbol in a written work of art can function. Take for example the scarlet *A* that adorns Hester's chest. In the earth an *A* is a mere thing. It hides its nature among the other letters and words that are at an artist's disposal. But when Hawthorne calls the letter up and places it in his world of *The Scarlet Letter*, the letter *A* immediately takes on a meaning that can only make sense in that world. But just as the letter needs Hester to find its meaning, all meaning in the story is also informed by the *A*. Hester's identity cannot be separated from the *A*, nor can Dimmesdale's, Pearl's, or Chillingworth's. Likewise, only by looking through the context of the *A* can the reader understand the sternness of Puritan society.

In great art, according to Heidegger, the earth and world are always at strife. The earth is always trying to reclaim and cover up its own as the world is trying to bring the mere things out of the earth. The world tries to escape the earth as the earth tries to bring it back in. At the same time, the earth is only seen as earth when brought out in a world and a world needs to remain grounded in the earth if it is to have meaning at all. In this manner, the "work sets up a world and sets forth the earth" (Heidegger, "Origin" 175). But this strife is what shows truth working, for "the essence of truth is, in itself, a primal strife in which that open center is won within which beings stand and from which they set themselves back into themselves" (Heidegger, "Origin" 180). As a result, behind every great work of art, there is a darkness. Earth as darkness is an entity that tries to cover up or conceal meaning – tries to bring being back into itself. The world tries to unconceal a meaning or open a center for beings to stand. The world must always be striving to establish its meaning in the face of an earth that tries to conceal it. This striving between

earth and world means that a great work of art will be capable of various and diverse meanings. The world of a great work of art will be able to uncover many aspects about the earth, but not necessarily all at the same time. The main reason for this is that human beings bring themselves within the purview of the art. This lets the art achieve its second function, to show human beings “their outlook on themselves” (Heidegger, "Origin" 168). The striving in a work of art lets individuals see meaning spring forward. As Heidegger says about literature,

> the linguistic work, originating in the speech of the people…transforms the people’s saying so that now every living word fights the battle and puts up for decision what is holy and what unholy, what great and what small, what brave and what cowardly, what lofty and what flighty, what master and what slave. ("Origin" 169)

This notion is where Heidegger's existential roots shine forth the clearest. As a reader engages with the world of art, the reader must become a part of that world. In this process the "mere things" of the reader – the reader’s assumptions, beliefs, and intuitions – are also brought forward. In confronting art the participant must also confront him or herself. It is clear to me that Hawthorne sees art as having a similar function. The end goal for both Heidegger and Hawthorne, then, is to use art to get at truth. However, we should not assume that either of them thinks of truth in any sort of transcendent fashion. The truth is one of unconcealment from the concealed. The earth for Heidegger is a blackness that holds all to itself. Hawthorne’s view of reality is equally complex, for Hawthorne’s reality is too complex to be probed or studied in order to find transcendent meaning. For transcendent meaning implies an all-seeing, omniscient perspective – an

objective meaning. Hawthorne, on the other hand, sees the world through a perspectivism that cannot be transcended. Perspectives can shift and be added to allowing truth to reveal itself, but with every shift or change in perspective, other truths are concealed. For this reason, Hawthorne's reality and art, like Heidegger's, must be unconcealed. For Heidegger, the unconcealment comes by building a world that the earth is drawn up into while the earth tries to draw the world back into itself. Hawthorne's tactic is to throw a veil over reality, or over the earth. The veil, I am arguing, functions in the same way as Heidegger's world. The veil, because of its heightened artificiality, draws attention to itself, and for the first time, lets the mere things, the ideas and notions of the earth, that comprise the veil be noticed. The words that make up Hawthorne's veils show themselves for the first time. They show the world of the work of art and hint at a more complex reality behind what they are showing. But it is that deeper reality that is the most important aspect of art. "Heidegger's defining hope for art, in other words, is that works of art could manifest and thereby help usher in a new understanding of the being of entities…that would no longer understand entities either as modern objects to be controlled or as late-modern resources to be optimized" (Thomson, *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity* 63). To this end, Hawthorne agrees. Hawthorne does not want to show reality so that it may be manipulated or refined, he wants the individual to meet reality in all of its richness.

Hawthorne gives a detailed example of his process in the opening chapter of *The Marble Faun*. As the narrator looks at the statue of the faun, he is incapable of critically articulating what it is about the faun that attracts him to the statue. It is at this moment that he points out the key to understanding the art:

> But, if the spectator broods long over the statue, he will be conscious of its spell; all the pleasantness of sylvan life, all the genial and happy characteristics of creatures that dwell in woods and fields, will seem to be mingled and kneaded into one substance, along with the kindred qualities in the human soul. Trees, grass, flowers, woodland streamlets, cattle, deer, and unsophisticated man! The essence of all these was compressed long ago, and still exists, within that discolored marble surface of the Faun of Praxiteles. (iv: 10)

It is the brooding over the statue, or we could say the meditating over or the nursing of feelings for the statue over time that ultimately provides results and insights. The word "brood" also connotes a natural process of an egg hatching. One cannot force an egg to hatch too early or the life inside it will end. Rather, with time and patience, the life or idea will emerge of its own accord. But, as Hawthorne is showing, the idea is not a fully formed idea, as shown with his use of the word "spell." Rather, what comes to him is an understanding of being ("trees, grass, flowers") and existence (those "qualities in the human soul"). With the brooding over a work of art, the truth of reality will unconceal itself to the individual. Ultimately, Hawthorne wishes the same process of unconcealing to happen with all his readers as they brood upon his own art.

For Heidegger, the world and the earth are always in strife. The two can never be a part of each other. For Hawthorne, the antagonism is not there. It is true that Hawthorne's veil will remain an artificial aspect of reality and, in some regard, cannot rejoin it. But the function of his veils is not to forever strive against reality or the earth. Rather, the function is to get the reader to open herself up to the reality that the veil

conceals. The veil, then, acts as a transport to position the reader into a correct relation with reality and then get the reader to move beyond the veil into a relationship with reality. Truth for Hawthorne in art and otherwise, as in Heidegger, comes from the interplay between the concealed and unconcealed. Throughout all of the modes and tricks that Hawthorne creates in order to put on his veil, he still wishes his readers to enter into a relationship with the reality that his text is veiling. Truth, for Hawthorne, is the relationship that binds the subject to the Other. For this reason, when a veil can reveal the reality behind it, it will also reveal a truth about the individual engaging with the veil. As Hawthorne puts it, there needs to be "some true relation" in order to reveal "the inmost ME behind its veil" (i: 4). Without the opening and commitment of one's being to the Other, truth will never be realized. However, one cannot explicitly enter into a true relationship. It must be entered into obliquely. This oblique approach needed for true relationships to form is the purpose and function of the veil.

Slowing and Controlling Pace

Hawthorne's veils are meant to mirror the multifaceted aspects of the world. By presenting multiple aspects of reality, he hopes that his readers will adopt the comportment of shyness (as will be discussed in-depth in chapter two) and let the object before them unfold itself to them. He demands a slower more patient reading from his audience; he wishes them to brood over the art. The commitment of patience will reward the sympathetic reader. Patient sympathy is one of the ways in which the reader is to open up to the text. It is only by opening up to the text that the unconcealed nature of reality can show itself. Hawthorne establishes the desire for a slow reading by manipulating his prose to create controlled gaps and distances in his writing.

It is tempting in any circumstance to get through a task as quickly as possible. Reading is no exception; speed reading tends to be an envied skill. However, Hawthorne distrusts the mindset that delights in making everything easier and more efficient. One need look no further than his updated allegory of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, "The Celestial Railroad," to see his unease with some of the overriding mental characteristics of his day. He sees that those who would take everything fast without the suffering inherent in the journey are the people who cannot see the reality of the world around them. Because Hawthorne's truth is relational rather than conceptual, reading to "get the facts" will only engage the veil and will fail to get to the truth that can be revealed through intuitive sympathy. So Hawthorne works to get his readers to slow down and put in the time to struggle with the veil and begin to build the true relationship.

As a way to get people to slow down, Hawthorne deliberately manipulates his style to prevent a speeding through his prose. Take, for example to first sentence of *The Scarlet Letter*: "A throng of bearded men, in sad-colored garments and gray, steeple-crowned hats, intermixed with women, some wearing hoods, and others bareheaded, was assembled in front of a wooden edifice, the door of which was heavy timbered with oak, and studded with iron spikes" (i: 47). The level of detail that Hawthorne includes in this one sentence becomes distracting. It doesn't really matter that some of the women wear hoods and some do not, but that detail is included. Hawthorne also feels the need to introduce all of the men first and then the women when he could have introduced them simultaneously with "A throng of villagers." Likewise, to say that the people were standing in front of a wooden building and then to describe the fact that the door was also wooden almost seems redundant. The final line about the spikes on the door is tacked to

the sentence like an afterthought. However, by building his sentence in this manner, Hawthorne is able to build a scene slowly and methodically giving his audience information and description that is needed and pertinent to the discussion that not only adds to the sentence but modifies everything that came before it. For this reason, a throng of men that seems to be the most important aspect of the sentence since it starts first is modified to include women. And the understanding of the wooden building changes drastically once it is understood that the door is studded with iron spikes. In this manner Hawthorne frequently interrupts his audience and forces them to go back and re-read the sentence to get the full meaning of the long, segmented sentence. As critics Stouck and Giltrow have observed, “readers may recognize as typical those long sentences with many partitions which, like dams in a channel, block and then release the flow of language” (563). The frequency in which Hawthorne disrupts "the flow of language" is extreme – it is almost constant. But this is done to make the reader recognize the veil of the prose and enter into a true relation with it. The true relationship places the reader in a unique position to be able to notice the carefully constructed gaps that Hawthorne places in his narrative.

Distancing and Inviting

Phenomenological critic Wolfgang Iser talks at great length about narrative gaps. In Iser’s theory of reading, the reader is engaged in a fundamentally constructive act because he or she must reconstruct the material of the narrative based on the text. However, the text is not perfect and creates “narrative gaps” that the reader must fill whether in time or in space or in detail. Iser explains how text, reader, and gaps all intertwine:

> The text is a whole system of such processes, and so, clearly, there must be a place within this system for the person who is to perform the reconstituting. This place is marked by the gaps in the text – it consists in the blanks which the reader is to fill in. They cannot, of course, be filled in by the system itself, and so it follows that they can only be filled in by another system. Whenever the reader bridges the gaps, communication begins. The gaps function as a kind of pivot on which the whole text-reader relationship revolves. Hence the structured blanks of the text stimulate the process of ideation to be performed by the reader on terms set by the text. (169)

In this manner, the act of reading becomes more than a mere subject-object relationship. As Heidegger himself explained, "The presencing [*Anwesen*] of that which appears to our look…is different than the standing of what stands-opposite [us] in the sense of an object" (qtd. in Thomson, *Ontotheology* 64). The reader, to co-opt an idea from Merleau-Ponty, is not thinking about the text. Nor is the reader thinking about him or herself thinking about the text. Rather, the reader is given over to the text wholly. The gaps of the text are filled in by the "system" of the reader. When the two systems combine, the reader enters into the world of the text. Only by entering into the veil of the text can the reader then see the earth that the world of text springs from. In this manner the concealed nature of reality shows itself. The unconcealed truth can only emerge when the reader engages with the veil. It is not solely in the work of art nor is it in the reader. It happens when the two meet in neutral territory – in the gap.

Hawthorne intentionally phrases his sentences not only to slow his readers down but in order to create gaps. The gaps created by the "block and then the release of language" end up altering and modifying sentences which requires the reader to take an active role in construction. Take for a different example the first line of *The Marble Faun*: "Four individuals, in whose fortunes we should be glad to interest the reader, happened to be standing in one of the saloons of the sculpture-gallery, in the Capitol, at Rome" (iv: 5). As the sentence progresses the reader must see four non-descript individuals and then make a decision about whether or not to invest any interest in them. The narrator does say that he would be glad to interest the reader in those individuals, but gives no other information about them. Instead the narrator moves to the setting. However, rather than starting from a large geographic region and then moving to pinpoint a location, a "zoom-in" approach, the narrator chooses to engage in a "zoom-out" approach. This has an unsettling effect. Initially, the reader would have no real idea about location other than a sculpture gallery. However, once the narrator adds that the sculpture gallery is at the Capitol, the ground must necessarily shift under the feet of the reader as expectations change, for sculpture-galleries in hometowns are not the same as ones found in major cities and museums. However, "the Capitol" remains vague. Many countries have buildings and cities that are referred to as simply "the Capitol," so the narrator takes one more step back and qualifies both the sculpture-gallery and the Capitol by locating all "at Rome." The assumptions and visuals the readers have now must change again, for a sculpture gallery at the Capitol in Rome will be of a different type and quality than almost anywhere else. By shifting the scene frequently under the feet of the reader, as it were, Hawthorne is requesting the reader to begin to construct the scene. But what about

the four individuals that the narrator wanted the reader to take interest in? They are not mentioned again for over a page of text. In the interim, the narrator continues to build the scene. By highlighting the importance of the individuals and then ignoring them, the narrator has entrusted the reader to continually fill in the gap created by the four individuals as the narrator builds the scene around them.

As Hawthorne constructs his sentences and scenes in interrupted fashion, he is initially pushing the reader away. However, for the patient reader, the sentence construction is also an invitation for the reader to fill in the gaps and create the holistic picture. The holistic picture of the scene and sentence can only come when the reader slows down and lets Hawthorne's complex syntax show how to create the scene. In this manner, the text creates the gaps for the reader to fill in. But Hawthorne does not limit himself to only create narrative gaps in the sentence structure. He also creates narrative gaps in the story itself as he places differing and contradicting perspectives next to each other.

Far from being sloppy construction, Wolfgang Iser argues the narrative gaps provide a unique way for the audience to gain access to the reality of the story:

> Blanks and negations both control the process of communication in their own different ways: the blanks leave open the connections between perspectives in the text, and so spur the reader into coordinating these perspectives – in other words, they induce the reader to perform basic operations within the text. The various types of negation invoke familiar or determinate elements only to cancel them out. What is canceled, however, remains in view, and thus brings about modifications in the

> reader's attitude toward what is familiar or determinate – in other words, he is guided to adopt a position in relation to the text. (169)

In his search to find ways to make gaps in his narratives, Hawthorne uses the perspectives of his characters to enlighten and hinder the audience's perspective. The perspectives encountered in Hawthorne's tales are always being trapped by other perspectives or hindered by obstacles to that perspective. *The Marble Faun*, more than the other romances, relies on the negation caused by differing perspectives. Each character sees a certain aspect of the other characters that the other characters do not see themselves. As T.S. Eliot remarked about this function in Hawthorne, "Hawthorne was acutely sensitive to the situation; that he did grasp character through the relation of two or more persons to each other" (161). Stemming from this insight, Eliot continues on to say that "He is the one English-writing predecessor of James whose characters are *aware* of each other (161 italics in original). Indeed, the characters of *The Marble Faun* seem to be the first characters in Hawthorne's fictions who really understand what it is to live and be in relationships. They talk to and about one another almost endlessly. They are aware that their lives are entwined in the lives of the other characters. For this reason they seek each other out and avoid each other. Unlike some of his early tales, a plot device doesn't necessarily drive the action in the story as much as the desire of the characters to be known by the other characters. But this is where the gaps of narration enter in as well. Each character in the story sheds some light on the complete nature of one of the others. But none of the characters truly understand the complete nature of anyone else. It is only by placing all the descriptions and perspectives together that the reader can hope to come to a more complete (but not the complete) understanding of a character. Take Miriam, the

most complex character in the novel, for example. As one of Hawthorne's dark heroines, Miriam, like Zenobia, is signaled as a negation when we, as the readers, are given hints that Miriam is an assumed name (iv: 429-30). But as the characters interact with her and talk to and about her, we, as readers, come to a more complete (although not perfect) understanding of who she is.

Hilda, at the beginning of the story, is counted as Miriam's greatest friend, and Hilda reciprocates that same sentiment. When Kenyon asks Hilda who she thinks Miriam is, Hilda is quick to respond, "I am sure that she is kind, good, and generous – a true and faithful friend, whom I love dearly, and who loves me as well!" (iv: 108); however, Kenyon, is not as easily convinced. He sees in Miriam a mystery to solve. In fact to him, Miriam shows a much different individual. Instead of a warm and trusting friend, Kenyon sees in Miriam a much troubled woman. In fact, Miriam confides to Kenyon and to no one else that she is "lonely, lonely, lonely! There is a secret in my heart that burns me - that tortures me! Sometimes, I fear to go mad of it! Sometimes, I hope to die of it!" (iv: 128). And yet to Donatello, the supposed faun of the story, she shows an even darker and more sinister side of herself. As he tries to woo her and win her love and affection, she warns him, "If you were wise, Donatello, you would think me a dangerous person…if you follow my footsteps, they will lead you to no good. You ought to be afraid of me" (iv: 80). As the mysterious woman of the story, Miriam shows herself to be three very different people depending on who she is with. For Hilda, she is warm, for Kenyon, scared and weary, and for Donatello dark and dangerous, yet the audience can piece each of these together for an overarching view of who Miriam is. As effective as the narrative

gaps are in keeping characters shrouded in mystery, Hawthorne uses the same technique in referring to important events such as the act of adultery in *The Scarlet Letter*.

Within *The Scarlet Letter*, the act of adultery is never explicitly talk about between Hester and Dimmesdale. They hint and allude to it, but it remains a central point that draws the characters together. Another way of thinking of this gap or negation is using the artistic term negative space. Negative space is a concept that states that a picture or image is perceived although it is not shown. Rather, the images or coloring surrounding the central idea all coalesce around the central point making the object that is not there perceivable. A famous example of this is an optical illusion that when seen one way is a vase but looked at another way is a picture of two faces looking at each other. In neither instance is a vase or faces drawn in, but the outlines and the coloring of the picture help the reader see the various objects. Within *The Scarlet Letter*, the reader must infer what the adultery is based on the hints the characters give without directly discussing it. Ultimately, Hawthorne is able to portray an act that, although viewed as a sin by many in the community, has the power to bind two souls together without describing or directly talking about the act. The adultery becomes the negative space of the novel; it is never shown, but the act makes every act in the novel coalesce around it. By refusing to talk about the actual act of adultery, Hawthorne is able to maintain a distance from it that gives it the consecration that Hester and Dimmesdale claim it to have (i:193). With his next novel *The House of the Seven Gables* Hawthorne is more interested in how the narrative gaps can obscure a character more or less altogether.

In *The House of the Seven Gables*, the character Hepzibah is largely described through gaps. The narrator, who does most of the character descriptions, hardly ever

bases his descriptions of Hepzibah upon immediate experience. However, if readers are not careful, they can misread the narrative gaps caused by the narrator's limited perspective and simply think that the narrator is omniscient. But the gaps in the narrator's perspective have serious consequences. Hepzibah becomes, in these gaps, an unknown Other. Take for example the first description that the narrator gives of Hepzibah as he describes and comments on Hepzibah's daily toilet. Rather than an omniscient narrator to tell the readers what Hepzibah feels, the narrator sticks to a very limited perspective, his own. It becomes perfectly clear that the narrator is trapped in his own peculiar perspective, and yet, the audience is left to take this narrator at his word. Implicit trust in the narrator, however, is problematic as it becomes clear that the narrator possesses no special insight and can only relate and interpret what his own five senses tell him. The problems of trusting the "disembodied listener" become apparent as the narrator remains outside Hepzibah's chamber and only listens to the sounds she makes as she prepares for the day. As a consequence of his eavesdropping the narrator is able to hear "*inaudible*…poor Miss Hepzibah's gusty sighs. *Inaudible*, the creeking of her joints…and *inaudible*, too...that almost agony of prayer" (ii: 30 emphasis added). Faced with this description, the reader must answer this question: How can someone standing outside a door listening hear anything that is inaudible? Immediately, a gap opens up between the perspective of the narrator and that of Hepzibah. Hawthorne furthers this gap by showing the limits to the narrator's power. One such limit is that of the narrator's knowledge: "the maiden lady's devotions are concluded. Will she now issue forth over the threshold of our story? Not yet, by many moments" (ii: 31). The narrator with the question takes on an almost reporting role in the story. He wishes to convey that the facts

will be given only as they happen in real-time. But fact based reporting is quickly brushed away as the narrator hears the "rustle of stiff silks" and immediately "[suspects] Miss Hepzibah, moreover, of taking a step upward into a chair, in order to give heedful regard to her appearance, on all sides, and at full length, in the oval, dingy-framed toilet glass, that hangs above her table. Truly! Well, indeed! Who would have thought it!" (ii: 31). Far from being an objective reporter, the narrator, based on a sound heard constructs an entire scene, a supposition, about what Hepzibah was doing and then grows indignant about Hepzibah's supposed actions. The narrator's biased attitude towards Hepzibah continues to grow until he begins to narrate how Hepzibah sets her store in order.

As she struggles to prepare everything, she accidently spills a container of marbles. Immediately, the narrator begins to reveal his true character: "heaven help our poor old Hepzibah, and forgive us for taking a ludicrous view of her position! As her rigid and rusty frame goes down upon its hands and knees, in quest of the absconding marbles, we positively feel so much the more inclined to shed tears of sympathy, from the very fact that we must needs turn aside and laugh at her!" (ii: 37). It becomes clear that the narrator cannot be trusted to give an unbiased opinion of Hepzibah, for we see his emotion and personality begin to color all that he tells us. We can easily imagine another narrator who would have genuinely felt Hepzibah's pain and frustration. We can also see a narrator who ruthlessly degrades Hepzibah. All these narrators will only be giving their own personal opinions and judgments of "poor old Hepzibah;" we cannot say that Hawthorne's narrator gives an unbiased accounting of Hepzibah's actions. The fact that the narrator wishes to laugh at her plight (yet realizes that laughing would be improper), shows us a personality, a character, and a perspective emerging. The narrator becomes a

character within the story as he relates, judges, and comments on much of the actions and motives of the people in the story. But his subjectivity in the story acts as the veil that the story needs to conceal the reality of the story. There is no way to find out the reality of Hepzibah or anything else that the story is trying to say without acknowledging the veil of the narrator, the gaps that it creates, and then engaging with those gaps to come to an understanding of reality.

Not content with the flawed third person narrator, Hawthorne took his flawed narrator a step further in his next romance. *The Blithedale Romance* is a first-person narrative that is constantly running into the gaps of narrative as the narrator's perspective is constantly blocked and shut off from the main action of the story. The famous example of this is when Coverdale witnesses the discussion between Westervelt and Zenobia from his hotel window. He is too far away to hear anything and is only able to make out hand gestures and body language when they are close to the window. However, once he is caught spying on them, Zenobia closes the blinds and Coverdale is left out of the drama. As it turns out, this is one of the more important scenes in the story, for it is when Zenobia contrives to get Priscilla back into the hands of Westervelt. However, this is unknown to Coverdale and the audience for most of the story. This is the main problem with Coverdale: being the narrator, he is still really a minor character in the drama that is central to the story that he is telling. He is never present for any of the major decisions of the novel and hears everything only after the fact. In fact, the major questions in the novel are supposedly answered in a scene that he misses.

As he travels back to Blithedale after Priscilla's rescue, he stumbles upon Hollingsworth, Zenobia, and Priscilla. Zenobia remarks that she has just been put on trial which leads Coverdale to ponder,

> What subjects had been discussed here? All, no doubt, that, for so many months past, had kept my heart and my imagination idly feverish. Zenobia's whole character and history; the true nature of her mysterious connection with Westervelt; her later purposes towards Hollingsworth, and, reciprocally, his in reference to her; and, finally, the degree in which Zenobia had been cognizant of the plot against Priscilla, and what, at last, had been the real object of that scheme. (iii: 215)

Every question that Coverdale had for the entirety of the book could have been answered had he been at the meeting. It isn't a coincidence that the questions above are the same questions that the audience has as well. Since the audience is trapped in the perspective of Coverdale, the audience is just as limited as he is. However, the readers are not Coverdale and are well aware of the gaps that are formed between Coverdale's reporting and his judgments. As will be shown later on, Hawthorne uses Coverdale to his advantage in order to convince his audience to move beyond Coverdale and enter the gaps of the narration. If the reader enters the gaps of perspective, she or he will not only be able to stitch the gaps together, but the intuitive sympathy that Hawthorne finds so important can enter in and bring the reader into a closer relationship with reality.

It is this relationship with reality that is at the heart of Hawthorne's philosophy and style. It is through the gaps and blanks in the text that Hawthorne can signal to his audience their part.

The gaps and distancing veil the story while inviting the reader to take an active relationship with the narrative by filling in the gaps that the narrative leaves. The gaps hide and obscure meaning, but they also invite the reader into the world that is being discussed. As Winfried Fluck explains,

> For Hawthorne, fiction becomes the space where this possibility – an art that does not shy away from moral commitment but allows for a distance that provides the basis for responsible individual choices – can be configured…his romances proceed by a carefully crafted system of expositional gaps, move between changing modes of representation, and stage unresolved conflicts of meanings … [which creates a] nourishing ground for individual growth through the constant challenge of interpretive choice. (431)

The moral commitment of the reader is the ultimate invitation that the veil is making. As Hawthorne's art hides the reality beneath it through his various techniques, it is ultimately asking the reader to engage with it in a meaningful way. The slow, thoughtful openness that Hawthorne requires his readers to take is a form of moral commitment. As the reader fills in the narrative gaps, and maneuvers around Hawthorne's prose, the reality that the veil is hinting at can begin to be conceived. The world of the art will continue to expand to show more of the earth which it is made from as the reader interacts with it. Ultimately, the moral commitment is the comportment of the reader to engage with the text in a way that refuses to try and force a meaning from the text but allow the text to unfold a variety of meanings based on the navigations of the reader. This moral commitment with reality is the heart of the existential concept of authenticity – it is

also at the heart of Hawthorne's conception of truth. In wishing to bring his readers into an intuitive sympathy with the reality of the text, Hawthorne wishes for his readers to engage with reality in a meaningful way that will both imbue reality and their own choices with weight and meaning. But, like the Existentialists after him, Hawthorne realizes that it is impossible to force someone into an act of existential authenticity. An individual must chose authenticity, for this reason, Hawthorne is careful to construct a style that always positions the readers to see meaning making as a shared responsibility between the subject and her reality.

Authority and Ambiguities

It is tempting to say that since Hawthorne has spent so much effort in crafting a prose that would position a reader into a specific relationship with the text that Hawthorne has a specific intent and meaning in mind for each of his stories. If this is the case, it seems that the reader could be more efficient in interpreting the stories if he could simply find the authorial intent. Hawthorne, like many of the Romantics, was keenly aware of this tendency in readers. It is through looking at the problem of authority that we can see to what extent Hawthorne is in step with the other American Romanticists and where he parts ways in an effort to create his own method of deflecting the search for authorial intent. I will show that Hawthorne is able to contribute to and even propel the shifts from a centralized authority to a more egalitarian one, but he stops short and will not follow other Romantic thinkers like Emerson into a radical subjective grounding of authority. Rather, he wants to locate the egalitarian authority in the ethical commitments between individual subjects.

Bernard Rosenthal argues that

> The common denominator of American Romanticism…may be found in the attempt to create a private world free from the constraints of time and history. Romantic writers want to reject predestination, mechanism, or any theory of history that denies individual preeminence in the shaping of events. (84)

Although that Rosenthal is a bit too enthusiastic in trying to claim that the Romantics tried to separate themselves from all history by placing full authority on the creative powers of the self, his point is still taken. There is a clear call in all of the writers for control over their own lives and works. Although the movement of authority from traditional, established institutions to the subjective individual has been an ongoing theme throughout modern history[6], the Romantics moved in a more radical subjective direction as they focused more on the intuition and feelings of the individual as a means whereby truth may be found. By focusing on these subjective avenues to truth, the Romantics created the authority to act and interpret meaning independent of traditional authority and, to some extent, of objective thought and reason. It is no wonder, then, that many of the Romantics were individuals who were trying to reform religion and society to make more room for the emotional, non-rational individual. As Mark Vasquez notes in his introduction to his study on authority and reform movements of the nineteenth century,

> Throughout the nineteenth century, American culture was shifting from the authority of the oral text to the authority of the written text, and the voices of authority – that of the minister and the teacher – moved from the

[6] In this sense, a clear indicator of the rise of the individual can be seen in the religious world of Luther (1483- 1546) who claimed that trained clergy are not needed in order to intercede between the individual and God. In philosophy, the rise of the individual in modern philosophy is seen with Descartes (1596-1650) who uses the subjective individual as the starting point of all knowledge.

> sphere of the church and school into the lyceum and into the literary marketplace. (xxi)

What these moves have in common is a move away from a communal transaction with a clear authoritarian figure such as a classroom with one teacher to a vague public realm where many voices can publish in the literary landscape as authority figures. Because of this transition, the individual must decide where the authoritative voice is. Once the move is made, it is easy to see how the authoritative voice becomes the subject who is making the choice about which voice or text to listen to.

Hawthorne participates fully in this movement away from an established authority by refusing to be the authority and, on some level, by rejecting the traditional places where authority resides: society and the church. Although "Hawthorne…never renounced, let alone denounced, the society and culture of his native land…in various respects, he was a sayer of *No*. In his work, he examined not only the nature of the Puritan social and moral order of the 17th century, but also the nature of the 19th" (Staebler 53). Hawthorne critiques much of the Puritan cultural authority that he saw leading to his ancestors' acts of violence. But he sees the Puritan authority spilling into his day as can be seen by his first mature romance set in his present.

> *The House of the Seven Gables* is set at a site emblematic of failed cultural authority. But an important difference between this house and the other ruins Hawthorne has shown to his readers has to do with the historical context of the novel. Where the earlier [works] grounded their dramas of failed authoritarian representational schemes in the past…*The House of the Seven Gables* is set in the present, and a vestige of its cultural authority

> continues to exert its influence over the inhabitants of Pyncheon-street. (Harrison 69)

It is clear that Hawthorne sees the house and everything in it as failed cultural authority since everything about and in the house is represented by death. Even the principle inhabitants, Clifford and Hepzibah, are often referred to as ghosts and dead. The grip of the past's authority can only be excised when Judge Pyncheon, the symbol of the authoritarian system, dies (Harrison 78).

However, as an author, Hawthorne has potentially placed himself in Judge Pyncheon's place as the judge of meaning and the source of authority. For this reason, he often attempts to hide meaning. Take, for example, his treatment of Hester's *A* in *The Scarlet Letter.* He confides in the audience, during "The Custom House," that he "On Hester's story…bestowed much thought. It was the subject of my meditations for many hour, while pacing to and fro across my room, or traversing, with a hundredfold repetition, the long extent from the front-door of the Custom-House to the side-entrance and back again" (i: 33-34). Even though he spent hours thinking through the story to the point of creating "motives and modes of passions that influenced the characters," he still remains silent about the fundamental meaning of the story (i: 33*).* When he is tasked to talk about the meaning of the actual scarlet letter, he demurs; "It had been intended, there could be no doubt, as an ornamental article of dress; but how it was to be worn, or what rank, honor, and dignity, in by-past times, were signified by it, was a riddle which…I saw little hope of solving" (i: 31). It seems unrealistic to expect that an author who has spent so much time thinking about the story and imagining motives and moods of characters would have nothing to say about the central symbol of the story. As Les Harrison points

out in his discussion of the narrator of "The Custom-House" and the narrator's exasperating ignorance of meaning behind the found *A*,

> Even if we protest that Hawthorne…knows all along the purpose of the scarlet letter and that his puzzlement is feigned…his determination not to fix the meaning of the letter at the start of the story is… significant as it shows that he is willing to locate the authority to interpret the meaning of the artifact within his audience. (63)

It is by refusing to give a straight answer to the meaning of the symbol that Hawthorne can best let the authority rest, partly, with each of his readers. He is not the only writer to do this. Melville is famous in *Moby Dick* for playing with various meanings of symbols. In his shorter works "Bartleby, the Scrivener" and "Benito Cereno" he also creates multiple layers of interpretation based in ambiguity (Crane 89, 73). Poe also works deep ambiguity into his works, most notably *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym,* in order to resist an easy (or any) authorial intention (Crane 78). And, as critic Agnieszka Monnet has pointed out, all three were following in the tradition established by Charles Brockden Brown in purposely obscuring meaning and interpretation so that the authority of interpretation would rest with the readers (27-8). By letting the authority rest with their readers, Hawthorne and the other Romantic writers are bowing to the inherent worth of the readers as subjective individuals.

But Hawthorne does not let all meaning rest with the readers. He purposefully complicated his stories, forcing his readers to slow down and engage the stories on their own terms. Hawthorne is infamous for self-contradicting and creating paradoxes for his characters and in his narration. The paradoxes and contradictions that Hawthorne places

in his stories force the reader once again to confront the gaps in the narrative and take a central role in the creation of the story. Take, for example, the conundrum of whether or not Dimmesdale actually revealed a scarlet letter on his own chest. By playing the perspectives of the crowd off one another, Hawthorne is able to create contradictions that the reader must resolve. The narrator reports that "most of the spectators testified to having seen, on the breast of the unhappy minister, a SCARLET LETTER – the very semblance of that worn by Hester Prynne – imprinted in the flesh" (i: 258). The narrator then goes on to catalogue the various interpretations of this scene before he questions the entire discussion of Dimmesdale's letter. He draws upon "highly respectable witnesses" to contradict the experience of the other spectators (i: 259). The "respectable witnesses" "who were spectators of the whole scene, and professed never once to have removed their eyes from the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale, denied that there was any mark whatever on his breast, more than on a new-born infant's" (i: 259). Through this contradiction, Hawthorne positions the readers to choose which experience they trust. On the one hand, the readers can choose from the majority of people, but on the other hand, the readers can choose the "highly respectable" people[7]. The readers must question the experiences presented and the motives for presenting them. Questioning the narrative opens up space for Hawthorne to invite the reader to enter into a dialogue. Rather than a passive recipient of the prose, the self- contradicting prose looks toward the reader in order to resolve the contradictions and find meaning in the text.

[7] The fact that the narrator turns around and immediately calls the highly respectable witnesses into question may show the reader how to resolve the contradiction, but it does nothing to close the narrative gap. If anything, new gaps open as the reader must ask why the narrator included the experience of the highly respectable people if he will immediately dismiss it. In this manner the contradiction changes into a paradox.

By forcing the audience to take an active role in the creation of the story, Hawthorne is underlining the Heideggerian claim that "art is truth setting itself to work" (Heidegger, "Origin" 165). How the reader interprets the art will disclose the existential characteristics of the reader and the story. Through the reader's meaning making, certain aspects of the story will be concealed while others are unconcealed. That unconcealment will not only show the text to the reader, it will also show the reader himself. We can see the concealing and unconcealing of interpretation as we look at the ambiguities that fill Hawthorne's stories.

Looking at *The House of the Seven Gables* we see a central ambiguity at the heart of the story that will affect how the story is interpreted based on the choices of the reader. Interpretation itself becomes one of the great themes of the book as seen through Holgrave and his daguerreotypes. Holgrave has great faith in the power of his daguerreotypes to show the truth of any subject because he sees the power of his art coming from the sun itself. As he shows Phoebe a picture of Judge Pyncheon, he comments, "There is a wonderful insight in heaven's broad and simple sunshine. While we give credit only for depicting the merest surface, it actually brings out the secret character with a truth no painter would ever venture upon, even if he could detect it" (ii: 91). However, Phoebe has different ideas about the product of the daguerreotype, "I don't much like pictures of that sort – they are so hard and stern; besides dodging away from the eye, and trying to escape altogether. They are conscious of looking very unamiable, I suppose, and therefore hate to be seen" (ii: 91). With these two interpretations of the daguerreotype, we see the tension of ambiguity, if not flat-out contradiction, in the story. On the one hand, the art brings the inner truth of the individual out into the open. On the

other hand, the art covers up and masks any truth as it tries to hide from perception "and escape altogether."

Since the daguerreotypist, Holgrave, is constantly referred to in the book as "the artist," Hawthorne is subtly asking his readers to think about these differing interpretations of the role of art itself. Does art, as it "rigidly subject[s] itself to laws" bring the inner truth out into the light of the world (ii: 1), or because the artist "may so manage his atmospheric medium as to bring out or mellow the lights and deepen and enrich the shadows of the picture" end up distorting the truth to the point that it is always "dodging away from the eye?" (ii: 1, 91). This ambiguity is seen in full force in Hawthorne's statement, "A high truth…brightening at every step, and crowning the final development of a work of fiction, may add an artistic glory, but is never any truer, and seldom any more evident, at the last page than at the first" (ii: 2-3). We could interpret this line to mean that the truth in the work appears in equal measure on every page of the work. The phrase "seldom any more evident" can be taken to mean that no great epiphany will come at the last page that is not present in the first. Through this interpretation, truth in art permeates the work as its "crowning…artistic glory." However, with a change in perspective, the same phrase can simply mean that no truth will be evident at any time in the story, for if no truth is apparent in the last page, it will not be found in the first page either. By saying that truth in art "may add an artistic glory," Hawthorne is calling the usefulness of truth, or a moral, in art into question. The reader once again finds himself in the dilemma of seeing art as a way to get to the inner truth or as a medium that obscures and hides from the truth.

With this ambiguity in mind, how should the ending of this book be interpreted? Many modern critics have disliked the ending of *The House of The Seven Gables.* Michael Gilmore surveys critics of Hawthorne from F.O. Matthiessen to William Charvat to simply say "the fairy-tale ending of *The House of the Seven Gables* has not satisfied the novel's modern readers" (172). He further goes on to agree with and quote Charvat that "Hawthorne, in concluding the book as he did, was yielding to the world's wish that in stories everything should turn out well" (172). Although the "fairy-tale" ending is the one most readily seen, we need to ask if that is the only one visible. I argue that Hawthorne cannot simply give an unambiguous happy ending. There exists in the text clues for other interpretations. We must look at how Hawthorne shows the ambiguity of his statement that truth is "seldom any more evident, at the last page than at the first" by showing how the last page of the novel either supports the truths of the first page or undermines them.

Hawthorne begins the romance by giving his moral: "the truth, namely, that the wrong-doing of one generation lives into the successive ones" (ii: 2). This "truth" is played out throughout the novel until the last page when the descendants of Maule and Pyncheon reconciled and "Alice Pyncheon – after witnessing these deeds, this by-gone woe, and this present happiness, of her kindred mortals – had given one farewell touch of a spirit's joy upon her harpsichord, as she floated heavenward from the House of the Seven Gables!" (ii: 319). By focusing on Alice Pyncheon and the "by-gone woe," the narrator can summarize all the wrong doings that were heaped upon all the successive generations only to be ended with a marriage. Thus the truth is just as evident on the first page as it is on the last. However, this interpretation has seeds of deep ambiguity in it.

Rather than showing the inner truth to the reader, it may be obscuring the truth. To see how truth is obscured, we must look at Holgrave. We must be careful about his intentions. He had hidden his family connections from everyone. He arrived at the house before Phoebe arrived, so she could not be his original draw, which would rule out the idea that the story is a strict love story. Phoebe is unsure of Holgrave's motives as she remarks that she does not know if he wishes Hepzibah and Clifford "well or ill" (ii: 216). She continues "You talk as if this old house were a theatre; and you seem to look at Hepzibah's and Clifford's misfortunes, and those of generations before them, as a tragedy…to be played exclusively for your amusement!...the play costs the performers too much – and the audience is too cold-hearted!" (ii: 217). It is the cold-hearted aspect of Holgrave that should cause concern. We know through the story that the Maule family are renowned wizards. Holgrave clearly shows that he does have power. He almost brings Phoebe completely under his control, and Hepzibah is "conscious of a force in Holgrave" (ii: 212, 244). In fact Holgrave himself admits that "I represent the old wizard, and am probably as much a wizard as ever he was" (ii: 316). With this in mind, we should read the last page differently than the traditional interpretation. The ending paragraph begins with Maule's well "throwing up a succession of kaleidoscopic pictures" which predict the future (ii: 319). Among these images is the wizard Holgrave "and the village-maiden, over whom [Holgrave] had thrown love's web of sorcery" (ii: 319). Rather than thinking of two people falling in love, the text ends rather one-sidedly. Through the use of the words "thrown" and "sorcery" the narrator underscores the idea that Holgrave has in fact put Phoebe under his spell. Rather than resorting to mesmerism, Holgrave chose a method that would captivate both Phoebe's mind and her soul. In this reading, the ending

shows no such truth of the effects of wrong-doing playing out through the generations until the wrong is righted; it uses "truth" as a smoke screen to hide the reality of one family's complete revenge over another.

Both readings can be readily seen and argued for, and in a certain sense both readings are true. It is how one interprets the novel and the role of art that establishes the truth, for truth is found in the ambiguous concealing and unconcealing of the art at work. Through the constant shifting ground of the narration, Hawthorne is able to destabilize the grounding of authority. Through his ambiguous phrases, he places the burden of interpretation on his readers. In practice Hawthorne is signaling to his audience the same thing that Zarathustra explicitly told his followers: question everything – including his own authority (Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke* 68-69).

However, questioning authority does not mean that the reader may make any interpretation he wishes. Hawthorne wants an art form that allows him to keep working with ambiguities while at the same time invites his readers into a relationship with the text instead of being passive recipients of "a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience" (ii: 1). For these reasons, Hawthorne chose to write romances. Although the ambiguity of the text begins to create a veil that invites the readers to engage with the text, the genre and style of romance does the same thing. For in each of his prefaces, Hawthorne explains the nature of romance signaling to the reader that he will need to engage with the conventions of romance if he wishes to appreciate, let alone understand, the story. In this manner, the veil of the romance is the most pervasive method that Hawthorne uses to both give himself the latitude needed to operate and to introduce the ambiguity that he desires.

The Romance

In his discussion of the American romance, Richard Chase argues that "Romance is…a kind of 'border' fiction, whether the field of action is in the neutral territory between civilization and the wilderness…or whether…the field of action is conceived not so much as a place as a state of mind…where the actual and imaginary intermingle" (19). It is because the romance is a border fiction that it approaches both aesthetics and epistemology differently from that of the novel. Stylistically, the romance "feels free to render reality in less volume and detail [than the novel]" (Chase 13). The great levels of cataloged detail found in the British realist novel are absent within the style of the American romance. Rather than focusing on making the prose create a realistic, outer world for the characters to live in and the readers to recognize, "The question of romance versus novel turns into and illuminates a moral question: the meaning and value of the inner life…The American romancer's concern with the deeper art is synonymous with his search for the buried life" (Porte 97). It is the fascination with the inner life, coupled with the desire to navigate a borderland, which leads the American romancer to explore, in sometimes a melodramatic manner, the relationships between characters. As Richard Chase comments, "[Characters] will on the whole be shown in ideal relation – that is, they will share emotions only after these have become abstract or symbolic. To be sure, characters may become profoundly involved in some way…but it will be a deep and narrow, an obsessive, involvement" (13). By looking at the abstracted manner of relations in the romance, the author becomes a dabbler in epistemology, for building an inner world meant to explore the border between the inner and ideal, the actual and the imaginary, is an invitation to ask the question: what is true? The novel, largely, rests on

conventions that reader and author accept as conveying truth. The focus on the verisimilitude of reality by cataloging details gives to the reader an empirical experience. However, the focus on empirical sensation, and by extension the grounding of truth, is largely absent in the romance. The reader is unmoored from the empirical groundings of truth enough to engage in the borderland. In this manner the romance is fundamentally a questioning or an exploratory art form. It asks the readers to navigate the truth claims being presented rather than to merely or passively accept them. As Joel Porte writes, “Romance art, we must remember, is oblique art, the true meaning often contradicting what apparently is being said” (110). When we see romance in this manner, it becomes clear why Hawthorne would gravitate toward this epistemic and aesthetic style. As critics David Stouck and Janet Giltrow argue, “the term romance, then, for Hawthorne connotes latitude and ambiguity, and he makes of it a poetics for his fiction” (561).

Hawthorne made it clear that he wrote romances and not novels. By making this distinction, Hawthorne signals to his readers that they must approach the story differently from the way they approach a novel. The romance is not merely a genre of the fantastical; rather, it is also an approach to seeing the world. As Hawthorne himself mentions in the “Preface” to *The House of the Seven Gables*, a romance has both its own materials and fashion (ii: 1). Materials or genre has received the largest focus among critics since even Hawthorne in the preface to *The Marble Faun* seems to focus on the material by claiming that it needs "ruin and decay" (iv: 3). The focus on materials is also seen in “The Custom House” introducing *The Scarlet Letter* when Hawthorne claims that the romance needs moonbeams and shadows (i: 35). Looking at Hawthorne’s prefaces, we can see how he signals to his readers the manner in which they need to approach his art. This manner, as

we will see, is one in which it is required that the reader take an active role in making meaning with the text. The romance continues, for Hawthorne, to merge aesthetics and epistemology together. In so doing, it invites the reader to engage in choices of interpretation and engagement that will have existential consequences.

Looking closely at the famous passage in "The Custom-House" about moonlight in a familiar room, we can see Hawthorne laying out a style and a rationale for his romances. The moonlight that Hawthorne describes as has specific function. It "spiritualize[s]" everyday objects to make them "things of intellect" (i: 35). This is done by taking the common and everyday objects and events and infusing them with "a quality of strangeness and remoteness" (i: 35). These two concepts are the key to Hawthorne's mode of fiction. The distance and the strangeness is what places the veil between the observed and observer. This distance is what would make the reader "discover a form, beloved, but gone hence, now sitting quietly in a streak of this magic moonshine, with an aspect that would make us doubt whether it had returned from afar, or had never once stirred from our fireside" (i: 36). But ambiguity is crafted to have an air of mystery about it, or as Samuel Chase Coale puts it, "riddles, secrets, mysterious backgrounds, and compulsive quests suggest even more possibilities, the romance vision of the open-ended text that continue indefinitely, that enhances and mesmerizes, that is not only itself a veil but that has several other veils behind it" (128). However, the veil is not there to only distance the Actual from the Imaginary, it is to create a neutral territory of meeting between the reader and the reality being veiled.

The distance is the "neutral territory… where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other" (i: 36). The ordering of the

words in this phrase is paramount. Hawthorne believes that insight can only come from an intuitive sympathy, an opening of oneself to the world. This is shown in the concept of the romance. The imaginary is not to probe or violate the realm of the Actual. Nor is the Actual supposed to trespass into to realm of the Imaginary. In this manner, we can see the relationship between the Actual and Imaginary as the Heideggerian strife between world and earth, but Hawthorne does not end at the strife. He explores what will happen if, instead of eternal conflict, the world and the earth could open themselves to each other. The Actual must open itself up and willingly draw part of the Imaginary into it just as the Imaginary must draw the Actual into it. This is intuitive sympathy at work in fiction. But in this mode we can easily place the reader and the text. Just as there is strife between earth and world, there is strife between art and viewer. For Hawthorne, this strife must be overcome by meeting in the neutral territory. The reader, as the Actual, must open herself to the Imaginary, or art, and imbue herself with the nature of the Imaginary. At the same time, the reader's openness should let the Imaginary imbue itself with the Actual's nature.

The strangeness and the distance of the romance creates the means whereby the reader can open up to the Imaginary; it creates the neutral territory. As Richard Chase writes about the style of *The Scarlet Letter*, "[the scenes] seem frozen, muted, and remote. There is an abyss between these scenes and the reader, and they are like the events in a pageant or a dream" (70). The distance will separate the text and reader, creating the neutral territory, until the reader agrees to sympathetically open herself up to the Other. In this manner, the veil of ambiguity becomes the means of both obscuring and inviting. By placing meaning making in neutral territory, Hawthorne can create an

environment that is open to an intuitive sympathy and allow the reader the space needed for moral commitment and authentic choice.

Hawthorne does not hide the fact that he is working in borderlands. As he talks about moonshine, ruins, and shadows as the needed materials of romance, he points to the artificiality of the story. It is in the artificiality of the story that the veil functions, but it is by pointing to the artificialness of the veil that the veil becomes fundamentally enticing. "Hawthorne…reveals the artifice of his texts to disorient the reader who lurches between fascination and interpretation. He thus initiates a strategy of hidden things, creating an aura of mystery crafted to seduce and lure the reader into participating in all the text's various poses and perspectives, which always remain elusive and out of reach" (Coale 127-28). This stands apart from the idea that the reader can find all meaning through authorial intent (an idea that Hawthorne's own comments upon his work call into question many times). Hawthorne as author wishes to hide himself completely from the reader behind the veils of the text.

Hawthorne specifically talks about hiding himself and his intent behind the veils of his text in the preface to *The Marble Faun* when Hawthorne, as author, tells the audience that "I stand upon ceremony, now, and, after stating a few particulars about the work which is here offered to the Public, must make my most reverential bow, and retire behind the curtain" (iv: 2). Although the metaphor switches from a veil to a theatre curtain, the meaning remains the same. The pictures presented in the romance are all surface. The images are presented as veils to obscure the meaning behind the images. It is easy to get wrapped up in the image, but one mustn't forget that behind every play, there is a director and some representation of a reality. The veils can help obscure and entice

into facing reality, the earth, or being, but Hawthorne is careful to make sure that a forceful probing into the text will never reveal any of those things. Of this point critic Edgar Dryden warns of Hawthorne's tales that "no matter how interpretations proliferate…something will always remain hidden" (134). That is because the fundamental task of the earth is to conceal and protect its own. Reality cannot be fully understood through the artificial worlds of the veil. In this manner, Hawthorne's art approaches an existential aesthetic, for the reader must remain open and rely on a sympathetic intuition if she ever hopes to have the veil of text parted to reveal what the reality, authorial or not, behind the romance is. More importantly, through the interacting with the veil, the reader is brought face to face with her own choices. By mixing the Imaginary into the Actual, the reader is able to see what type of person she is.

Truth is given through the veils that conceal the truth at the same time that they reveal it, and only the choices and outlook of the reader can determine what points of truth will be concealed or unconcealed. As the reader engages with the "borderlands" of the romance and navigates the neutral territory that Hawthorne has created, she must make a choice of meaning and interpretation. In this manner, the Other of the text will show not only what it is but who the reader is as well. If we were to ignore the fashion and just focus on the materials, we would miss a great deal of Hawthorne's work. Ruins, moonbeams, and fairylands are not enough to create a Hawthornean romance. How those materials are used is just as important.

The Allegory

Usually, when someone complains about Hawthorne's style or how he uses his materials, the complaints focus on his use of allegory. In his famous critique of

Hawthorne, Poe says that Hawthorne "was infinitely too fond of allegory…the strain of allegory…completely overwhelms the greater number of his subjects, and …interferes with the direct conduct of absolutely all" ("Review" 24). However, if we understand why Hawthorne used allegory as a primary mode of writing, we will see that Poe's point about Hawthorne's inability to create "direct conduct" is misplaced. Hawthorne did not want the direct conduct of realism or the novel. Rather, he was interested in the indirect aspect of the allegory. However, Hawthorne, realized that for an allegory to give him a true indirect approach, he would need to change it from its traditional form.

Historically, the Christian theory of allegory, although commented upon by Augustine and other church fathers, is traced back to the writings of Dante who, in the *Convivio*, explained that a text can be interpreted in four senses: the literal or surface level, the allegorical, the moral, and the anagogical or the spiritual. However, as critic Charles Singleton points out, Dante thought these senses operated differently when employed by either the poet or the theologian. The poets, as creators, usually limit themselves only to the literal sense and the allegorical whereas the theologians as interpreters deal with all four senses (Singleton 78). The divide between the two groups becomes more pronounced as the poets deal almost exclusively in fictional allegory while the theologians deal in historical allegory – specifically the historical allegory of scripture (Singleton 80). The consequence of this divide is that the allegory of the poets will always supersede the base level of the literal, e.g. the literal words presented on the page will always stand *for* something; the literal level will give way to the allegorical. The allegory of the theologians, on the other hand, operates simultaneously with the literal level. The literal can be historically true and maintain its irreducible veracity while, at the

same time, pointing to another allegorical truth (Singleton 80). For this reason the story of Abraham and Isaac remains a historical event with its own moral lessons while, at the same time, it functions as an allegory of God's sacrifice of Jesus Christ. With this division in place, the poet's realm remained separate from the theologian's. Even among the religious allegories of the reformation and Enlightenment, the poetical mode of allegory was the dominant form. The most famous allegory of Christianity, *Pilgrim's Progress,* functions in the manner that Dante described with the literal sense of words and images giving way to the allegorical sense.

One of the consequences of this traditional mode of allegory is that allegories succeed when they can reach a universal interpretation. As the meaning of the symbols within the allegory are universally acknowledged, the allegory reaches its perfect, didactic form. The symbols of the traditional allegory are only stand-ins for concepts such as grace, love, or trials. When readers are presented with the form of allegory, they begin the act of deciphering the symbols to get to the meaning beneath the surface. What makes *Pilgrim's Progress* so effective is not the ambiguities within the message, but the ability to teach a clear moral and religious message under an aesthetic veneer.

For Hawthorne, this traditional style of allegory was inadequate. He needed a mode that could veil meaning at the same time that it could invite engagement. He also needed a mode that could withstand universal interpretation. Instead of a universal, didactic form, he needed a form that could open up to personal meanings of its readers. In this manner, Hawthorne worked to take a sacrosanct form and turn it into an existential mode of engagement. Individuals cannot simply look to a teacher for interpretation, they must engage the allegory and find their own person meaning. He creates his unique form

of allegory by breaking down the distinction between the poetical and theological forms of allegory by mingling the Actual and the Imaginary. In *The Scarlet Letter* for example, he uses historical events and historical people in a fictional world. Or in *The Marble Faun* where he uses real places that he describes in great detail, and populates those places with fictional characters. When he begins to intermingle the Actual (theological/historical) with the Imaginary (poetic/artistic) he begins to blur the line in allegory about whether the literal level stands *for* or *with* the allegorical. The fictive aspect of the prose signals that the prose does stand for something. The fact that he builds symbols of letters, houses, flowers, animals, and names into the art signals to the reader that there should be an allegorical interpretation to the tale. However, the literal level of his prose can never easily be boiled down to one simple substitution. And this inability to boil the allegory down to a simple solution is Hawthorne's second break down of traditional allegories. He favors creating symbols that might stand for something or might not stand for anything.

With *The Marble Faun*, for example, Hawthorne introduces the nameless Model who seems to be the perfect set-up for a symbol. Without a name Miriam's Model is a blank canvas that needs interpreting. Hawthorne is all too willing to give possible clues for the Model's interpretation and meaning. He is variously identified in the text as a Father, a Monk, and an individual from Miriam's past. As an embodiment of each of these ideas, the Model at once becomes a symbol for the patriarchal order, the church, and history. But what does this mean when the Model's mission seems to focus on enslaving and oppressing Miriam? Furthermore, Miriam comments that the Model was at one point in time good but, over time, has become corrupt and evil (iv: 95). If we take the

Model to be a stand-in for the church or patriarchy, then by claiming that it has become corrupt, Hawthorne should take his place among the more radical thinkers of his day. However, the Model embodies history as well (being the only character who has a link with Miriam's past and frequently refers to it); and it makes little sense to say that history has become corrupt. As we look at the events that surround the Model more closely, we should ask what it means for the allegorical elements of the Model when he is killed by the innocent Donatello. Are the innocent the only ones who could destroy the church, patriarchy, or history? Looking at the crime from another perspective, we see that the murder of the Model is ultimately what makes Donatello conscious of his existential being. Through the logic of interpretation, the allegory would seem to be saying that the existential existence of an individual can only be realized if that individual steps outside or rejects patriarchy, history, or the church. However, this interpretation is contradicted or challenged as Donatello ultimately submits to the traditional authorities, yet he retains his consciousness.

Hawthorne takes pleasure in creating characters who supposedly have straight-forward interpretations only to complicate those interpretations. Both Miriam and Zenobia are characters who assume names of other powerful women and should supposedly be read as stand-ins for those powerful women. Miriam, the sister of Moses, often chastised and corrected the prophet. Zenobia, a powerful Syrian queen, led a revolt against the Romans and eventually conquered Egypt. However, in Hawthorne's stories, Zenobia commits suicide and Miriam perpetuates the fall of an innocent. The meanings that these women's names suggest are compromised and become complicated by what they do in their stories.

Even some of Hawthorne's most seemingly blatant symbols become obscured as the reader tries to navigate between the allegorical and the literal meanings of the stories. Take for example the scarlet *A*. If a reader simply reads the allegory as a cautionary tale with Hester standing for the adulterous, the interpretation is quickly complicated. Hester in the text becomes a giver of charity, a strong woman, and regarded by the community as "Able" (i: 161). The literal level of the text resists the simplistic allegorical while, at the same time, inviting it. In this manner, Hawthorne's symbols never stand for any one thing. By creating a symbol that has the potential to stand for many things, Hawthorne places the moral responsibility of interpretation on the reader. It is the interpretation that the individual reader unconceals that is at the heart of Hawthorne's allegories. Rather than trying to uncover a universal meaning, Hawthorne's allegories are aimed at uncovering an individual, existential meaning for each of his readers.

By creating allegories that invite while at the same time resist interpretation, Hawthorne can ensure that his reader, if honest, will continue to grapple with the text to find personal meaning within the ambiguity. Even if not all of his allegories are considered masterworks,

> [his] tales are significant because they show Hawthorne participating in the popular movement toward updated allegory. By adapting allegory to suit modern needs, Hawthorne, like lesser authors of the day, was modifying a sacrosanct Puritan form by mixing it with contemporary themes and styles … [However] certain of his works have gained well-deserved fame because of their success in mixing allegory with New

> England history in a way that transferred Puritan doctrines from dogma to psychology. (D. Reynolds 39- 40)

By using the familiar form of allegory, Hawthorne is able to show that the certainties the allegory is supposed to teach are not certain at all. Thus, in his own ironic way, Hawthorne is able to use allegory to undermine what allegory was supposed to do – get at a universal truth. The only truth that can be found in a Hawthornean allegory is one that is unconcealed by the interpretations of the reader. But this is just fine for an individual who thinks that truth is found in the intersubjective dealings of individuals.

Because of Hawthorne's complicated allegories, the reader's character and personality is reflected back to him through his own interpretation of the story. Hawthorne's allegories become Others who define and give context to the reader. The reader's interpretation of the allegory does as much to bring meaning to his life as it does to the actual story. But this insight is often overlooked. Most critics and teachers wish to simplify Hawthorne's allegories into straight-forward, traditional allegories. David Reynolds, for example, argues that Hawthorne's allegories "probe 'the power of blackness'" because they "proved a convenient disguise because of [their] didactic aura" (41). Because Hawthorne's allegories are incredibly hard, if not impossible, to interpret in a straightforward manner, it is misleading to say that Hawthorne was doing only one thing. However, Reynolds does have a point. Hawthorne's prose is calm and does seem to belie the deeper, darker truths under the genteel veneer. This led many of his reading public and critics to miss some of the darker implications behind his veil of allegory. As David Reynolds reports, "The *Southern Quarterly Review* was typical in commending his tales as "quiet, gentle, fanciful, - clothing naked facts in pleasing allegory, and beguiling

to truth and virtue, through labyrinths of fiction" (41). It seems that the temptation to give a simple reading of Hawthorne's allegories remains too great. Even today, educators are more than willing to interpret his allegories along traditional lines.

In a 2011 article published in *Teaching America Literature: A Journal of Theory and Practice*, James B. Kelley reports his findings of a four year study in which he gathered responses from English teachers from high school and college level English classes who taught "Young Goodman Brown." Kelley wanted to see how English teachers dealt with the ambiguity of Hawthorne's most famous allegory. He found that "the teachers' discussion of allegory in 'Young Goodman Brown' often rely on the idea of a clear, decipherable meaning of the story. An allegory only succeeds in arriving at its goal – to educate its audience through a palatable, if not entertaining tale – if its symbolism is easily deciphered and the non-literal meaning of the story as a whole is clear to the audience" (71-72). In other words, most of the teachers still assume that Hawthorne uses the old forms of allegory. Kelley further elaborates upon the study as he reports that most of the teachers in the study "generally conclude that [the] central ambiguity does not affect the meaning of the story" (75). In a great summation of his findings about English teachers, Kelley could be talking about most of readers who have been beguiled by the veil of the allegory: "Hawthorne's short story is regularly treated as an allegory, a tale interpreted by the teacher for the edification of the young reader, and the ambiguity in the story perhaps must be eliminated or sidestepped so that the allegory can succeed" (81). However, Kelley is careful to point out that even though the teachers viewed Hawthorne in this manner, when they were asked to give an interpretation of the story and its elements, their interpretations were wide and varied (78). Although the

teachers denied the complexity of the allegory, their varied interpretations of the allegory show how complex it is. Their responses show that Hawthorne has, in fact, updated the allegory to create a veil that resists simplistic, universal interpretation.

The remoteness or neutral territory that his allegories create allow the readers to explore the text and themselves. It would be a mistake to say there is any one interpretation to any of his allegories. Even Hawthorne himself was at a loss for their meaning. In a letter he sent to his publisher about the tales in *Mosses from an Old Manse*, he writes, "Upon my honor, I am not quite sure that I entirely comprehend my own meaning in some of these blasted allegories" (qtd. in D. Reynolds 39). Once the reader acknowledges that any interpretation of Hawthorne's allegory is a personal one, he must assume responsibility for his interpretations. This responsibility creates a relationship that exists between the existential individual and the complex ambiguities of Hawthorne's allegories. As the reader does this, he will find a deep personal meaning in the allegory that comes because the truth has unconcealed itself to him. But this should never be interpreted to mean that the individual has the entire truth, for it is the nature of the veil to always conceal.

Irony

The final piece of Hawthorne's literary style that this chapter will examine is irony. To this point, we have explored how Hawthorne is able, through his style, to create an art of distance that also entices. His distancing and ambiguity places a veil over reality which helps to bring the reader into a true relationship with the text. Yet there is one style technique that Hawthorne uses just as frequently in order to entice the readers into engaging with his stories and that is irony.

Irony as an act of enticement is not a method solely used by Hawthorne. As Jacob Golomb points out, “because of its intimate relationship with the notion of authenticity, the most powerful and widely used literary means [of the Existentialists] of enticing the reader is irony” (26). After placing distance between the text and the reader, Hawthorne utilizes irony to point, in a self-referential manner, to the flaws in the narrative. The irony, then, ultimately encourages the reader to engage in meaning making in the face of the veil’s distancing effect. It is the engagement with reality in the neutral territory created by the veil that the reader is empowered to make an authentic choice of moral commitment. It is with this move that Hawthorne reaches his closest point of connection with the existential tradition, as will be shown in chapter three, for by learning about reality the individual who enters the relationship with reality will learn something about herself self. Only by full engagement with the world will an authentic individual emerge.

Hawthorne’s veils must conceal reality and seduce the reader into a desire to engage with the veil in order to find reality. Irony is one of the few modes of writing that can both mask and entice at the same time. As a result of this characteristic, Hawthorne uses it widely. Irony, in this sense, is the art of indirect communication. Golomb declares that “the ironic writer presents a text in such a way that the reader or listener is moved to reject the overt, literal meaning and seek an implied contradictory or inexplicable sense” (26-27). But irony can only veil and entice a reader to try and uncover reality. It would be a mistake to think that the truth is found in a simple inversion of the ironic portrayal, for irony can only conceal and question the concealment; it is incapable of establishing a truth.

This is not to say that irony is a synonym for cynicism. "Irony is negation of the negative – the ethic which has lost its validity; cynicism is its passive acceptance. … Cynicism seeks to avoid unfavourable situations by escaping, by shying away from, any constructive confrontation. Irony solves problems by aborting stale commitment to prevailing norms and opening up new directions" (Golomb 29-30). In other words, cynicism refuses to commit to problems because it sees only nihilism behind those problems. Irony sees a problem and signals to the reader that there is a better way of dealing with the problem. Irony is a call to action.

Even with our discussion of irony, there is no doubt that others see Hawthorne as a cynic who only sees nihilism. Robert Milder for instance sees Hawthorne's veils as "a deliverance from the threefold horrors of naturalism: the horror of universal meaninglessness; the horror of death and oblivion; and the horror of enthrallment to bodily desires, particularly sexual" ("Other" 584). But this reading assumes that just because Hawthorne didn't see a world of transcendental truths, universal for all, he didn't see any truth. The truth that Hawthorne saw and strove to get his audience to see was an existential truth that had to be chosen individually. He was not interested in making a nihilistic claim; he was interested in getting the reader to make an authentic, existential commitment.

Hawthorne is not interested in establishing truths for his audience; rather, he wishes his audience to open up and enter into the world to try and find the truth for themselves, for truth must be engaged with authentically. He manages to get his readers to do this by focusing on two types of irony. The first type, as identified by Golomb, "is achieved by the simulated adoption of another's point of view for the purpose of ridicule,

by reducing this point of view to absurdity" (27). This type which we will label the irony of the absurd point of view is most clearly seen in *The Blithedale Romance,* the only mature romance written in the first person. The second type of irony, or the Nietzschean, that Golomb identifies in existential writers like Nietzsche is

> achieved by depicting the psychologically disastrous consequences of clinging to prevailing values…this type of irony, implying that no vindication of the values under attack is possible, is helpful in the search for authenticity, which necessarily involves transcending the prevailing ethos of objectivity in favour of less-defined openness of mind, character and identity. (27)

This type of irony is seen throughout Hawthorne's writings mainly targeting his Puritan characters such as Dimmesdale and Hilda who, instead of listening to their inmost self or others around them, choose to eschew all personal relationships in favor of obedience to an abstract system.

Irony of the Absurd Point of View

Hawthorne's most sustained use of another's point of view appears in Miles Coverdale in *The Blithedale Romance*[8]. Because he is in the voice of Coverdale for the entire novel, it would appear that Coverdale's ethos is the novel's ethos. But herein is Hawthorne's craft. He has constructed an entire character and an ethos that the audience readily rejects. This rejection is not out of an inordinate distaste for Coverdale, for despite

[8] I am using for this example an established, named character. Although, I would argue that Hawthorne's narrator in *The House of the Seven Gables* functions in a similar way to Miles Coverdale. It is up to the narrator of *Gables* to relay and interpret the events of the story, but it becomes clear early on in the story that the perspective of the narrator should be superseded. The narrator in *The House of the Seven Gables* can be seen as a prototype or a forerunner to Miles Coverdale as a main narrative voice that the audience has no reason to reject and yet, through the irony of the author, is encouraged to transcend.

his penchant for voyeurism, he never does anything morally repugnant. But this is where Hawthorne's irony comes into full play, for "though the ironic idiom apparently uses the objective language of the prevailing ethos, the essence of irony is the indirect but intentional persuasion to transcend that framework" (Golomb 28-9). Everything that Hawthorne does through Coverdale signals to the readers that Coverdale is missing something vital. The irony helps to pinpoint what Coverdale's mistake is, but it is up to the choices of the reader to figure out what the authentic choice or mode of being should then be.

In order to make this type of irony work, Hawthorne must signal to the reader that Coverdale is an absurd character that should not be taken at face value. The largest signal of absurdity comes at the end of Coverdale's manuscript. Throughout the story Coverdale conveys himself to be a "calm observer" who could simply disentangle himself from the course of the plot (iii: 97), yet at the end of his story he admits to having loved Priscilla (iii: 247). Immediately, the audience is faced with the absurdity of his previous claims, for surely, he could not be calm and disinterested and still love one of the primary players of the drama. Hawthorne must mean for this ending to be an ironic statement to signal Coverdale's absurdity. Once the irony is noticed, the audience can question Coverdale's methods and modes in order to try and figure out exactly what it is that Hawthorne is trying to convey. Even though the confession of love is the most blatant form of absurdity and irony in the novel, Hawthorne is more interested in the irony that is conveyed as Coverdale tries to mirror Hawthorne's literary style and fails.

As Martin Fitzpatrick, to whose argument I owe much of this discussion on Coverdale, argues "through Coverdale, Hawthorne misplaces tragedy as travesty,

transmutes sentiment into laughter, and approaches truth obliquely, with absurd and ironic discrepancy rather than with direct representation" (27). In other words, Coverdale is a failed Hawthorne. As we have already seen, Hawthorne functions in the realms of romance and allegory, but what we see throughout all of *The Blithedale Romance* is failed allegory and romance.

In order to create an allegory, the author must turn an object into a symbol. However, Hawthorne refuses to state for certain what his symbols mean. Take for example the interplay between Phoebe and the House from *The House of the Seven Gables*. In his description of the effect that Phoebe had upon the House, Hawthorne writes, "It really seemed as if the battered visage of the House of the Seven Gables, black and heavy-browed as it still certainly looked, must have shown a kind of cheerfulness glimmering through its dusky windows, as Phoebe passed to-and-fro in the interior" (ii: 81). This description would suggest that Phoebe becomes a symbol of light and life for the old, dark house. However, Hawthorne does not play the symbol that straight-forwardly; instead, he hedges the entire description with the word "seemed." As critics David Stouck and Janet Giltrow explain, this is a type of verb called an epistemic modal. "Modality renders a proposition indeterminate neither affirming or denying it … [the epistemic modal] is [what] Hawthorne most frequently resorts and to which his style owes most. Epistemic modals inscribe a limit to knowledge, and frame a proposition as an estimate made from that position of limitation" (564). In our example, it might seem that Phoebe really lights up the house, but Hawthorne refuses to confirm or deny the proposition which leaves the reality and interpretation up to the reader. In a like manner,

the central symbol of the novel, Colonel Pyncheon's portrait, is also described using the epistemic modal. Hawthorne writes of the portrait:

> It was considered, moreover, an ugly and ominous circumstance, that Colonel Pyncheon's picture—in obedience, it was said, to a provision of his will—remained affixed to the wall of the room in which he died. Those stern, immitigable features seemed to symbolize an evil influence, and so darkly to mingle the shadow of their presence with the sunshine of the passing hour, that no good thoughts or purposes could ever spring up and blossom there. (ii: 21)

In this example, Hawthorne begins to create the symbol; however, we see that even here the symbol does not have interpretive certainty, for the picture only "seemed to symbolize" the evil influence that others imagine exuding from the picture. Whether it really does symbolize that evil or something else entirely is up for personal interpretation.

This engagement of personal interpretation is what Hawthorne wants from his readers. Just as he says in the preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*, if the truth is impaled and nailed down, it will wither and die. He revisits this notion again in *The Marble Faun* when his narrator, trying to explicate in a rational way the power of the sculptured faun must confess "the idea grows coarse, as we handle it, and hardens in our grasp" (iv: 10). It is clear that as he extends this idea in *The Seven Gables* and then revisits it again in *The Marble Faun* that he hasn't forgotten this concept in *The Blithedale Romance*. But Coverdale does exactly what Hawthorne warns against in the books both preceding and proceeding Coverdale's. Coverdale tries too hard to establish his symbols, and he leaves no room for his audience to engage in meaning making

themselves. Take for example the connection that Coverdale makes between Zenonbia and her flower. Upon first meeting Zenobia, Coverdale describes the flower in a direct manner:

> It was an exotic of rare beauty, and as fresh as if the hothouse gardener had just clipt it from the stem. That flower has struck deep root into my memory. I can both see it and smell it, at this moment. So brilliant, so rare, so costly as it must have been, and yet enduring only for a day, it was more indicative of the pride and pomp which had a luxuriant growth in Zenobia's character than if a great diamond had sparkled among her hair. (iii: 15)

There are no epistemic modal tendencies in this description of the flower as symbol for Zenobia. Gone is the oblique approach to truth formation that Hawthorne favors in his other works. Instead, Coverdale gives a straightforward correlation by pointing out that the flower *was indicative.* Because Hawthorne has altered his style for this one romance, we must read the style change as an artistic and epistemic choice. Hawthorne's choice is focused on getting the readers to analyze Coverdale and his being. By seeing Coverdale's shortfalls, the reader will be able to make better choices. One of his shortcomings is the fact that Coverdale, once he establishes a symbol, must make it as clear as possible. In case readers miss this initial approach to symbol making, Coverdale tries again. After his sickness, Coverdale reflects on the flower again saying,

> The most curious part of the matter was that, long after my slight delirium had passed away,—as long, indeed, as I continued to know this remarkable woman,—her daily flower affected my imagination, though

> more slightly, yet in very much the same way. The reason must have been that, whether intentionally on her part or not, this favorite ornament was actually a subtle expression of Zenobia's character. (iii: 45)

Coverdale tries as hard as he can to make sure that the readers get the symbol. He must explicitly state, twice, that the flower is a symbol for Zenobia and her character. But with this move, Coverdale has indeed grasped the idea too hard, and it has hardened. As Martin Fitzpatrik remarks about Coverdale's treatment of the flower,

> The flower does not open up into resonant ambiguity; rather, Coverdale's handling of it circumscribes and limits it to leaden allegory. Coverdale's revelation that Zenobia's flower is a fit emblem for her character seems the more heavy-handed and clumsy in view of her death at the novel's end (like a cultivated flower, the beautiful and lustrous Zenobia is *cut down* in the *bloom* of her youth). (34 emphases in original)

We can begin to see the problems with Coverdale's style of narration. Because of his forced symbolism, he lacks the depths that we have come to expect from Hawthorne's own allegories. Coverdale's artistic turns become tired and absurd. Because of his inadequacies, Coverdale cannot invite his readers into a relationship with himself or the text through ambiguities. So, the question becomes: if Coverdale is simply preforming the function of Hawthorne as author, yet doing it poorly, why does Hawthorne as author choose to lampoon his own methods?

To this end Fitzpatrick observes,

> Coverdale fails…in order that Hawthorne…may succeed. Hawthorne understands how to approach truth indirectly, while Coverdale does not,

> and so Coverdale, who fails because he lacks a fine and discriminating touch, becomes the vehicle of Hawthorne's own subtle complexity. It is the discrepancy, the distance between adequacy and Coverdale's own performance, that provides the means for Hawthorne's strategy of indirection. (38-9)

This is where the irony of the story comes shining through. Even though Coverdale uses Hawthorne's modes, he fails on a grand scale. Zenobia's death comes as no surprise at the end, and as a result, the tragedy that Coverdale tried so hard to write simply becomes a travesty of his writing ability. The shocking ending simply becomes predictable and prosaic. Coverdale went wrong when he tried to give an objective telling of how things really were. In this manner, Hawthorne is not only lampooning Coverdale, but he is lampooning everyone who wishes to establish a direct, universal truth. Rather than being like Coverdale and impose meanings on all things, Hawthorne's irony is pointing to the readers to be more open to what the truth is, for reality and truth must be approached existentially. Truth cannot be prescribed, it must be unconcealed.

Nietzschean Irony

But perhaps Hawthorne's most frequent mode of irony is what we can call Nietzschean irony – when an author shows the disastrous consequences of holding too hard to an established set of values. This is shown most clearly with his Puritan characters Hilda and Dimmesdale. Hawthorne wants to highlight, in both characters, the rigidity with which they hold to their Calvinistic doctrine. In *The Scarlet Letter*, he refers to all the Puritan community as iron people, and in *The Marble Faun*, he makes Hilda's descent from them explicit by calling her the daughter of the Puritans.

In order for the second type of irony to work, the readers must see that the character believes the prevailing values and that those values lead to "psychologically disastrous" consequences. Hawthorne does this by showing how often characters suffer mental damage or hurt others around them because, instead of engaging with the complexities of realty, they hold onto a conviction in the form of a system. As critic Roberta Weldon observes, "The term system appears several times in Hawthorne's fiction, frequently to describe an ideology closely linked to a set of cultural practices, religious or moral …often in the context of failure. The system usually seems curiously distant from the individuals who inhabit it, as if institutionalized by some force beyond their control" (114). The system stands for a group of ideals, values, and meanings that are arranged to dictate an interpretation of the world. The system makes an appearance in *The Marble Faun* as Hawthorne, ironically, walks through the psychological deterioration of Hilda.

Although Donatello is meant to be the innocent one of the book, Hilda is also portrayed as pure and simple at the beginning. The other characters frequently describe Hilda as the best of people – even one that could become sainted (iv: 53). However, after the murder of Miriam's Model which Hilda witnessed, she exclaims to Miriam, "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..[which means I must] henceforth…avoid you!" (iv: 208). Hilda must supplant or deny the relationships she has with people around her in order to uphold her theology. But this comes at a price. As Hilda begins to shut herself away from Miriam and Donatello, she becomes increasingly depressed. The narrator informs us that "for the first time in her life, Hilda

now grew acquainted with that icy Demon of Weariness" (iv: 336). As a result of that depression, the old paintings that she had enjoyed and had taken so much religious comfort in, became "but a crust of paint over an emptiness" (iv: 341). It is at that point that Hawthorne establishes her belief in a system that will ultimately leave her in mental anguish.

As she walks through the cathedrals in Rome, she continues to see individuals making confession, and it causes her to wonder, "do not these inestimable advantages…or some of them at least, belong to Christianity itself? Are they not a part of the blessings which the System was meant to bestow upon mankind? Can the faith, in which I was born and bred, be perfect, if it leave a weak girl like me to wander, desolate, with this great trouble crushing me down?" (iv: 355). Hilda's view of Christianity, her Calvinistic Puritanism, comprises the system that governs her thoughts and beliefs, but here for the first time, she thinks about the inadequacy of her system. Immediately upon these thoughts "a poignant anguish thrilled within her breast; it was like a thing that had life, and was struggling to get out" (355). She is, for the first time in her life, faced with doubt about her system. Rather than confronting that doubt or confronting the seeming inadequacies of her system, she chooses to try and repress her doubts and believe all the more fervently in the system in which she "was born and bred." It is her talks with Kenyon that show her state of mind as she struggles with the system.

Kenyon muses that the murder of Miriam's Model might not be as bad as Hilda thinks because as he says,

> when I think of the original cause, the motives, the feelings, the sudden concurrence of circumstances thrusting them onward, the urgency of the

> moment, and the sublime unselfishness on either part – I know not well how to distinguish it from much that the world calls heroism. Might we not render some such verdict as this? 'Worthy of death, but not unworthy of Love.' (iv: 384)

Kenyon is willing to give the murderers the benefit of the doubt and still love them. However, Hilda quickly responds,

> Never!…this thing, as regards its cause, is all mystery to me, and must remain so. But there is, I believe, only one right and one wrong; and I do not understand (and may God keep me from ever understanding) how two things so totally unlike can be mistaken for one another; nor how two mortal foes – as Right and Wrong surely are – can work together in the same deed. This is my faith; and I should be led astray, if you could persuade me to give it up. (iv: 384)

The force of Hilda's "never" should color the rest of her Hilda's answer. Her answer is not one of reasoned, measured calmness. It is one that is given in frantic desperation, for Hilda knows the doctrine of right and wrong, good and evil, and to acknowledge that those might not be as defined as her system has made them would shake her too greatly. Yet, she had genuine feelings of kindness for Miriam. Her relationship and feelings for Miriam are willfully repressed by Hilda's force of will to keep her in alignment with her system, but that does not mean that her feelings for Miriam can simply be ignored. At this moment, the narrator gives us a glimpse of Hilda's emotional and mental state: "she grew very sad; for a reference to this one dismal topic had set, as it were, a prison-door ajar, and allowed a throng of torturing recollections to escape from their dungeons into the

pure air and white radiance of her soul" (iv: 385). With the descriptions of prison doors and torturing memories, Hawthorne is laying out a psychological case study of repression. This is Hawthorne's point. If he is trying to show the need to honor relationships by having Hilda dishonor those relationships because of a belief in a flawed value system, he wants to show how that belief system will ultimately lead to harmful psychological consequences. But far from letting Hilda try to overcome this mental anguish, Hawthorne instead continues to show Hilda as an individual who is continually repressing her feelings and continues to stay in a willful state of ignorance until the end (see iv: 460, 464). As a result, Hilda becomes the clearest example in the novel of the type of person Hawthorne would have his reader's avoid becoming.

The irony that surrounds Hilda is an invitation from Hawthorne to get the reader to act. The action that Hawthorne is requesting is a deeply existential question. At its core is a desire for the reader to begin to question her systems. He wants to know if the systems that the reader holds will drive her into psychological despair. Will the reader's systems estrange her from her friends and her inner self? In other words, Hawthorne is asking the reader to make an existential choice of how she will live her life: will she follow a system like Hilda or remain open to reality? But Hilda is not the only character that struggles with the ideals of the system. Dimmesdale also allows the Puritan system to control him.

Dimmesdale becomes the main character in *The Scarlet Letter* that Hawthorne wishes to show as suffering psychologically because of the prevailing values that he espouses. In order to make clear that Dimmesdale is subjected to those values, he has the narrator comment at length about Dimmesdale's involvement with the system: "The

minister…had never gone through an experience calculated to lead him beyond the scope of generally received laws… At the head of the social system, as the clergymen of that day stood, he was only the more trammeled by its regulations, its principles, and even its prejudices. As a priest, the framework of his order inevitably hemmed him in" (i: 200). Although the system hems Dimmesdale in, he still feels motivated to uphold and propagate the system, so he continues to preach and teach the tenets of the theology. He continues to preach and maintain his Calvinistic theology even up to his death; however, Hawthorne is careful to point out that Dimmesdale's death is not a peaceful one. It is the death of a man who is suffering great mental affliction, and the readers can see how the system that Dimmesdale believes in is putting a mental strain on him that begins to split his mind leading to an agonizing death.

Looking at Dimmesdale's climb up the scaffold in front of the Election Day crowd, we can see that Dimmesdale believes his religious convictions. He bellows through the crowd to Hester as he stands at the base of the scaffold, "Hester Prynne…in the name of him, so terrible and so merciful, who gives me grace, at this last moment, to do what…I have withheld myself from doing seven years ago, come hither now, and twine thy strength about me!...but let it be guided by the will which God hath granted me!" (i: 253). Even as he relies on Hester's strength to support him, he does his best to subordinate both her and her strength to his religious convictions. This is flying in the face of what they had planned together in the woods only a few days prior and takes Hester by surprise because Dimmesdale has not told her of his intentions. At this moment she is still thinking of ways that they could escape and be happy together. This is not to say that Dimmesdale is ultimately sure of himself, either. Hester notices that he is filled

with doubt and anxiety as he stands on the scaffold (i: 254). Even though Dimmesdale might not be emotionally convinced of his actions, he intellectually conceives of a God that requires this suffering of him, so more from his head than from his heart, he asks Hester, "Is not this better…than what we dreamed of in the forest?" (i: 254). She is not convinced because she only sees death in front of her and her child. She tells Dimmesdale as much, but Dimmesdale again supplants his relationship with her with his rigid theology by saying "For thee and Pearl, be it as God shall order…and God is merciful! . . . Let me make haste to take my shame upon me" (i: 254). With this Dimmesdale makes a confession and falls to the scaffold.

In tears, Hester pleads to know if, at least, their relationship will continue on after death. Dimmesdale's response gives her no hope:

> Hush, Hester, hush…the law we broke! – the sin here so awfully revealed! – let these alone be in thy thoughts! I fear! I fear! It may be, that, when we forgot our God, - when we violated our reverence each for the other's soul, - it was thenceforth vain to hope that we could meet hereafter, in an everlasting and pure reunion. God knows, and He is merciful! He hath proved his mercy, most of all, in my afflictions. By giving me this burning torture to bear upon my breast! By sending yonder dark and terrible old man, to keep the torture always at red-heat! By bringing me hither, to die this death of triumphant ignominy before the people! Had either of these agonies been wanting, I had been lost forever! Praised be his name! His will be done! Farewell! (i: 256-57)

It is clear that Dimmesdale is, even at this point, a very conflicted man. His psyche is tearing itself apart. He is repeating what his Calvanistic doctrine tells him he should say, but there are hints that he does not believe it. Even though he seems to claim that there is some chance of redemption for him because of his "triumphant ignominy," his death is not one of authentic triumph.

Theologically, he must take back everything that he said and agreed to in his forest interview with Hester only days prior, for in the forest Dimmesdale said that neither he nor Hester "violated the sanctity of the human heart" (i: 195)[9]. He also agreed in the forest with Hester that their act of adultery "had a consecration of its own" (i: 195). But now, he is talking about violation and broken laws. There is a hint, besides his apparent anxiety, that he does not completely believe what he is saying as he also repeats "I fear! I fear!" (i: 256). Dimmesdale's fear taints his final sermon making it wishful thinking or frantic hoping in the reality of a cruel dogma rather than steadfast conviction of a known truth. This is Hawthorne's point. He does not want Dimmesdale to believe the things that he says, and he does not want the audience to believe what Dimmesdale claims either. Hawthorne wishes that the reader will see the irony of the situation and reject Dimmesdale's choice of living strictly according to the system. By showing what the system could do to an individual, Hawthorne leaves the reader to decide where the authentic choice should be.

Dimmesdale's word that he comes back to throughout this scene, the word that he uses repeatedly to describe his God, is mercy. However, his God's mercy is repellent.

---

[9] Because the language of the passages are so similar with the talking of sanctity, reverence, consecration on the one hand, and violation on the other, I read "heart" and "soul" in this context as synonyms, or at least so related that their meanings are intertwined as often one cannot talk about one without the other, and traditionally, the soul is often associated with the heart as opposed to the mind.

Dimmesdale teaches a God who will torture the sufferer. Dimmesdale sees mercy in the pain that is killing him psychologically and physically. The audience cringes to see that Dimmesdale wishes this same "mercy" to be upon Hester and Pearl. Dimmesdale's God is also the same type of God that Nietzsche attacks frequently. Nietzsche holds nothing but contempt for men like Dimmesdale when he says,

> They are miserable, there is no doubt about it, all these whisperers and counterfeiters in the corners, although they try to get warm by crouching close to each other, but they tell me that their misery is a favour and distinction given to them by God, just as one beats the dogs one likes best; that perhaps this misery is also a preparation, a probation, a training; that perhaps it is still more something which will one day be compensated and paid back with a tremendous interest in gold, nay in happiness. (*Genealogy* 27)

The mercy of Dimmesdale's God teaches him to suffer and like it, yet he cannot help being afraid to meet his God. This double-mindedness should cause the audience to stop and ponder the ramifications of Dimmesdale's system and the belief in this type of God. Implicit in this ironic treatment of Dimmesdale's theology is an invitation for the reader to ask where his beliefs will lead him to and what actions they will justify.

We need to note that in order for this type of irony to work, and stay away from pure polemics, Hawthorne must never explicitly condemn his characters. On this level, he doesn't. Supposedly, their stories are told straight. Yet, it becomes clear in the readings of these stories that all are receiving the brunt of Hawthorne's condemnation, for they are not characters to look upon as positive examples. Each is a flawed and absurd individual

whose beliefs or values ultimately lead him or her astray. But by pointing them out in an ironic way, Hawthorne is inviting his readers to make a moral choice because irony, unlike sarcasm and pessimism "is ultimately positive" (Golomb 29). Instead of holding to the rigid world view that destroys so many of his characters, Hawthorne is inviting his readers, through his literary technique, to adopt a more fluid and flexible grasp of reality. However, how fluid that grasp should be is not defined, nor can it be defined by Hawthorne because Hawthorne realizes that how one approaches the world is a fundamentally personal matter. This is the concept of existential authenticity. It is also the concept that Hawthorne's writing points to as the most important concept, and it is the thought of authenticity that he spent the majority of his art exploring as will be shown in the following chapters.

Conclusion

Inherent in Hawthorne's artistic style is the assumption that aesthetics and epistemology are connected. Hawthorne's style is formulated in a manner to get the readers to engage in sympathetic relationships with the text in order to make interpretive choices. As the reader and text work together, a new creation is made that requires commitment and understanding. Hawthorne explicitly begins to explicate this theory of art while talking ostensibly about a painting, yet we can easily substitute the wording of the literary work to see what Hawthorne is doing:

> A [text], however admirable the [author's] art, and wonderful his power, requires of the [reader] a surrender of himself, in due proportion with the miracle which has been wrought. Let the [text] glow as it may, you must look with the eye of faith, or its highest excellence escapes you. There is

> always the necessity of helping out the [author's] art with your own resources of sensibility and imagination. Not that these qualities shall really add anything to what the Master has effected; but they must be put so entirely under his control, and work along with him to such an extent, that, in a different mood, (when you are cold and critical, instead of sympathetic,) you will be apt to fancy that the loftier merits of the picture were of your own dreaming, not of his creation. (iv: 335)

By emphasizing the need to surrender the self to the work using the "eye of faith" (equated with sympathy in the parenthetical), Hawthorne is showing how the reader must open himself up to the text in order to "work along with" it to find out what is really happening. Although this parallels existential reader-response theory, the author (the Master) must stay a part of the literary experience. For Hawthorne the effects of complicated prose that slow the reader down, ambiguous lines that invite differing interpretations, ambiguous romances that explore borderlands, complicated allegories that resist simple interpretation, and Nietzschean irony that warns of the dangers of failed moral outlooks all make sure that he can control the work of art. As he manipulates his style, he becomes the Other that invites the individual into relationships with the art in order to find the truth of reality and of the self, for Hawthorne believes that "art is truth setting itself to work."

Chapter 2: Hawthorne's Epistemological Perspectivism and Intersubjective Intuitive Sympathy

It is almost universally acknowledged among scholars that Hawthorne was a writer who was fundamentally concerned with morality. However, many critics begin to go astray when they think of morality only within the Judeo-Christian tradition. This form of morality leads to a narrow view of Hawthorne and his interaction with the world. Assuming such traditional morality, critics such Brenda Wineapple fault Hawthorne for his failure to support abolitionism stating that his position could be equated with the pro-slavery position (263). She goes so far in her biography of Hawthorne as to state that he "identified with the Southern white slaveholder" (264). This follows large amounts of political criticism of the 1990s wherein one of the most vocal condemnations of Hawthorne came from Eric Cheyfitz's 1994 essay where he writes within the context of Hawthorne's views on slavery, "Hawthorne's words about 'evils' are the easy remarks of a comfortable, middle-class, white, Protestant male who feels no need to envision forms of transformative social action in a time of crisis. Indeed, following his politically, historically, and ethically empty vision of the end of slavery, Hawthorne, in a statement that is entirely characteristic of him, rationalizes his emptiness" (545). Among the criticism, there seems to be a general if unstated condemnation of hypocrisy on Hawthorne's part that is attributed to Hawthorne's various prejudices. However, if we understand Hawthorne's morals broadly, his hesitation in joining any reform movement becomes understandable.

Hawthorne's morality is farther reaching than one that limits itself to concepts of sin or redemption. Hawthorne is closer to a Nietzschean view of morality that

encompasses all that a person does and is. Hawthorne would most likely agree with Nietzsche's observations about the mere fact of seeing the world: "We construct a new picture, which we see immediately with the aid of all the old experiences which we have had, always according to the degree of our honesty and justice. The only experiences are moral experiences, even in the domain of sense-perception" (*Gay* 98). For this reason we cannot talk about Hawthorne's views on moral behavior without talking about Hawthorne's understanding of epistemology. Hawthorne, like Nietzsche, is keenly aware that interpretations of pictures and experiences follow the lived experiences of an individual. Epistemology and Hawthorne's understanding of truth and the nature of the world will pave the way for his entire brand of moral thought. But in order to have individuals see his moral thought and its implications, Hawthorne makes some steps that mirror what Nietzsche will do philosophically. This chapter will begin to systematize the movements that Hawthorne makes as he moves away from monological interpretations of reality toward a proto-existential view of the world based in the complexities of reality. This chapter will bring in the insights of Nietzsche to highlight Hawthorne's thought because Nietzsche, like Hawthorne, is fundamentally concerned with how different moralities produce different types of people.

Hawthorne's first step in his moral epistemology is to introduce a general level of skepticism. He does this through frequent attacks on monological worldviews such as Puritanism, Emersonian Transcendentalism, and various reform movements. He distrusts any group that impresses its rational convictions on the world, for he sees rational convictions as a way of distorting an individual's relationship to reality. After casting a skeptical light on worldviews that would interpret the complexities of the word through a

single rational belief system, his second step is to introduce a type of perspectivism into his work in order to talk about the nature of reality. His ideas on perspectivism, what he calls "optics," and reality will naturally lead to a different way of viewing truth as that which does not have fixed meaning. In line with this thought, Coverdale berates Hollingsworth in *The Blithedale Romance*, "Cannot you conceive that a man may wish well to the world, and struggle for its good, on some other plan than precisely that which you have laid down? And will you cast off a friend, for no unworthiness, but merely because he stands upon his right, as an individual being, and looks at matters through his own optics, instead of yours?" (iii: 135). He moves to an idea of an unfixed meaning of life in *The Marble Faun* when he has the narrator call for life to become "an unfettered stream" that can move about the world, change its course, and evade a fixed meaning or purpose (iv: 239). Finally, once Hawthorne has set this all in place, his third step is able to set up his view of epistemology and morality. This view of morality grows to become thoroughly existential as it is grounded in large part in the being of an individual. If Hawthorne's morality is to be grasped, it should be grasped through the connective relationships that authentic individuals have with each other and the world around them. Hawthorne's morality and epistemology, as I will argue, is best understood by looking at interpersonal truth or as he calls it, sympathetic intuition.

Critique of Monological Worldviews

We should note at the outset that Hawthorne is not trying to find an overriding theology or philosophical system that interprets every aspect of the world in a uniform way. His worldview recognizes contradiction, conflict, and perspective. It sees an ambiguity at the heart of reality and existence and chooses to embrace, on some level,

that ambiguity. It is for this very reason that Hawthorne must start his epistemic thought as a skeptic. He must begin by showing the problems inherent with monolithic belief systems. In order to do this, he caricatures the Puritans in order to show how their uncompromising theology ultimately leads to destruction.

Critique of the Puritans, The Iron People

Hawthorne makes it clear what type of personality the Puritan mentality will create through his character Hilda. Time and again, in *The Marble Faun*, Hilda is referred to as a "daughter of the Puritans" (iv: 54, 344, 351, 362, 399). Although she engages in no corporal punishment, her punishments are just as severe on an emotional level. When the other female protagonist, Miriam, comes to seek consolation after a crime that Hilda witnesses, Hilda turns her out with the excuse that "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..[which means I must] henceforth…avoid you!" (iv: 208). Hilda's sternness comes again to Kenyon as he tries to make sense of sin by voicing the idea that sin is a progressive principle. As Kenyon contemplates whether sin was meant to educate and, ultimately, edify, Hilda reprimands him: "'Oh, hush!' cried Hilda…with an expression of horror which wounded the poor…sculptor…'Do you not perceive what mockery your creed makes, not only of all religious sentiment, but of moral law, and how it annuls and obliterates whatever precepts of Heaven are written deepest within us?'" (iv: 460). Hilda, in every situation sees the strictness of the moral law that she believes is "written deepest within us." By her language of "deepest" we are supposed to see the law as a fundamental part of every human being. Because she sees this universal, moral law as fundamental, she refuses to go against it. In every moral

matter as she perceives it, Hilda is unyielding. She is willing to "wound" those closest to her in order to preserve her sense of right and wrong. Critic Emily Budick voices Hawthorne's criticism of Hilda and by extension all of his Puritans when she says, "[Hilda] preserves her innocence at the expense of her goodness" (iv: 241). But it is this desire for innocence or righteousness that deprives the Puritans, in Hawthorne's eyes, of goodness. They fail to see the world for what it is, and instead, they make sure that the world reflects their convictions. They are the iron people.

In the opening scene of *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne describes at length his vision of the Puritan people. His Puritans are caricatures, but the caricature functions to highlight the mindset that he wants to analyze. By looking at the "grim rigidity that petrified the bearded physiognomies of these good people," Hawthorne elucidates what he sees as these people's main characteristic (i: 49). He notes that in any other culture, their looks could betoken "nothing short of the anticipated execution of some noted culprit" (i: 49). However, in this culture, the spectacle could be anything from "an undutiful child…[who] was to be corrected at the whipping post" to "a Quaker…[who] was to be scourged out of town" (i: 49). In any case, Hawthorne notes that their demeanor "befitted a people amongst whom religion and law were almost identical, and in whose character both were so thoroughly interfused, that the mildest and the severest acts of public discipline were alike made venerable and awful" (i: 50).

Hawthorne gives the readers several hints as to the type of people that he believes the Puritans to be and by extension what type of world they live in. The most striking is the comment that the law and religion have become one: every moral crime is also a civil crime and every civil crime a moral one. It is no wonder, then, that he often characterizes

these people as iron. The rigidity of their thought, civic and theological, casts them as a hard, cold people who have been tempered to withstand all that the world should throw at them. Like iron they are a people who shape the world around them and not a people to be shaped by the world. This characterization of the Puritans is needed in the introductory scene of the book because it is against this backdrop that the heroine of the story must struggle and live.

The focus on the criminality of moral choices explains why the Puritans can punish someone for simply being a Quaker. In an exacting, totalizing religion, a failure to live up to its precepts is a punishable crime. It is not so much that the Puritans wanted to dominate other religions in the area; they surely recognized no other religion. A Quaker sees religious responsibilities and duties differently. Quakers, witches, heathens, and other outside groups would be equally persecuted for one and the same reason: blasphemy. In the Puritan mind, other religions would offer another story of the truth, but this would be impossible since they believed there to be only one truth. And they made sure that their world fit into the truth they recognized.

The failure to live the religion also explains why a child who is not dutiful can be publically punished. Scripture says that children must honor and obey their parents; if this is not done, a moral failing and crime has been committed. The rigid, totalizing world view of the Puritans, as Hawthorne sees it, can explain why a child's negligence can be punished to more or less the same degree as an adulteress, for in each instance the sinner has rebelled against the truth. It is the "grim rigidity" of this system that finally introduces Hester Prynne.

When Hawthorne finally introduces Hester Prynne who is about to serve part of her punishment by standing on the gallows, he does it by way of the town beadle "with a sword by his side and his staff of office in his hand... Stretching forth the official staff in his left hand, he laid his right upon the shoulder of the young woman, whom he thus drew forward" (i: 52). Hawthorne admits that the beadle represents every aspect of the "Puritanic code of law," so it would makes sense that the Puritans symbolize that law with the ruling staff and the sword. It is also worth noting that it is the symbol of the law that places the right hand on Hester and draws her out of the jail. This action shows that the militant law wants to have complete control of the individuals under it. This is not to be inherently oppressive, but it falls back to the assumption of only one universal truth that the Puritans possess and must enforce.

In order to find support for the universal truth of their doctrine, the Puritans practiced natural theology[10] in order to show the reasonableness of their thought and how their interpretation was, by nature, the only interpretation. Their turn to natural theology was not original. Probably one of the greatest practitioners of natural theology was the Catholic theologian Thomas Aquinas who is best known for bringing all of the known science of his time into alignment with his view of Christianity. Stemming from Aquinas' natural theology, evidentialism, or the practice of basing religious belief on the evidences found in nature became a common practice among American Christians. Drawing on the pattern set by Aquinas, Christians in the seventeenth century, including Puritans, began to study nature in order to find "evidence for God by reflecting on the existence and order of

[10] As opposed to revealed theology which gathers doctrine from revealed scripture alone, natural theology endeavors to create arguments for theological doctrine without reference to scripture. In exercising natural theology, the theologian will use evidence derived from experience, history, reason, and nature in order to support a doctrinal point.

the natural creation" (Holifield 5-6). Eventually, this began to spread away from the existence of God until natural theology and evidentialism was used by both Lutheran and Calvinist theologies to "prove the infallibility of the biblical account" and by extension their doctrine (6). According to Puritan doctrine, these evidences would prove their unique relationship with God as his chosen people. Amid the intensive study of nature, the natural theologians began to point to miracles within nature as direct evidence for God (6). Biblical accounts of miracles within nature such as the parting of the Red Sea, making the sun stand still, and calming of a stormy sea held much sway as evidences for the divine, and the natural theologians would try to find other miracles or abnormalities that could further provide evidence for God within the natural world. As the narrator explains, "Nothing was more common, in those days, than to interpret all meteoric appearances, and other natural phenomena, that occurred with less regularity than the rise and set of sun and moon, as so many revelations from a supernatural source" (i: 154). But these evidences for the believers also provide evidence for God's relationship with them. The Puritans desired to find evidences within nature to support their beliefs and to confirm their relationship with God as his chosen people. This desire spurs the narrator of *The Scarlet Letter* to remark, "the belief [of finding manifestations of God in natural wonders] was a favorite one with our forefathers, as betokening that their infant commonwealth was under a celestial guardianship of peculiar intimacy and strictness" (i: 155). It is easy to see in a mind attuned to natural theology how any "natural phenomena that occurred with less regularity than the rise and set of sun and moon" could be interpreted as a miracle. Individuals looking for divine evidences or signs would be especially susceptible to interpret astronomical occurrences as messages from God since

they appear random and do happen in the "heavens." For this reason when Arthur Dimmesdale sees the letter *A* set ablaze in the night sky from the meteor that lights up the street "with the distinctness of mid-day" (i: 154), he sees it as a sign from God telling the world about his secret sin and reminding him of his impending day of judgment (i: 154-55). The world, then, for the Puritans is one in which God directly communicates to them. They believed themselves to be a privileged people whom God had set aside. Indeed, it is this outlook that leads Hawthorne in *The Scarlet Letter* to characterize them as an "iron" people, inflexible, rigid, and cold. They see themselves as the people who must uphold an inflexible and unyielding truth, God's eternal truth, but looking at the Puritans, we can see that Hawthorne's Puritans are not being honest with themselves. Rather than beginning with evidence and then seeing what explanations best make sense of that evidence, Hawthorne's Puritans start with a set of doctrines and assumptions about the nature of the world and search for the evidences to support those interpretations. Dimmesdale's *A* in the sky is the perfect example of this. Dimmesdale was already thinking along the lines of judgment and guilt. In fact, he was standing on the gallows when the *A* appeared in the sky. From his feelings, he interprets the *A* to confirm his worldview.

Hawthorne's problem with Puritanism as shown in these examples is that the Puritan desire to purge sin ends up punishing and driving away those individuals who could use help the most. The intolerance to unorthodox ideas morphs into an intolerance towards others. Hawthorne argues against this rigidity of worldview by showing multiple areas for uncertainty. Hawthorne wants to call the very nature of all totalizing thought systems into question because "a central lesson of Hawthorne's tales and romances is that

such yearning…for certitude of any kind – is all too often a veiled desire for dominance over others, a longing that inevitably eventuates in a kind of moral death" (Fuller 674). The solution to the spiritual death that comes from holding too strictly to a rational belief system seems to be skepticism. Hawthorne wishes his characters to question the concepts that they hold to be truth prior to any justification of those concepts from the realities of the world. Through questioning Puritan concepts of law and religion, Hawthorne is making a larger criticism of the types of thought that ultimately keep individuals pinned under a centralized law with no way to act on meaningful interpersonal interactions.

The centralized, universal law that the Puritans believed in, which engrained itself in the deepest parts of Hilda, is the same mentality that Hawthorne saw in his contemporaries. *The Marble Faun* was published on the eve of the American Civil War and can be seen as a response to his fellow New Englanders. In his condemnation of Hilda's inflexible Puritanism, he also condemns his contemporaries. As Larry Reynolds argues, Hawthorne, on the eve of the Civil War, "realized that the residual Puritanism of New England animated those most vigorously castigating the South. As the Civil War approached, admiration for the Puritan spirit grew in New England, and more and more writers referenced the Old Testament rather than the New in support of their views" (162). This zealotry of the Puritan spirit eventually led individuals like John Brown to take the unyielding Puritan law and apply it to the point of bloodshed. As Moncure Conway, a Unitarian abolitionist, wrote about New Englanders leading up to the Civil War, "It appears to me now that there had remained in nearly every Northern breast, however liberal, some unconscious chord which Brown had touched, inherited from the old Puritan spirit and faith in the God of War" (qtd. in L. Reynolds 162-63). By

condemning Hilda's unwillingness to listen to and engage with others, Hawthorne is also condemning every inheritor of the Puritan spirit – every son or daughter of the Puritans – who would rather kill or shun than talk.

Hawthorne's Criticism of Emersonian Transcendentalism

Hawthorne was not the only one to criticize Puritan society and thought. The more liberal Unitarian ministers of the early nineteenth century began to preach explicitly against the type of evidentialism that the Puritans and other Christian sects were practicing (Holifield 434). Eventually, some of the more radical of this group split from the Unitarian religion altogether and formed the group known as the Transcendentalists. As Margaret Fuller commented to her friend William Henry Channing, the entire purpose of the Transcendentalist ideology was to "work from within outwards" instead of receiving truth "on external grounds" (qtd. in Holifield 435). In this manner the self or what was to be found in the self became the source of truth. Although Hawthorne was connected to many of the key players in Transcendentalism, it was the ideas of the movement's de facto spokesman Ralph Waldo Emerson which Hawthorne found to be unsettling. The Transcendentalist movement, as Hawthorne saw it, could be defined by what Emerson said and wrote. Even currently, for better or worse, when individuals wish to study Transcendentalism, they by and large study Emerson. For this reason, Hawthorne's criticism of the movement will largely be a criticism of Emerson's brand of Transcendentalism.

Drawing on insights from Reverend William Ellery Channing who carried on a very public argument with the last Puritan preacher Lyman Beecher, Ralph Waldo Emerson continued to push for a further justification of an individual who would "replace

Lockean reason with an intuition that no longer relied on external proofs" (Holified 435). Emerson distrusted "large, controlling ideas" such as those found in Puritan Orthodoxy (C. Davis 30). Although initially a member of the Unitarian clergy, Emerson eventually left even that liberal theology because it wouldn't allow him the leeway to practice his individual beliefs in the manner that he felt best. The most famous evidence of this movement away from the religion was over the practice of communion. As Emerson related his reasoning for his refusal to offer The Lord's Supper to his Unitarian congregation, it all had to do with the authority that the church put on the sacrament. Emerson could find no strong evidence in scripture for the need for communion. He saw that Jesus taught that individuals should only worship the true God and refuse to worship idols, but the church, by insisting on one specific form of worship (communion), effectively created another idol. As Emerson himself comments about this, "Is not this to make vain the gift of God? Is not this to turn back the hand on the dial? Is not this to make men — to make ourselves — forget that not forms, but duties; not names, but righteousness and love are enjoined; and that in the eye of God there is no other measure of the value of any one form than the measure of its use?" ("The Lord's Supper" 1139-40). We can see here the beginning of Emerson's thought that truth must come from within. Outward forms and external names have very little importance. Truth given to an individual through an external means is not really truth at all. As Emerson continued to work out his own ideas and beliefs, he came to see that the only way to counteract the strong controlling ideas of various orthodoxies was to place the full force of authority for finding and interpreting truth on the self. Stated in another way, rather than relying on scripture, the church, or evidences of miracles to see what truth should be, Emerson

believes that one should only look to the self for “the sources of nature are in his own mind” ("The Over-soul" 399).

Emerson believed that the key to all knowledge could be found by looking inward to the self or outward toward nature. Truth could be found as one plumbs the depths of one’s being, and it could be found as one communes with nature, for the truths of nature reside in the self. For this reason he famously states “The ancient precept, ‘Know thyself,’ and the modern precept, ‘Study nature,’ become at last one maxim” (Emerson, “The American Scholar" 56). In his 1836 manifesto “Nature,” launching what was to be known as the Transcendentalist movement, Emerson proclaims, “Standing on the bare ground, -- my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, -- all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God” (Emerson, "Nature" 10). Knowledge for Emerson, then, becomes absolute – assuming, that is, that the Universal Being is also absolute. When Emerson communes with nature, he communes with all of existence. As E. Brooks Holifield comments, Emerson “began to think of God not as an agent governing through law but rather as Law itself, as Absolute Goodness and Absolute Truth, or better as the Neoplatonic One, beyond being, essence, and life” (443). In this manner, Emerson began to see that the human being could, at least in part, come into contact with Absolute Truth by simply looking into one’s self. As he writes in “The Over-Soul,” “We are wiser than we know. If we will not interfere with our thought, but will act entirely, or see how the thing stands in God, we know the particular thing, and every thing and every man. For the Maker of all things and all persons stands behind us, and casts his dread omniscience through us over things” (391-92). In this

manner of thinking, in order to know everything about another individual, one need only look inward and see the thoughts in one's own mind. It is also worth noting, that Emerson's language also implies a truth or knowledge that is applied to things (as the "dread omniscience" is cast over externalities) rather than one that emanates from the things or people themselves. It is easy to see how this mode of thinking would make Hawthorne uncomfortable.

If Hawthorne was trying to argue against a monological view of the world that saw a people as a chosen group that must maintain the strictures of God, it wouldn't make much sense to replace it with another line of thought that, although headed to the opposite extreme, claimed many of the same things. Both Emerson and the Puritans claimed that they had access to Deity. Both Emerson and the Puritans claimed special insight into the way the world really worked at its most fundamental level. The immediate difference is that the Puritans believed that they inherited their worldview from God via revelation and scripture. The Emersonian Transcendentalists received their worldview because God (as the Absolute Truth) was within them. Both groups, then, formed a worldview that was totalizing and all encompassing. Hawthorne began to see the same problem in Emerson's brand of Transcendentalism that he was fighting against in Puritanism: the insistence of certainty at the expense of others.

Whereas Puritans punished the Other who did not maintain the precepts of God, Emerson's way of thinking simply had no use for another subjective being. Emerson already explicitly said that if knowledge of nature was desired, one could simply study the self since both contained God. To Hawthorne's way of thinking, Transcendentalism has the potential to lead to a complete subjective solipsism and disengagement with all

other subjects and objects of nature. To some extent this happened. Emerson could, on the one hand, speak at abolitionist events and support feminist causes, but he could also praise, to Hawthorne's chagrin, John Brown who murdered a family in Kansas with a broad sword and tried to lead an armed revolt. Emerson made no secret of the fickleness of his subjective philosophy. He claims that "good and bad are but names readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution, the only wrong what is against it…I shun father and mother and wife and brother, when my genius calls me" (Emerson, "Self-Reliance" 262). It is the disregard that Emerson claims to have for others unless they suite him that has Hawthorne wary. Ultimately, he sees in Emersonian Transcendentalism another system that tends to disregard others in its zeal for its own ideas. "For Hawthorne, so it seems, subjectivity is, or can be 'outside of everything,' perhaps even outside itself, or beside itself. If it is outside of everything, this means that it cannot touch anything closely enough to make that 'anything' when it is named even a metonymic expression of itself" (Miller 57). Thus any idea of knowledge or reality that Hawthorne was to take seriously must be grounded in the Other whether the Other is the world or another individual. If any philosophy failed to ground itself in the Other, Hawthorne saw a philosophy of isolation and solipsism.

The Puritans used their doctrine to cut others off because anyone who didn't agree with Puritan doctrine was acting heretical. Hawthorne's vision of Emersonian Transcendentalism had the same problem. Because Emersonian philosophy was centered on the self, there was no room to acknowledge the important reality of the Other. Both ways of viewing the world simplified the complexity of the Other in a manner that fit their respective worldviews. The Puritans condemned the Other while Emerson was

dismissive. However, when this zeal of the surety in the self and its projects was made manifest in popular culture, many reform movements began to emerge in antebellum America each claiming a truth at the expense of an Other.

Hawthorne's Criticism of Reform Movements

Hawthorne's America was full of individuals who apparently knew exactly what they wanted and were absolutely convinced that they had the truth on their side. As Hawthorne grew and watched his country, he was constantly facing different types of reformers. Feminists, abolitionists, unionists, secessionists, socialists and all other types of reformers were vying for the nation's attention. Each group fighting – sometimes violently – in order to get their vision of the world imposed on the rest of society.

This violent tendency is the perhaps the greatest reason that Hawthorne became interested in reformers and reform movements. His interest can be seen in his tales such as "Earth's Holocaust," and "A Rill from the Town Pump," where reform movements and their implications are explored.

In "Earth's Holocaust" Hawthorne critiques the intentions of reformers as one by one reformers from every sort burn everything that they find reprehensible at the expense of everyone else until nothing in the world is left. At each instance, reformers give rational arguments to justify their actions: the temperance reformers threw in the world's alcohol in order to save the drunks as they looked on in pain; in a move that echoes Emerson's "Divinity School Address," a group of reformers threw in every symbol of church they could find along with all the copies of the Bible so faith can be "more sublime in its simplicity" (x:400); all the military equipment is destroyed to prevent war; and all offensive art is done away with. However, once "every human or divine

appendage of our mortal state" has been melted down, the narrator is still concerned about the human heart (x: 401). Instead of trying to change the human heart through connecting, reformers "go no deeper than the Intellect, and strive, with merely that feeble instrument, to discern and rectify what is wrong," but if this remains the case, then "our whole accomplishment [of reform] will be a dream" (x: 404). The narrator takes the fact that reform movements are a dream one step further by assuming that reform movements have always been interested in merely the external so that "Man's age-long endeavor for perfection had served only to render him the mockery of the Evil Principle" (x:403). As reformers try simply to take away or change the externalities of the people and situations they wish to reform, they by necessity objectify those they wish to reform. For the temperance reformers, those who drink become merely drunkards and thereby lose their humanity. This propensity of the temperance reformer to strip the drunkard of humanity is explored at length in "A Rill from the Town Pump."

"A Rill from the Town Pump" is ostensibly about a town's water pump situated at "the corner of two principle streets" giving a temperance lecture to the town (ix: 141). Within its lecture, it talks about the pains that alcohol causes families, and in true temperance fashion declares that when all stop drinking alcohol then "Poverty shall pass away from the land…then Disease, for lack of other victims, shall gnaw its own heart, and die. Then Sin, if she does not die, shall lose half her strength" (ix: 146). However, the Town-Pump, in the midst of his condemnation of alcohol, begins to condemn the temperance reformers who "take up the honorable cause of the Town-Pump, in the style of a toper fighting for his brandy-bottle" (ix: 147). In their "fiery pugnacity" the reformers become "tipsy with zeal for temperance" (ix: 147). By including these

allusions to drunkenness in a temperance talk, the narrator is able to show the reformers that they are in just as much need of reform as the people they are trying to reform. This is ultimately the message that Hawthorne wishes to convey: reformers of all sorts, if they forget that they are dealing with people and begin to fight blindly for a cause, become every bit as morally compromised, the tool of the "Evil Principle," as those they would wish to reform.

In these tales just mentioned, Hawthorne explores what happens when one individual tries to reform another. Inevitably what happens is one subject universalizes a code of behavior and tries to compel all other people into alignment with his way of thinking. Thus Hawthorne's reformers "are presented as superficially loving and righteous but secretly contentious, disruptive, [and] devilish" (D. Reynolds 118). The problem with the social reformers and the reform literature that was constantly being written (especially if we are to include the abolitionist writings of the Transcendentalists and others) as Hawthorne saw it was that in their zeal to claim the moral high ground and uphold the values of the individual, they by necessity had to degrade a different, supposedly equal, subject. The claim that only one side had universal truth and moral superiority seemed questionable to Hawthorne.

Hawthorne saw himself in a world that was dominated by monological worldviews. The Puritans that he often studied saw their doctrine as a universal truth to which all people must conform to or be labeled as heretical. Emerson, in Hawthorne's eyes, saw the self as possessing a universal truth, so the need for meaningful engagement was negligible. The reform movements that surrounded him tended to subordinate individuals to a supposed universal cause or principle. What each group had in common

with the rest was the belief that it had access to a universal truth. Truth, for these groups is transcendent, and individuals were less important than the truth. Hawthorne challenges that. In his writing he complicates the nature of truth. For Hawthorne, truth is not something transcendental. Truth is more fluid. Truth is capable of deception.

The Truth that Deceives

Rather than claim that one and only one reform group or philosophical movement or religion held the truth, Hawthorne took a radical move by looking at truth in a different light. As he saw a need for skepticism amid the differing groups that minimized or ignored the need to engage with anyone outside their own group, he also saw a need to reconceptualize the word "truth." Too many contradictory claims were being made in the name of truth, and more alarmingly, murders and other acts of violence were perpetrated in the name of truth. From watching all that was happening in his society, Hawthorne began to see another way of envisioning truth that moves away from truth as certitude.

The problem of certitude can be found not only in Hawthorne's fiction but in his notebooks and life as well. If we are to talk about the quest for certitude, we must by nature talk about the quest for truth. Hawthorne, as a moral thinker, is interested in the nature of truth. Among one part of his friends and acquaintances such as the Peabody sisters, Thoreau, Emerson, and Fuller, it seemed to be a consensus that truth, in true transcendental fashion, should emanate from the self. But since Hawthorne is fundamentally concerned with the interpersonal truths, he sees problems with a theory of truth that is grounded solely in the subject. In order to see to what extent Hawthorne problematizes the concept of truth, we must turn to an encounter he had with an old school friend. In this encounter, he sees a truth about the man. However, the truth that

Hawthorne sees is not a transcendental truth. Rather it is a truth of a veil, one that both illuminates and conceals at the same time.

On July 28, 1837, Hawthorne met up with an old college friend since turned U.S. Congressman, Jonathan Cilley. It was the first time the two had met since graduating from college twelve years earlier, and Hawthorne took the opportunity to deliver a character sketch of Cilley in his notebooks. Among the many observations that he made of Cilley Hawthorne notes that

> he is a singular man, shrewd, crafty, insinuating…seizing on each man by his manageable point, and using him for his own purposes, often without the man's suspecting he is being made a tool of; and yet, artificial as his character would seem to be, his conversation, at least to myself, was full of natural feeling, the expression of which can hardly be mistaken; and his revelations with regard to himself had really a great deal of frankness. (viii: 61)

This double nature of both falseness or artificiality and naturalness and frankness bothered Hawthorne. He realized that Cilley wasn't aware of what he was doing, nor was Cilley conscious of the fact that he used other people to achieve his own ends. At the same time, Hawthorne realized, there was a truth to this duplicitous nature of Cilley. It is this very fact that "makes him so very fascinating" (viii: 62). It would be too easy to write Cilley off as a hypocrite since as Hawthorne admits "a man of the most open nature might well have been more reserved to a friend, after twelve years separation, than Cilley was to me" (viii: 62). But Hawthorne does not label Cilley a hypocrite. Instead the conclusion that Hawthorne draws would be one to throw most ardent seekers of dogma of

whatever sort into fits. Hawthorne saw in Cilley a living contradiction. On the one hand Cilley's reaction to Hawthorne after such an extended amount of time with no contact seemed extraordinary and as different from normal behavior as to be false, yet on the other hand, Hawthorne felt as if Cilley really believed that his emotions were genuine. In the very act of being manipulated by the possibly artificialness of Cilley, Hawthorne found himself drawn to the man. It is to this end that Hawthorne sums up the character of Cilley by saying, "there is such a quality of truth, and kindliness, and warm affections, that a man's heart opens to him in spite of himself; he deceives by truth" (viii: 62). Examining Hawthorne's statement about truth, two things immediately stand out: first is that there are various qualities to truth and second, truth can deceive.

As soon as we mention that truth has quality to it, we must reject the fact that truth can be a static entity that is either there or not. Truth must become something that has various qualities, levels or stages to it. In his famous preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*, Hawthorne gives a glimpse at a radically different view of the truth from those of both Puritans and Transcendentalists. For both groups, truth is found in propositions. It is something that can be studied, captured, and owned. This will divide the world into those who have the truth and those who do not. Hawthorne illustrates his idea of truth, partially, through the metaphor of hunting butterflies. If he was to hunt the truth of the story – in the form of a moral – and "impale" it like "sticking a pin through a butterfly," the truth would "stiffen in an ungainly and unnatural attitude" (Hawthorne, *House* 3). This pegging of truth is precisely what the convictions of the Puritans, Transcendentalists, and reformers do. In their zeal for holding, protecting, or even spreading the truth, they effectively kill it. Hawthorne seems to say that the only way to

experience the truth is to be skeptical that truth was experienced. As critic Clark Davis puts it, “the truth [Hawthorne] imagines is not an object that can be seized but an elusive effect of individual experience” (42). It is this elusive quality of truth that leads directly into Hawthorne’s second observation: truth can deceive.

With this comment, Hawthorne flies in the face of traditional Western thought. Ever since John the Evangelist wrote in his gospel, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,” thinkers have been equating truth with liberty (John 8:32 KJV). For this reason, Descartes questioned everything he could possibly know to find the criterion of truth that could liberate him from his own doubt. Locke looked for the truth that would justify the sciences and create a basis for a tolerant and more equitable political system. Kant looked for a truth that would be so certain as to shut out crippling skepticism and establish an unquestionable moral code that could preserve the autonomy of the individual.

But the truth that Hawthorne saw in Cilley is one that led an individual into deception and manipulation. The truth that Hawthorne sees is a power, but it is not power that inherently liberates. The truth that Hawthorne thinks about is one that falls into closer alignment with truth as understood by Nietzsche and Heidegger.

Hawthorne, Nietzsche, and the Fight against Convictions

Nietzsche, in his treatment of truth, is concerned with describing the fundamental truth claims associated with specific types of moral individuals both strong and weak. He sees in both a drive to find the truth, whatever that may be, which he labels the will to truth, but he did not see a transcendental truth of any sort. Nietzsche saw truth that was rooted in contradictory people living in a contradictory world. Nietzsche went so far as to

say that individuals who did believe in the transcendental or metaphysical truths were weak. This is seen most clearly in his frequent attacks on Christianity. Nietzsche claimed that Christians say that they "know" the truth not because they actually knew anything but because they needed to have faith in the idea of a transcendental truth. Of course, the Christian transcendental truth originates in and drives to an afterlife. In this manner, the phrase "the truth shall make you free" means, in Nietzsche's view, that the "truth" of an afterlife will release the sufferer from the dreary pains and concerns of this life (*Twilight* 63-4). "The will to truth is valued by the weak not because the truth exists and is beneficial, but rather because they need to believe in truth. The certainty and clarity provided by the will to truth provide comforts to the ill-constituted" (Glenn 579). This will become the largest criticism that many level at Hilda in *The Marble Faun* who "preserves her innocence at the expense of her goodness" (Budick 241). In fact, the idea that truth is established out of the needs of the people is seen more broadly in Hawthorne's notebooks when he writes, "The tradition is just as good as truth" (viii: 513). For it is tradition that guides many individuals to act. They center their lives on the concrete surety that tradition offers them. Nietzsche extends this thought so that rather than setting truth and tradition on the same level, he makes them synonyms:

> What then is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions - they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of

> sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins. ("On Truth" par. 9)

Many see Nietzsche as a prophet of postmodernism and as such, they think that Nietzsche rejects all notions of truth (Glenn 580). However, it becomes clear that he does see truth as a real thing. In fact, Nietzsche specifically says at the beginning of *The Genealogy of Morals* that many truths – even ugly ones – exist (10). In the deconstructive zeal, many have made the mistake of taking Nietzsche's perspectivism and used it to erase all truth. Nietzsche, on the other hand, would scoff at that. There is truth, or, rather, there are truths - even if those truths are used to deceive.

The truth that Nietzsche sees and maintains is fundamentally one that must be found on an individual level. And, like Hawthorne, it is also one that is built on the concept of doubt and skepticism rather than faith and universal certainty. Truth is revisable based on the changing nature of reality. This is seen most clearly when individuals are honest about who they truly are and their relationship to the world. As we can see, Hawthorne is interested in many of the same ideas as Nietzsche. Just like Nietzsche, he bases a worldview on doubt and skepticism, and like the German, he sees that an openness must be exhibited in order to see the world as a place that is always in flux.

Just as Hawthorne critiques the world views of those who hold to their convictions at the expense of others, Nietzsche has much to say on this phenomenon as well. Throughout his works, Nietzsche wishes to draw the reader into skepticism, but his skepticism claims that convictions held by individuals can cloud the truth or even lead them away from the truth. As Nietzsche declares, "Convictions are more dangerous

enemies of truth than lies" (*Human* 223*)*. These convictions masquerade as truth and reality, but only serve to separate the individuals who hold on to those convictions from the truth of reality. As critic Scott Jenkins recounts, "[Nietzsche] maintains that while we often believe in accordance with the evidence, we possess many of our beliefs because they give us a feeling of pleasure, security, or self-respect – not because they are supported by evidence" (267-68). As a result of this phenomenon, Nietzsche advocates a skepticism about convictions – mostly stemming from religious and metaphysical sources – in favor of an epistemology based on observation and engagement with the world. This is not to say that Nietzsche advocates a scientific positivism. For, he sees too many scientists who hold their concepts of truth prior to any evidence given by reality. In many situations, Nietzsche levels the same criticism against science as he levels against religion, for he sees in science a secular religion (*Gay* 176-77). Neither religion with its dogma nor science with its positivism are free from the error of creating an interpretation of the world before experiencing the multifaceted world. Once these ideas are embraced, whether in science or religion, the individual has effectively shut him or herself out of world experiences because, in his or her mind, that individual has the truth to reality. For this reason, both Nietzsche and Hawthorne call for a skepticism about the concepts or convictions that will close individuals off from the world around them. It is not a skepticism about knowledge, but a skepticism about doctrines, dogmas, and convictions. In embracing skepticism of grand interpretive concepts, the individual (in theory) remains open to the world of experience and evidence.

Nietzsche advocates a withdrawal from the dogmatic concepts of both religion and science in order to see the world clearly for the first time. This call will also be

picked up and formalized by the phenomenologists in the twentieth century as they try to get back to the things themselves. It is at this point where Heidegger picks up on Nietzsche's views of truth and begins to formally elaborate the view of truth that conceals and unconceals.

Hawthorne, Heidegger, and the Truth that Veils

To illustrate what he means about truth that conceals and unconceals, Heidegger looks at Plato's "Allegory of the Cave." Heidegger breaks the "Allegory" into four sections and examines each section in turn: "1) the situation of the human being in the subterranean cave 2) The liberation of the human being within the cave 3) the authentic liberation into the light 4) the look back and the attempt to return to the Dasein in the cave" (*Truth* 102). After giving his own translation of the sections, he discusses how truth is functioning in each scene. Focusing only on his discussions, we can see that truth becomes a process of unconcealments.

In the first section, Heidegger is very careful to point out the fact that the prisoners in the cave who are seeing the shadows have no conception of shadow for they have no notion of the source of light nor of objects that might cause a shadow (*Truth* 104). In their minds what they see is what there is. There is no other reality besides what is in front of them. In his interpretation of the "Allegory," the prisoners equate themselves and their being with the shadows since they cannot move their own heads to view a body or bodies around them (*Truth* 105). Although Glaucon (the individual to whom Socrates is relating the "Allegory") claims that the scene is very bizarre, Heidegger says that this scene is not so unusual. To bring it into the language that he used in *Being and Time,* he claims that this is an everyday scene as Dasein is "given over to

idle talk, to the customary, what lies closest at hand, the everyday, business as usual" (*Truth* 105-06). Every item that is in the world of the subterranean human beings is real for them. For the prisoners, the shadows are not *mere* shadows but the ultimate reality. The prisoners' world is a world of unconcealedness in that their reality lies open to them for them to engage with and draw meaning out. Nothing before them is a lie. The problem is simply that they do not understand the nature of the unconcealed that is before them. They do not understand that the unconcealed before them is also concealing other things.

With the second stage, a human being is unchained and is turned to see the light that causes the shadows on the wall. This does not mean that everything that the individual thought previous to liberation (e.g. that the shadows were talking to the prisoner) was a lie; rather, the individual is able to make connections between things to a greater degree. In Heidegger's terms "unconcealment moves" (*Truth* 109). Relationships of things come into starker focus. The prisoner gathers in more truth. Being becomes clearer for the individual because now the individual can see that the shadows are mere shadows of things themselves – including the prisoner's own Being. However, Heidegger warns, that the second stage "is not an actual liberation, it is only an external liberation" (*Truth* 110). The reason for the partial liberation is the pain that the light causes the prisoner as he faces the light. Given the choice between continually looking at the fire and turning back to the shadows and "business as usual," the prisoner will turn back to the shadows because being has not been changed (*Truth* 110).

The third stage that Heidegger highlights as the authentic stage of liberation is characterized by struggle, endurance, and courage (*Truth* 114). As the prisoner is dragged

out of the cave, the prisoner struggles because the pain from the light of the outside world is even greater than the pain caused from the fire. However, the option of turning back around to face the shadows is no longer available. As a result, the prisoner begins by "comporting himself" to the images that look most like what was familiar in the cave (*Truth* 113). Gradually, the prisoner begins to see with greater and greater clarity the world outside (*Truth* 113). But this clarity gives the greatest insight of all. As was shown, with each step of liberation, the understanding of Being became even clearer. In this third stage, the individual who dwells outside the cave can finally understand the fundamental nature of Being. But that fundamental nature of Being is to understand only the Being of one's own Dasein (*Truth* 114). Critic Iain Thomson lays out the implications of this stage: "when we learn to dwell [outside the cave]…we come to understand and experience entities as being richer in meaning than we are capable of doing justice to conceptually…and so learn to approach them with care, humility, patience, gratitude, even awe" (*Ontotheology* 164).

The final stage is the return to the cave. The once prisoner is now the liberator. Except now the liberator is in a unique position to realize that there are different types of unconcealment of reality. The question that must be asked by the liberator is "What sort of reality is it that the cave dwellers take as what is?" (Heidegger, *Truth* 141). The liberator can then work with the next prisoner in order to liberate one more and bring the prisoner into greater unconcealment. The entire point of the "Allegory," Heidegger claims, is to show that, "there is no truth in itself at all, but instead, truth happens in the innermost confrontation with concealment in the sense of disguise and covering up… Man exists in the truth and the untruth, in concealment and unconcealment together"

(*Truth* 142). Truth, in other words, cannot happen within an individual without changing him in some fundamental way. It is for this reason that "man exists in the truth and the untruth" that Hawthorne's friend Jonathan Cilley could be both genuine and artificial. He embodied the truth that deceived because he revealed the nature of his being in the very movement of concealing it.

For Hawthorne and the existential thinkers to come after him, skepticism about universal declarations is a necessary starting point, but it is not the end point. Engagement with the world is a necessary step. Truths arrive as the individual engages and opens the self to the world. It is for this reason that after Hawthorne and the existentialists call transcendental truth and truth claims into question, they turn their attention to the nature of the world. In turning his attention to the world, Hawthorne will not seek to force meaning out of it. Rather, his method for truth finding is to engage with the complexities of the world in order to allow it to unconceal truth.

Hawthorne, Perspectives, and Lack of Inherent Meaning

Hawthorne's world is one that defies a simple interpretation. His world is fractured and open to the different perspectives of his various characters. When they finally realize that their world resists a simplistic – indeed, any universal – interpretation, that they can finally see themselves as humble beings and engage sympathetically with those around them. However, many of Hawthorne's characters never get to the point of sympathetic engagement in their continual mission to try and make sense of the world around them. All too often they continually try to impose their ideals on the world without success. Hawthorne's task for many of his novels is to position his characters in a situation in which they are confronted with the inadequacies of their interpretation of the

world. It is through the mechanism of reality breaking through the truth held by the characters that Hawthorne can introduce a skepticism into his thought as well as point to a possible way to find an authentic reality.

Hawthorne works through the movements of skepticism and sympathetic engagement most explicitly in his last published romance, *The Marble Faun*. After the Fall of Donatello, Kenyon and Donatello are standing at the top of a tower at Donatello's ancestral estate. It is good to note that they are standing on the top of a tower. In this manner both men literally have their heads "bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space," to quote Emerson ("Nature" 10). By this maneuver, Hawthorne can have Kenyon exclaim in true Transcendentalist fashion, "Thank God for letting me behold this scene…I have viewed it from many points, and never without as full a sensation of gratitude as my heart seems capable of feeling…*to ascend but this little way above the common level*, and so attain a somewhat wider glimpse of His dealing" (iv: 258 italics added). This language, with its images of seeing and ascending above the common, is meant to mimic the Transcendentalists' language. However, this effulgent outburst is quickly checked by Donatello who, standing right next to him on the tower says, "You discern something that is hidden from me…I see sunshine on one spot, and cloud in another, and no reason for it in either case" (iv: 258). This clash of perspectives is further complicated as, later, Kenyon and Donatello are both looking at a stained glass window. Kenyon remarks that the grace of God shines through the window. Donatello cannot agree: "He glows with divine wrath…each must interpret for himself" (iv: 306). In both instances, the narrator, who is usually more than happy to pass judgment on the characters or to call into question their comments, remains silent. The silence let's both

statements stand as reality showing the truth of a contradictory world where "each must interpret for himself." Each character experiences a different truth that is unconcealed while both have other truths that remain concealed to them.

The fact that there seems to be an implicit agreement from the narrator that "each must interpret for himself" shows a world that is fractured and segmented in the differing perspectives that inhabit it. Rather than having recourse to an overriding belief system or to an inherent divinity housed within the individual, reality and what is or what isn't must become a function of individual hermeneutics. Robert Milder comments that "Hawthorne is suggesting that 'nature's cunning alphabet,' as Melville would call it, is not self-interpretive but must be construed (or misconstrued) by individuals in their walled-in psyches" ("Beautiful" 2).

The most prolonged discussions of meaning and interpretation happen between Donatello and Kenyon as Kenyon visits Donatello at his family estate. As they look over the scenery, Kenyon is carried away by strong emotion to the point of making grand statements about the nature of interpretation. As he looks at nature around him, he declares in true Transcendentalist fashion, "I cannot preach…with a page of heaven and a page of earth spread wide open before us! Only begin to read it, and you will find it interpreting itself without the aid of words…When we ascend into the higher regions of emotion and spiritual enjoyment, they are only expressible by such grand hieroglyphics as these around us" (iv: 258). Donatello, feeling the guilt of his recently committed murder, is not convinced. As he looks around at the same scenery, he feels no spiritual enlightenment. He definitely does not see an intrinsic interpretation in the scenery. To prove this point to Kenyon, he points to a shrub nearby and asks, "If the wide valley has a

great meaning, this plant ought to have at least a little one" (iv: 259). Kenyon is too eager to answer his friend, "Oh, certainly…the shrub has its moral, or it would have perished long ago. And, no doubt, it is for your use and edification, since you have had it before your eyes, all your lifetime, and now are moved to ask what may be its lesson" (iv: 259). The assumption that Kenyon seems to be holding – that meaningless things must perish – proves to be a troubling one for him. In this instance he argues for a type of teleology for the plant. The shrub's entire existence has been leading up to this one moment when it will reveal a lesson to Donatello for his "use and edification" (iv: 259). But no such lesson presents itself. Donatello examines the shrub closely and simply states, "It teaches me nothing…but here was a worm that would have killed it; an ugly creature, which I will fling over the battlements" (iv: 259). The fact that Donatello cannot see a moral lesson in the bush doesn't elicit further comment from Kenyon or the narrator. The conversation is simply left at that statement and the chapter ends. In this manner, Donatello gets the last word. This strategy of the chapter break suggests an implicit agreement with Donatello's point of view. However, it shouldn't be thought that Donatello espouses a form of nihilism, he simply rejects the transcendental claim that nature could be an open book with one (or any) inherent interpretation.

With the focus on hermeneutics and interpretation, Hawthorne has effectively changed the nature of the conversation from what is truth to how should truth or reality be interpreted. Whereas each group that Hawthorne critiques was arguing over what constituted reality in the nature of church doctrine or in the God-infused world and all things in it, or what constituted a moral society, Hawthorne moves away from metaphysical questions. Hawthorne is not concerned about arguing metaphysics, e. g.

whether or not God exists, whether or not there is free will. He is concerned about the meaning of what he sees as reality as is shown in the actions of his characters. Neither Donatello nor Kenyon argue about the nature of the landscape or the fact that the sun is shining through a stained glass window; they argue the meaning, or truth, of such signs. Kenyon sees in all signs and environments a beneficent God who has his best interest at heart. Donatello, on the other hand, sees a God who is either malevolent or indifferent, or in the case of the bush, he sees nothing at all. Their interpretations of the world around them instructs them how to act and will continue to dictate how they see other signs that are given to them by the world. This should remind us of Nietzsche's claim that "We construct a new picture, which we see immediately with the aid of all the old experiences which we have had" (*Gay* 98) as well as Heidegger's claim that truth is grounded in Being's comportment toward the world. None of these Existentialists claim an objective truth. Kenyon eventually begins to question his assumption about inherent meaning as he is brought into direct conflict with events that resist interpretation when he enters the carnival.

The entire *The Marble Faun* is used to call into question many commonly accepted epistemological foundations. Religion, relationships, history, tradition, art, and the senses are all skeptically treated. We have already seen that Kenyon interpreted the sun as evidence of a beneficent God. Indeed, throughout most of the book, he remains the one character who seems the most unquestioning of his knowledge as he is the one character who was not involved with the murder that is central to the book. However, Hawthorne is not content to leave Kenyon alone with his convictions. Hawthorne sends Kenyon through the Roman Carnival where his certainty gives way to confusion as he

realizes that he cannot transcend his own perspective to make sense of a world that refuses to reveal its meaning to his regular mode of interpretation. Hawthorne highlights the interpretive impossibility of Carnival in order to make Kenyon question his previously held beliefs and move him closer to opening himself up to a chaotic world.

Part of Kenyon's problem in Carnival is that he has no control over what happens to him. Throughout the book, he has an interpretation for everything that he experiences; however, in Carnival he has no way to interpret what is happening to him because he lacks any previous experience that would prepare him for its chaotic nature. All of the criteria that he had used are gone in the carnival or are flatly contradicted. At every turn Kenyon is greeted by "the mirth of ancient times, surviving through all manner of calamity…[a] mouldy gaiety…[with] shallow influence…[on the] mass of spectators…who carry on the warfare of nosegays and counterfeit sugar-plums" (iv: 437). It is hard to tell if Carnival is a celebration of life (mirth, survival, gaiety, spectators, nosegays, and sugar-plums) or a reenactment of death (ancient, calamity, mouldy, shallow, and warfare). Kenyon, unable to get his bearing, finds himself in "a sympathy of nonsense" (iv: 439). Carnival embodies for Hawthorne the perfect symbol for reality. Carnival is life; it is death; however, if one tries to force preconceived concepts on it without knowing its nature, it degenerates into nonsense.

The last scenes of the book embody this nonsense. Hawthorne forces Kenyon to experience the disorienting effect of the "awful freedom" of Carnival (iv: 445). People and friends appear and disappear in various disguises. The crowd pushes into him and sweeps him along. He is forced to overhear conversations and only speculate that they are relevant to him and what he is trying to figure out. Kenyon receives no explication of the

situation. The entire scene for Kenyon becomes one of confusion and chaos with no solutions. Life and death begin to blur amid the carnival as he is approached by a seven-foot tall woman who first tries to woo him and then takes out a fake gun and shoots lime-dust all over him and a man dressed as a notary approaches him and requests to take his last will and testament (iv: 446). In all the confusion, Kenyon is tossed around and is forced to be a simple observer of the chaos. By the time that he leaves the carnival, he is changed. No longer is his traditional way of knowing reliable. Rather, he is now more open to the possibility that the only way of gaining knowledge of reality is to question experience.

In Carnival voices, identities, and even the patterns that distinguish life from death begin to merge and become indistinguishable. Once the interpretive distinctions that an individual normally utilizes collapse into each other, consistent or transcendent meanings are no longer readily seen or made. Following the Roman Carnival in the last chapter of *The Marble Faun*, the narrator makes the connection between the carnival and the reality of the story explicit. Just as the carnival was chaotic and eluded meaning, the reality of the story and – in fact – life is chaotic and eludes meaning:

> [The reader] is too wise to insist upon looking closely at the wrong side of the tapestry, after the right one has been sufficiently displayed to him…If any brilliant or beautiful, or even tolerable, effect have been produced, this pattern of kindly readers will accept it at its worth, without tearing the web apart, with the idle purpose of discovering how its threads have been knit together; for …the actual experience of even the most ordinary life is full

> of events that never explain themselves, either as regards their origin or their tendency. (iv: 455)

After going through Carnival, Kenyon begins to drop his transcendental leanings in order to think about the perspectives of others and the meanings that they might make in any given situation. He begins to surmise how much of the world is open for interpretation as he tells Hilda, "you do not know…what a mixture of good there may be in things evil; and how the greatest criminal, if you look at his conduct *from his own point of view*, or from any side-point, may seem not so unquestionably guilty, after all" (iv: 383 emphasis added). Kenyon is beginning to realize that an interpretation of the world and concepts within it such as good and evil require a perspective in order to be interpreted. The criminal from his point of view may seem to be doing good, yet his actions from a different point of view could be abject evil. Kenyon seems to be pointing to even more interpretations with his nod to "any side-point" that there are even more view points and interpretations that could mix good and evil into all sorts of new combinations and judgments.

Although *The Marble Faun* is the only book in which Hawthorne deals explicitly with Carnival, carnivals of all sorts find their way into many of his works. Carnival is a convention that Hawthorne uses in his writing to subvert the given social meaning that his protagonists inhabit. From the mob of "My Kinsman, Major Molineaux" to the Election Day festivities in *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne uses the carnival to call into question the rational principles his characters use to navigate their worlds by forcing his readers and characters to navigate a cacophony of perspectives. But in the subversion of the social norms, Hawthorne is able to take his carnivals a step forward by also obscuring

meaning and getting his characters to experience the "awful freedom" of reality that the carnival represents. Hawthorne's carnivals are places of obscured meaning and ambiguous interpretation, for it is in the carnival that inherent meanings are shown to be nonsense.

The Scarlet Letter's ending scene is in the midst of a carnival situation which Hawthorne goes through great lengths to qualify. He makes it clear that this is a Puritan carnival. If it would be held anywhere else it would look like "a period of general affliction" (i: 230). Nevertheless, all the elements for the carnival are present including a vast throng of people, including outsiders, a loosening of the social order, and a subversion of many of the traditional offices and social norms.

The carnival takes place on a public holiday that is marked for the opportunity for a new governor to take his office. Hawthorne begins to populate his scene with a market place "thronged with the craftsmen and other plebian inhabitants…in considerable numbers; among whom, likewise, were many rough figures" (i: 226).

> The picture of human life in the market- place, though its general tint was the sad gray, brown, or black of the English emigrants, was yet enlivened by some diversity of hue. A party of Indians – in their savage finery of curious embroidered deer-skin robes, wampum-belts, red and yellow ochre, and feathers, and armed with bow and arrow and stone-headed spear – stood apart, with countenances of inflexible gravity…Nor…were they the wildest feature of the scene. This distinction could more justly be claimed by some mariners…who had come ashore to see the humors of Election day. (i: 232)

The fact that the town is, if not out and out welcoming the outsiders, tolerating their presences shows a general relaxing of the mood. Hawthorne continues: "the people were countenanced, if not encouraged, in relaxing the severe and close application to their various modes of rugged industry, which, at all other times, seems of the same piece and material with their religion…the great honest face of the people smiled, grimly, perhaps, but widely too" (i: 231). The fact that the sailors were able to get away with many social transgressions "under the beadle's very nose" does not go unnoticed by the narrator either (i: 232). However, the real subversion and obscuring of meaning happens when Dimmesdale climbs the scaffold.

At the end of Dimmesdale's election sermon, the narrator makes a note about this accomplishment: "He stood, at this moment, on the very proudest eminence of superiority, to which the gifts of intellect, rich lore, prevailing eloquence, and a reputation of whitest sanctity, could exalt a clergyman in New England's earliest days" (i: 249). Everyone in the crowd watching this sermon would recognize this fact. And it is telling that upon completing this sermon, the Reverend Dimmesdale's next move is to ascend the scaffold with Hester and Pearl by his side.

Approaching the scaffold, Dimmesdale calls out to Hester, "twine thy strength about me!...Thy strength, Hester…Support me up yonder scaffold" (i: 253). The high minister acknowledges to the listening crowd who had been watching the entire transaction with "awe and wonder" the need that he has of a condemned woman (i: 252). It is with this call for the strength of an adulterous woman and their mutual ascension up the scaffold that chaos and the full effect of the carnival emerge. The crowd erupts into tumult and "the men of rank and dignity, who stood more immediately around the

clergyman, were so taken by surprise, and so perplexed as to the purport of what they saw, - unable to receive the explanation which most readily presented itself, or to imagine any other, - that they remained silent and inactive spectators" (i: 253). During the election procession, the crowd had been silent and watchful as the men of "rank and dignity" had moved through the crowd. Now, as the minister climbs the scaffold, the men of power become the spectators and the crowds become the principle actors.

The entire scene becomes a stark inversion of social norms. The preacher who is the condemner of secret sin becomes the one who hides the biggest secret sin in the community. The preacher who just welcomed the new governor with the election sermon is now standing on the lowliest place in the community. The healing doctor is standing next to the scaffold cursing and showing himself to be a fiend bent on enslavement. The town outcast and adulteress is being shown in heroic light as she gives her strength to support the supposed man of God. It is at this time of subversion that objective meanings and interpretations begin to be lost.

In the conclusion, the narrator makes it a point to walk through the various interpretations that the townspeople make. Some saw a scarlet letter on the breast of Dimmesdale that they claimed was his penance. Others saw a letter upon Dimmesdale's breast caused by Chillingworth who they now claim to be a necromancer. Others saw a letter that was placed on the breast of Dimmesdale by the "dreadful judgment" of God (i: 259). And yet others

> who were spectators of the whole scene, and professed never once to have removed their eyes from the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale, denied that there was any mark whatever on his breast…Neither, by their report, had his

> dying words acknowledged, nor even remotely implied, and, the slightest connection, on his part, with the guilt…[of] Hester Prynne" (i: 259).

Although the narrator at this point is impelled to give the moral and "correct" interpretation of the event as "Be true! Be true! Be true! Show freely to the world, if not your worst, yet some trait whereby the worst may be inferred!" (i: 260), David Reynolds is quick to point out that

> This concluding moral…is in fact a nonmoral, given the ambiguities that abound in the rest of the novel. After all, the main characters *have* freely shown to the world some evidence of their sin: Hester wears her badge of shame; Dimmesdale confesses in the pulpit that he is a vile sinner; Chillingworth is widely recognized as the devil. But this openness comes to naught…Each of the principle characters is a kind of immoral reformer caught in the highly ironic predicament of trying honestly to probe or expose sin and yet in the very process becoming more deeply entangled in sin. (123-24 italics in original)

The narrator's interpretation, far from being definitive, ends up becoming just another voice and interpretation added to all the voices of interpretation that try to make sense of what was seen and witnessed amid the carnival. As critic Jac Tharpe accurately says, "In a story where so much is open, very little is known" (96).

The carnival scene of *The Blithedale Romance* further complicates what happens when all voices become mixed. The final confrontation in the novel between Coverdale, Zenobia, and Hollingsworth happens in the midst of a carnival situation. When Coverdale returns to Blithedale after a long absence, he finds the inhabitants of Blithedale holding a

masquerade in the forest. Every individual save Silas is in costume and dancing to "Satanic music" (iii: 210). As Coverdale, who has spent the majority of the story observing individuals to find who they really are, looks on, he is deeply unsettled by what he sees. Not only is every individual in costume, but as they dance, their identities become even more indistinguishable. Coverdale remarks that "they joined hands in a circle, whirling around so swiftly, so madly, and so merrily…that their separate incongruities were blended all together; and they became a kind of entanglement that went nigh to turn one's brain, with merely looking at it" (iii: 210). For an individual like Coverdale where incongruities and distinctions become the very definitions of meaning, the loss of these things mean a loss of meaning. Coverdale is not capable of seeing the fluidity of meaning that became apparent to Kenyon during Carnival. Coverdale, as a minor poet, is not even able to see what Hawthorne does as he moves and subverts meanings in *The Scarlet Letter.* Throughout his works, Hawthorne seems to be telling the audience that meaning is based on judgments toward an ever changing world. If a reader, much like Coverdale, refuses to see the shifting meanings of signs, the world will become unsettling to even look at. These varied judgments and interpretations of the world is a concept that Nietzsche made explicit.

The interpretation of the meaning of signs in the world would mean that the individual is not privy to the key that could universally make sense of all that happens to her. As Nietzsche comments, "The world… has once more become 'infinite' to us: insofar we cannot dismiss the possibility that it *contains infinite interpretations*" (*Gay* 217). The idea of infinite interpretations is perhaps what Hawthorne has in mind when he has Kenyon begin to apply his new-found perspectivism to the concept of sin. In a

thoughtful moment, Kenyon asks if sin is “merely an element of human education” (iv: 460). In other words, he asks if sin is simply an event that happens to an individual that allows her to interpret and use (if she desires) to change behavior. As a traditional moral thinker, the point of denying sin as “a dreadful blackness in the Universe” is curious (iv: 460), but if Hawthorne is concerned with exploring interpretations of the world based on personal experience, this wouldn’t be surprising at all.

The two artists Miriam and Hilda find themselves one day talking about the merits of a painting of Beatrice Cenci who after much abuse (and possibly rape) from her father ended up leading the rest of her family in his murder. Beatrice Cenci was then captured and beheaded by the authorities. They both find the expression of Beatrice incredibly sad, but are at odds about why. Miriam finally asks of Hilda, “Then…do you think that there was no sin in the deed for which she suffered?" (iv: 66). Taken aback, Hilda rallies and strongly proclaims, “Yes, yes; it was terrible guilt, an inexpiable crime, and she feels it to be so. Therefore it is that the forlorn creature so longs to elude our eyes, and forever vanish away into nothingness! Her doom is just!” (iv: 66). Hilda sees the world through her strong Puritan convictions. She has the laws of propriety written in her like iron and believes that all killing, no matter the circumstance, is wrong. She refuses to even think about the idea that a killing could be justified. She goes further to say that Beatrice deserves the beheading she received, which makes Miriam’s response all the more apt: “O Hilda, your innocence is like a sharp steel sword!" (iv: 66) Hilda is put in the place of the executioner who would dispatch Beatrice all over again given the chance, but Miriam continues with her take on events “Beatrice's sin may not have been so great: perhaps it was no sin at all, but the best virtue possible in the circumstances” (iv:

66). Miriam is willing to entertain the idea that the killing of an individual is not only not a sin but a virtue. We know that Miriam has a dark past and that at the story's beginning she is being mysteriously enslaved or possessed by an unnamed monk referred to as Miriam's Model. It is evident that as Miriam is thinking about Beatrice, she is also thinking about her own circumstance. This insight lends itself to further illumination of her next line: "If she viewed it as a sin, it may have been because her nature was too feeble for the fate imposed upon her" (iv: 66). Is Miriam strong enough to carry out a murder and not carry with it the weight of sin? The idea that the strength or weakness (feebleness) of the perpetrator is a deciding factor in whether or not an act is sinful smacks of Nietzschean philosophy.

Nietzsche believed that not only did the weak believe in sin, it was the weak who invented sin in order to enslave and have power over the strong. In his *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche maps out the conflict between the weak and the strong to show how "slave morality" eventually came to be the dominant morality. Running throughout his history is the argument that morality and moral perspective all depends on the constitution of the individual. Some acts by the strong will appear good while those same acts in the eyes of the weak will be evil (*Genealogy* 25). For both Hawthorne and Nietzsche, perspective becomes a major part of existence. One of the keys for Hawthorne is to make sure that many of his characters realize that they cannot transcend their individual perspective. For the reader, he wishes to show that perspective, then, becomes the main factor in how individuals view and judge their reality.

To some extent the exploration of sin's many interpretations based on personal experience is exactly what he does with his first and most popular book, *The Scarlet*

Letter. Ostensibly, the sin at the heart of the book is adultery, but Hester Prynne doesn't seem to see her adultery with Dimmsedale as a deadly sin or rebellion against God or the social order. This is made most explicit when Hester and Dimmesdale finally meet in the forest after seven years of separation. It is here that Hester reveals Chillingworth's true identity and Arthur exclaims that "He has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart. Thou and I, Hester, never did so!"(i: 195). Perhaps, Dimmesdale is unaware of the opening he has just given Hester to talk explicitly about their adulterous liaison, but Hester takes the opening and says, ""Never, never! ... What we did had a consecration of its own. We felt it so! We said so to each other. Hast thou forgotten it?" (i: 195). Dimmesdale claims not to have forgotten. The narrator, we must point out, never comments on this sentence. Hester acknowledges that both she and Dimmesdale at the time found their adultery consecrated or, in other words, associated with the sacred. How can it be that a moral writer lets his two sinners agree that their sin was sacred? But sacred it remains. Even though Dimmesdale begins to torture himself over the act, the narrator makes it clear that any sin he had was "a sin of passion, not of principle, nor even purpose" (i: 200). Dimmesdale's problem is that he cannot let his reason align with his passion. He agreed with Hester that their act was sacred. However, his reason told him that he broke a law. The conflict that then rages within him immobilizes him and tortures him. It is also worth noting that the narrator, as he talks about Hester and Arthur, freely talks about Arthur's sin, but never mentions Hester viewing the act as a sin. In fact, in the entire book, Hester never refers to her affair as a sin. The closest she comes is referring to the scarlet letter as a mark of her shame, but shame and sin are not the same thing.

It would seem that a writer intent on upholding traditional morality should forcefully question the thoughts and motives of Hester Prynne, but the best that the narrator can do in reprimanding her is to say that some of her life experiences had "taught her much amiss" (i: 200). Rather than focusing on her rebellion, the narrator blames Hester's sin on her circumstances. On some level, even the narrator is willing to agree with Hester's interpretation that the sin had a "consecration of its own" if for no other reason than that

> She had wandered, without rule or guidance, in a moral wilderness, as vast, as intricate, and shadowy as the untamed forest… For years past she had looked from this estranged *point of view* at human institutions, and whatever priests or legislators had established; criticizing all with hardly more reverence than the Indian would feel for the clerical band, the judicial robe, the pillory, the gallows, the fireside, or the church. (i: 199 emphasis added)

The narrator and Hawthorne realize the importance of point of view. Hawthorne introduces the perspectivism that informs the world early on and realizes that when an individual holds a different point of view, she will interpret reality and even morality differently.

For Hawthorne, there can be no heightened vision that can let the viewer see everything with clarity. What individuals are left with are their perspectives and all the problems that come with them. Namely, perspective entails certain inherent value judgments (such as seeing wrath or grace, meaning or meaninglessness), and a set perspective also means that an individual will not be able to get out of his own

perspective to see another's. Because of this entrapment in a perspective, there will be answers that will never come. There will be events in life that will "never explain themselves, either as regards their origin or their tendency" (iv: 455), or as Tharpe reads it, "The whole of the world appears transcendentally meaningless" (109).

But this does not mean that truth is unattainable. Amid the chaos and the carnival of life, meaning and truth can be found. When an individual refuses to let the convictions of doctrine, philosophy, or social movement cloud her view of reality, then reality can reveal itself to the individual as she engages with the veils of reality and opens herself up to the world.

Being Open to the World

Throughout this chapter, we have focused on Hawthorne's attempt to come to a knowledge of the world in a thoroughly moral manner. Like Nietzsche, he believed that the only moral way of obtaining knowledge is to take a skeptical look at the many convictions that individuals hold. This skeptical outlook is held because of the insight that sometimes the truth can deceive. More often than not, the truth deceives the individual who believes it so that the individual does not see the rest of reality around him. The individual takes for granted that the unconcealed truth before him is all the truth there is. The need for skepticism comes from the fact that reality is incredibly complex and contradictory. It is only by staying open to that complexity that the knowledge of the world can show itself to the individual. This positioning in the world will allow other truths to unconceal themselves. To be clear, being open to the world does not mean that we are to take an unbiased scientific stance toward the world. The problem of science, as Nietzsche sees it is that

> A 'scientific' interpretation of the world…might consequently still be one of the s*tupidest*, that is to say, the most destitute of significance, of all possible world-interpretations: I say this in confidence to my friends the Mechanics, who…believe that mechanics is the teaching of the first and last laws upon which, as upon a ground floor, all existence must be built. But an essentially mechanical world would be an essentially *meaningless* world! Supposing we valued the worth of a music with reference to how much it could be counted, calculated, or formulated – how absurd such a 'scientific' estimate of music would be!" (*Gay* 216-17 italics in original).

Hawthorne, for his part, would agree with this estimation of science. He has a deep suspicion of the supposed "objective" stance that scientists claim to have. Hawthorne doesn't think an objective stance towards anything, even if it was possible, is capable of creating the meaning needed in order to engage with the world.

Hawthorne objects to scientific positivism for the same reason he criticizes all other groups: an absolute faith in science will subject all other human beings to an abstract thought or standard, often with disastrous consequences. It seems that when Hawthorne explicitly deals with science, the science simplifies and problematizes the worldview of the scientist. In his proto-science fiction stories, "Rappaccini's Daughter" and "The Birthmark," Hawthorne includes the scientist who understands the world only in accordance with his scientific knowledge. In "The Birthmark" Alymer sees nature as a mechanism that can be understood and controlled. His wife, as just one aspect of nature, can thusly be altered and changed in the pursuit of science. However, even though he successfully completes his task of removing his wife's birthmark, she dies because she

can no longer function in nature and the realm of science. Rappaccini, in his quest to march back into Eden, uses his science to create a utopian world (along his imaginings). However, his science does not take in the complexities of the world and his science ultimately leads to the death of his daughter. As critic C.R. Resetarits observes, "Hawthorne's men of science all share an obsession with mastery over nature through scientific inquiry and experimentation; the isolating aspects of this pursuit leave the men unhinged from their own holistic natures" (179). It is the unhinging of their natures that blinds the men from the real meaning of themselves, their relationships, and the world around them. In similar stories, such as "The Celestial Railroad" Hawthorne looks at technology to show how a wholesale faith in science and technology will lead to destruction. As Hawthorne sees science, science tries to impose a meaning and order on nature. In his openness, Hawthorne is looking for a world to unfold meaning to him.

In order to find meaning, value, and truth in the world, Hawthorne believes that a part of the self must be negated. This should come as no surprise when so much of Hawthorne's thought explores skepticism. In this regard, Hawthorne fits nicely into a clear genealogy that stretches from the Romantics to the Existentialists. Critic Clark Davis argues that the way Hawthorne finds truth is "the same as Keats's 'negative capability,' as a desire to receive the world through an intentional self-negation" (45). To carry this toward the Existentialists, Sartre made the observation that consciousness is nothingness. Heidegger said that authenticity can start to come out when one is being-toward-death. Merleau-Ponty declared that the body is a darkness. For each of these individuals, the locus of the known, the comprehensible, and the seen all begin with the incomprehensible, the unseen, the unknown, the void, the darkness.

Hawthorne negates the self through the use of veils. In this sense, he closely mirrors Heidegger's ideas of being open to the world: "to engage oneself with the disclosedness of beings is not to lose oneself in them; rather, such engagement withdraws in the face of beings in order that they might reveal themselves with respect to what and how they are" (Heidegger, "On the Essence" 125"). In doing this "[Hawthorne] maintains a structure of secrets even while placing that structure in ironic lights that reveal it as a product of thought and a creative positioning vis-à-vis the world" (C. Davis 46). This veiling preserves a sense of self while at the same time signaling that the visible self is a construct – thus highlighting the negativity.

Truth for Hawthorne is found through engaging with the veils. Davis hints at a Heideggerian reading of Hawthorne's concept of truth in his discussion of the veil (C. Davis 52). It is this notion that we shall now make explicit. The veil in and of itself shows a type of truth in an appearance that also promises many truths that are not readily visible. Every movement of truth, then, holds within it a measure of truth and untruth. Or, with every negativity that Hawthorne encounters, he is able to witness a complex series of truths: truths that deceive. In the process of deception, truth promises other truths under the deception. Putting it another way, rather than trying to force the veils open, Hawthorne realizes that he must let the veils part on their own accord. But we must also remember that for every one of Hawthorne's veils that is lifted, another veil will be encountered much like Heidegger taught that every unconcealing concealed other truths ("On the Essence 130).

The negativity of the veil positions individuals within a world. These veils can be in the self to hide and entice the self to go further into the self. Or the veil can be on the

world or on the Other in order to both block and entice the observer into a relation with the object or other subject. The veils that pervade the world serve to give a face to the world, but also hide the more complex nature of the world from the observer. Put another way, every positive proposition needs a negative one in order to fully define and embody it. For this reason, Hawthorne's view of the world nearly always alludes to both the light and the dark, a veil and the complex truths under it. But rather than being in conflict with each other, these two forms inform and lend clarity to each other. More often than not it is the negative, dark, and melancholy that adds to the veil of life, light, happiness, and beauty.

It is the vastness, the darkness, the nothingness that is able to draw everything into it. It is paradoxically through the illumination of darkness that light can be seen. In a quieter way, we can see this idea brought up many times through Hawthorne's notebooks. Upon one of his many walks in the autumn, he stops to reflect upon all the different colored trees that he sees before him. The colors strike him because they are "infinitely diversified by the progress which different trees have made in their decay" (viii: 213). Because of their varying degrees of decay "every tree seems to be an existence by itself. In summer, the sunshine is thrown away upon the wide, unvaried verdure. Now, every tree seems to define and embody the sunshine" (viii: 213). Hawthorne seems to be saying that it is only when looked at through the vantage point of darkness that light and individuality can be seen. The sunlight – the thing that is most readily seen – is not embracing or defining the trees; rather it is the negativity (that which resides behind the veil) residing in the trees that creates both the trees as individuals and the sunlight. We cannot say that the trees themselves "define or embody the sunshine."

Hawthorne makes a special point to say that the sunlight is “thrown away” on the summertime trees. The trees in the full bloom of life have no need for the life-giving vitality of light. They simply melt and meld together making one great, monotonous “unvaried verdure.” It is the decay of the trees, rather, that is able “to define and embody the sunshine.” Decay is understood to be the absence of that which sustains life. Decay is the approach of the great darkness of death. It is only when decay, darkness, and the visage of death is close at hand that the light of the sunshine becomes embodied. And this life becomes embodied by highlighting and defining each individually existing tree. Life cannot bring individualism to the individual. Individualism can only be brought about in the face of nothingness which Hawthorne explicitly equates with death in a different notebook entry (viii: 204). Death and decay allow for the life giving power of the sun to set each tree apart from the others into its own unique existence. In this way decay embodies life.

It might be a bit macabre to claim light and life is only a veil hiding the reality of death and decay, but this is the reality that Hawthorne sees. Just as the individuality and life of the trees could be seen only when they began to decay, so it is with all existence. As will be shown in later chapters, the darkness needs the light in order to give it full meaning, for the darkness, when seen, is simply a veil for more light. In this interplay between light and dark, one will always give way to the other as they each depend on the other for their manifestations. Rather than being competing forces, the light and the dark are complementary. The full truth of the scene is understood only when Hawthorne understands that the veil of light will give way to darkness just as the veil of darkness gives way to light.

This interplay between light and dark as mutual, complementary entities is played out constantly in his novels. Perhaps one of the most striking examples of the negative of the world informing the positive veil is shown in one of the narrator's many meditations in *The Marble Faun.* At one point, the narrator begins an explicit meditation on the nature of reality. In a pessimistic moment, he laments, "That pit of blackness that lies beneath us, everywhere ... the firmest substance of human happiness is but a thin crust spread over it, with just reality enough to bear up the illusive stage-scenery amid which we tread. It needs no earthquake to open the chasm" (iv: 161-62). Although there is a veil over the chasm or pit of blackness, there is reality to the veil. It is not a mere deception. However, it is a truth that if believed in fully will deceive. In order to know more of reality, the darkness needs to be realized. In this regard, Hawthorne has his narrator comment about Eden since the fall of Adam and Eve that anyone stumbling into it now would see a "loveliness through the transparency of that gloom which has been brooding over those haunts of innocence, even since the fall. Adam saw it in brighter sunshine, but never knew the shade of pensive beauty which Eden won from his expulsion" (iv: 276). It is clear that the gloom and shade of Eden are adding a beauty and loveliness that is desirable. Through the use of the verb "won," Hawthorne is suggesting that this new Eden is one that is better because of the Fall even though things must be viewed through the transparency of gloom.

The idea of decay embodying the veil of life is further explored in the notebooks in a thought that Hawthorne has on January 4, 1839: "The love of posterity is a consequence of the necessity of death. If a man were sure of living forever here, he would not care about his offspring" (viii 186). Instead of dealing with trees or buildings, he has

finally reflected on the human world, but the concept is the same. One of the sweetest emotions and relations that a human can enjoy, familial love, is made possible only because of death. The fact that an individual will die, that the individual knows that he will die, and that his death could come at any moment defines the individual's attitude towards his children. If a father or mother were to live forever, if either knew their children would live forever, there would be no urgency to teach them, to try to raise them. There would be no real need to try and protect them. Those parents would need to invest nothing to ensure their children's survival or the survival of their legacy or name. Without any of that anxiety or concern, whether it be focused on altruistic or egoistic motives, love will have no fertile ground to grow. The preciousness of the moment is made more so because in front of the individual looms the nothingness of death. Death "defines and embodies" love by highlighting the fleeting nature of every possible moment. Death makes the anxiety and concern possible from which love will emerge. But love is the veil that we fixate on and emulate. In all of these examples, Hawthorne is simply asking each to engage the veil to see what is behind it.

It should not be assumed that Hawthorne engages the veils around him through a deep and vigorous probing. His approach is best described as opening himself up. Clark Davis argues that Hawthorne's character can best be described as shyness (30). However, the core of his epistemology can also be summed up with that word as well. Heidegger's better known pathway to authenticity is through anxiety and being-toward-death. However, he also has another way of being authentic and that is through shyness (scheuheit) (Aho 132).

Shyness is a fundamental comportment to the world much like being-toward-others or being-toward-death. Shyness, as critic Kevin Aho explicates, is a "recollection of a more original way of being that is open to beings and 'lets beings be'" (132). To simply let things be prohibits the experimental testing or manipulating of things in order to crack their secrets. "However, the phrase required now – to let beings be – does not refer to neglect and indifference but rather the opposite" (Heidegger, "On the Essence" 125). This approach to being recognizes that "to let beings be as the beings which they are – means to engage oneself with the open region and its openness into which every being comes to a stand, bringing that openness, as it were, along with itself" (Heidegger, "On the Essence" 125). It is willing to "[set] what is slow and patient on its way" (qtd. in Aho 132). With a focus on patience, it should be easy to see how shyness is ready to take in all aspects of the world and is reluctant to alter the way the world is. Opening himself up to the world and the way the world is, Hawthorne is able to see past the veils of reality that surround him. However, manipulating the veils through rigorous testing ensures that they stay firmly in place. The patience that reality requires in opening itself up for Hawthorne is also not witnessed through sense perception alone. One cannot simply study a scene as an observer hoping to get a meaning from the scene, for shyness is also a recognition of the veils. Heidegger makes this point explicit, "letting-be is intrinsically at the same time a concealing" (Heidegger, "On the Essence" 130). Rather, like many of the Romantics and some of the Existentialists to follow, Hawthorne believed that one of the most powerful ways into the nature of things was through the intuition.

Intuition as a Means of Reaching an Open World

For Hawthorne, the intuition can give him a surer sense into the nature of the world than what his reason tells him. He once accompanied his wife to a séance while he was in Italy. During the séance, he was impressed by what was happening and the "evidence" that was given to all of the guests in order to prove that what was being experienced was real. However, Hawthorne remained unconvinced:

> What astonishes me is the indifference with which I listen to these marvels. They throw old ghost stories quite into the shade; they bring the whole world of spirits down amongst us, visibly and audibly; they are absolutely proved to be sober facts by evidence that would satisfy us of any other alleged realities; and yet I cannot free my mind to interest itself in them. They are facts to my understanding (which it might have been anticipated would have been the last to acknowledge them.) but they seem not to be facts to my intuitions and deeper perceptions. (xiv: 398-99)

The difference that Hawthorne identifies between the facts of the understanding and the facts of the intuition is important. The understanding relies upon the reason and the evidences that the reason puts together. It is the understanding and the reason that are largely responsible for convictions that can end up leading the individual away from reality. The intuition is more primal than the understanding.

As religious scholar E. Brooks Holifield has shown, the nineteenth century saw a major shift in epistemology that was especially embraced by the Romantics as they listened to Coleridge teach that "the reason grasped the true, the good, and the beautiful through an immediate intuition that had to be prior to any empirical recognition of true

facts, good deeds, or beautiful objects" (441). Emerson was following along with the rest of the Romantics in following Coleridge's interpretation of Kant to show that the mind organizes everything (441). By following Coleridge and the romantic notion of the mind, the mind becomes the force that is able to produce a unity between the self and the rest of the world (Flynn 386). The mechanic used to produce the unity is intuition. Critic Erin Flynn points out that Emerson follows many of the German Romantics in his conception of intuition as an intellectual intuition. This does not mean that the intuition can be reflected upon or put into words; rather, "this is the intuition of the one all, the pre-reflective awareness on which our self-reflection depends, the intuition of all our later tuitions, as Emerson puts it" (Flynn 382-83). Reflection and intellect tend to separate the individual from the rest of reality, but if one can simply suspend or bypass the ego-centric understanding, then that individual will be able to reach the intuition that ties the one to all. This concept of the intuition as preceding rationality later evolved into Emerson's radical subjectivity that could be seen in his proclamation that "God is within us" (qtd. in Holified 442). It is God within the individual and within all of nature that sends Emerson into aspects of intuition that most trouble Hawthorne. For one of the biggest implications of Emerson's brand of intuition is that the intuition is "neither personal nor impersonal, but a dissolver of persons…[it] resembles the pre-reflective unity on which the romantics thought our self-consciousness depends. In vivifying nature it unites in that pre-reflective unity our freedom with the substance of nature" (Flynn 386). Thus, for Emerson, once intuition is felt, the self and nature dissolve into a unity: the study of self and the study of nature become one.

However, this is not Hawthorne's view of intuition. Although he agrees with Emerson that intuition is pre-reflective and cannot be grasped through the understanding, he does not agree with Emerson about its function or location. Because Hawthorne believed that knowledge of the world (or, at least, the veils of the world) can only come through the opening of the self to the world, it does not follow that he would agree with Emerson in thinking that all intuition can be found solely through the self. In Emerson there is no need to really try to get to know the Other, for the Other will simply dissolve into the same unity of nature as the self. Hawthorne, on the other hand, insists that the self and the Other are both ontic. Because Hawthorne denies the ability of the self to merge in some unity with the Other or all of nature, he must reject Emerson's subjective intuition. "For Hawthorne…pure subjectivity or self-consciousness, the exclusion of the whole phenomenological richness of existence, is bound to lead to sterile solipsism" (Chai 8). The way to avoid the solipsism that Hawthorne saw too readily in Emerson is to stay grounded in reality and, more importantly, in others as a fundamental reality. For Hawthorne the meaning of existence comes from the interplay of the self and the Other whether that Other is a subjective individual or the physical aspects of the world (209). As a way to distinguish his view of intuition from that of the Romantics following in Coleridge's footsteps, Hawthorne realized that intuition is mainly an interplay between the veils of things. But the interplay is crucial. For, it is an engagement with the different veils that will lead the differing parties into an intersubjective relationship, not a unity. Hawthorne sees the ultimate function of intuition as a way of binding the self to the

Other, not with the dissolution of both self and Other. For this reason, Hawthorne likes to distinguish his form of intuition with the label "intuitive sympathy"[11]

This nature of the intuition is further elaborate on by Hawthorne in *The Scarlet Letter* when he has the narrator say, "When an uninstructed multitude attempts to see with its eyes, it is exceedingly apt to be deceived. When, however, it forms its judgment, as it usually does, on the intuitions of its great and warm heart, the conclusions thus attained are often so profound and so unerring as to possess the character of truth supernaturally revealed" (i: 127). It should be noted that Hawthorne does not say that the intuition is the truth, only that it shares the character of a revealed truth. In other words, the intuition carries a force with it that is beyond rational comprehension. Intuition, like truth operates on an existential level. It is not a product of the mind, but it is a force that, when in full operation, has the power to change the individual. But so many of Hawthorne's characters (such as Holgrave, Coverdale, or Parson Hooper) have a problem with this aspect of intuition: they cannot countenance the non-rational, so they willfully exempt themselves from experiencing sympathetic intuition.

For Hawthorne's intuition to work, there must be an interplay between the subject and the Other. Since his engagement with the world is through the differing veils that the world represents, the intuition must manage and interact with the veils that make up the world. Nietzsche would bring this point out explicitly later when he said, "Between

---

[11] Many times Hawthorne uses the phrase "intuitive sympathy," but other times he will only use one word or the other. It is my contention that in his mind these words are synonymous. For example, Coverdale in *The Blithedale Romance* muses that he has a "quality of the intellect and the heart, which impelled me …to live in other lives, and to endeavor – by generous sympathies, by delicate intuitions, by taking note of things too slight for record, and by bringing my human spirit into manifold accordance with the companions whom God assigned me – to learn the secret which was hidden even from themselves" (iii: 160). The parallel construction within the appositive phrase shows that each of these phrases is standing in for and complementing the others.

subject and object…there is at most an aesthetic relation: I mean a suggestive transference, a stammering translation into a completely foreign tongue – for which there is required, in any case, a freely inventive intermediate sphere and mediating force" (qtd. in Gregory 23). It is the aesthetic relation between veil and veil and the suggestive transference that comprises sympathetic intuition as the "mediating force." But the intuitive sympathy is able to uncover more truths than mere rational observation. This point, Holgrave in *The House of the Seven Gables*, makes clear. He wishes to understand, rationally, Clifford and Judge Pyncheon. He wishes to take Clifford and understand Clifford "to the full depth of my plummet-line" (ii: 178). Or, as the narrator explains, "In his relations with them, he seemed to be in quest of mental food; not heart-sustenance" (ii: 178). But Holgrave knows that his quest for understanding will end in failure. Rational measurement is never enough to fully understand someone or be able to solve their "riddle," as Holgrave puts it (ii: 179). Holgrave is acute enough to understand that the only way to really understand someone, as he tells Phoebe is to possess "intuitive sympathy…A mere observer, like myself, (who never have any intuitions, and am, at best, only subtle and acute,) is pretty certain to go astray" (ii: 179). Herein is the condemnation of objective science. Holgrave wishes to measure and merely observe the phenomenon before him. By doing this he will only be observing the veil and will be no closer to understanding the truths that lay beyond it. Holgrave, to his credit, recognizes this. But he makes a mistake in thinking that the type of intuition that is needed for understanding is beyond him. The narrator of *The House of the Seven Gables* is very clear about the universality of the sympathies between people and even things: "the sympathy or magnetism among human beings is more subtle and universal, than we think; it exists,

indeed, among different classes of organized life, and vibrates from one to another" (ii: 174). There is a connection between Holgrave and the rest of the world that he could enjoy if he only set aside his overriding desire to measure and merely observe. He must learn to engage with the world. As critic Maughn Gregory explains,

> intuition is not intellectual but sensational. It is more feeling than thought, since it is only once-removed from raw somatic nerve stimuli. Thus it is more vivid, emotional, and holistic than conceptual thought. Also, the regularity perception imposes on empirical phenomena is not sufficient to make the phenomena rational to us – to facilitate human purpose and action. Perception is more varied and complex than conceptual thought. Perceptual metaphors are *not* formed instrumentally, toward any rational purpose, and so they are essentially creative, aesthetic, erotic and playful. (25)

Holgave is not the only one to see the conflict between the rational convictions and the truths offered by the intuition. Phoebe, in spite of Holgrave's faith in her willingness to trust her intuitions, also falls victim to her rational convictions. Upon meeting Judge Pyncheon for the first time, she falls immediately into a conflict between her reason and her intuitions. Her reason tells her that a respectable relation wishes to give her a kiss, yet she backs away. Her reason tells her that his kind offers of assistance and monies to Clifford and Hepzibah are generous and kindly, yet she feels uneasy. She

> perplexed herself, meanwhile, with queries as to the purport of the scene which she had just witnessed, and also whether judges, clergymen, and other characters of that eminent stamp and respectability, could really, in

> any single instance, be otherwise than just and upright men…A wider scope of view, and deeper insight, may see rank, dignity, and station, all proved illusory, so far as regards their claim to human reverence, and yet not feel as if the universe were thereby tumbled headlong into chaos. But Phoebe, in order to keep the universe in its old place, was fain to smother, in some degree, her own intuitions as to Judge Pyncheon's character. (ii: 131-32)

The impulse to smother intuition in favor of received understanding – "to keep the universe in its old place" – is the reason that Hilda in *The Marble Faun* refused to talk with Miriam. Hilda was laboring under a rational conviction of what being good or innocent meant, and to give up that rational conviction would mean the complete rethinking of her world view. But this is exactly what is called for. The rethinking of those long held rational convictions will ultimately move the universe to a new place.

We should be clear that the new place of the universe or the new outlook received through the supplanting of rational convictions in favor of sympathetic intuition is not final. The veils of others and of nature are multifaceted. Hawthorne is aware that an individual can wear more than one veil, and there is no guarantee that moving past the first veil will show the seeker any more fundamental truth than what was seen initially. Besides, the knowledge and understanding that exist between the subject and the object can only exist between those two. The understanding received about one particular subject cannot easily translate to yet another situation. Nietzsche understood this aspect of the intuitive process perhaps better than Hawthorne. Nietzsche could see that "the authenticity of intuition is personal and existential rather than universal. Nietzsche's

intuitive man is not privy to Truth but to authentic experience. He doesn't know the world as it really is, only the world as his imagination would have it; though indeed, this may be more of the world than is dreamed of in conventional knowledge" (Gregory 25-26).

Conclusion

Although Hawthorne's reluctance to engage in his contemporary political atmosphere caused many of his time to label him a traitor to the North and caused Bronson Alcott to write, "Of all our literary men, [Hawthorne] openly espoused the side of the South, and was tremendously disturbed at the Northern victories," it cannot be said that he tolerated slavery or any of the practices that he was condemned of supporting (L. Reynolds 157). Instead, his refusal to support movements of any sort be they religious, philosophical, political, or reform came from a deep skepticism he had toward large, universal ideologies. Hawthorne saw that once a universal ideal was believed in without question, the perception of reality for those who believed in the universal began to warp. Human beings became less important than the idea and were sacrificed – be it Puritans persecuting Quakers or John Brown murdering Southerners – to fulfill the ideal's demands.

In order to counter this tendency, he promoted an approach in his writing that can be seen as a forerunner to the existentialist thinkers. He counters universal truth claims by grounding his writing on a foundation of skepticism towards a coherent, objective reality. He forces his characters to encounter various perspectives that contradict their own interpretation of the world. By doing this he moves truth toward an interpersonal conception of truth grounded in truth's nature to conceal and unconceal or veil and call

for an unveiling. The unconcealing of truth within and between persons can only happen through remaining open to the world and Others in order to let intuitive sympathy operate.

It is the world of Others that Hawthorne will spend most of his time exploring. His fundamental concern is the relationships between the individual and society and other specific individuals. In order to see his unique way of navigating these fundamental relationships, the next two chapters will examine Hawthorne's works in light of existential concepts such as Das Man, authenticity, and despair.

Chapter 3: Responsibility and Subjective Living: Hawthorne's Philosophy of Existential Authenticity in regards to the Other, the Public Eye, and Intuitive Sympathy

Borges complained that Hawthorne did not fully develop his characters. His complaint was that Hawthorne's characters lacked a psychological depth because he could not stop writing allegory. It is true that there are very few dynamic characters in Hawthorne's novels. In light of this complaint, it is ironic that so many people have studied Hawthorne's novels for their psychological insight. Rather than focusing on psychologically fleshed-out characters, Hawthorne created remarkable characters and placed them in remarkably hard situations. Borges felt that Hawthorne's style works for a short story, but not for a novel. In his criticism of Hawthorne he says, "In the three American novels and *The Marble Faun* I see only a series of situations, planned with professional skill to affect the reader, not a spontaneous and lively activity of the imagination" (89). I argue that these situations planned to affect the reader, far from being a defect of the story, comprise Hawthorne's greatest strength, for it is his slow and multifaceted approach that makes Hawthorne's meditations on the situations work.

I use the word meditation quite consciously. Hawthorne recognizes that he places his characters into challenging situations. Hawthorne's situations are extreme: public humiliation, intense guilt, murder, torture, and bitter love triangles. He recognizes the feelings that these situations would naturally create, and like many existential writers, he gravitates towards these extreme situations in order to push his characters beyond their "ethical safety net" (Golomb 24). He wants to explore the feelings generated by extreme situations in order to find an appropriate response to the situations based on the

dispositions of the characters. In other words, he wants to see what the authentic reaction would be.

Readers should not suppose that any exploration of authentic action must take place solely in philosophical essays. As Jacob Golomb explains, “arguing for authenticity is self-defeating in that it presupposes the authority of rationality and objectivity, which is called into question by this ideal” (18). It is for this reason that the existential authors often turned to fiction in order to explore authenticity. Kierkegaard, through his posturing and use of differing pseudonyms, clothed his writing in a fictitious mode. Nietzsche used his fictional Zarathustra to find a voice for many of his ideas. Camus and Sartre wrote short stories, plays, and novels to explore concepts of authenticity, the absurd, and bad faith. Fiction became, for these writers, a natural medium for the exploration of authenticity, for authenticity cannot be proscribed or explained; it can only be shown or hinted at. It is also for this reason that we can see Hawthorne exploring authenticity even though he never wrote a philosophical essay on the subject.

Even though the existentialists often turned to fiction in order to avoid presenting authenticity as an object of rationality or objectivity that does not mean that it is completely subjective. It is not based on pure subjective emotion. Authenticity is not honesty, it is not being merely sincere, and it is not being genuine. For an individual can be honest, sincere, and genuine to a socially constructed self – one that has been created by social norms outside of the control of the individual. For this reason a better definition for authenticity is awareness of the self and its projects. In conjunction with the awareness of the self’s projects is the concept of responsibility. The authentic individual is aware of the choices she makes and takes responsibility for those choices as they shape

her projects and world. However, since the authentic choice can only be known by the acting individual, authors cannot point out the choice of a character and claim it to be *the* authentic choice, for the authentic choice will be different based on circumstances and individuals. At best authentic choices can only be shown. However, existential authors have instead adopted the method of ironically portraying non-authentic choices and characters in the hope that readers will see the irony and be enticed into acting authentically in their own lives by avoiding the characters' pitfalls.

As was shown in chapter one, Hawthorne uses many of the same literary devices as the existential authors in order to get his readers to see the irony and the flawed absurdity of his characters. Once the veil of irony is recognized, it is Hawthorne's intent that the reader will engage with the veil in order to find where, instead, reality and the authentic choice should be.

This chapter will look in-depth into one of Hawthorne's overriding themes, the tension between the individual and the community, to show that, at its heart, Hawthorne is reading these tensions in a manner akin to the existential concept of authenticity. We can see Hawthorne's understanding of authenticity by exploring how he positions the self as that which is in need of engaging with an Other. By looking at the various characters who engage with the Other in ways that ultimately strip them of their humanity and by extension their authenticity, we can see the pitfalls that Hawthorne identifies for building an authentic self. The chapter will then focus on how the look of the Other can define the self and lead either to entrapment or intuitive sympathy. Intuitive sympathy is ultimately that which allows the individual to come in full contact with the Other. It is only once the individual fully experiences the Other that the authentic self can be realized.

Knowing the Self

Some existentialists, like Sartre, deny that there is a core self while others, like Kierkegaard, claim that the self cannot be known or understood. For Kierkegaard, the core self is eternal and, therefore, incomprehensible. Heidegger and Sartre see a self of pure potential to be realized through the individual's various projects. As I have shown already, Hawthorne was intrigued by the use of veils both inner and outer to show how hard it is to actually know the self. In his early notebooks, the idea of veiled people or individuals as actors comes up with frequency, such as when he writes about a lone apple-dealer at a railroad station. After he finishes writing his sketch about the old man, he writes as a post-script, "I should like, if I could, to follow him home, and see his domestic life – all that I know of him, thus far, being merely his outward image, as shown to the world" (viii:226). Hawthorne realizes that the outward image of an individual will not give a spectator an accurate understanding of who that individual is. Any illusion about the meaning of one's own life is quickly done away with by simply imagining how one looks through another's perspective: "A perception, for a moment, of one's eventual and moral self, as if it were another person, - the observant faculty being separated, and looking intently at the qualities of the character. There is a surprise when this happens, - this getting out of one's self, - and then the observer sees how queer a fellow he is" (viii: 178). The only reason that an individual thinks that his actions and beliefs have any meaning is the simple fact that the individual lives with those same beliefs and actions daily. However, when looked at from another perspective, those same behaviors become "queer" – or absurd as Camus calls it. Because much of what an individual believes and values is informed and insulated by his perspective, Hawthorne questions whether or not

that individual can really understand himself: “insincerity in a man’s own heart must makes all his enjoyments, all that concerns him, unreal; so that his whole life must seem like a merely dramatic representation” (viii: 166). Implicit in Hawthorne’s thought is the idea that the individual might not be able to recognize the true desires of his own heart, so the individual can still enjoy life and concern himself with projects and goals without being true to the heart or inner self. Jacob Golomb in his analysis of Nietzsche’s talk on the self might as well be commenting on Hawthorne: “Introspection into the inner layers of one’s self is of no avail, since, as Nietzsche warns us, the individual is a ‘thing dark and veiled; and if the hare has seven skins, man can slough off seventy times seven and still not be able to say: “this is really you, this is no longer outer shell”’” (23). And here is the problem that Hawthorne faces: whether looking outward at another individual or inward into one’s own heart, he consistently problematizes the ability to understand the self. It is no wonder that both Hawthorne and Nietzsche, then, gravitated toward the symbol of the veiled self in order to show the difficulty of knowing the self.

The use of veils and masks in Hawthorne is widely known from Parson Hooper’s black veil to the Veiled Lady to the false names serving as veils for Chillingworth, Zenobia, and Miriam. At each instance Hawthorne is trying to communicate the difficulty of knowing either the Other or the self, for, as Parson Hooper reminds us, each individual wears a veil (ix: 52). However it seems paradoxical to tell an individual to be authentic to his self while denying, at the same instant, that the self can be known or understood. To resolve this conundrum, the meaning of authenticity must be examined as the Existentialists used it. For this reason, we must turn to Heidegger who was the first to formalize what authenticity is and how it can be achieved. After looking at Heidegger’s

groundwork regarding authenticity, we can see how others like Sartre modified it to include notions of the look and how Hawthorne uses many of these same ideas in building his characters.

Heidegger, Dasein, and Das Man

For Heidegger, the self is of secondary importance to Dasein. Dasein is the place where being happens, where consciousness and the world meet (*Time* 171). The self, as it is traditionally understood, is only a part of Dasein (although an important part), and the reason that the self can never be uncovered is that Dasein is continually changing and moving. Human Dasein is different than any other type of being. The difference between human Dasein and that of other beings is that for human Dasein, being is a concern (*Time* 84). Dasein[12] is fundamentally concerned with its own existence and the quality of that existence. Dasein is concerned with what it will be and what it must do to achieve its becoming. This concept led the premiere French existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre to exclaim that, "existence precedes essence" ("Humanism" 34). Dasein finds itself in the world – Heidegger poetically uses the term "thrown" to denoted the destabilizing and unmoored feeling of existence – and must confront its existence (Heidegger, *Time* 210).

Dasein's fundamental way of confronting its existence is to construct projects for itself and to comport itself toward those projects and the world. A project, for Dasein, is an act of becoming. Dasein is not fundamentally concerned with building a house as it is with becoming a construction worker. It is not concerned with teaching a lesson as it is with becoming a teacher. It is not concerned with raising children as it is with becoming a

[12] From here on out, Dasein will refer only to human Dasein.

parent. The projects of becoming a builder, teacher, or parent are all recognized as worthwhile projects to pursue by Dasein, so it works towards becoming those things. This fundamental characteristic of Dasein, Heidegger claims, is care. Dasein cares what it is, and Dasein cares about what it will become and what it will take to get there. When we recognize this attribute of Dasein, we can see that an authentic choice is one that Dasein makes in order to help it fulfill its chosen projects. For Heidegger "to be authentic Dasein, therefore, is to grasp that one cannot become authentic…as a static being, but only as the asking, searching Becoming, that is, as a transcendent consciousness" (Golomb 89-90). However, Heidegger recognizes that this process is more complicated because sitting opposite from Dasein and its projects is Das Man, or "the They."

Das Man is not concerned with authentic choices. In fact, Das Man, if it can help it, will relieve Dasein of the burden of making any choice. Das Man or the They is simply the social structures or attitudes that maintain the status quo. The empty phrases that someone's behavior is "simply not what one does" or "this is simply the thing to do," are manifestations of Das Man at work. Das Man is fundamentally concerned with what is acceptable and what is not. Das Man wishes to keep individuals in order, and the simplest way of doing so is to relieve individuals of their choices. Most of the time, Das Man is harmless. Order is needed. One obeys the speed limit because it is what one does. However, when taken to an extreme and given all power, Das Man can destroy individuality.

Das Man encourages a stable medium for everyone. It is concerned, for example, with getting everyone into the middle-class, or with getting everyone to go to college because these are simply what one should do. These are not necessarily bad goals, but left

unchecked, Das Man will strip Dasein of its authenticity. Because Das Man wishes everyone to attend college, there is the danger that an individual will only go to college because it is socially expected. The decision was made for the individual in a life plan that would say graduate high school, go to college, get a good job, get married, have kids, and retire. The individual blindly follows this plan without asking himself if this is really the project that he wants to follow. Das Man, then, becomes the force that steals the self from the self. It robs the individual from living his life and instead has him live a script. Authenticity is the taking back of life and existence. It is a form of self- possession.

Hawthorne's stories are full of examples of inauthentic individuals, and only rarely do readers get to see an authentic individual. Of course, Hawthorne does not use the words authentic and inauthentic, but we can clearly see the inauthenticity working in his stories as he talks about exterior and interior selves. As will be shown, Hawthorne uses the language of veils, sight, and actors to convey many of the same ideas about authenticity and self-possession as Heidegger. The case of Judge Pyncheon, for example, shows Hawthorne explicitly dealing with the concept of a life that has been hijacked by Das Man.

The Problem of Das Man and Judge Pyncheon

Through the narrative of the *The House of the Seven Gables* Hawthorne presents a man who is all smiles and jollity, but there are signs that beneath his polished exterior there broods a deep malevolence. As the narrator describes Judge Pyncheon the overall picture of the Judge comes out as unnatural and forced:

> His dark, square countenance…would perhaps have been rather stern, had not the gentleman considerately taken upon himself to mitigate the harsh

> effect by a look of exceeding good-humor and benevolence…A susceptible observer…might have regarded it as affording very little evidence of the genuine benignity of soul, wherefore it purported to be the outward reflection. And if the observer chanced to be ill-natured, as well as acute and susceptible, he would probably suspect, that the smile on the gentleman's face was a good deal akin to the shine on his boots, and that each must have cost him and his boot-black, respectively, a good deal of hard labor to bring out and preserve them. (ii: 116-17)

However, nobody, with the exception of Hepzibah, sees beneath the surface. This, in and of itself, does not qualify as inauthentic life; however, Judge Pyncheon allowed several veils to be placed on him by Das Man, and started to believe them to be real. Hawthorne warns of what can happen when the many veils the individual wears becomes calcified into reality.

Judge Pyncheon only has one goal in the novel and that is to wrest from his cousin Clifford the hiding place of a great treasure. For this purpose the Judge framed Clifford for murder and had him tortured in prison which leads to Clifford's mental instability. The Judge then has Clifford released and gives him just enough time at home with his sister to get comfortable before he begins to threaten Clifford with prison once more unless Clifford reveals the secret. And yet in the face of all of this, the narrator tells us

> The Judge, beyond all question, was a man of eminent respectability. The church acknowledged it; the state acknowledged it. It was denied by nobody…Nor, we must do him the further justice to say, did Judge

> Pyncheon himself, probably, entertain many or frequent doubts, that his enviable reputation accorded with his deserts. (ii: 228)

Here we see Das Man working on Judge Pyncheon. Das Man tells the Judge that judges, especially ones with political ambitions, must be respectable. Das Man then begins to tell the Judge what it means to be respectable such as smiling broadly, attending church, and being just in his dealings. The narrator, even makes a point with the last line to say that even Jaffrey Pyncheon thought of himself as respectable. It is with the last line that Hawthorne begins to turn inward and really examine the Judge's character. It is as Hawthorne turns inward that we can see the problem with equating authenticity with mere honesty, integrity, or genuineness. Speaking of the Judge, the narrator says,

> His conscience, therefore – usually considered the surest witness to a man's integrity – his conscience, unless, it might be for the little space of five minutes in the twenty-four hours, or, now and then, some black day in the whole year's circle – his conscience bore an accordant testimony with the world's laudatory voice. (ii: 228-29)

The Judge's conscience is clear of any guilt or doubt as to his standing. Despite his actions, he honestly feels that he is respected and a morally respectable member of the community. Herein is the problem: the Judge, in allowing the carefully crafted public persona or a mask that he was present with to become his reality, he has turned his life over to the image Das Man created for respectable persons. Heidegger explains, "This Being-with-one-another [in the form of Das Man] dissolves one's own Dasein completely into the kind of Being of 'the Others,' in such a way, indeed, that the Others, as distinguishable and explicit, vanish more and more" (*Time* 164). To illustrate how this

dissolution into the Other happens, it will be good, at this point, to step away from the Judge and discuss a different character that all but escaped from the self in an effort to conform to a public perception of himself.

In Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre talks about the concept of bad faith as, in one iteration, becoming wholly defined by the Other and ceasing any notion of becoming. In his discussion of bad faith, he introduces a waiter who is just a little too good at what he does. All of his movements have an edge of artificiality to them and slight exaggerations. However, as Sartre points out, it would practically be universal consensus among the patrons of the restaurant that the waiter is the best waiter in the restaurant. But why? In this case he has given himself over completely to the look of the Other – not a specific individual Other, but the public Other. Sartre explains that this type of static being dissolves the distinction between appearance and being. The waiter has become exactly what the public Other has demanded that he become. Of the waiter and all public occupations Sartre says, "the public demands of them that they realize [their condition] as a ceremony; there is the dance of the grocer, an auctioneer, a tailor. A grocer who dreams is offensive to the buyer, because such a grocer is not wholly a grocer. Society demands that he limit himself to his function as a grocer, just as the soldier at attention makes himself into a soldier-thing" (*Being* 102). This public demand forces the individual to conform to an idea and be nothing other than the idea. This public demand that conveys what one ought to do is Heidegger's Das Man. Hawthorne recognized this function of Das Man and named it the "public eye" (ii: 229).

This gaze of Das Man or the public eye is ultimately an abstraction. However, this is not to say in Hawthorne that abstractions have no power. On the contrary, as

Hawthorne points out, abstractions such as wealth and public honors have the power of "big, heavy, solid unrealities" (ii: 229). The paradox is striking. An abstraction can have no physical power, per se. But the abstraction gains so much power that even in its being-less state, it is able to become "big, heavy, and solid" with the power to move and mold individuals to fit its expectations.

For this reason the Judge did what the public eye demanded of him. The public eye, forever upon him, demanded that he become respectable, so he conformed to what the public eye deemed to be respectable. He gathered to himself "gold, landed estates, offices of trust and emolument, and public honors" for this is what the public eye said he should do (ii: 229). His existence, by conforming to the demands of the public eye becomes purely external. Becoming so involved in "the external phenomena of life," the judge fails to look inward (ii: 229). It is precisely at this time that the Judge's veil, created because the public eye demanded it, becomes his complete reality: "With these materials, and with deeds of goodly aspect, done in the public eye, an individual of this class builds up, as it were, a tall and stately edifice, which, in the view of other people, and ultimately in his own view, is no other than the man's character, or the man himself" (ii: 229). He is so much absorbed into his outward projections for the public eye that he is completely unaware of what is happening to his own self. His self has merged into the mask that the public eye presented to him. All interior or authentic awareness of the self vanishes. As the narrator suggests, "a daily guilt might have been acted by him, continually renewed, and reddening forth afresh, like the miraculous blood-stain of a murder, without his necessarily, and at every moment, being aware of it" (ii: 229). The public eye tells him that respectable people feel no guilt for what they do as long as their

actions are in pursuit of becoming more respectable. He has become "a respectable judge" and nothing more. The public eye demands that the Judge do and say certain things which he does. He plays the part of respectable Judge so well, that he loses himself in the look of the public eye and loses any sense of who he really is. In this manner, the Judge has replaced his veil with a mask.

We should not think that because the Judge succumbed to the public eye that Hawthorne thinks that an individual should refrain from all social interaction. This also does not mean that an individual must go out into nature in order to learn about the self. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Without the Other, the self cannot be known at all. On this point, Hawthorne is quite clear. In his tale "Man of Adamant" an angel is sent to Richard Digby who sequestered himself in a cave in order to be alone and sanctify himself. In order to convince him to return to the community, the angel tells him, "they [the community] need thee, Richard, and thou hast tenfold need of them" (xi: 166). However, the specific need that Richard Digby has of the community is not mentioned in the story. Hawthorne gives some hint at what it could be in *The House of the Seven Gables*. The inhabitants of the House of the Seven Gables, Hepzibah and Clifford, are label as ghosts and dead as they are cut off from the world that passes by the house. Although the narrator describes both brother and sister as ghosts, it is Clifford that makes this claim explicit. As they were contemplating stepping out of the house and into "the presence of the whole world" Clifford demurs, "It cannot be, Hepzibah…We are ghosts! We have no right among human beings – no right anywhere, but in this old house" (ii: 169). Without engaging with the Other, the self ceases to have meaningful existence. Without the Other to help define and energize the self, the self will calcify and become dehumanized. The

resulting dehumanization from lack of engagement with the Other is one of the central ideas in *The Blithedale Romance,* for this is the main problem with Miles Coverdale.

The Problem of Miles Coverdale

The last chapter argued that Coverdale should be viewed as an ironic character. Part of his irony comes in his detachment from every individual that he comes in contact with. In his effort to be a detached observer, he also fails to develop a fully formed self. In his narrative Coverdale remarks that

> It is not, I apprehend, a healthy kind of mental occupation, to devote ourselves too exclusively to the study of individual men and women. If the person under examination be one's self, the result is pretty certain to be diseased action of the heart, almost before we can snatch a second glance. Or, if we take the freedom to put a friend under our microscope, we thereby insulate him from many of his true relations, magnify his peculiarities, inevitably tear him into parts, and, of course, patch him very clumsily together again. What wonder, then, should we be frightened by the aspect of a monster, which, after all,—though we can point to every feature of his deformity in the real personage—may be said to have been created mainly by ourselves! (iii: 69)

But, this is exactly what Coverdale is doing. On the one hand, he is looking at himself in an intense way through the writing of these events in his life. On the other hand, he is constantly probing the characters of both Hollingsworth and Zenobia to find out who they really are. As he himself confesses, "[they] were separated from the rest of the Community, to my imagination, and stood forth as the indices of a problem which it was

my business to solve" (iii: 69). Coverdale makes two fundamental mistakes with his approach to his friends. Initially, he views them as isolated individuals free from any community or commitment. If one is to understand an Other, it must be done within the confines of the Other's community. The second error that Coverdale makes is to objectify the people he wishes to know. Instead of seeing them as individuals, he sees them merely as "indices of a problem." By turning his friends into mere parts of an equation or riddle, he removes from them any notion of dynamic being: they do not live within a community nor are they capable of growth or development. Coverdale places his friends at a distance from himself. The objectification that Coverdale makes of his friends and acquaintances is exactly what leads to his own objectification and dehumanization. Although Heidegger and Sartre show how Das Man can objectify the self, they remained relatively quiet on how objectifying the Other might damage the self. This problem was addressed by the existentialist philosopher Martin Buber who showed exactly how the objectification of the Other can lead to an objectification of the self.

In his book *I and Thou*, Buber claims that there are only two primary ways of interacting with the world – I-Thou and I-It relationships. I-It strives to reduce all the world to things and mere experiencing of things: "I perceive something. I am sensible of something. I imagine something. I will something. I feel something. I think something" (20). All of these are experiences of an individual experiencing the world, but "the man who experiences has not part in the world. For it is 'in him' and not between him and the world that the experience arises. The world has no part in the experience…For it does nothing to the experience, and the experience does nothing to it" (21). As full of experiences as the I-It relation may be, those experiences are grounded in the self and

only remains "in" the self. As it comes to other people, the I-It can only experience things, not complete human beings. People are objects to be studied and used if only to uncover their secrets. As Buber explains, "if we add 'secret' to 'open experiences,' nothing in the situation is changed. How self-confident is that wisdom which perceives a closed compartment in things, reserved for the initiate and manipulated only with the key. O secrecy without a secret! O accumulation of information! It, always It!" (21). The I-It relationship, Buber explains, is to see the relations of the world as object-object. There is no way in an I-It relationship to remain a full subject when the "I" only sees a fellow human being as an object to be studied; in other words "the primary word I-It can never be spoken with the whole being" (20). When an Other is approached as a puzzle to be solved, the individual disregards important aspects that don't seem to be relevant to the particular problem. If the Other's behavior in a certain scenario is to be explained, then all other behavior not relevant to that scenario is ignored. In this manner, the Other loses many parts of her individuality, but humanity is also lost in the one trying to "solve" the Other. When an individual tries to figure the Other out, as she would a puzzle or riddle, all focus is aimed at the reason or intellect. The individual ignores any feelings, thoughts, or desires that she might have in order to think about the problem. The individual then turns herself into a mere computational thing in order to solve the riddle. In this dynamic, there is no room for intuitive sympathy. There is no room for complex human beings. This idea is what concerns Hawthorne the most about trying to rationally understand another. If one tries to do it, she will not only fail but will remove herself from humanity. Coverdale is only seeing the world in I-It relationships.

And this removal from humanity is exactly what became of Coverdale. Coverdale is not interested, really, in getting to know anyone better. He is trying to figure out what makes them "tick." He wants the answer to their riddles. He boiled his friends down to puzzles and information. He lacks the intuitive sympathy that Hawthorne holds in high regard. As a result, he not only objectifies them, but he objectifies himself. As he himself ultimately confesses, "that cold tendency, between instinct and intellect, which made me pry with a speculative interest into people's passions and impulses, appeared to have gone far towards unhumanizing my heart" (iii: 154). This confession comes from the individual who has gone to great lengths to maintain his individuality and keep it inviolate (iii: 99). And perhaps this is the misunderstanding of Coverdale: he sees no difference between the probing of the intellect into a person for the sole purpose of solving their riddle and the sympathetic intuition that engages with the entire person.

It is clear that some of Hawthorne's commentators have erased this distinction between the intuition and the intellect as well. As critic Jac Tharpe has commented about Hawthorne's works, "The doctrine of nonviolation has become, in operation, a means not of preventing control alone but of preventing a person from giving the sympathy that another needs. One being is simply afraid of another when he has to come directly to face the mystery of being itself" (137). But Hawthorne did not see sympathy as violating another person if only because sympathy does not seek to violate another individual, to "solve" them. Rather, it seeks to get to know them as an individual, it maintains the I-Thou relationship, but more shall be said about this later.

Zenobia condemns Hollingsworth because he remains a self that never seeks to engage with an Other; although, this criticism could easily be said of Coverdale as well.

As Hollingsworth judges Zenobia for turning Priscilla over to Westervelt, Zenobia screams at Hollingsworth, “Are you a man? No; but a monster! A cold, heartless, self-beginning and self-ending piece of mechanism!” (iii: 218). The echoes of this accusation reverberate with Coverdale’s confession of being cold with an “unhumanized” heart, and as was shown, Coverdale is fundamentally concerned with preserving his own view of self. As Zenobia continues, she explains “It is all self…Nothing else; nothing but self, self, self!” (i: 218). Hollingsworth has kept himself inviolate and has not let another person persuade or change him. He is just like Coverdale or like Richard Digby in setting himself apart from everyone else who could have touched him. Whereas Digby had his cave and Coverdale had his bowery and secluded rooms, Hollingsworth secluded himself in his philanthropic project creating yet another example of Hawthorne’s iron people with “inflexible severity of purpose” (iii: 43).

However, Coverdale does get glimpses of what it would take to humanize his heart once again. In the woods, on his way back to Blithedale, he comes across the people of the community in the forest making merry. Someone brought out a fiddle and started a dance, “So they joined hands in a circle, whirling round so swiftly, so madly, and so merrily, in time and tune with the Satanic music, that their separate incongruities were blended all together, and they became a kind of entanglement that went nigh to turn one's brain with merely looking at it” (iii: 210). Coverdale labels the music as Satanic simply because, to his mind, it causes the individuals to blend together, and that thought makes Coverdale ill. In fact, he remarks upon the problem of becoming entangled with others. As he sat in his bower spying on the inhabitants of the community, he mused upon a message the he would send to Priscilla that would warn her “that her fragile thread of life

has inextricably knotted itself with other and tougher threads, and most likely it will be broken" (iii: 100). Coverdale is wary of commitment and getting his life thread "inextricably knotted" with other people because they might break his self. In both of these examples, Coverdale is afraid of the power of the Other on the self to change, shape, or direct it. But it is this fear that is at the root of his "unhumanized" heart. This condemnation of the isolated individual, as has been shown, does not mean that Hawthorne would have the self turn itself over as the sole property of the community or public eye; rather, there must be a third option. It is an option that Coverdale sees, but is unable to grasp.

Upon seeing Zenobia condemned by Hollingsworth and Priscilla and left to weep by herself, Coverdale comments that "it seemed to me that the self-same pang, with hardly mitigated torment, leaped thrilling from her heart-strings to my own" (iii: 222). He admits that this feeling consecrated him to "minister to this woman's affliction" (iii: 222). However, Coverdale, having the unhumanized heart, instead of consoling her "leaned against a tree, and listened to her sobs, in unbroken silence" (iii: 223). This is perhaps the greatest condemnation that could befall Hawthorne's characters, to be consecrated by a special sympathy to help a sufferer and then do nothing. It is no surprise that later when he, through mental effort, tries to "fall in with her mood," he cannot (iii: 224).

But these hints at the end of Coverdale's story get us to what Hawthorne is trying to hint at and push his audience to accept. Both Judge Pyncheon and Coverdale are missing a part of what it is to be human because they don't understand the correct relationship between the self and the Other. Regardless of what Coverdale might think, being with an Other is fundamental to being human. Since Coverdale could not be with

an Other, he became "unhuman." As Heidegger put it in his book *Being and Time*, "Being with Others belongs to the Being of Dasein, which is an issue for Dasein in its very Being. Thus as Being-with, Dasein 'is' essentially for the sake of Others" (*Time* 160). Heidegger recognizes that there is no being without being-with-Others. Hawthorne recognizes that the self must be tied to an Other if the self is ever to really know itself, for it is through the Other that the self is mediated. Hawthorne sees this fundamental tying together of beings as intuitive sympathy.

Problems with Intuitive Sympathy and Abstractions

Sympathy must address concrete Others. Hawthorne understood that sympathy, if not grounded in an existing individual, could be a dangerous thing. To illustrate this, he shows us two extremes of individuals who try to place sympathy in the abstract. One is Hollingsworth who, as a philanthropist, sacrificed the feeling of sympathy in order to appeal to an ideal. As a result of this sympathy, Hollingsworth destroyed existing individuals around him. Hawthorne's other example is Clifford who was so enamored with sympathy that he tried to divorce it from the presence of existing individuals and almost destroyed himself in the process.

Hollingsworth, Alcott, and the Abstract Ideal

Hollingsworth "knew absolutely nothing, except in a single direction, where he had thought so energetically, and felt to such a depth, that, no doubt, the entire reason and justice of the universal appeared to be concentrated thitherward" (iii: 55-56). His singleness of purpose is prison reform; he would like to see criminals reformed by appealing "to their higher instincts" (iii: 36). It is alarming that Hollingsworth plans on engaging "higher instincts" of individuals rather than with the individuals themselves.

How can he be certain that every criminal has higher instincts? Hollingsworth has sacrificed the existing individual for a notion of an abstract and idealized humanity. Rather than engaging with humanity around him, he only strives for his ideal of humanity. It becomes clear that in Hollingsworth's zeal to engage in the betterment of criminals, he has no time for those around him. As he asks Coverdale, "How can you be my life-long friend, except you strive with me towards the great object of my life?" (iii: 57). Herein we see Hollingsworth's problem, he has shut out the Other unless the Other conforms to him and his goals. As praiseworthy as his goal of prison reform may be, he denies that there is a complicated world outside of himself with varying perceptions and goals. As a result of this, he has effectively cut off his sympathy with those around him in exchange for a sympathy with an ideal. This ultimately leads Coverdale to remark that all philanthropists should be avoided because "They have no heart, no sympathy, no reason, no conscience" (iii: 70).

The lack of sympathy is the fundamental problem with forgetting the individual amid the zeal for reformation or revolution. The ideal can take over and quell the individual. It is this idea that continues to lead many people to condemn Hawthorne as pro-slavery or even a traitor to the United States during the American Civil War (L. Reynolds 181). But this is not accurate. Hawthorne is capable of praising reform while, at the same time, condemning violence to the individual. As critic Larry Reynolds points out in a discussion of Hawthorne's views of the English Civil War, "Cromwell as democratic rebel fighting for oppressed people evoked Hawthorne's approval; Cromwell the ruthless king killer did not" (165). Even the American Civil war presented many problems for Hawthorne. One of the problems was how well-meaning individuals lost

their sympathy for an existing, specific Other and tried to hold to sympathy for Humanity or an ideal. In Hawthorne's eyes this sympathy for an abstract notion of Humanity is how generally peace-loving individuals like Bronson Alcott became like Hollingsworth, a person with "no heart, no sympathy, no reason, [and] no conscience."

Larry Reynolds claims that "Hawthorne came to believe that [Alcott's] devotion to 'the higher law' could prove dangerous, as his support of John Brown and eagerness to go to war had shown" (171). Reynolds makes a convincing argument that Hawthorne was trying to deal with Alcott in in his claimant manuscript when he wrote

> He is partially crazed; yet in a benevolent way, and so as to craze all that associated with, having a great spiritual fever queerly done up with his weakness and folly…A certain property shall attend him wherever he goes; a bloody footstep. Pshaw! He shall have the fatality of causing death, bloodshed, wherever he goes; and this shall symbolize the strife which benevolence inevitably provokes. (qtd. in L. Reynolds 172)

The danger of benevolence that characterize all of Hawthorne's revolutionaries and reformers is best articulated by existential philosopher Simone de Beauvoir in her *Ethics of Ambiguity*. She too was concerned with the tendency for the ideal of a good action to begin to work violence and bloodshed: "But an action which wants to serve man ought to be careful not to forget him on the way; if it chooses to fulfill itself blindly, it will lose its meaning or will take on an unforeseen meaning" (153). Hawthorne sees the unforeseen meaning of dehumanizing existing individuals that happens once an ideal cause or love of an abstract notion of humanity is embraced. As a result of this unforeseen meaning,

Hollingsworth manipulated men and women to fulfill his dream and Alcott is more than happy to send men to their deaths in order to free an abstract humanity.

Clifford and Engagement with Humanity

Clifford, in *The House of the Seven Gables*, in a key scene of the novel, fails to see the individual in favor of the universal as well. However, unlike Hollingsworth and other reformers and revolutionaries, Clifford tries to connect sympathetically with all of humanity. He cannot, it should be mentioned, tolerate much individual contact as he often shivered with "repugnance at the idea of personal contact with the world" (ii: 165). But this does not stop him from trying to find sympathy.

One day, as Clifford is at his window, he sees a political parade pass by. From his vantage point above the street, the parade seems to have a peculiar effect upon the participants. "It melts all the petty personalities, of which it is made up, into one broad mass of existence – one great life – one collected body of mankind, with a vast, homogeneous spirit animating it" (ii: 165). It is this large spirit, an "ocean of human life," that calls to Clifford (ii: 166). Having been locked away without human sympathy for thirty years of his life, this sight is almost too much for him. The sight of humanity compelled Clifford to try and plunge himself "into the surging stream of human sympathies" (ii: 165). Each member of the parade is connected to the others, it seems to Clifford, through those sympathies that he longs to be a part of. His longing almost draws him to throw himself out of his window into the parade. As Sean Kelly observes, "While Clifford cannot relate to humanity in its messy and often-repugnant particularity, his wish to relate to it from an idealized, detached perspective proves to be potentially lethal" (242). Kelly goes on to argue that this scene is Hawthorne's answer to Emerson's

transparent eyeball when Emerson writes "I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal being circulate through me" (qtd. in Kelly 242). Rather than the transcendence that Emerson exults in, Clifford's sympathy with the "currents of the Universal being" almost end in annihilation. Hawthorne cannot take seriously a view from nowhere or a view that is able to completely step outside of the perspective of a self. Without the perspective of the self, there can be no viewing. What makes this instance even more interesting is the type of sympathy that Clifford is feeling. Clifford is striving to connect with an abstract humanity through sympathy. For this reason, as Kelly points out, "Hawthorne describes a form of sympathy that is abstracted to the point that it risks the individual's own disintegration" (242). There is no real connection between Clifford and the parade of people. If Clifford wished to join the throng of humanity and keep his life, Hawthorne seems to be saying, he must set aside his repugnance for the world and join the parade, becoming another face in the crowd.

Clifford is another way for Hawthorne to condemn the search for a universal Other. Whereas Hollingsworth had his ideal cause that led him to shut out his sympathy to others, Clifford idealized the universal Other and tried to join it leading to a close call with his own demise. It becomes apparent that both Clifford's and Hollingsworth's sympathies lie with an abstract, universal humanity. But Hawthorne would agree with de Beauvoir, "Universal, absolute man exists nowhere" (112). There can only be individuals and sympathy existing between individuals.

Specific Engagement with the Other

For Hawthorne, then, it seems that the complete human self can only come about as it encounters another, specific, self. He sees a great power in intuitive sympathy that

can consecrate individuals in their relationships with each other. This will allow them to know one another without violating each other, for the intuitive sympathy is an act of meeting in the middle as both parties, voluntarily, reach out of their solitude to find an Other waiting for them. In order to know one another, being must meet being on a more primal level. In this regard Hawthorne and Heidegger are in agreement. Heidegger explained how understanding of an Other is to come; it does not come from a probing or an investigation of the Other. "This understanding, like any understanding, is not an acquaintance derived from knowledge about them, but a primordially existential kind of Being, which, more than anything else, makes such knowledge and acquaintance possible" (*Time* 161). The primeval understanding that goes before reason and knowledge is Buber's I-Thou relationship and Hawthorne's intuitive sympathy. It is the mechanism that can reveal the Other to the self and the self to the Other in ways that confound the rational order of thinking and analysis. This understanding of the Other also has another effect: in the understanding of the Other, the intuitive sympathy will also teach the self about itself. Hawthorne recognizes that the self needs to become entangled in the Other.

As he engaged with introspection into his own life, Hawthorne saw a stark difference in the person he was before and after he met his wife, Sophia. In a letter to her, he remarks at length on this difference and her role in his change:

> [How] little did I know what it is to be mingled with another's being! Thou hast taught that I have a heart – thou only hast thrown a light deep downward, and upward, into my soul. Thou hast revealed me to myself; for without thy aid, my best knowledge of myself would have been merely to know my own shadow – to watch it flickering on the wall, and mistake

> its fantasies for my own real actions. Indeed, we are all but shadows – we are not endowed with real life, and all that seems most real to us is but the thinnest substance of a dream – till the heart is touched. That touch creates us – then we begin to be – thereby we are beings of reality, and inheritors of eternity. (xv: 495)

The resonances with this passage and Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" are telling. Without an Other, or a guide, the self remains a prisoner within its own cave looking at its own shadow, never knowing what it truly is; however, with the assistance of a compassionate guide (as denoted with the touching of the heart) the self is drawn out into existence. In this way, Hawthorne is in agreement with Sartre. As Sartre explained about coming to know the self:

> [The individual] realizes that he cannot be anything (in the sense that we say that someone is witty or nasty or jealous) unless others recognize it as such. In order to get any truth about myself, I must have contact with another person. The other is indispensable to my own existence, as well as to my knowledge about myself. This being so, in discovering my inner being I discover the other person at the same time. ("Humanism" 51-52)

For Sartre, every aspect of the self is mediated through the Other, for the Other defines all aspects of the self. Hawthorne is largely in agreement with Sartre. As we saw with Coverdale and Judge Pyncheon, the Other has a great power in defining the self. And, as we saw with Clifford and Hollingsworth, a failure to engage with an Other in meaningful ways will result in the eradication of the self or its dehumanizing. However, unlike Sartre, the correlation that Hawthorne draws between self-knowledge and the Other as

couched in the language of the allegory shows that self-knowledge or self-construction is not merely ontological but ethical as well. It would seem impossible to thoroughly know the self without the assistance of the Other, but the self can still present veils in order to make sure that sympathetic relations are what define the self and Other. However, this is not to say that the self is masked, for as Hawthorne said, "A veil may be needful, but never a mask" (viii: 23). Clark Davis explicates the moral framework behind Hawthorne's statement: "To wear a mask is to hide, to be cut off from the world and therefore miserable. The veil, on the other hand … implies some limitation within the relationship with otherness, a permeable barrier that represents a heightened awareness of distance" (61). The permeability of the veil is important. A mask is hard, and completely defined. However, a veil is soft, permeable, and often able to shift appearance. A veil has the power to beckon while a mask will always block. A good distinction between mask and veil, as Clark Davis insightfully points out, can be found in "The Minister's Black Veil" where Parson Hooper, in placing a veil upon his face, creates a mask.

It is in the use of veils that one is both held off from and seduced by the one veiled. In "The Minister's Black Veil" Parson Hooper estranges the ones closest to him and his congregation by placing a veil over his face. With the veil in place, he has literally placed a distance between himself and the Other that should at the same time seduce the other into getting to know him better. On some level, this works; his preaching becomes all the more powerful because his congregation is able to feel a sympathy that wasn't there before (ix: 49). However, Hooper cannot feel this sympathy in return. For him, the veil becomes a mask – a simple emblem of separation which refuses to allow anyone entrance. And herein is the ontological difference between the veil and the mask:

the veil invites or encourages the sympathetic Other to enter in and be drawn into more truth. The mask assumes itself as the truth. Hooper was partially correct; everyone does wear a veil. His moral failing, though, was his refusal to let those closest to him, like Elizabeth, penetrate his veil with her sympathetic touch. In this manner his veil became his mask. His mask defined him completely as the title of the story implies.

So sympathy becomes the key to all human interaction. It lets the individual meet an existing person and become empowered by him. Sympathy recognizes the real function of the Other. Colin Davis, a scholar on Levinas, explicates Levinas' view of the Other in a way that Hawthorne would agree with:

> the Other makes me realize that I share the world, that it is not my unique position…The Other puts me into question by revealing to me that my powers and freedom are limited... It instigated dialogue, teaching, and hence reason, society and ethics. It also gives a proper foundation to freedom. The transcendental Ego would like to be the sole source of its own knowledge, actions and meanings; the encounter with the Other shows such freedom to be egotistical, arbitrary, and unjustified. (qtd in C. Davis 55)

As was shown earlier, Hawthorne did not trust the type of world view that would lead to Solipsism. The Other, and the sympathetic engagement with the Other, allows reality to spring forward. In this regard, Hawthorne is in agreement with Martin Buber's I-Thou relationship. The I-Thou is a relationship between two individuals that allows being to meet being:

> If I face a human being as my *Thou*…he is not a thing among things, and does not consist of things. Thus human being is not *He* or *She*, bounded from every other *He* and *She*, a specific point in space and time within the net of the world; nor is he a nature able to be experienced and described, a loose bundle of named qualities. But with no neighbor, and whole in himself…This does not mean that nothing exists except himself. But all else lives in *his* light." (Buber, *I and Thou* 23-24 emphasis in original).

This type of relationship is not one that wants to get anything out of the relationship. It is not one that is trying to solve the problem of who the Other is. It is one of deep reverence and respect. It is a relationship that Hawthorne often uses the word consecrate to describe. However, for Hawthorne, consecration and the complete openness that comes from intuitive sympathy do not have to result in positive outcomes. We must remember that Hawthorne is working with human realities using the words that he has available to him, so when he uses the word sympathy he does not mean merely as Gordon Hunter argues "a receptivity to others that…enables the compassionate comprehension of and empathy with another person's suffering (Budick 233). That is to only see one part of the human side. Hawthorne makes it clear that he sees multiple sorts of sympathy at work, so the idea that sympathy is only about the alleviation of suffering is a false one caused more by modern definitions of the word than by Hawthorne's understanding of the word. Sympathy can also be a receptivity to others that draws out the darkest emotions. Sympathy is better defined as a receptivity to others that draws what is innermost out to be defined by the Other. As Hawthorne makes clear in "The Custom House" sympathy can only happen when two individuals "stand in some true relation" to each other; if the

true relation is not reached, their "inmost Me" will forever be concealed behind a veil (i: 4). Unless this true relationship is entered into, the speaker may talk about anything at all, including herself, yet still keep that core self hidden. It is with this understanding that Hawthorne criticizes autobiographical writing, "People who write about themselves and their feelings, as Byron did, may be said to serve up their own hearts, duly spiced, and with brain-sauce out of their own heads, as a repast for the public" (viii: 253). In this fashion the public doesn't learn about the author. Everything the author gives the public is an artificial construct "spiced" for consumption. No true relationship is entered into because no sympathy is present. Sympathy, then, is the ability to enter into that "true relationship" and glimpse the "innermost Me." In other words, sympathy is the only way that two or more individuals can see each other's center, and as people, Hawthorne would believe, are not all inherently good, seeing who a person really is does not have to be a good thing.

Dark Sympathy

Hawthorne focuses on sympathy throughout his works, sometimes in a positive light and sometimes in a negative one. However, it is in *The Marble Faun* that he more fully investigates the various natures of sympathy.

Miriam and Donatello cannot be considered by anyone the perfect couple. In *The Marble Faun*, they bicker and fight. Miriam avoids Donatello, and Donatello follows her around like a dog. Their relationship stays at this level until they commit murder together. It is at this point that the two individuals become linked, inseparably together, and we can see that intuitive sympathy should not only be interpreted in a positive light.

Donatello is fiercely loyal to Miriam and is often described in the text as a dog or an animal (see for example iv: 148). Yet, between the two a bond begins to form initially made by their mutual hatred of Miriam's model. On one of their many outings, the Model interrupts Donatello's merry making demanding an interview with Miriam. Almost without thinking Donatello exclaims, simply and forcibly, "I hate him!" to which Miriam immediate replies, "Be satisfied; I hate him too!" (iv: 91). The simple confessions of their hatred is not disturbing to our discussion of sympathy and the Other. Rather, it is the insight into the nature of this exchange that the narrator gives us that should be our focus. The narrator tells us that Miriam "had no thought of making this avowal, but was irresistibly drawn to it by the sympathy of the dark emotion in her own breast with that so strongly expressed by Donatello. Two drops of water, or of blood, do not more naturally flow into each other, than did her hatred into his" (iv: 91). Everything that Hawthorne's sympathy demands is present in this passage. There is a drawing out of the innermost self to the outer world, and an openness of communication between Miriam and Donatello that remains beyond the realm of language as their hates intermingle with each other like two differing drops of blood.

This drawing forth of Miriam's veil frightens her momentarily as she realizes that she was "affrighted out of the scornful control which she had hitherto held over her companion" (iv: 91). As a result, she pleads with Donatello not to follow her any longer. Donatello, for his part realizing his deep connection to her cries, "Not follow you! What other path have I?" (iv: 91). For Donatello realizes to what extent he has been defined and created by his involvement with Miriam. He knows that as long as he is to remain himself, he must remain with Miriam. As he later confesses to Miriam, "Methinks there

has been a change upon me, these many month; and more and more, these last few days. The joy is gone out of my life; all gone! – all gone! Feel my hand! Is it not very hot? Ah; and my heart burns hotter still…This burning pain in my heart…for you are in the midst of it" (iv: 148-49). But Donatello does not wish to change for the better. He does not necessarily wish his joy to come back, for he values his relationship with Miriam more than he does his happiness. This valuation of the relationship ultimately leads to his involvement with the murder of Miriam's model.

As Donatello stands at the brink of the precipice after throwing the Model to his death, Miriam demands to know what he had just done. His response is emphatic "I did what your eyes bade me do, when I asked them with mine, as I held the wretch over the precipice!" (iv: 172). This silent communication should remind us of the openness of communication that the two have experienced before. They do not need words to communicate. Their emotions and intentions, because of the dark sympathetic bond between them, flow from being to being uninhibited. It was at this moment of silent communication that Miriam realized that she agreed to the murder with her entirety of being, and so she embraced him. "She pressed him close, close to her bosom, with a clinging embrace that brought their two hearts together, till the horror and agony of each was combined into one emotion, and that, a kind of rapture" (iv: 173-74). The combining of their beings is further elaborated upon as they discuss their new state, "'Oh, friend, are you conscious, as I am, of this companionship that knits our heart-strings together?' 'I feel it, Miriam,' said Donatello. 'We draw one breath; we live one life!" (iv: 175). Their language is reminiscent of the biblical sermons of marriage where husband and wife are compelled to become "one." In fact, Hawthorne explicitly draws this parallel and the

consecrating power of sympathy when the narrator comments upon the Donatello and Miriam's bond, "It was closer than a marriage-bond. So intimate, in those first moments, was the union that it seemed as if their new sympathy annihilated all other ties" (iv: 174). These two individuals intertwined themselves together so much, dark sympathy opened them to each other so much, that their states of being are now intermingled and they became as one. Miriam even recognizes this, apart from the narrator, when she asks Kenyon, "Was the crime – in which [Donatello] and I were wedded – was it a blessing in that strange disguise?" (iv: 434). The sympathy that intermingles hearts is not only found in *The Marble Faun*; Hawthorne mentions the sympathy that reaches behind the veils into the inner heart in *The Scarlet Letter*.

With his novel, *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne introduces dark sympathy. In the initial interview between Hester and Chillingworth, Chillingworth asks Hester to reveal to him the identity of Pearl's father, but Hester refuses. At this, Chillingworth simply smiles at Hester's naiveté and commences to tell her about sympathy:

> Thou mayest cover up thy secret from the prying multitude. Thou mayest conceal it, too, from the ministers and magistrates, even as thou didst this day, when they sought to wrench the name out of thy heart, and give thee a partner on thy pedestal. But, as for me, I come to the inquest with other senses than they possess…There is a sympathy that will make me conscious of him. I shall see him tremble. I shall feel myself shudder, suddenly and unawares. Sooner or later, he must needs be mine. (i: 75)

The fact that Chillingworth will be able to detect the guilty party while that party is unawares, lets us see that sympathy is not necessarily a virtue that is consciously

practiced. The fact that Chillingworth is able to uncover Dimmesdale without a confession and then use that sympathy to torture shows that Hawthorne did not see sympathy as a means to console and help others through suffering. Rather, sympathy is a mysterious quality that binds two individuals together. It is a pre-reflective emotion or a mood that syncs two hearts.

The fact that Hawthorne recognizes that the sympathy that binds people together is more than just a positive emotion goes far to align him with the Existentialists. Just like Heidegger, Hawthorne realizes that the connections that form between individuals are simply a way of being, and those connections do not have to be positive. They simply are. However, along with intuitive sympathy, Hawthorne explores in more detail the look of the Other that traps and confines the self, turning the veil into a mask. As I noted earlier with the discussion of the public eye and Judge Pyncheon, Hawthorne uses the idea of the look to show how the self can be captured and completely defined by the Other. Hawthorne wants to show that if sympathy is not maintained, the look of the Other will become the primary mode of knowing, or defining, the Other. In order to show how the look of the Other can define the self, Hawthorne makes sure that the dark sympathy between Donatello and Miriam does not last in its fullness.

The Look of the Other

Along with the dark sympathy that streams between Donatello and Miriam, Donatello also forms a heavy conscience. Once Donatello's conscience begins to bother him, the dark sympathy that moves between himself and Miriam becomes interrupted. He is no longer in a true relationship with Miriam. As the narrator comments, "sin, care, and self-consciousness have set the human portion of the world askew" (iv: 239-40).

According to the narrator, through sin, care, and self-consciousness, the true relationships that make sure sympathy can flow between individuals are interrupted, and as those true relationships are interrupted, the worlds of those effected are "set askew." Once those worlds are set askew, the self can only encounter the look of the Other instead of the Other's sympathy.

Donatello becomes incredibly self-conscious about what he has done. As soon as his self-consciousness sets in, he can no longer communicate openly with Miriam, so he leaves Rome to go back home without her. Miriam, realizes how much she needs Donatello and how much he has also changed her. In her loneliness after her intense opening with Donatello, she admits to Kenyon, "What benumbs me – what robs me of all power – is the certainty that I am, and must ever be, an object of horror in Donatello's sight!" (iv: 280). Donatello has slipped out of the dark sympathetic relationship of openness wherein he shared in Miriam's emotions and intentions to one where she becomes an object – one that entices him to murder. Miriam is afraid that this means she will always remain a murderer in his sight. It is no coincidence that Miriam (and Hawthorne) have used the word sight. For the eye, the gaze, the look, all define the self, or as Sartre has put it "[the look] is a pure reference to myself" (*Being* 347).

Sartre had a lot to say about the look of an individual and how that look defines the self because "the look is first an intermediary which refers from me to myself" (*Being* 347). In one of his most famous vignettes, Sartre describes a voyeur who, perhaps out of jealousy, looks into a room through a keyhole. As the voyeur looks through the keyhole, he is aware of only what his gaze is focused on, nothing else. His own awareness of being melts away and becomes consumed in the object of his gaze. However, that completely

changes when the voyeur hears someone behind him. Upon realizing that he is being looked at, the voyeur recognizes how he must appear to the onlooker. The purpose or the ends of looking through the keyhole in the first place all drop away. No longer is the voyeur defined by his own projects and ends. He is only defined by the gaze of the Other. If left alone, the voyeur could be both a voyeur and a respectable citizen. He could be both what he is and what he is not. But the look of the Other takes that freedom away. As Sartre puts it, "in order for me to be what I am, it suffices merely that the Other look at me… I grasp the Other's look at the very center of my *act* as the solidification and alienation of my own possibilities" (*Being* 351-52 emphasis in original). The look is what captures and defines the subject. The look is what objectifies the subject for the Other. Referring to earlier examples, the look is what holds the expectation that Sartre's waiter become a mere waiter and that Judge Pyncheon become merely a respectable judge. It is this objectification that makes Miriam merely a "horror" in Donatello's sight. Although the look, whether from the Other or the public eye, is what defines the individual, that does not mean that the individual necessarily loses all power of self-definition. Both the waiter and Judge Pyncheon willingly give themselves completely over to the look in order to be defined, for both realize, on some level, that the easiest way to find social respectability is to submit to the public eye. However, Miriam resists. She knows the power of the look and takes pains to present a guarded front to the world to block the look from defining her inmost self, but she finds that even a carefully guarded secrecy cannot prevent the Other from eventually defining the self.

This solidification and alienation caused by the Other's look is what Miriam knows all too well and what she is afraid of. Earlier in the text, Miriam went off by

herself to "relieve the nerves" (iv: 157). Unbeknownst to her, Donatello followed. "Unaware of his presence, and *fancying herself wholly unseen*, the beautiful Miriam began to gesticulate extravagantly, gnashing her teeth, flinging her arms wildly abroad, stamping her foot. It was as if she had stept aside, for an instant, solely to snatch the relief of a brief fit of madness" (iv: 157 emphasis added). Without the look of the Other, Miriam felt herself free to drop her poise and give face to her inner turmoil. This exhibition upsets Donatello so much that he makes himself known. Miriam becomes furious with him exclaiming, "How dare you *look* at me?...Men have been struck dead for a less offence!" (iv: 157 emphasis added). The only crime on Donatello's part, and it appears to be a mortal crime, is simply looking at Miriam in her most private moment. Miriam is keenly aware that the look of the Other has the potential to completely define her. It is this knowledge that benumbs her into thinking that for Donatello, the one person she cares about, she will forever be a murderer.

The idea of the defining look is explored even further by Hawthorne in a conversation between Kenyon and Donatello. As the two men talk after Donatello has left Rome, Kenyon moves the conversation to the subject of guilt and torture. Kenyon comments that one of the worst possible tortures for a human being would be "infinite and eternal solitude" (iv: 305). In Kenyon's idea, the individual would be cut off from all pleasing interactions with an Other to face his self alone. However, Donatello is not convinced. He is keenly aware of the power of the look and, suspecting that Miriam is watching him, corrects Kenyon, "But there might be a more miserable torture than to be solitary forever…think of having a single companion for eternity, and, instead of finding any consolation, or, at all events, variety of torture, to see your own weary, weary sin,

repeated in that inseparable soul!" (iv: 305). To be trapped forever in the defining look of the Other and only see what that individual sees of the self as defined by one act would be hell. In this instance, there would be no possibility for change, and with the possibility of change removed, the dynamic self ceases to exist creating a mere object. This exact idea was also explored in Jean-Paul Sartre's play *No Exit*.

In *No Exit* three random people find themselves in hell. However, there are no instruments of torture: no fire and brimstone. As Hawthorne said, there is no "variety of torture" (iv: 305). There is only a conventional couch and a locked room. Into the room the characters are brought. Garcin is first introduced. His crimes are cowardice as he deserted the army and callousness as he had several adulterous trysts in his own home and bullied his wife to bring coffee to his lover and him in bed. As his companions, he is joined by Ines who manipulated a woman whom she desired as a lover into murdering her husband and Estelle who becomes pregnant through an adulterous tryst and ends up drowning her baby when it is born. Whenever they try to present themselves in a new light before the others in the room, their shameful deed is always brought back up. These three people are trapped by their sins in life as the shameful acts are the only acts that the others in the room see. As a result of this situation, there is no growth and no change for them. They are forced to see their own "weary, weary sin, repeated in [those] inseparable soul[s]" (Hawthorne iv: 305). This finally leads to the play's most memorable line as Garcin comes to his realization about what is really happening,

> I understand that I'm in hell. I tell you, everything's been thought out beforehand. They knew I'd stand at the fireplace stroking this thing of bronze, with all those eyes intent on me. Devouring me…What? Only two

> of you? I thought there were more; many more…So this is hell. I'd never have believed it. You remember all we were told about the torture-chambers, the fire and brimstone, the 'burning marl.' Old wives' tales! There's no need for red-hot pokers. Hell is – other people! (Sartre, *No* 45)

Garcin, like Donatello and Miriam, finally recognizes that being perpetually trapped and defined by the look of an Other is torture. Individuals need possibilities to change before them. If it wasn't for the act of intuitive sympathy, Hawthorne would have to conclude that every individual is forever trapped by the look of either the public eye or the Other. However, intuitive sympathy can supersede the look. Miriam is the first to realize the power of sympathy as she was the first to realize the power of the look. Donatello, on the other hand, is convinced that as he looks upon Miriam and as she looks upon him, he will only see his murderous act repeated forever. He can only comprehend that the look of the Other will forever trap him. But this is his own shame talking. He does not understand that Miriam is able to "guide him to a higher innocence than that from which he fell" (iv: 283).

Reestablishing the Sympathetic Connection

Miriam sees that Donatello's edification is possible because she still has a sympathetic connection with him. Miriam is able to see what lies beyond the veil in Donatello's heart. Miriam understands that the Other who has the power to trap one in a look also has the power to liberate and empower through sympathy. She understands "If Donatello is entitled to ought on earth, it is to my complete self-sacrifice for his sake. It does not weaken his claim, methinks, that my only prospect of happiness (a fearful word, however) lies in the good that may accrue to him from our intercourse. But he rejects me!

He will not listen to the whisper of his heart" (iv: 283). It is precisely the sympathy that Miriam has that lets her hear "the whisper of his heart," but it is Donatello's self-consciousness that "sets [his] world askew," so he is no longer able to hear the promptings of his own heart (iv: 239-40).

Although apart for many months, the deep sympathetic tie between Miriam and Donatello remained in force. They were aware of each other's presence even if their eyes could not detect for certain that the other one was there. Finally, through the planning of Miriam and the machinations of Kenyon, Donatello and Miriam meet face to face once again in front of the statue of Pope Julius in Perugia. Upon seeing her, Donatello only says one word: "Miriam" (iv: 319). But that word was enough. "It told Miriam things of infinite importance, and, first of all, that he still loved her. The sense of their mutual crime had stunned, but not destroyed the vitality of his affection" (iv: 319-20). For his part, Donatello readily confesses to Miriam that his "deepest heart has need of [her]" (iv: 320). The reference to the deepest heart should be seen as that part of the being behind the veil, the most intimate part of a human being that can only be reached through sympathy. However, the two hesitate before each other. Their "two souls were groping for each other in the darkness of guilt and sorrow, and hardly were bold enough to grasp the cold hands that they found" (iv: 320-21). Perhaps they would have stayed like this had it not been for Kenyon.

For the entire interview between Miriam and Donatello, Kenyon had kept himself to the background, but he wasn't disengaged from their interests. In fact he "stood watching the scene with earnest sympathy" (iv: 321). It is with the sympathy that he had for both of his friends that he was able to comprehend their plight, and able to

comprehend how best to help them. This marks a change in Kenyon, for earlier in the novel, Kenyon was unable to have sympathy for Miriam.

When Miriam initially entered Kenyon's workshop at the beginning of the novel, she was agitated from her encounters with the Model. Kenyon, sensing Miriam's agitation, became defensive and alarmed (iv: 128). Instead of trying to listen to her, Kenyon immediately began to try and rationally give advice. In this manner, Kenyon refused to engage in sympathy and, like Coverdale did with his friends, turns Miriam into a riddle to be solved. As Emily Miller Budick points out, Kenyon is plagued with "his inability to simply sympathize with rather than [to] advise or help" (iv: 246). However, things have changed by this point. He has lost the "reserve and alarm" that had prevented him from initially showing Miriam a full sympathy (Hawthorne iv: 128). It is because of the "earnest sympathy" that he now has that he is able to tell them about the nature of sympathy that exists between the two of them. He begins by addressing Miriam to explain what her actions have done for Donatello. He then addresses Donatello about the true nature of Miriam's actions:

> And here, Donatello, is one whom Providence marks out as intimately connected with your destiny. The mysterious process, by which our earthly life instruct us for another state of being, was begun for you by her, She has rich gifts of heart and mind, a suggestive power, a magnetic influence, a sympathetic knowledge, which, wisely and religiously exercised, are what your condition needs. She possesses what you require, and, with utter self-devotion, will use it for your good. The bond betwixt

> you, therefore, is a true one, and never – except by Heaven's own act – should be rent asunder. (iv: 321)

Kenyon recognizes the sympathetic knowledge that Miriam possesses of Donatello, through his own sympathy, and from that sympathy, sanctions their bond as a "true one." Their bond is true in the sense that no earthly power can sever the bond. It is true in the sense that it has knit the hearts or beings of these two people together as to become one. It is also true in the sense that it is only through their bond that either can receive what their "condition needs." The sympathetic bond empowers them. Because this positive sympathy is one of freedom and empowerment, to use Heidegger's phrases, this bond is an authentic one: "They thus become authentically bound together, and this makes possible the right kind of objectivity, which frees the Other in his freedom for himself" (*Time* 159). For the first time, Donatello is really able to act for himself and make his own choices. And for the first time in the novel, Miriam feels responsibility for someone else. It is this bond that ultimately makes the two characters free to act. The bonds that tie hearts together in sympathy, it becomes clear, do not have to be formed in order to alleviate suffering. The bond of sympathy that twined Donatello and Miriam together was a dark sympathy, but nonetheless, it is still a "true" or authentic bond. It is for this reason that the public eye finally recognizes their bond as a marriage.

Even though the narrator acknowledges that the sympathy between Miriam and Donatello should be seen as a marriage bond at the time of the murder, this bond was not sanctioned by the look of the Other. It is this step that Hawthorne looks at next. As Kenyon spoke to the two penitents, they finally held hands, and Donatello started thinking about everything that Kenyon imparted to him. The narrator tells us:

> He still held Miriam's hand; and there they stood, the beautiful man, the beautiful woman, united forever, as they felt, in the presence of these thousand eye-witnesses, who gazed so curiously at the unintelligible scene. Doubtless, the crowds recognized them as lovers, and fancied this a betrothal that was destined to result in life-long happiness. And, possibly, it might be so…Perhaps – shy, subtle thing – it had crept into this sad marriage-bond, when the partners would have trembled at its presence, as a crime. (iv: 323)

The fact that the narrator is able to combine the two functions of the Other in explicating Donatello's thoughts is telling. For on the one hand, sympathy is in full force between Miriam and Donatello creating a marriage bond between them even though they have not been to a religious or civil leader for any ceremony. On the other hand, the look of the Other sanctions what the sympathy between the two has created. The "thousand eye-witnesses" see and define a wedding ceremony taking place before them (although a very strange and "incomprehensible" ceremony), so it is the look of the Other that is finally able to confer marriage upon the two characters.

The purpose of the Other is two-fold: first, the Other is to draw out the innermost parts of the character through sympathy. By doing this, connections with individuals in the world are made and enforced. Through those connections, individuals are created. However, it is also the function of the Other to trap and hold the individual within the look. The look will define and present what the self is to the self without the possibility of change unless, of course, the Other is looking sympathetically. As we have looked at Hawthorne's views of the self and the Other, we have seen that Hawthorne's view of the

conflict between self and Other is both an ontological and an ethical conflict, for the Other is in charge of knowing the self and presenting the self to the self. If this is not done through a sympathetic gaze, then the self will be deformed. Or the self will hide behind its veil calcifying it into a mask. The final problem for Hawthorne becomes how to try and balance the veiled self, the public eye, the look, and sympathy of the concrete Other in order to find an authentic self.

Becoming Authentic: Death, Responsibility, and the Intersubjective

There is no character that Hawthorne penned who has become such a part of American culture as Hester Prynne. Hester and her scarlet letter have become cultural touchstones as they have been the basis for movies, books, articles, and other pieces of art. As a symbol, she has become a sign of a strong individual standing up against a repressive society. As with most of Hawthorne's symbols, it is not as simple as that. Hester not only stands up to the society she is a part of, if she indeed stands up to it, but she also serves that same community. She nurtures and in some ways empowers it. However, she is still able to maintain a distinct personhood in the midst of her social punishment. She, more than any other of Hawthorne's characters is able to find an authentic existence. This is not to say that she is an authentic character at the beginning of the romance. Instead, Hawthorne has created an individual who is defiant, but who is still engrossed in the power of the society and Das Man. However, Hawthorne is able to position her to begin her movement into authentic existence.

The first thing that Hawthorne does is to move Hester out beyond the normal circumstances of society. Being arrested for the charge of adultery, the consequence of the law is death; however, the ministers and the judges "in their great mercy and

tenderness of heart…doomed Mistress Prynne to stand only a space of three hours on the platform of the pillory, and then and thereafter, for the remainder of her natural life, to wear a mark of shame upon her bosom" (i: 63). This action has the consequence of unsettling the community. From the gossips who complain about the lightness of the sentence to the ministers themselves who do not know quite how to talk to Hester Prynne, it is clear that Hester has now been placed in a category outside of the normal categories of Puritan society. But this is the first step that must be taken in searching for authenticity. As Jacob Golomb explains, in order to find authenticity,

> one must find one's way without recourse to the guiding systems of social institutions. By acting in circumstances that are beyond the 'good" and honest" ethic, the world of shallow appearances and pious ethical codes – namely, in the real jungle and in the traumatic moments of personal truth – we can arrive at some conclusion as to whether genuine selfhood or a hollow core lies behind one's cultural shell. (24)

Standing on the platform places Hester somewhere outside of the normal order of society. Whereas the agreed upon law demands her death, the fact that she remains alive and marked places her noticeably outside of the strictures of the law. To make this point explicit, the narrator comments on how her particular punishment moved her outside of the normal social functions: "it had the effect of a spell, taking her out of the ordinary relations with humanity, and inclosing her in a sphere by herself" (i: 54). Starting at this point in time forward, every action that Hester makes is an invention within the social order as she navigates a new position – one that her upbringing and social institutions

have not prepared her for. Once in this position, every action she performs must reveal who she is – who her "inmost Me" is - at least to herself (i: 4).

One thing that many of the philosophers of authenticity agree upon is the need for responsibility for one's choices. As Sartre states at the end of his summary of all types of existentialism, "existentialism's first move is to make every man aware of what he is and to make the full responsibility of his existence rest on him" ("Humanism" 36). By placing Hester outside of society, Hawthorne positions her so that all of her choices would be chosen without recourse to society. By inhabiting a space beyond law and the normal social order, the power of the public eye is weakened. It is up to Hester at this point to take responsibility for her actions. Although she initially tries to take responsibility for her actions by sewing the letter to her garments and standing on the platform, we quickly see that these two acts are not authentically chosen, for the public eye is too much upon her at the beginning.

While yet in prison, it was Hester's job to sew a scarlet *A* to her bodice. The reader's first glimpse of the scarlet letter shows it to be above what was expected:

> On the breast of her gown, in fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidery artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy, that it had all the effect of a last and fitting decoration to the apparel which she wore…her attire, which, indeed, she had wrought for the occasion, in prison, and had been modelled much after her own fancy, seemed to express the attitude of her spirit. (i: 53)

Although Hester's action has some authentic elements to it, this action cannot be seen as fully authentic. On the one hand the letter "seemed to express the attitude of her spirit."

We know that the spirit she is expressing is more than a temporary passion because even years later when Hester's other garments became more austere and "her rich and luxuriant hair had either been cut, or was completely hidden by a cap, that not a shining lock of it ever once gushed into the sunshine" (i: 163), she still maintained "the scarlet letter on her breast, glittering in its fantastic embroidery" (i: 160). The fact that Hester has chosen to lavishly embroider her emblem shows that she has taken some thought for her action. More than that, the fact that she maintains the symbol shows she has made the symbol her own. She could have made a simple *A*, but the fact that it was elaborately embroidered, shows time and choice in its application. Her *A* is a luxuriance that does not go unnoticed and leads some of the gossips to suggest that a rag of "rheumatic flannel [would] make a fitter one!" (i: 54). However, the letter is specifically "wrought for the occasion" with the public firmly in mind. Hester has a firm idea of the public eye and creates an emblem that is crafted to get a reaction from the public. This mindset, then, gives us our evidence that Hester's actions at this time are not authentic. She is not making choices that engage her responsibility to herself. She is making choices to perform in front of the public eye. Her inauthenticity becomes more apparent as she steps onto the scaffold.

The second part of her punishment is to stand upon the scaffold for three hours. As she first emerges from the prison door, the town beadle places his hand on her shoulder to guide her to the scaffold. However, "she repelled him, by an action marked with natural dignity and force of character, and stepped into the open air, as if by her own free-will…and never had Hester Prynne appeared more lady-like, in the antique interpretation of the term, than as she issued from the prison" (i: 52-53). Hester could

have been led out or pushed out of the prison to take her punishment, but the fact that she rejects the hand of authority and walks herself to the scaffold "as if by her own free-will" again shows her choices and the personal responsibilities that she has committed to with those choices. But the narrator's remark of "as if" should give us pause. Her actions are not completely of her choosing. Rather, she is trying to present an image or a mask to the public eye. Both the letter and the entrance to the public are planned and thought out. For authenticity to show itself, it must come in spontaneous moments. Her moments start to come as she stands upon the platform, and only when she stands on the platform does her authenticity begin to truly show itself.

Hester had readied herself for jeers and taunts. She was looking for a vocal humiliation. If that had happened she would have simply met the public outcry with "a bitter and disdainful smile" (i: 57). But the crowd does not taunt, and it does not jeer. Instead, her expectations are thwarted as she is met with a stony, solemn silence. She has to endure "the heavy weight of a thousand unrelenting eyes, all fastened upon her, and concentred at her bosom" (i: 57). The weight of the public makes her feel as if she has to shriek or go mad (i: 57). This insight into her mental condition shows that all of the actions of stepping to the scaffold were done with the public and not herself in mind. Her stance, her elaborate gown, and her body language were all calculated to present an image to the public eye rather than reveal anything much about Hester to herself or others. At this time, she tries to present a mask of herself as strong when inside, she recognizes that she is weak. But it is in this moment of weakness that Hester comes to her first realization about who she is and the position she is fulfilling. As she stands on the platform above the crowd being watched and examined, she relives her life. She realizes

that this moment of shame is her reality and, more importantly, that all her life events, from the most mundane, to the most consequential, led her to this moment (i: 58). Simone de Beauvoir comments on this idea by, fittingly, applying it to Calvinist doctrine,

> The child does not contain the man he will become. Yet, it is always on the basis of what he has been that a man decides upon what he wants to be... Now, the child set up this character and this universe little by little, without foreseeing its development. He was ignorant of the disturbing aspect of this freedom which he was heedlessly exercising. He tranquilly abandoned himself to whims, laughter, tears, and anger which seemed to him to have no morrow and no danger, and yet which left ineffaceable imprints about him. The drama of original choice is that it goes on moment by moment for an entire lifetime, that it occurs without reason, before any reason, that freedom is there as if it were present only in the form of contingency. This contingency recalls, in a way, the arbitrariness of the grace distributed by God in Calvinistic doctrine. Here too there is a sort of predestination issuing not from an external tyranny but from the operation of the subject itself. (40-41)

The fact that Hester recognizes that her life led her to that moment, and the fact that there is no rejection of her life or the reality of the moment, goes far to show that Hester is accepting her reality. Really, for the first time she feels that shame is her reality (i: 59). She understands herself as her community sees her, a mere symbol. She recognizes that she would be forced to give up her individuality and “become the general symbol at which the preacher and moralist might point, and in which they might vivify and embody

their images of woman's frailty and sinful passion" (i: 79). It is only with this realization, with the weight of the thousands of eyes, can she begin to finally act authentically for herself, to hold onto her individuality, and to engage with the community even in the face of a type of existential death.

One key that Heidegger points to in the search for an authentic identity is the confrontation with death. The existentialists are lampooned and derided for their seeming fixation on death, but in death they see the ultimate fate of human existence. All choices must be made in the face of death. Most individuals fail to take death seriously or acknowledge its personal connection with them (Heidegger, *Time* 302). But when acknowledged, it has the power of bringing out the authentic individual. Das Man falls away, according to Heidegger, as the individual fully embraces her mortality (*Time* 311). As a result of this, the authentic individual would act authentically towards others after she fully understand her own mortality. And it is no mystery that Hawthorne wants to have death in the near background of his story. He mentions death and its derivatives over fifty times during the course of *The Scarlet Letter*. Hester's sentence should have been death. She knows it, and the entire community knows it. The community approached her punishment with the same air as if they were attending an execution (i: 58). Furthermore, Hawthorne introduces the concept of a lived death that carries with it much of the same function as actual mortality. He writes, "there is a fatality, a feeling so irresistible and inevitable that it has the force of doom, which almost invariably compels human beings to linger around and haunt, ghost-like, the spot where some great and marked event has given the color to their lifetime" (i: 79-80). As a result of this tendency,

Hester mediates all of her interactions with the individuals around her with the shadow of death in her mind.

Hester's relation with death becomes clearer during her first interaction with Roger Chillingworth. Chillingworth approaches her to administer medicine to both her and the baby as they lay in their prison after their public humiliation. Hester, thinking that Chillingworth means to revenge himself on her as he proffers her medicine, says, "I have thought of death…- have wished for it, - would even have prayed for it, were it fit that such as I should pray for anything. Yet, if death be in this cup, I bid thee think again, ere thou beholdest me quaff it" (i: 73). A change has happened with Hester Prynne as she has stayed in the prison. Whereas before she would gladly have embraced annihilation, something has changed that is keeping her alive. That change is Pearl.

It cannot be said that the community helped her, for upon her immediate release from prison, she found that "in all her intercourse with society, however, there was nothing that made her feel as if she belonged to it. Every gesture, every word, and even the silence of those with whom she came in contact, implied, and often expressed, that she was banished, and as much alone as if she inhabited another sphere" (i: 84). And so, for many years, Hester's only meaningful contact with a human being is with her daughter. It is Pearl who brings Hester the greatest joys and sorrows. It is no coincidence that the narrator notes "How soon – with what strange rapidity, indeed! – did Pearl arrive at an age that was capable of social intercourse, beyond the mother's ever-ready smile and nonsense-words" (i: 93). For it is the social aspect of Pearl and Hester that bind them to humanity. This is shown as Hester pleads in front of the governor for the custody of her child.

Upon a supposedly failed examination about basic religious teachings, it seems that the authorities are disposed to take Pearl away from Hester. At the hint of this outcome, Hester grabs Pearl and confronts the magistrate declaring, "God gave me the child!...She is my happiness! – she is my torture, none the less! Pearl keeps me here in life!" (i: 113). As we have already pointed out, Pearl is Hester's main link with humanity. As critic Clark Davis points out, by Hester's declaration that "Pearl keeps me in life," she is not threatening suicide. Instead, she is making "a significant declaration that to be 'here in life' is to be involved with others as individuals, in agreement or disagreement, to speak and be spoken to" (63). Hester has seen death, she has wished for death, and she knows that without Pearl, she will belong to a living death. With all this knowledge, she accepts how close she is to death – socially, mortally, and spiritually – and that her individual annihilation could come to her at any time. It is a fate that she no longer wishes for. She wishes to be alive and engaged with humanity, which is an engagement with the individual Other. It is this desire that keeps her entering the community.

She continues to work in the community, both in acts of business and in acts of charity. Her needle work pays for her subsistence and any extra money she earns, she uses for charity (i: 83). Even when those she serves abuse her, she continues to interact with them. "She never battled with the public, but submitted uncomplainingly to its worst usage; she made no claim upon it, in requital for what she suffered" (i: 160). As a departure from the initial encounter with the public in which everything she did was calculated to defy the public, she no longer acts to justify her individuality or her existence to the public. She is not defiantly facing the public, but is pulling from the "resources of her nature" in interacting with the public on a daily basis (i: 78). However,

"while Hester never put forward even the humblest title to share in the world's privileges…she was quick to acknowledge her sisterhood with the race of man" (i: 160-61). All of her acts are ones that are chosen and acted on consciously. She made the choice to be a comforter to those who suffered as she had suffered, and as such, she does not let the initial degradations of society stop her from claiming her right to join in humanity's suffering.

It is for these reasons that many in her community "refused to interpret the scarlet *A* by its original signification. They said that it meant 'Able' so strong was Hester Prynne" (i: 161). It is for these reasons, also, that Hester began to change and more fully embrace the community and herself. The narrator tells us that "The effect of the symbol – or rather, of the position in respect to society that was indicated by it – on the mind of Hester Prynne herself, was powerful and peculiar" (i: 163). For years she was forced to witness her own "weary, weary sin repeated in the inseparable" other of the community. For many her individuality was erased and she became merely a symbol. However, through her constant interaction, her individuality was restored to her as even the authorities who sentenced her to become the symbol would point her out to strangers saying, "It is our Hester, - the town's own Hester" (i: 162). Rather than a universal symbol, she became an individual – one whom the town claimed as its very own.

Hester's understanding of Pearl being an anchor to her humanity and life helped her move among the community. The declaration of the community that she was Able and strong helped her to make more decisions for herself to confront some of the biggest and darkest powers in her life. Sitting in her home after meeting Dimmesdale on the scaffold at midnight, Hester thought through everything that she had been through in the

seven years leading up to that moment. She recognized who she was and honestly asked herself if "there had not originally been a defect of truth, courage, and loyalty, on her own part, in allowing the minister to be thrown into a position where so much evil was to be foreboded" (i: 166). The self-realization is critical for an authentic choice to be made because authenticity requires awareness of who one is and who one wishes to be. It is for this reason that she concludes that she must face Chillingworth and "do what might be in her power for the rescue of the victim on whom he had so evidently set his gripe" (i: 167). Perhaps this is Hester's first authentic choice. Whereas before, her choices had all been mediated by how she wished to be seen by society, this choice is purely about who she is and the responsibility that she feels for her situation. As Clark Davis puts it, "The emphasis here is on the movement from personal encounter to the recognition of responsibility" (68). There is responsibility that Hester realizes she has for Dimmesdale for allowing him to be put into a dangerous situation and a responsibility that she has to herself to become the individual that she wishes to become.

As she talks with Chillingworth in the woods, she is shocked to discover that a change has come upon him and that he has turned "himself into a devil" (i: 170). What is even more surprising to Hester is the fact that she realizes that even here in Chillingworth "was another ruin, the responsibility of which came partly home to her" (i: 170). It is telling to see that Hester recognizes for the first time how closely her life is tied to the lives of others around her. She also recognizes the responsibility that she has for those lives. For Hawthorne, this realization is not derived from the intellect. As with all true relationships of the interpersonal, the knowledge of the entanglements of the self can only come through sympathy.

As the narrator tells us at the outset of Hester's interview with Dimmesdale, "There had been a period when Hester was less alive to this consideration; or, perhaps, in the misanthropy of her own trouble, she left the minister to bear what she might picture to herself as a more tolerable doom. But of late, since the night of his vigil all her sympathies towards him had been both softened and invigorated" (i: 193). The softening and the invigorating of her sympathies – of those connections that move an individual past a veil into the inner sanctum of the other – showed her not only Dimmesdale's plight and Chillingworth's evil, but those sympathies also showed her the role that she played in creating the two men. It is here that her authenticity emerges. It does not come from the self-defiance in the face of the community, nor does it come from the resolute actions of self-creating. Rather it comes in the full awareness of how intricately connected the self is to others and others to the self. It is a realization of the responsibility one has to the self and others in making the choices of becoming and being. These insights lead Hester to realize that it was a mistake to keep Chillingworth's secret for seven years, for it allowed the drastic change to happen to all three of them. Hester realizes that each of her actions shaped others, and the actions of others shaped her.

It is for this reason that she proposes to free Dimmesdale by telling him Chillingworth's secret, and ultimately plans to separate Dimmesdale and Chillingworth by removing Dimmesdale from the town. It may not be the best solution, but it is a solution that she is empowered to carry out. As Clark Davis points out, "What separates Hester from Hawthorne's destructive male protagonists is her attempt to structure her relationships to other on the basis of her own limitations…Hester can help others both practically and emotionally because she recognizes the limits of her own knowledge"

(73). For this reason, Hester realizes one of the fundamental assumptions of the book that parallels Simone de Beauvoir's observations that "It is not true that the recognition of the freedom of others limits my own freedom: to be free is not to have the power to do anything you like; it is to be able to surpass the given toward an open future; the existence of others as a freedom defines my situation and is even the condition of my own freedom" (91).

Hester finally sees the situations as they are due to the softening of her sympathies. She recognizes the responsibilities that she has for others as they have become doomed like herself. It is in the midst of these realizations that she also sees the only way that she can find to open up happier futures for all involved, and she acts on it. Although running away might be ethically questionable in a traditional sense, her decision is made from the deep connection and commitment that she has for herself and others and thus becomes a deeply authentic choice.

Conclusion

Hawthorne, in many ways, can be seen to anticipate the authentic turn that Existentialists like Heidegger and Sartre made. Rather than demanding that individuals only look into their own subjective selves like the Transcendentalists preached, Hawthorne saw a more complicated view of the self that was mediated by the relationship between the self and the Other. Hawthorne recognizes the pull of an abstract public in order to shape the individual which could, like Judge Pyncheon, completely inform all aspects of the individual's life. And like Sartre, he recognizes the power of the look to define and objectify the self. However, unlike either Heidegger or Sartre he sees a way to form a connection between individuals through intuitive sympathy. Through navigating

the pulls of the look, the public eye, and intuitive sympathy, the individual can find his identity being understood. It is only through true relationships that intuitive sympathy and the authentic choices become possible. It is only through the authentic relationships based upon sympathy that individuals can see their innermost self being comprehended by an Other. It is this comprehension that leads the self to recognize his own choices, the responsibility he has for those choices, and the way his life intertwines with the lives of Others who shape the self.

Chapter 4: The Caverns of the Heart: An Existential Approach to Sin, Providence, the Fall, the Human Condition

Although it is doubtful that Hawthorne ever went to a church service with the intent to worship, it can hardly be denied that he was a deeply religious man. As is clear in his notebooks and his fictions, his "Christian heritage was cardinal" (Fairbanks 975). But his Christianity, by and large, was not the orthodox Christianity of the church. Hawthorne would often deal with biblical stories – especially the Genesis stories of the Garden of Eden and the Fall – but Hawthorne is not interested in whether or not these stories dealt with a historical event. Rather he wants to see in the story a symbol or allegory of the human condition. This is brought out explicitly in *The Marble Faun* as Hawthorne connects the story of the Fall to his characters. In general he remarks, "The young and pure…may have heard much of the evil of the world, and seem to know it, but only as an impalpable theory. In due time, some mortal, whom they reverence too highly, is commissioned by Providence to teach them this direful lesson; he perpetrates a sin; and Adam falls anew, and Paradise, heretofore in unfaded bloom, is lost again, and closed forever, with the fiery swords gleaming at its gates" (iv: 204). The idea that Adam falls anew is at the heart of Hawthorne's Christianity. His is not a theology of sacraments and psalms but one that is interested in exploring the Fall that is perpetuated by each individual as she strives to find meaning and connections in the world.

As Hyatt H. Waggoner observes in his biography of Hawthorne, "Moral and religious concerns, in short, are almost always central in Hawthorne's work, but Hawthorne's interest in them is primarily subjective and psychological. But his subjectivism is never solipsist and his psychologism never reductive. Rather, they are

signs that his concern with matters moral and religious is existential" (*Nathaniel* 242). His treatment of doctrines such as Original Sin and his preoccupation with the unpardonable sin are not matters of dogma; rather, these notions should be understood in an existential or an ontological way. By looking at his treatment of doctrine in an existential light, we will see how the underlying assumptions of his faith fall in line with the worldview that we have explored in the previous chapters.

In order to understand Hawthorne's religion, then, we must look into his conception of the human condition and human reality through the lens of faith. We have already seen how Hawthorne uses irony and complex language in order create veils that both estrange and seduce the reader. As we investigate Hawthorne's fixation on sin, guilt, and suffering, we will see that he sees these ideas acting in similar ways. Just as the many veils that individuals wear must be engaged with in an open manner for intuitive sympathy to function, Hawthorne thinks that the same veils are in place on a religious level. However, instead of public eyes and optics to shape and place veils over the subject, Hawthorne will turn to more spiritual and abstract qualities of light and dark, redemption and sin. Hawthorne's main interest is to show that light and goodness are only veils of the darkness. However, much like Kierkegaard, Marcel, and Tillich, Hawthorne's profound darkness has the potential to give way to a more intense light and joy.

We need to make it clear what Hawthorne is and is not about. Because Hawthorne's interest in religion is more existential than theological, or as Waggoner put it, "Hawthorne is more concerned with the experienced toothache than with orthodontic theory" (*Nathaniel* 241), Hawthorne does not argue – and rarely mentions – dogma.

Because he is more concerned with how realities play out in individual lives than he is with how those realities came about, his writing is devoid of argumentation for God's existence or the need of certain sacraments. His existential approach has misled some critics into trying to apply traditional theological maneuvers to his thought only to come up short.

Although fairly accurate in most respects regarding Hawthorne's existential leanings, Henry G. Fairbanks has inaccurately argued "that Hawthorne makes the existence of evil an argument for the existence of God" (975). There are two problems with this. One the one hand, never in my readings does Hawthorne make the claim that because evil exists God must exist. Rather, existentially, it is the existence of evil coupled with the assumption that God exists (as will be shown in greater detail later) that paves the way for a better mode of existence. Secondly, even if Hawthorne is arguing for God's existence, his arguments should not be seen as an objective, logical proof. To stay consistent with what Hawthorne is trying to do, we should see Hawthorne's arguments as ultimately reflective as Hawthorne works to find meaning in his own perspective. Hawthorne would balk at the idea that his ideas should be exported and applied to every perspective.

Hawthorne, like the theistic existentialists, takes the existence of God as a given. This assumption is not satisfactory for some critics and leads to a misreading of Hawthorne's motives: as Robert Milder complains, "Hawthorne's faith is not rooted in positive belief; it is born, like Starbuck's in *Moby Dick*, from horror at the alternative, and it presupposes what its casuistry intends to prove: that a beneficent God exists and therefore could not (being beneficent) have ordered life to end in death" (Milder,

"Beautiful" 6). Hawthorne, however, is not creating a circular argument. He is not presupposing God's existence in order to prove a beneficent God. Hawthorne must make the assumption that God, or the Other, exists and then work out where to go from there. The type of objective proof for God's existence that Milder seems to be criticizing Hawthorne for not having would be counterproductive to an existential framework. A proof would be an objective fact to be argued and quibbled over. In the Existentialist's eyes, arguing over a fact will lead the individual nowhere. It will have very little or no effect on the individual's faith or being. Instead of trying to objectively prove the divine's existence, the Existentialists – including Hawthorne – are more interested in showing the ways for an individual to build a relationship with a personable God.

A Moment from Hawthorne's Life

For Hawthorne, it is these moments of intense suffering that the promise of a brighter light becomes even clearer. Take for example the time when his own mother died.

The death of his mother, Hawthorne recalls, was "the darkest hour I ever lived" (viii: 429). But it is from this darkness that he proves to himself the cure for that depression. As he later stood by a window and watched his daughter Una playing outside, he began to reflect upon the nature of darkness and light. With his daughter he saw "life itself" and with his dying mother saw "the whole of human existence at once, standing in the dusty midst of it" (viii: 429). He is forced to confront the paradox of human existence. On one hand, the human being embodies life itself, for it is conscious of living. Yet, it is that same power of consciousness that makes death a reality. The fact that Hawthorne saw that life must be surrounded by death makes him initially exclaim that human

existence is "a mockery, if what I saw were all, - let the interval between extreme youth and dying age be filled up with what happiness it might!" (viii: 429). However, Hawthorne uses the darkness and the suffering, coupled with his faith in God, to move him to a deeper light:

> But God would not have made the close so dark and wretched, if there were nothing beyond; for then it would have been a fiend that created us, and measured out our existence, and not God. It would be something beyond wrong – it would be an insult – to be thrust out of life into annihilation in this miserable way. So, out of the very bitterness of death, I gather the sweet assurance of a better state of being. (viii: 429)

This is no argument for God's existence; rather, it is an argument for a "better state of being" or existence. He is looking for a way to comfort or resolve the paradox of life and death. Because of the initial assumption that a beneficent God exists, Hawthorne sees out of the suffering of his darkness a light shining through. Just as the decay of the trees embodied a bright and colorful life[13], the decay and blackness of death embody for him an assurance of a better life.

Hawthorne, in addition to his assumption about God, must face the reality of evil. As was hinted at above, Hawthorne does not see the evil in the world contradicting an existence of God. However, Hawthorne does not want to rationalize away the problem of evil either. He recognizes it for the pain and suffering that it is. On a cosmic scale, evil in the forms of suffering and sin become types of veils that have the power to both separate the sufferer from the divine and also draw the sufferer into a true relationship with an

[13] See page 155 for the full discussion about decay, light, and the trees.

Other. In this manner God is always moving individuals into contact with others in order to help them encounter veils that will ultimately move them into a true relationship – just as in the moment of his suffering, Hawthorne fixated upon his daughter Una. This entire process of encountering the various veils in order to move into true relationships is the entire thrust of Hawthorne's theology and his view of the human condition.

Providence and Faith

Hawthorne is not concerned with proving the existence of God, and God, as such, does not make many appearances throughout Hawthorne's writing. Like the theistic existentialists, God is a backdrop to human existence that gives individual lives color and a possible goal to strive toward, but does not interject himself into human affairs in a noticeable or rational way. As Hyatt Waggner points out, "The term *Providence* signified a reality to Hawthorne, but a reality man could not hope to understand. 'I am that I am': Tillich's and Buber's refusal to specify a propositional content for the concept of God has a long history... For Job, too, God's ways remained, even at the end, 'unintelligible' in any strictly rational sense" ("Art" 173). However, because of this absence, or inability to give a rational definition to Deity, some scholars have been led to see in Hawthorne a trend that falls more in line with the atheistic existentialists. As Jac Tharpe explains,

> The vision of *The Marble Faun* is, after all, however, ironically affirmative, as Albert Camus' *The Plague* is affirmative when compared with his *The Stranger* or with John-Paul Sartre's *No Exit*. …The affirmation is…peaceful resolution, temporary cessation of tragedy. There is no hope, but there is human courage in the face of hopelessness…There is no hope, but there is relied in the conviction that artificial doctrines

> about sin and crime are not meaningful either. Donatello and Miriam have nothing to look forward to, but they are innocent of guilt. (138)

Hawthorne does see a hope for a better life and existence, and that hope is born out of the suffering that he sees. But it is, ultimately, his faith in God, or Providence to use his term, that switches his philosophical implications from ultimate meaninglessness found in the bleakest of naturalisms to a veiled meaning that is found in theistic existentialism.

Perhaps the clearest function of both faith and God can be seen, unsurprisingly, in the interpersonal relationships of Hawthorne's characters. For Hawthorne seems to shrug off the doctrine of Calvinistic predetermination and replaces it with a notion of direction. God, in Hawthorne's mind, does not plan out every event and action of humanity, but he will place people in situations to allow them to interact with others, in order to help them try to build an authentic self. As Hawthorne says in a notebook entry, "All sorts of persons, and every individual, has a place to fill in the world, and is important in some respects, whether he chooses to be so or not" (viii: 20). To focus on a specific place that has been set aside for each individual implies a designer or director of life's drama. But we should also point out, Hawthorne does leave room for the individual's choice. The individual can choose to be important or not. Relatedly, individuals can choose to see those who surround them as important or not as well. For these reasons, in the romances, Hawthorne wants to show how Providence can move individuals around while showing that some individuals choose to act on that movement while others do not.

As characters move about their stories, they find themselves in new situations and among new people who open authentic possibilities for the characters. One of the most dramatic of these is Hilda's confession to a Catholic priest. As the "daughter of the

Puritans," she is suspicious of the Catholic clergy and utterly refuses to be absolved of any sins by one, but she is still able to realize after her confession "Surely, Father, it was the hand of Providence that led me hither, and made me feel that this vast temple of Christianity, this great home of Religion, must needs contain some cure, some ease, at least, for my unutterable anguish. And it has proved so" (iv: 360). Neither Hilda nor the narrator seem to find any fault with this faith based reasoning. God, as a merciful God, would want to help his creations, but instead of sending angelic visitations or supernatural healings, he places people in situations where they could find help from others. As with Hilda, the help could be a simple solace; however, as with Miriam and Donatello, the help could be the means to redemption.

It becomes clear that Providence ordained Miriam to help Donatello find an authentic self. However, because of his guilt, Donatello almost completely cut off his association with Miriam. Had he avoided Miriam's companionship altogether, Donatello would have forever been lost in his guilt and misery. If it wasn't for the strong insistence of Kenyon, Donatello would have forever stayed miserable instead of finding his connection again with Miriam, for Kenyon could see that Miriam "is one whom Providence marks out as intimately connected with [Donatello's] destiny. The mysterious process, by which our earthly life instructs us for another state of being, was begun for [Donatello] by [Miriam]" (iv: 321). Explicit in this case is the ordaining of specific persons to interact with others in order to help them. But this does not mean that these individuals are determined to be together. Miriam understands that the true relationship, the authentic relationship, must be one that is entered into willingly.

After Donatello leaves Rome, Kenyon encourages Miriam to confront Donatello or else her “opportunity of doing him inestimable good is lost forever” (iv: 317). Even when “inestimable” stakes are at hand, Miriam demurs: “True; it will be lost forever!...But, dear friend, will it be my fault? I willingly fling my woman’s pride at his feet. But – do you not see? – his heart must be left freely to its own decision whether to recognize me, because on his voluntary choice, depends the whole question whether my devotion will do him good or harm” (iv: 317). Miriam understands that even though Providence ordains certain relationships to be, the agents within those relationships are still given every opportunity to exercise their free will to accept or reject those relationships. If the relationships are forced, no amount of divine ordination can save the individual in question. Existential freedom, in other words, puts the individual in as firm of control of life as God might have over it. It is up to the individual to accept or reject those relationships. Once the relationships are accepted, a great deal of power can be derived from them, and no one outside of the relationship should try to break it up.

Hester Prynne appeals to the idea that individuals are placed by God in order to give others aid as she defends her right to keep Pearl with her. It is, likewise, this reason that Dimmesdale uses in Hester’s defense before those who want to take Pearl away from her: “For Hester Prynne's sake, then, and no less for the poor child's sake, let us leave them as Providence hath seen fit to place them!" (i: 115). The fact that Dimmesdale recognizes that their positions relative to each other have been given for their sakes shows that he sees Providence placing individuals in relationships for reasons. And Dimmesdale is not the only one who recognizes this.

None other than Zenobia believes that Providence creates companionships for the edification of those in the relationship when she condemns Hollingsworth for being ready to sacrifice Priscilla "whom, if God ever visibly showed a purpose, He put into your charge, and through whom He was striving to redeem you!" (iii: 218). However, Hollingsworth was not able to overcome the inauthentic that he set before himself in order to become a redeemed, authentic individual, for he could not see God's supposed purpose until it was too late. But not every character accepts the people that Providence sends into his or her life. It is clear in Hawthorne's writing that free will is firmly in place, so he also explores the dangers of refusing God's help. This danger is most explicitly commented upon in *The House of the Seven Gables.*

In some respects, *The House of the Seven Gables*, is a cautionary tale about the dangers of refusing the assistance of Providence placed others. For although God was sending people to help Hepzibah, "In her grief and wounded pride, Hepzibah had spent her life in divesting herself of friends;-- she had wilfully cast off the support which God has ordained His creatures to need from one another; -- and it was now her punishment, that Clifford and herself would fall the easier victims to their kindred enemy" (ii: 245). In her willful isolation, Hepzibah divested herself of any help that could be given to her as Judge Pyncheon begins to harass the family. As we have seen in the previous chapter, authentic living comes through the intuitive sympathies that connect individuals together. Intuitive sympathy engages the veils that people place before themselves in order to get to the true innermost part of an individual. With this comment from the narrator, we can see clearly the extent to which authenticity is a religious concept. For the authentic connections are connections that are ordained by God.

So, like a director, Providence moves its players around life's stage in order for them to encounter new situations and people and through their interactions, experience sin, suffering, and others. It is by this means that individuals are able to navigate the painful aspects of reality in order to make the authentic connections that are necessary.

It should be noted that the implications of Hawthorne's idea of Providence as the force that maneuver's individuals into potentially edifying relationships has many characteristics of a soul-making theodicy. The soul-making theodicy championed by John Hick is an attempt to show that evil is needed in order to allow God's creations, i.e. human beings, to learn and grow by experiencing sin and suffering and alleviating the suffering of others. Hick, drawing upon early Christian fathers such as St. Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria, argues that "one is created at an epistemic distance from God in order to come freely to know and love the Maker; and that one is at the same time created as a morally immature and imperfect being in order to attain through freedom the most valuable quality of goodness" (270). God has thus placed human animals in a fallen world to allow them to grow and develop, through their free choices, to become good. As Hick succinctly explains, "Our sinful nature in a sinful world is the matrix within which God is gradually creating children of God out of human animals. For it is as men and women freely respond to the claim of God upon their lives, transmuting their animality into the structure of divine worship, that the creation of humanity is taking place" (271). It is in the creation of humanity that the soul is made. Although not considered an existentialist, Hick's soul-making theodicy is firmly grounded in the existential aspects of life: it is up to individual to make meaning from his existential suffering, for the individual is free to interpret the world as he will, and as the individual acts on that

freedom, and takes responsibility for his choices, an authentic individual can emerge. As we shall see, Hawthorne has ideas remarkably similar to Hick as Hawthorne does see sin and suffering as humanizing an individual. Hawthorne also sees an educative aspect to sin and suffering. However, Hawthorne focuses not so much on the idea of building a soul as he does on creating authentic relationships which, as we saw in the last chapter, humanize and create an authentic individual. Just as we saw the vital need for intuitive sympathy in creating an authentic individual based in true relationships, Hawthorne thinks that a fall of sorts must proceed even the introduction of intuitive sympathy. This step is the softening or the humanizing of an individual through sin and suffering so that the individual will be more open to the intuitive sympathy of others. For this reason, early in Hawthorne's writing career he began to think about the need to visualize the human condition in the form of an inner cave.

The Human Condition

In his *American Notebooks*, Hawthorne jotted an idea for a sketch that encapsulates his understanding of the human condition. It is the imagery of this sketch that informs much of Hawthorne's understanding about the world around him and the people he interacts with. As such, this sketch becomes the crux of much of his existential leanings. In the sketch, Hawthorne writes:

> The human Heart to be allegorized as a cavern; at the entrance there is sunshine, and flowers growing about it. You step within, but a short distance, and begin to find yourself surrounded with a terrible gloom, and monsters of diverse kinds; it seems like Hell itself. You are bewildered, and wander long without hope. At last a light strikes upon you. You press

> towards it on, and find yourself in a region that seems, in some sort, to reproduce the flowers and sunny beauty of the entrance, but all perfect. There are the depths of the heart, or of human nature, bright and peaceful; the gloom and terror may lie deep; but deeper still is this eternal beauty. (viii: 237)

What is striking with this sketch is the way in which the light leads to the dark which in turn leads to the light. Each must give way to the other. For this reason, out of the pleasant joys of life, darkness may be seen, but in that very darkness, a promise of light can also be witnessed. And thus we see the veil. This cyclical hermeneutics is at the heart of Hawthorne's view of the human condition. Depending on what side of the darkness the individual is on will determine if the light leads to darkness or the darkness leads to light. This is what ultimately causes the light and the dark to intermingle in Hawthorne.

The implication for this thought means that before Hawthorne can move his characters into a brighter mode of being, he must send them through the darkness. As Miriam remarks about Donatello's change after his fall: "Is he not beautiful? ... So changed, yet still, in a deeper sense, so much the same! He has travelled in a circle, as all things heavenly and earthly do, and now comes back to his original self, with an inestimable treasure of improvement won from an experience of pain. How wonderful is this!" (iv: 434). As Miriam remarks, the change from light to dark to light must happen to everything – heavenly and earthly. The brightness of the earth must give way to the darkness before being made bright again. If there is an aspect of this that Hawthorne was more keenly aware of, it is that life will invariably lead to death. Amid strolls in the summer forests he would witness the "gentle sadness" amid the most colorful flowers as

"Pensive Autumn is expressed in the glow amid their pomp" (viii: 342). However, to understand why Hawthorne moved in this direction, we must understand the existential implications of this movement.

Hawthorne is not alone into trying to move his readers into an understanding of the dark. This is a common thread that is used by the Existentialists. Kierkegaard, who is largely seen as the first Existentialist, saw it as his mission to show people their own despair. It is also telling that his major religious works are labelled *Fear and Trembling* and *A Sickness Unto Death*. He recognized that the only way to move someone closer to God was to move them further into despair: "The possibility of this sickness [despair] is man's advantage over the beast; to be sharply observant of this sickness constitutes the Christian's advantage over the natural man" (*Sickness* 148). Likewise, Paul Tillich saw estrangement as a fundamental aspect of human reality that must be comprehended in order for genuine choices to emerge, but the movement to action has significant consequences. As Tillich writes, "The state of existence is the state of estrangement. Man is estranged from the ground of his being, from other beings, and from himself. The transition from essence to existence results in personal guilt and universal tragedy" (*Essential* 165).

Each of these thinkers saw that the "darkness" was necessary to human existence and found ways to get individuals to realize the darkness that was there. For this reason, many of them were labelled as pessimists. It is easy to see how Hawthorne also fits into this mold of thinkers. As F.O. Matthiessen said "Essential truths of the human situation are exactly what Hawthorne's imagination could not shrink from – not even…when he wanted to" (286). And it is this truth that Hawthorne needed to share – that "we are all

wronged and wrongers, and avenge one another" (viii: 167). It is this startling realization that led Waggoner to claim that "Hawthorne was more interested in guilt as a necessary human condition than he was in any specific sinful act" (*Nathaniel* 244-45). Whereas the Existentialists use words such as anxiety and despair, Hawthorne, drawing upon his Puritan background and Calvanist heritage, uses the word guilt. There is a universal guilt that makes up the blackness of every heart. It is Hawthorne's job to uncover this guilt. This had led some like Austin Warren to say that Hawthorne, "discerns sin everywhere – in the open sinner and, almost exultantly, in those whom men deem good and holy" (qtd. in Fairbanks 986). Although it is doubtful that Hawthorne exults in the rooting out of sin – does he cheer when Dimmesdale steps onto the scaffold? – it is true that he does discern sin everywhere. But this should not be misunderstood to say that everyone is sinful or evil. Rather, he would say that everyone is guilty.

The guilt and the journey into the cave, although common to all, must be experienced by the individual. So, for Hawthorne, the Fall in Genesis – moving from innocence to dark fallenness to ultimately move to redemption – is the blue print for a fall that all must take on the journey to authentic relationships. To understand why Hawthorne and the other Existentialists must send individuals into the darkness, we need to focus on the light and innocence at the beginning of the cave. By seeing the innocence and the light, we will be able to see the need and desire for the darkness. And from the darkness, we can see how Providence works in Hawthorne in order to help individuals find a more intense, brilliant, and authentic light.

The Problem of Innocence

Of all Hawthorne's innocents, Donatello in *The Marble Faun* stands out as the most innocent. He is initially seen as a child, a simpleton, and a faun. In all descriptions of him, his simplicity and bestial nature are highlighted. In a clear summation of all that Donatello represents, Miriam exclaims, "How close he stands to Nature!" (iv: 83). However, it is not the human purpose to stand close to nature. As a result, he is also compared to a "young greyhound" and a "pet spaniel" (iv: 82, 43). His animalistic nature shows itself to Miriam as Donatello confronts the model: "His lips were drawn apart, so as to disclose his set teeth, thus giving him a look of animal rage which we seldom see except in persons of the simplest and rudest natures" (iv: 90-1). All of these animal qualities, and the fact that he is so close to nature, do seem to have some positives to them. Because he shares the nature of simple animals, he is able to give sympathy in an unquestioning manner to a greater degree than any man or woman (iv: 43).

Yet, however much Donatello might be able to bestow sympathy on others, it becomes questionable whether or not he can receive any. Like an animal he can only be aware of the simplest of pleasures and commitments. He does not see relationships as a means of binding two people together. In his simple way, he can only see relationships as a form of possession. It is for this reason that he weaves a chain of flowers to capture Miriam and binds her to him in order to "lead her along in triumph" (iv: 84). But this relationship of possession lacks the solemn, sanctifying quality that Miriam and Donatello experience when they are both able to give and take sympathies.

If authenticity is a function of true relationships between individuals, then it is impossible for Donatello to have an authentic existence while he remains so close to

nature. For this reason, Donatello and all innocents – such as Edgar and Edith, Young Goodman Brown, Giovanni Guasconti, and even Hilda – must enter the darkness of the cave. They must learn about the sin and suffering of life, for this is the only way that authentic living can be accomplished. Moving into the darkness is the only way for happiness to be realized. As the narrator comments upon the qualitative difference between the innocence of Donatello and the mode of life that darkness gives, we are able to see what would happen if he stayed perpetually in his innocence. As the narrator watches Donatello dance and play among nature, he comments, "It was a glimpse far backward…before mankind was burdened with sin and sorrow, and before pleasure had been darkened with those shadows that bring it into high relief, and make it Happiness" (iv: 84). Moving into the darkness is inevitable, but it should not be seen as an exclusively negative aspect of life. As the narrator suggests, both sin and suffering are needed in order for happiness to be found.

In *The Marble Faun* when Miriam presents Donatello with several sketches of her art, he is taken aback and cannot comprehend or appreciate them. Miriam, quick to see this asks, "'Do you like these sketches better, Donatello?'…'Yes,' said Donatello rather doubtfully. 'Not much, I fear,' responded she, laughing. 'And what should a boy like you—a Faun too,—know about the joys and sorrows, the intertwining light and shadow, of human life? I forgot that you were a Faun. You cannot suffer deeply; therefore you can but half enjoy'" (iv: 46-47). The appreciation of the light of life can only come from the darkness. Life itself, it seems, can only be comprehended when suffering is known.

It is for this reason that we must look at suffering and sin to see how they act on the individual in order to potentially move the individual out of the darkness and into a greater light on the other side.

Moving into the Darkness and the Function of Suffering

As we have already seen, Hawthorne sees the estrangement of the individual and the veils that people and the world put on as a fundamental aspect of reality. Sympathy and emotion help to bridge the gap in order to help make connections with people. It becomes the purpose of sin and suffering, then, to enable people to have that special sympathy with others around them. As both Kierkegaard and Tillich implied, it is suffering and sickness that make us human. Sin is one of the quickest ways to suffer, and so sin, in many ways, makes us all the more human as well.

There is little doubt that Hawthorne saw a world filled with suffering. As one of his darkest, albeit unfinished, characters Grimshawe, remarks,

> Whence did you come? Whence did any of us come? Out of the darkness and mystery, out of nothingness, out of a kingdom of shadows; out of dust, clay, impure mud, I think, and to return to it again. Out of a former state of being, whence we have brought a good many shadowy recollections, purporting that it was no very pleasant one. Out of a former life, for which this present one is the hell! And why are you come? ... it was not to be happy. To toil, and moil, and hope, and fear, and to love in a shadowy, doubtful sort of way, and to hate in bitter earnest – that is what you came for! (xii: 356-57)

The profusion of darkness in Hawthorne leads some critics to engage fully with the veil as if that is all there is. Critic Jac Tharpe comments, "Existence is a great pain, Hawthorne suggests, and life is distortion of chaos" (155), and "The point is that life is condemned to existence. Existence itself is part of the general condemnation" (109). Whereas more modern critics have seen that "[Hawthorne's naturalism's] vision of earthiness (and earthliness) remained but more as a suspicion of final meaninglessness…With one sentence – 'If they had it, what are they the better, now?' – Hawthorne deprecates both the joyous naturalist's bird in the hand and the hopeful supernaturalist's bird in the bush. A world weary naturalism that recoils against its own insights" (Milder, "Other" 593-94). However, both Tharpe and Milder are looking at Hawthorne through a lens of religious orthodoxy. Hawthorne is not as dark a pessimist as they would think. To get a clearer view of Hawthorne, one must look at him through the tradition of existential theology. He has more in common with the theology of Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Marcel, Buber, and Tillich than he does with Aquinas, Calvin, Beecher, or Paley. With this in mind, when Tharpe writes "The need for irrational suffering apparently demands the continuation of life" (108), he sees a traditional Christianity gone awry. Whereas Dostoevsky and Hawthorne[14] would correct him by saying that human life demands the need for suffering. As critic Vladimir Astrov explains,

[14] There has been a question about whether or not Dostoevsky read any of Hawthorne's works. Although, as far as I can find, nothing definitive has been proven, Vladimir Astrov, who studied when Hawthorne's works were translated into Russian along with Dostoevsky's reading habits, declares "The inference seems, therefore, plausible enough that F. M. Dostoevski did read the main novels of Hawthorne and was acquainted with his problems so forcibly presented" (298).

> Hawthorne as well as Dostoevski knew too much of the human soul and its needs not to recognize that a purely humanist millennium could never satisfy man's deepest desire. In a time that more and more inclined to believe in pure reason and material progress – that was interfused with the theory that man is good and only his institutions are bad – Hawthorne and Dostoevski pleaded for the rights of the spiritual, and stressed the power of the irrational and the abysmal in soul and life (296).

Life needs the suffering and the irrational to help individuals find meaning in their life. Suffering is simply a means to an end, although an important means. Without suffering, the individual wouldn't be aware of life.

Others have perceived Hawthorne's need for suffering. Melville suspected that it was suffering that was at the bottom of Hawthorne's art. In his famous review of *Mosses from an Old Manse,* Melville effuses about the reality of emotion that can be found in the different sketches. In his focus on "The Old Apple-Dealer," he talks about the immense sadness that is felt throughout the story: "such touches as these, - and many, very many similar ones, all through his chapters – furnish clues whereby we enter a little way into the intricate, profound heart where they originated. And we see that suffering…this only can enable any man to depict it in others" (Melville 32). As Melville saw, the characters that Hawthorne writes about become characters through their suffering. F.O. Matthiessen takes this even further when he claims "existence became real for Hawthorne only through suffering" (373). But this need for suffering to bring existence is not unique in Hawthorne. As I have already pointed out, Dostoevsky also sees the need for suffering to be present in order to have an understanding of life.

Perhaps the greatest function of pain and suffering for Hawthorne and Dostoevsky is its ability to show the individual life. In Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground*, the Underground Man reflects on what it means to be conscious and an individual. Through his many digressions and asides, he always comes back to a pair of points, namely that "the whole meaning of human life can be summed up in the one statement that man only exists for the purpose of proving to himself every minute that he is a man and not an organ-stop!" (288-89) and the follow-up statement "I am convinced that man will never renounce real suffering, that is to say, deconstruction and chaos. Suffering! Why, it's the sole cause of consciousness" (292). The twin propositions that life is to prove the primacy of consciousness and the fact that the consciousness is created through suffering drive the Underground Man. It is no mistake, then, that the character who expresses these twin propositions best in all of Hawthorne is the one character that has been deprived the most of having a life.

Having been in jail for over 30 years, Clifford Pynchon finds himself inexplicably released and at home away from the pains of his dark cell. At home his sister and cousin dote on him and make sure that he has everything that his heart could desire as long as it is within their power to give. But it is in the midst of this reprieve, sitting in his favorite spot of the garden that he asks his cousin Phoebe to pinch his hand or to give him a rose so that he can press its thorns into his flesh so that he may prove to himself that he is awake (ii: 150). To further elaborate on this point, he did this, as the narrator tells us, "in order to assure himself, by that quality which he best knew to be real, that the garden, and the seven weather-beaten gables, and Hepzibah's scowl, and Phoebe's smile, were real, likewise" (ii: 150). The pain grounds Clifford in reality in much the same way as the first

person narrator uses it to ground himself in Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground*. In both cases, pain and suffering is what makes the individual aware of himself and his life. It would be too easy to brush off the fact that both Clifford and Underground Man are outcasts from society and disturbed individuals in one way or another, but this would be a mistake.

Hawthorne elaborates on the fact that life is brought about by suffering by expanding on the concept of suffering to include, more broadly, death and decay. In his notebooks, he often mentions how life needs death around it in order to be recognized. In one of his longer mediation about this phenomena, he writes,

> Most of the oak-leaves have still the deep verdure of summer; but where a change has taken place, it is of a russet red, a warm, but sober hue. These colors, infinitely diversified by the progress which different trees have made in their decay, constitute almost the whole glory of the Autumnal woods; but it is impossible to conceive how much is done with such scanty materials. And, as you pass along, every tree seems to be an existence by itself. In summer, the sunshine is thrown away upon the wide, unvaried verdure. Now, every tree seems to define and embody the sunshine. (viii: 212-13)

The image of death and suffering through decay enhancing light appears over and over as he sees a dead leaf placed in a green field or a piece of black shade enhancing the light of a garden. But this is not just an aesthetic notion. In one instance he mentions that "the green grass, strewn with a few withered leaves, looks the more green and beautiful for them. In summer or spring, nature is further from one's sympathies" (viii: 206). It is the

fact that death is present in the form of the dead leaves that not only makes life more beautiful, but it also brings him into a closer sympathetic connection with nature itself. Without death (and by extension suffering), such as in spring and summer, his sympathies for nature remain closed.

If pain is ignored, then the individual is not living life to its fullest. Paradoxically, pain's function is to enhance the observation of life and the joys of life, but it does it by completely isolating the individual. Rather than making the individual focus on the world around her, the pain of suffering causes the individual to focus on the self. Pain separates the individual from all others. The effects of this are two-fold. First, the greater the pain, the more the sufferer becomes aware of her individuality and the vastness of the world that surrounds her. Secondly, the greater the suffering, the more aware the sufferer becomes of her own isolation amidst the world and the need for sympathy to bridge the gaps between people. It is in this manner that the individual moves from the light at the front of the cave into the darkness. However, the step into the darkness is a necessary step, for it is this step, as Miriam told Donatello, that enables the joy or light waiting on the other side of the darkness to be reached.

Although the step into the darkness is a necessity, it is by no means guaranteed that the individual will reach light on the other side of the darkness. The failing in characters such as Goodman Brown, Parson Hooper, and Arthur Dimmesdale is the fact that they cannot get out of their isolation or choose not to. This inability to reach out for help is also the failing of the Underground Man. He sees the value and the purpose of pain, but he cannot see it as a means to an end. He only sees pain as the end. The function of suffering is ultimately to teach the individual two important, but related, lessons. The

first is the need for intuitive sympathy in the dealings with others and the second is the correct nature of pain itself as another type of veil.

There is yet another type of suffering that takes up much of Hawthorne's attention, and that is the suffering derived from sin. Sin performs much of the same function as suffering in moving the innocent into darkness and preparing him or her for the light on the other side. However, sin can be more effective than suffering because it is accompanied by the feeling of guilt. However, like the suffering of those who refuse to be consoled, sin can produce a darkness so complete that individuals can refuse to be pardoned, and so we must look at the special darkness caused by sin, the unpardonable sin, and guilt.

The Darkness of Sin

For as often as Hawthorne talks about sin and guilt, we should not think of Hawthorne's conception of sin as that of orthodox Christianity. Hawthorne does not see sin as a crime solely against God. As Denis Donoghue states," Hawthorne…reduced sin to a social offence, a transgression against the community" (40). Lawrence Buell, in his response to Donoghue, largely agrees with him; however, he adds that "Hawthorne's conception of sin is, at least sometimes, more charged with a sense of radical evil than Donoghue indicates…When Hawthorne muses in his *American Notebooks* about what the 'unpardonable sin' might be…it doesn't have to do merely with secrecy or refusal to confess in public but also and more particularly with cold-blooded violation of or experimentation with another human soul" (55-56). However, Henry Fairbanks gets even closer to Hawthorne's conception of sin when he says that "sin lies in the will, and not in the concrete sinful act…His mortal sins are those of a Dantean category, not a Calvinistic

one. Like pride and greed they are of the heart, not of the flesh" (977).[15] It is for this reason that Hawthorne so roundly condemns Jaffrey Pyncheon upon his death: "Thus, Jaffrey Pyncheon's inward criminality, as regarded Clifford, was indeed black and damnable; while its mere outward show and positive commission was the smallest that could possibly consist with so great a sin" (ii: 312). In following Fairbanks' lead, we can say more in line with existential thought that sin is not an act; rather, sin is a state of being. Sin is a way that the sinner comports herself toward specific aspects of the world, namely against God, the Other, and the self. In this manner pride in and of itself is not a sin, but becoming a proud person is. A lustful act is not a sin, but when it consumes the character creating a lustful individual, it is. For both pride and lust have ways of estranging an individual from the Other and even from the self.

The interior of the heart, then, is where we must look for sin. One cannot look at conventional morality to find out if an action is sinful or not. Much like the ideals and certainties that warp reality if allowed to replace perspectives, sin ultimately stems from the idea of placing a cause, goal, or idea above the existing individuals who surround the sinner. These overriding ideas cloud and misshape sympathy trying to make individuals serve a cause or a habit.

> Thus in *The Scarlet Letter* Hawthorne was working with substantially the same underlying philosophy as Dostoyevsky. Each in his own way had reached the conclusion that man must be judged by his motives and not by his actions. Each was ready to exalt the sinner, if only the sin was the

[15] See for example, the story of Alice Pyncheon in *The House of The Seven Gables* where at the end of her story Holgrave remarks, "For Alice was penitent of her one earthly sin, and proud no more!"(ii: 210). The fact that she only had one sin, would probably strike most orthodox Christians as absurd. But, here Hawthorne is explicitly pointing to one sin, that of pride.

> result of storms of passion or of accident or of necessity and the heart was still open to the impulses of the right and good. Each was ready to condemn the righteous if their hearts were turned to stone and their feelings were atrophied. Conventional morality knows nothing of such an excuse. (Manning 420)

All of the major sins including pride, lust, envy, sloth, and gluttony have one quality in common. When they become the overriding trait of an individual's character, they tend to block out the individual's capacity for engaging in intuitive sympathy. Intuitive sympathy is what informs an individual of her connections and her self. When intuitive sympathy can no longer function, it creates inauthentic relationships of I-It everywhere. It is for this reason that Miriam becomes so concerned about the motive of Beatrice Cenci in *The Marble Faun* much to the annoyance of the Puritan daughter, Hilda.

As a copyist, Hilda is superb. She can mimic the masterworks of the masters and catch the little nuances that make the works of art so memorable. It is her treatment of Guido's *Beatrice Cenci* that strikes Miriam's attention so much and leads her to quarrel with Hilda about the nature and function of sin. The narrator shows how the picture contains "an unfathomable depth of sorrow, the sense of which came to the observer by a sort of intuition. It was a sorrow that removed this beautiful girl out of the sphere of humanity, and set her in a far-off region, the remoteness of which – while yet her face is so close before us – makes us shiver as at a spectre" (iv: 64; see also xiv: 92). The intuition that the narrator suggests emanates from the portrait of Beatrice is the intuitive sympathy of connection. In an effort to find a connecting relationship to the girl that "sorrow…removed out of the sphere of humanity," Miriam ponders the painting and tries

to understand what Beatrice must have gone through. These thoughts closely mirror Hawthorne's own thoughts of the painting as he looked at Guido's original painting of Beatrice Cenci. Hawthorne ultimately comes to the conclusion that Beatrice "is like a fallen angel, fallen, without sin" (xiv: 93). In Beatrice's situation, even patricide, for Hawthorne, is not necessarily a sin. He does not make this claim nearly as explicitly in his published work. He does, however, give Miriam the thoughts he wrote in his notebooks to voice, and as she speaks, she asks Hilda if Beatrice is sinless. Hilda's cutting remark brings Miriam up short, "Yes, yes; it was terrible guilt, an inexpiable crime, and she feels it to be so. Therefore it is that the forlorn creature so longs to elude our eyes, and forever vanish away into nothingness! Her doom is just" (iv: 66).

Miriam gently condemns Hilda by telling her that her "innocence is like a sharp and steel sword" (iv: 66). In Miriam's mind, she cannot pass judgment so easily. She continues echoing Hawthorne's thoughts,

> Beatrice's sin may not have been so great; perhaps it was no sin at all, but the best virtue possible in the circumstances. If she viewed it as a sin, it may have been because her nature was too feeble for the fate imposed upon her…If I could only get within her consciousness! If I could but clasp Beatrice Cenci's ghost, and draw it into myself! I would give my life to know whether she thought herself innocent, or the one great criminal since time began! (iv: 66-67)

Much like Hawthorne, Miriam refuses to judge or condemn until she can be sure of what is happening within the heart of the sinner. Her wish to "get inside" Beatrice is the wish for the sympathetic connection that can come between two people. Only then can she

know Beatrice and know if her expression is caused by sin or mere suffering. And here is the difference between sin and suffering: anyone and everyone can and must suffer; however, not everyone will suffer from sin – Jaffrey Pyncheon for example.

There is no doubt that Donatello believes the murder of the model is a sin. Miriam, on the other hand, is not so sure, yet they both suffered as a result from it. Hilda commits no murder, but she suffers because of the act. Hester does not sin in the act of adultery, but still suffers resulting from it. Throughout all of this, one thing becomes clear: Hawthorne's respect for the individual trumps any code of normative morality. For this reason, Hawthorne's moral teachings should be considered more in line with authenticity. His sins are the sins against the individual, and in committing crime against the existing individual, the sinner commits crime against who he really is. As the existential theologian Paul Tillich observed, each human being has a destiny to fulfill, yet every individual is estranged from that destiny – meaning the individual is not who he will eventually become. Sin is the "personal act of turning away" from that destiny or who that individual really is (Shiner 222). We can see this specific nature of sin in Hilda's rejection of Miriam.

After the murder of Miriam's model, Miriam approaches Hilda in her shrine looking for some comfort. However, as soon as Miriam stepped into the room Hilda "put forth her hands with an involuntary repellent gesture, so expressive, that Miriam at once felt a great chasm opening itself between them two" (iv: 207). Miriam is taken off guard by this reception and tries to assure Hilda that she remains the same and still loves her as a sister, but Hilda is ready to put her "beyond the limits of humankind!" (iv: 208). Hawthorne is specifically using the wording that he used to describe Beatrice Cenci.

Beatrice's suffering removed her from the sphere of humanity, and now, Hilda is willing to put Miriam "beyond the limits of humankind" because of her crime. Hilda's reaction to move Miriam beyond the reach of humankind results from Hilda's wish to sever all ties of intuitive sympathy with Miriam. Miriam recognizes this and explains that she has remained the same and the only change has come from Hilda. Hilda cries, "It is not I, Miriam…not I, that have done this!" (iv: 208). The "this" that Hilda refers to is not the murder itself. Rather, Hilda is referring to the distancing in the relationship. Hilda, because of the ideals of morality she holds, only sees the standard of an abstract morality and Miriam moving away from it. Miriam, on the other hand, sees no such standard of morality. Instead, she sees the relationship between the two, hence, she stresses their relationship as sisters (iv: 208). Miriam emphatically speaks Hawthorne's philosophy as she cries "You, and you only, Hilda [have severed the relationship]!" (iv: 208). Hilda can only see that a crime has been committed, so in her conception of the world, she must move Miriam from the category of sister to sinner. As such, for Hilda, Miriam now embodies all that sin is.

However, Miriam continues to insist that she is the same. Miriam has always been a mixture of dark and light. What Hawthorne once said of his own daughter could be equally applicable to Miriam: "But in truth, one manifestation belongs to her as much as another; for, before the establishment of principles, what is character but the series and succession of moods?" (viii: 413). Miriam has always been both sister and sinner, and the only real change in the relationship between the two women is the fact that Hilda can now only see the sinner whereas before she only saw the sister. Hilda can only see a world of stark light and dark, and when she is confronted with a reality that light can

mingle with dark, she cries out "Do not bewilder me thus, Miriam!" (iv: 208). Herein Hilda falls into the inauthentic.

It is clear that Hilda understands what Miriam is saying. It is also clear that Hilda recognizes her duty to reach out and help her friend. Her inner being is telling her to do just that, but her ideals are telling her to cast Miriam off – hence her "bewilderment." Hilda willfully chooses to ignore what her being tells her to do and listens to the overriding moral code that is imposed upon her. Hilda refuses to touch or connect with Miriam. Hilda has witnessed the murder and holds her code of morality as superior to her friendship with Miriam. She is just as willing to condemn Miriam for a crime of passion or expedience as she was willing to condemn Beatrice, for Hilda represents the Orthodox Christianity that can only judge the act instead of the heart. It is with this action that Hilda sins, for Hilda turns away from what it means to be an authentic individual. By listening to her abstract moral code instead of her own feelings, conscience, and what her intuitive sympathy demands of her, she sins against herself and enters a sinful or inauthentic state of existence, for sin is an estrangement "from God, from men, from [one's self]" (Tillich, *Essential* 167). Hilda is not the only one to ignore her intuitive sympathies in favor of an over-riding moral code, all of Hawthorne's works are populated with such people, but it is to Jaffrey Pyncheon that we must turn for a moment. As a man completely given over to Das Man, Jaffrey Pyncheon has lost his self. He is a man who lives in a perpetual state of sin.

As we have previously seen, Jaffrey Pyncheon is a two faced man. He pays no attention to the feelings of his heart, and when he does, he redoubles his efforts to cover them up. However, this is not always effective. As the narrator tells the readers upon first

meeting Jaffrey Pyncheon, that "this character – which showed itself so strikingly in everything about him, and the effect of which we seek to convey to the reader – went no deeper than his station, habits of life, and external circumstances" (ii: 56-57). His polish and refinement never enter his inner life and existence. There remains constantly with Judge Pyncheon a forced pleasantness that manifests itself in a gracious smile. But "a susceptible observer…would probably suspect, that the smile on the gentleman's face was a good deal akin to the shine on his boots, and that each must have cost him and his boot-black, respectively, a good deal of hard labor to bring out and preserve them" (ii: 116-17). Phoebe sees Jaffrey Pyncheon's falseness first hand when she reflexively refuses to let the Judge kiss her. As she looks at him, she sees his inner self come out. She "was startled by the change in Judge Pyncheon's face. It was quite as striking…as that betwixt a landscape under a broad sunshine, and just before a thunder-storm; … cold, hard, immitigable, like a day-long brooding cloud" (ii: 118-19). However, with the next blink of Phoebe's eye, Jaffrey's face changes again until she "found herself quite overpowered by the sultry, dog-day heat…of benevolence, which this great man diffused out of his great heart…very much like a serpent" (ii: 119). By constantly suppressing his inner emotions and replacing with them with his artificial and much practiced gentility, Jaffrey becomes incapable of acknowledging who he is – he estranges himself from himself.

When Hepzibah tries to point out his hardness and hypocrisy, he simply shrugs it off. It is at this time that Hepzibah gives Jaffrey the thorough Hawthornian condemnation of denying his humanity by pointing out that he has willfully given up his connections with all those who would be closest to him. She cries, "Oh, Jaffrey…it is you that are diseased in mind, not Clifford! You have forgotten that a woman was your mother!—that

you have had sisters, brothers, children of your own!—or that there ever was affection between man and man, or pity from one man to another" (ii: 236). Jaffrey cannot handle this talk and makes it plain, "'Talk sense, Hepzibah'…exclaimed the Judge with the impatience natural to a reasonable man… 'I have told you my determination. I am not apt to change'" (ii: 237). The inflexible nature of the man in presenting a mask to the world – reasoned, affable, and cultivated – makes sure that he constantly suppresses his true nature. He has become so estranged from himself that he no longer sees or recognizes what his true, inner self is no matter how often it tries to break to the surface. As a result, his sin and estrangement has simply turned him into a puppet of the public eye making his true self unreachable. But Judge Puncheon is not the only one to move himself beyond the reach of those who would lay claim to the individual's sympathies. In *The Blithedale Romance* Hollingsworth almost loses his humanity altogether to the ideal of prison reform.

In *The Blithedale Romance* Zenobia effectively gives herself over to Hollingsworth only to be used by him. Hollingsworth is in the business of gathering disciples and not companions. Ultimately, this leads to Zenobia condemning Hollingsworth, and as Coverdale remarks upon the entire scene, "One thing, only, was certain, Zenobia and Hollingsworth were friends no longer. If their heart-strings were ever intertwined, the knot had been adjudged an entanglement, and was now violently broken" (iii: 216). Zenobia accosts Hollingsworth with the condemnation that she promised him her entire fortune in order to let his dreams become a reality. More than that, she promised herself, but he flung her aside (iii: 218). From there, his deceptions and manipulations grow. He promises to be a friend to Coverdale only insofar as

Coverdale would be his disciple, but "foremost, and blackest of [his] sins" is the stifling of his "inmost consciousness! [he] did a deadly wrong to [his] own heart!" (iii: 218). For a dream of pure egoistic fulfillment, Hollingsworth estranges himself from all of humanity, his own humanity included.

Coverdale remarks that "Hollingsworth must have been originally endowed with a great spirit of benevolence, deep enough, and warm enough, to be the source of as much disinterested good, as Providence often allows a human being the privilege of conferring upon his fellows. This native instinct yet lived within him. I myself had profited by it, in my necessity" (iii: 55). However, Hollingsworth by and large chooses to ignore his "native instinct" or else twist it to serve his larger ideal. Coverdale realizes the results of setting up an ideal as a universal when he comments that "Hollingsworth had a closer friend that ever you could be. And this friend was the cold, spectral monster which he had himself conjured up, and on which he was wasting all the warmth of his heart, and of which, at last…he had grown to be the bond slave. It was his philanthropic theory!" (iii: 55). The fact that Coverdale says that Hollingsworth has become a bond slave to his own ideal shows two things. Foremost, it shows that Hollingsworth has given up his heart to serve his ideal, but also that his ideal has gotten out of hand. It is a "spectral monster which he had himself conjured up." The problem with Hollingsworth's project is the fact that "He had taught his benevolence to pour out its warm tide exclusively through one channel; so that there was nothing to spare for other great manifestations of love to man, nor scarcely for the nutriment of individual attachments, unless they could minister, in some way, to the terrible egotism which he mistook for an angel of God" (iii: 55). Again, we see the willful choice that is being made in order to give up the self in order to serve

an all-encompassing ideal. The fact that Hollingsworth "taught" himself not to show care towards anyone else and only serve the ideal shows himself willingly giving up his humanity. This is a point that he readily admits as he tells Coverdale, "I should rather say, that the most marked trait in my character is an inflexible severity of purpose. Mortal man has no right to be so inflexible, as it is my nature and necessity to be!" (iii: 43). But this nature is one that was learned by the necessity that he created for himself. It is a nature that, like Jaffrey Pyncheon's, is carefully cultivated at the expense of the true self. As a result, it robs Hollingsworth of his humanity and turns him into "a monster! A cold, heartless, self-beginning and self-ending piece of mechanism!" (iii: 218). When Hollingsworth removes himself from humanity and his self in order to become a "self-ending piece of mechanism," we should readily see the inauthentic state that Hollingsworth enters into. He is no longer nurtured by the authentic relationships of intuitive sympathy. As a result, he becomes a caricature of an abstract ideal and a sinner.

The propensity to estrange one's self from one's native self and from Others, for Hawthorne, is the major cause of sin. It is this estrangement or dread, as Kierkegaard would call it, that stems from being split and unable or unwilling to reconcile the split. When the sinner reaches the point that he is unwilling to reconcile his split and embraces his estrangement, then he has entered the realm of the unpardonable sin.

The Unpardonable Sin

As critics Joseph T. McCullen and John C. Guilds point out, the vast majority of critics get their understanding of Hawthorne's conception of the unpardonable sin from one entry in his notebooks (222). The passage in question has been a spring board for all

sorts of attempts to understand Hawthorne's outlook on sin and human depravity in general:

> The Unpardonable Sin might consist in a want of love and reverence for the Human Soul; in consequence of which, the investigator pried into its dark depths, not with a hope or purpose of making it better, but from a cold philosophical curiosity, - content that it should be wicked in whatever kind or degree, and only desiring to study it out. Would not this, in other words, be the separation of the intellect from the heart? (viii:251)

It is the conception of the divorcing the intellect from the heart that led prominent scholars such as Frederick Crews to declare in his reading of *The Blithedale Romance,* "*Blithedale's* theme is the most common one in Hawthorne's work. It is what he called the Unpardonable Sin…Each of the book's characters is guilty of denying the heart – except Priscilla, who is not a character at all but an abstract symbol of the heart" ("A New" 167). However, because of a traditional notion of Christianity, critics make the mistake of focusing on those who were violated by the sinner. This mistake comes from a traditional notion that a sin is a trespass against someone – even if that someone is God. It is further given weight by the comment given by Dimmesdale that Chillingworth "has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart" (i: 195). But it is unclear in this instance if Dimmesdale means that Chillingworth violated Dimmesdale's or his own heart. The article "a" purposefully places ambiguity about whose heart Dimmesdale is referring to. Because of Hawthorne's existential leanings, the sinner should be the central focus. For the nature of sin is not found in a given action but in a mode of being. The unpardonable sin, then, is not any specific sin. To use Tilllich's terminology, if the nature

of sin is "the state of estrangement from that to which one belongs – God, one's self, one's world" (*Essential* 166), then the unpardonable sin would be when a sinner has turned so far away from whom he is that he has removed himself from the spheres of humanity altogether.

To make the fact that one should not look for a specific action for the unpardonable sin clear, Hawthorne presents the most serious of traditional sins to his readers in a sympathetic light. The murder in *The Marble Faun* is down-played, if not exonerated altogether. In speaking of the murder, Kenyon remarks upon the motive of Donatello and Miriam, "They are perhaps partners in what we must call awful guilt; and yet, I will own to you—when I think of the original cause, the motives, the feelings, the sudden concurrence of circumstances thrusting them onward, the urgency of the moment, and the sublime unselfishness on either part—I know not well how to distinguish it from much that the world calls heroism" (iv: 384). The word "adultery" never appears in *The Scarlet Letter.* In fact, the only time that Hester and Dimmesdale talk about their sexual encounter, they explicitly comment that "what we did had a consecration of its own. We felt it so! We said so to each other!" (i: 195). And in *The House of The Seven Gables* the years of Clifford's false imprisonment and torture by his cousin Jaffrey are hardly commented upon at all.

However, in each of his works, Hawthorne continues to bring up the notion of violation. Dimmesdale talks about Chillingworth in a manner that places his sin in perspective: "There is one worse than even the polluted priest! That old man's revenge has been blacker than my sin. He has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart" (i: 195). More than the actual act of entering a human heart is Chillingworth's

"cold-blooded violation" of it. We have seen previously that sympathy allows individuals to get a glimpse of the heart and what the most inner aspect of an individual are. But Chillingworth has a special reason to probe out Dimmesdale's heart. Chillingworth wants to see Dimmesdale tortured. He sees into Dimmesdale's heart, probes his secret, and claims that "he could reveal a goodly secret!" (i: 171). Chillingworth does everything in his power to keep Dimmesdale alive even though he acknowledges that it would have been better for Dimmesdale "had he died at once! Never did mortal suffer what this man has suffered" (i: 171). But, Dimmesdale is not the only one violated by Chillingworth. In conjunction with this definition of sin, Chillingworth also violates the sanctity of his own heart. And it is this violation that produces in him the unpardonable sin.

Hawthorne stresses the fact that his spectacular sinners: Miriam's Model and Chillingworth have both undergone a fundamental change in their being, so they not only violate the sanctity of others, they have violated and changed their very natures. If we look at these villains closely, we can see a theme running throughout their dark sins. Each of these men, was at one time a kindly, good, and honorable man who was deeply connected with a community. But each had let a certain idea take hold of him and let that idea rankle his character and his humanity until there was only a "fiend" (i: 171) or "demon"(iv:147) left. The pattern that these men go through closely mirrors the one unpardonable sin that Kierkegaard talks about – that of the demoniac despair.

For each of these sinners, their unpardonable sin mirrors the sin of Kierkegaard's despair of defiance or demoniac despair. Kierkegaard saw that a sinner who became estranged from herself and her humanity could enter a relationship of defiance. But this relationship requires that the individual know something of who she really is: "In order to

will in despair to be oneself there must be consciousness of the infinite self" (*Sickness* 201). The sinner must have had a notion at some time of her being in a relationship with God, or had an idea of the righteous, eternal condition that lies at the heart of every individual. So, for Chillingworth and the Model, Hawthorne has to make clear that at one time each were good men who had religious faith. But these men had to consciously reject their faith and their place within humanity. They do this by denying their humanity, embracing their evil cause, and rejecting the notion that they have any power to change their decisions.

Out of all Hawthorne's greatest sinners, Miriam's Model remains the most enigmatic. He is never given a clear name in life. He dresses as a priest, yet he is also the cause of Miriam's horror and Donatello's distress. He speaks very little, but what he does say shows sin's pattern of turning away from the self, others, and God into a universalized ideal that he creates for himself. He fools himself into thinking that he is simply an instrument of fate. In this regard he sets himself up in direct rebellion to the saving grace of the Other in an effort to make himself merely a thing. He tells Miriam that "Our fates cross and are entangled. The threads are twisted into a strong cord, which is dragging us to an evil doom" (iv: 95). The Model continually brings up the idea of fate. He denies that there is any way that the situation he and Miriam are in can turn out any differently than in their mutual destruction. However, Miriam does see an alternative, "Pray for rescue, as I have! ... Dark as your life has been, I have known you to pray, in times past!" (iv: 95). These words cause a look of horror to appear on his face "insomuch that he shook and grew ashy pale before her eyes. In this man's memory, there was something that made it awful for him to think of prayer; nor could any torture be more

intolerable, than to be reminded of such Divine comfort and succor as await pious souls merely for the asking" (iv: 95). Herein is the clearest explanation for why the Model's sin becomes unpardonable. The sin is not unpardonable because God refuses to forgive it. It is unpardonable because he has so estranged himself from his relationship with God that he refuses to ask for forgiveness. The Model realizes that a great change has come over him. He knows that at one time he was a good man who enjoyed communion with other human beings and God, but now that communion repulses him. He is determined to continue on the course he set before him. As Kierkegaard writes, "For to hope in the possibility of help…that for God all things are possible – no, that he will not do for all the world; rather than seek help he would prefer to be himself – with all the tortures of hell if so it must be" (*Sickness* 205). The Model has become such a bond-slave to his own creation – in this case the possession of Miriam – that to listen to an Other, even if that Other is trying to help him, is no longer an option.

As the narrator continues to analyze the Model, he comes to the conclusion that a fundamental change has happened: "this torment was perhaps the token of a native temperament deeply susceptible of religious impressions, but which had been wronged, violated, and debased, until, at length, it was capable only of terror from the sources that were intended for our purest and loftiest consolation" (iv: 95-96). Although the native temperament that is being referred to by the narrator is one that would strive to find light and connections with others, it has been so violated that those same connections cause pain and anxiety. However, this violation is ultimately caused by the self and no one else. Miriam points this out to the Model explicitly when she says "you mistake your own will for an iron necessity" (iv: 96). The mistake that the Model makes is thinking his demonic

turn is a deterministic necessity, and as such, he is willing to endure whatever torture comes his way in order to see his idea and project fulfilled. But he is not the only one to make this mistake. In the face of an Other who shows him the way to forgiveness, Chillingworth continues in his unpardonable sin as well.

At the beginning of *The Scarlet Letter* Hester Prynne promises Chillingworth that she will keep his identity a secret. She keeps his secret for eight years as she raises Pearl in quasi-solitude. Eight years after their initial meeting in the jail, she sees Roger Chillingworth once again while he gathers herbs in the forest and is completely taken off guard. He had always shown a slight deformity, but upon seeing him after his residency with Dimmesdale, she is taken aback by his startling appearance:

> It was not so much that he had grown older; for though the traces of advancing life were visible, he bore his age well…But the former aspect of an intellectual and studious man, calm and quiet…had altogether vanished, and been succeeded by an eager, searching, almost fierce, yet carefully guarded look. It seemed to be his wish and purpose to mask his expression with a smile, but the latter played him false. And flickered over his visage so derisively, that the spectator could see the blackness all the better for it. (i: 169)

It is clear that Hawthorne wishes to express an inner change that is only momentarily expressing itself outwardly. In fact the narrator makes this change explicit as he relates "In a word, old Roger Chillingworth was a striking evidence of man's faculty of transforming himself into devil, if he will only, for a reasonable space of time, undertake a devil's office" (i: 170). Chillingworth consciously removes himself from the reach of

humanity's grasp in order to "undertake a devil's office." He claims freely that he is "a mortal man, with once a human heart" who has become "a fiend for [Dimmesdale's] especial torment" (i: 172). It is with these words that Chillingworth fully realizes who he has become and "lifted his hands with a look of horror, as if he had beheld some frightful shape, which he could not recognize, usurping the place of his own image in a glass. It was one of those moments…when a man's moral aspect is faithfully revealed to his mind's eye" (i: 172). This revelation and horror of who he has become launches him into a reflection on his life. He claims that at one time "no life had been more peaceful and innocent than mine" (i: 172), and then to Hester he asks, "Dost thou remember me? Was I not, though you might deem me cold, nevertheless a man thoughtful of others, craving little for himself, - kind, true, just, and of constant, if not warm affections" (i: 172). Hester agrees that he had been such a man and under this idea implores him to quit his torment of Dimmesdale, but he demurs. He cites the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination by saying everything has "been a dark necessity…it is our fate" (i: 174). He does not concern himself with Hester's actions and tells her that he will continue to do what he has been doing and "let the black flower blossom as it may!" (i: 173). Chillingworth is set on carrying out Dimmesdale's torment no matter the price.

In this manner, we can see that Chillingworth has sacrificed, willfully, his heart for an ideal of revenge. The horror that he has at himself is evidence that he recognizes how repulsive he is and what he has become. He knows that who he has become is not who he is. Beneath the veil of the fiend, there is still some remnant of a good man. However, he suppresses this horror and replaces it with a firm determination to continue becoming the fiend that he has set for himself. In this regard, he willfully sacrifices and

estranges himself from his true self in the process. Chillingworth in this way, illustrates the individual that Kierkegaard points out as achieving the unpardonable sin:

> but the more consciousness there is in such a sufferer who in despair is determined to be himself, all the more does despair too potentiate itself and become demoniac…Even if at this point God in heaven and all his angels were to offer to help him out of it – no, now he doesn't want it, now it is too late, he once would have given everything to be rid of this torment…now that's all past, now he would rather rage against everything. (*Sickness* 205)

With his declaration of letting the "black flower blossom" Chillingworth is embracing his torture and estrangement. With his embracement of torture, he forfeits any chance of being pardoned for his crimes.

The ideas that these men have placed before them have grown and become nurtured by their own life for so long that they forget that those ideas are products of their own will. They have mistaken their own existential choices for acts of determinism and "iron necessity." They became slaves to their own creations which in turn warp and twist them into caricatures of their own ideals, and in so doing take them out of the realm of humanity to reside fully in sin: estrangement from others, God, and the self.

As could be imagined, it would be impossible to go through life without becoming estranged from the self and others. Almost everyone in life sets up ideals for themselves and then in turn serves them. But the unpardonable sin is only when the service to those ideas dehumanize the individual and make her incapable of even wanting to change. For everyone who has not calcified her personality into the unpardonable sin,

the state of sin can change. We can recognize our sin and fix our actions to rejoin ourselves, our "native personalities." However, this does not mean that sin needs to be avoided. As Hawthorne points out, the heart is a blackness with an even greater light beneath that. When taken in the right manner, I argue that Hawthorne sees in sin a means of driving individuals into the light. In this manner sin, and the sorrow that comes with it, will have a way of producing even more light. The production of more light is begun with the special feeling that accompanies sin: guilt.

Although everyone suffers because they are in despair or estranged, sin heightens and intensifies the despair and estrangement. In this manner, guilt is felt and intensified. Because estrangement comes from turning away from the self, i.e. living an inauthentic existence, and everyone is estranged to one degree or another, all will experience the feelings of estrangement. One of the ways that this shows itself is in guilt. Hawthorne wants to show, in an existential way, how guilt is one of the first steps in binding all beings together because universal guilt is at the heart of human existence.

Sin and the Suffering of Guilt

In an insightful reading of Hawthorne's romances, Barry A. Marks, shows that Hawthorne consistently places the crimes of his characters "off stage" as it were, so the readers are ultimately at a loss for who really should get the blame for the crimes committed. In fact, the readers are, at best, only able to infer what the crime actually was based on contextual clues. The reason for placing the crimes of the stories away from the readers is twofold. As Marks explains, "Hawthorne's strategy was not merely one of avoidance: it reflected, in addition, two of his most central convictions: 1) that life is ultimately mysterious (and that man's sin lies primarily in his unwillingness to accept the

mystery); and 2) that man's sin is a condition which issues in immoral action rather than immoral action itself" (360). We have already looked at how Hawthorne would see sin as a mode or state of being rather than a specific action. Looking at the mystery of life is looking at the fundamental attributes that inform existence. By avoiding showing the crime, Hawthorne can avoid discussions of justice – which would force his readers into examining particulars and specific instances. More subtly, because neither the crimes nor the sins are explicitly spelled out, yet the characters feel some level of guilt, Hawthorne is implicating all of his characters in crimes and sins. The guilt is universal, and as the narrator of *The Scarlet Letter* claims, "be the stern and sad truth spoken, that the breach which guilt has once made into the human soul is never, in this mortal state, repaired" (i: 200-01). The implications of this permanent fall into guilt are profound.

Hawthorne wants to make sure that his readers are aware of the nature of sin. It is not like an object that one can possess and then discard at will. As the narrator of *The Scarlet Letter* explains, once experienced, the effects of sin or guilt cannot be undone. Sin and guilt, then, fundamentally change an individual. But this is not necessarily a statement of human depravity. In an existential vein, Hawthorne is making a claim about what guilt does to a person. Because the existential mode is ultimately one of existence and not of doctrine, Hawthorne wants to show how sin's guilt changes the very mode of being. And it is this mode of being that guilt introduces the individual to that brings the individual into contact with the Other. Hawthorne makes sure to elucidate how sin does in fact change our mode of being in *The Marble Faun*. Right after the murder of her model, Miriam is struck with an epiphany about the nature of sin:

> And at the thought she shivered. Where then was the seclusion, the remoteness, the strange, lonesome Paradise, into which she and her one companion had been transported by their crime? Was there, indeed, no such refuge, but only a crowded thoroughfare and jostling throng of criminals? And was it true, that whatever hand had a blood-stain on it,—or had poured out poison,—or strangled a babe at its birth,—or clutched a grandsire's throat, he sleeping, and robbed him of his few last breaths,—had now the right to offer itself in fellowship with their two hands? Too certainly, that right existed. It is a terrible thought, that an individual wrong-doing melts into the great mass of human crime, and makes us, who dreamed only of our own little separate sin,—*makes us guilty of the whole*. (iv: 176-77 emphasis added)

Two aspects of this quote need to be examined. First is the notion that it is the guilt that comes from sin that introduces the individual into relations with the Other. The second is the idea that a single separate sin makes the individual "guilty of the whole." Rather than focusing an individual into a complete isolation as Miriam supposed, the opposite happens. The guilt shows the individual all other sinners. This idea of universal guilt is similar to that brought up and used to great effect in both Camus and Sartre.

In Camus's novel *The Fall*, the narrator Jean-Baptiste Clamence sums up the notion of universal guilt, "We cannot assert the innocence of anyone, whereas we can state with certainty the guilt of all. Every man testifies to the crime of all the others…God's sole usefulness would be to guarantee innocence, and I am inclined to see religion rather as a huge laundering venture. . . . Don't wait for the Last Judgment. It

takes place every day" (110-11). The idea of guilt for Camus comes from the idea that each individual judges all other individuals. This universal judgment reflects Sartre's conception of guilt as it comes from realizing that everyone sees everyone else as a "fallen" object. Drawing explicitly upon the language of Genesis, Sartre shows how the guilt that comes from original sin is a fundamental aspect of being-in-the-world-with-others. Once the individual is identified by the Other, through the look, guilt is brought about:

> It is before the Other that I am guilty. I am guilty first when beneath the Other's look I experience my alienation and my nakedness as a fall from grace which I must assume. This is the meaning of the famous line from Scripture: 'They knew that they were naked.' Again I am guilty when in turn I look at the Other, because by the very fact of my own self-assertion I constitute him as an object and as an instrument, and I cause him to experience that same alienation which he must now assume. Thus original sin is my upsurge in a world where there are others; and whatever may be my further relations with others, these relations will be only variations on the original theme of my guilt. (Sartre, *Being* 531)

For Sartre, all relations after the fall are some form of guilt relations, and there is no way for the guilt to be removed in this existence, so Hawthorne would be in agreement that the breach that guilt makes "cannot in this mortal state be repaired." However, Camus and Sartre are not talking about guilt in any moral sense. Rather, for them guilt results from an amoral foundation of human existence. But, as I argued in chapter two, like Nietzsche, Hawthorne sees in all existence a moral function. The guilt for all is the

realization that they are not the only ones guilty. They are being judged by the Other as they are judging the Other. In this way, universal guilt is one way of bringing all individuals one step closer to true relationships.

The second aspect of guilt is the notion that a single crime becomes a part of the guilt of all. The fact that the individual's sin comprises the guilt of all humanity is an idea that Hawthorne will raise time and again in *The Marble Faun.* One individual's crime is humanity's crime, for the one sinner represents humanity. In this regard, Hawthorne is thinking, again, along Sartrean lines.

In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre adds to the controversial statement "In war there are no innocent victims" his own equally controversial statement "we have the war we deserve" (709). Far from being a supreme cynic, Sartre is making a claim, although maybe a bit dramatic, that all events and choices, once they are engaged by the individual, become the sole responsibility of the individual. As he puts it, "man being condemned to be free carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders; he is responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being" (*Being* 707). The implications of this are many, but the one to focus on in this context is that "whatever may be the situation in which he finds himself, the for-itself must wholly assume this situation with its peculiar coefficient of adversity" (*Being* 707). In other words, no matter the situation, the individual must take all responsibility for the action and the consequences that stem from the action upon himself. To make this more radical, the individual must also assume the responsibility of the action and consequence in behalf of all humanity, for the individual is acting on humanity's behalf. The existing individual, merely thinking that his sin is a private matter, is mistaken. He may kill in a war, but his

involvement in the shooting makes him responsible for the entire war. Hawthorne's meaning is seen clearly in this mode of thinking. The existing individual's involvement in a sin makes that individual responsible for Sin – "makes us guilty of the whole." So all sin and all guilt that comes as a consequence of the sin rests with the individual sinner. This does not mean that only one, specific individual must bear the weight of all humanity's sin. There is no such scapegoat in his thought. Rather, Hawthorne recognizes multiple sinners, each bearing the responsibility for Sin individually, and creates "an innumerable confraternity of guilty ones, all shuddering at each other" (iv: 177). Each individual sinner bears the responsibility of all sin. In this manner all are entangled together and guilt becomes universal.

Furthering the thought that a single sin "makes us guilty of the whole," Hawthorne shifts his focus to the guilt of the non-sinners, for the sin of one is the guilt of all. To begin illustrating this point, Hawthorne turns to the daughter of the Puritans, Hilda. Hilda, in most regards is a character that readers are not to emulate, but just like an inhuman angel, she is given truths to speak. Upon her encounter with Miriam after the murder, Hilda, too receives, an epiphany about the nature of sin and the human condition: "Ah! now I understand how the sins of generations past have created an atmosphere of sin for those that follow. While there is a single guilty person in the universe, each innocent one must feel his innocence tortured by that guilt. Your deed, Miriam, has darkened the whole sky!" (iv: 12). In order to make sure that the readers do not brush off Hilda's insight, the narrator quickly chimes in on Hilda's behalf, "Every crime destroys more Edens than our own!" (iv: 212). And to echo the idea a third time, the same notion is given by Donatello who pines, "The sky itself is an old roof, now…and, no doubt, the

sins of mankind have made it gloomier than it used to be" (iv: 302) In each case, the sin of one produces guilt or darkness and suffering in all. When seen in this light, every sin is an original sin because in each sin is the fall of humankind anew, and the perceptive sufferers recognize this truth. Thus in guilt, all fall, all encounter the fallen, and all suffer for it.

Humanizing Effect of Sin and Suffering

Just as we saw that in guilt individuals began to be bound to each other, ultimately the function of all sorts of suffering is similar, for as Paul Tillich observes, the suffering that comes through sin and through simple lived experience "provoke and augment each other" (*Courage* 54). All types of suffering, whether from guilt or from pure suffering, serve a two-fold function. On the one hand, it is to "soften" or humanize the individual, and secondly, it is to bind the various sufferers together. So when we talk about the pain of guilt, we should naturally also think about the pain that comes from suffering.

Suffering, through its humanizing effect, creates a capability or an emptiness that can be filled through sympathy – scripture calls this emptiness the broken heart. The capability opened to the sufferer for sympathy acts like yet another veil. Like all veils we have seen so far, there are individuals who mistake the veil for reality. As a result, there are individuals who look at the broken heart caused by suffering and think that their suffering is all there is. Donatello, Dimmesdale, and Clifford are perfect examples of Hawthorne's characters who retreat into their suffering and isolate themselves from others because of their suffering. This aspect of retreating into the self because of suffering, as was shown, is needful because it highlights the life of the individual for the

individual. Yet, Hawthorne would remind us that this is only half of the function of the veil. It is also there to entice.

The enticement of suffering is not an enticement for more suffering but rather for a source of its alleviation in the sympathy of others. As we have shown, the only way through one of Hawthorne's veils is by a complete opening of the self through sympathy. When intense pain enters life, it is almost a guarantee that the sufferer will search out the means to quell the pain, holding nothing back. The more exquisite the pain, the more open the sufferer is for a cure. It is in these moments that a sympathetic soul can step in and connect with the sufferer. By allowing the means for sympathy to bind two individuals into a sympathetic relationship, Hawthorne sees the ultimate function of sin and suffering as humanizing, for these are the mechanisms in place that allow for an human animal to become aware of others and find a place in humanity.

The most eloquent defense of suffering comes from Hester Prynne. Through her years of suffering, she is able to see what it does for her. More importantly, she holds suffering in such high importance that she wishes others to suffer as well. As she fights the magistrates to keep Pearl with her, she is asked by an examining preacher what she could possibly teach her child. Hester's answer is quick and decisive. Pointing to the *A* upon her breast, she declares "I can teach my little Pearl what I have learned from this!...This badge hath taught me, - it daily teaches me, - it is teaching me at this moment, - lessons whereof my child may be the wiser and better" (i: 111). At the meeting, the ministers do not press Hester as to what the letter has taught her. Instead, they focus more on traditional catechisms to see if Pearl knows her religious teachings. But it is clear that Hester is not talking about religious dogma. Later in the book as she is watching Pearl,

we get a glimpse at the lessons the *A* has taught her and what she wishes Pearl to know. "[Hester] wanted – what some people want throughout life – a grief that should deeply touch [Pearl], and thus humanize and make her capable of sympathy" (i: 184). It is apparent that Hester has learned this lesson well as she spent years in suffering. In those same years of suffering, she looked after others who suffered and who society could not or would not touch. She recognized the suffering in the hearts of others and worked to alleviate it. Thus her own suffering led her to possess a larger measure of sympathy towards others – even those who abused her. This aspect of pain is important enough for Hester to wish her little girl to suffer.

Staying in the Dark or Moving Into the Light

It should not be assumed that simply suffering humanizes an individual. The nature of suffering to repel is well known. Hawthorne would readily admit that suffering has the ability to repel and estrange individuals. As the narrator of *The Scarlet Letter* informs us of Hester's thoughts on suffering, suffering only makes individuals "capable of sympathy" (i: 184). Suffering does not guarantee that either the humanizing or the reaching out for sympathy will happen with an individual. The individual still has a choice of whether to allow the suffering to change the self. The notion that sin and suffering trying to humanize someone is seen throughout Hawthorne's romances. Sometimes the humanizing effects of suffering are able to take effect in the individuals' lives; however, sometimes even suffering is not enough to soften the human heart.

Much like sorrow, sin is meant to soften or humanize the individual to be more open to the other sinner in the world. It repels the sinner into solitude and entices the sinner into a relationship to help ease the sin and suffering of another. And so *The Marble*

Faun becomes a study in whether or not individuals, when faced with suffering, will open themselves to the sympathy of Others. We have already seen that Donatello opens himself up to the sympathy of others. However, Hilda does not. Although she suffers, she does not allow it to soften her. Perhaps the reason is because her suffering is derived through the sins of others and not her own. With no sin, Hilda is a "dove cast in stone" (Budick 247).

When Hilda casts Miriam off as a sinner who is unworthy to be touched, Miriam condemns her roundly, "Ah, this is hard! Ah, this is terrible! ... As an angel, you are not amiss; but, as a human creature, and a woman among earthly men and women, you need a sin to soften you!" (iv: 209). This idea that sin is needed, also known as the Fortunate Fall, is the central thought in *The Marble Faun.* In my reading, it is apparent that Hawthorne was strongly attracted to this thought; although, because of its unorthodox nature, he softens his statement of sin's necessity as a simple "perplexity" spoken of by Kenyon:

> Here comes my perplexity…Sin has educated Donatello, and elevated him. Is sin, then,—which we deem such a dreadful 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 ultimately rise to a far loftier paradise than his? (iv: 460)

I have endeavored to show what that loftier paradise is. It is not some degree of sainthood; the sheer fact of Hawthorne's flawed characters strikes down that assumption. Rather, the paradise comes from a more formal form of happiness and authentic

relationships that can only come in the face of death, sin, and suffering. The paradise comes from sanctified relationships that become stronger with greater capacities for sympathy. It is the greater capacity for sympathy that is at the heart of Hawthorne's conception of the Fortunate Fall. The authentic individual existing in an authentic relationship is the only way to move into the light once more.

However critics, like Dennis Perry, argue that Hawthorne is more hesitant about the Fortunate Fall (77). As Perry points out Kenyon ultimately follows Hilda and even asks Hilda to "guide me home" even though it becomes clear that Hilda has not matured morally (iv: 461). The other part of Perry's argument runs that Kenyon learns of the Fortunate Fall from Miriam when she tells him "Was that very sin,—into which Adam precipitated himself and all his race, was it the destined means by which, over a long pathway of toil and sorrow, we are to attain a higher, brighter, and profounder happiness, than our lost birthright gave? Will not this idea account for the permitted existence of sin, as no other theory can?" (iv: 434-35). Kenyon, as a supposed stand-in for Hawthorne, becomes deeply perplexed by this line of thought. On the one hand, he has seen the reality to Donatello's change and improvement in happiness. On the other hand, the notion flies in the face of his orthodoxy as he initially tells Miriam, ""Mortal man has no right to tread on the ground where you now set your feet" (iv: 435). It is this perplexity that leads Perry to comment, "While many readers assume Hawthorne believes Donatello's is a fortunate fall, he presents it as a deeper problem than his characters, or readers, can fully understand. This paradox is ultimately incapable of being resolved to every reader's satisfaction" (iv: 76-77). But if Kenyon rejects the notion of a Fortunate Fall out right by escaping into Hilda, he places himself in the inauthentic mode of being

that Hawthorne has condemned throughout his writing. He will become an individual who refuses to engage with the complexities of reality – a reality that he has witnessed and lived – and rely on an artificial ideal instead. For this reason, we are to reject his final withdrawal into Hilda.

The narrator of *The Marble Faun*, even if he withholds comment on the idea of the Fortunate Fall when it is spoken by Kenyon, seems to fall in step with the line of thought elsewhere in the romance. When Donatello the innocent finally convinces Miriam the dark sinner to engage in some frivolity, the narrator can't help but comment on the differences between subjective enjoyments experienced by the two even as they enjoy the same activity:

> So the shadowy Miriam almost outdid Donatello on his own ground. They ran races with each other, side by side, with shouts and laughter; they pelted one another with early flowers, and gathering them up twined them with green leaves into garlands for both their heads. They played together like children, or creatures of immortal youth. So much had they flung aside the somber habitudes of daily life, that they seemed born to be sportive forever, and endowed with eternal mirthfulness instead of any deeper joy. It was a glimpse far backward into Arcadian life, or, further still, into the Golden Age, before mankind was burdened with sin and sorrow, and before pleasure had been darkened with those shadows that bring it into high relief, and make it Happiness. (iv: 83-84)

Just as the human heart can be allegorized as a cave moving from light to darkness to a brighter light, reality too functions in the same way for pleasure to be tainted by sin and

sorrow to turn into happiness. It seems to be that Hawthorne could not bring himself to make an out and out commitment in spoken dialogue where the idea of beneficial sin is stated explicitly, but the fact that it is seen in the prose goes a long way to suggest that it was an idea that Hawthorne took seriously. For that matter, we can spend a moment to see how that idea has also made appearances throughout his writings and thought.

In *The Scarlet Letter* the idea does appear, although clothed in more orthodox garb. There is no doubt that Hester and Dimmesdale suffer, yet in their sin and their suffering, they both reach a level of sanctification that no one else in the book achieves. For Hester Prynne, her suffering causes her to understand the suffering of others more fully. In turn, "people brought all their sorrows and perplexities, and besought her counsel, as one who had herself gone through a mighty trouble" (i: 263). In a like manner, many people requested the presence of Dimmesdale to minister to them since he seemed to have a level of holiness insomuch that "the very ground on which he trod was sanctified" (i: 141). But the narrator makes it clear as to why Dimmesdale has this power. It is his guilt and inner sin. "This very burden it was, that gave him sympathies so intimate with the sinful brotherhood of mankind; so that his heart vibrated in unison with theirs, and received their pain into itself, and sent its own throb of pain through a thousand other hearts, in gushes of sad, persuasive eloquence" (i: 141). This vibration with other hearts under the weight of sin and suffering is the cause of its own relief when it reaches out to others. *The Scarlet Letter* says that when the reaching out happens, it shall find relief: "The complaint of a human heart, sorrow-laden, perchance guilty, telling its secret, whether of guilt or sorrow, to the great heart of mankind; beseeching its sympathy or forgiveness,—at every moment,—in each accent,—and never in vain!" (i:

244). But because of the nature of suffering and sin, it is up to the individual to try to reach out for that sympathy. When sympathy is striven for under suffering, it shall be found. When no sympathy is looked for, the heart is left to its own devices. Hawthorne can hope that if this happens, the sheer weight of sin and suffering would be enough to break the heart. However, as Judge Pyncheon shows, if the heart has been given over to the public eye, then no amount of sin or suffering will be able to touch it.

The function of sin as that which softens is brought up in relation to Judge Pyncheon. In the oddest chapter that Hawthorne probably ever wrote, the narrator of *The House of The Seven Gables* goads the dead Jaffrey Pyncheon to continually arise and go about his business. The narrator is able, in this chapter, to comment extensively on the Judge's character, plans, and fortunes. Intermingled with many of these sayings are the reflections of the narrator. Among these reflections is the function of sin.

> Or will he – after the tomblike seclusion of the past day and night – go forth a humbled and repentant man, sorrowful, gentle, seeking no profit, shrinking from worldly honor, hardly daring to love God, but bold to love his fellow-man, and to do him what good he may? Will he bear about with him—no odious grin of feigned benignity, insolent in its pretense, and loathsome in its falsehood—but the tender sadness of a contrite heart, broken, at last, beneath its own weight of sin? For it is our belief, whatever show of honor he may have piled upon it, that there was heavy sin at the base of this man's being. (ii: 282-83)

It is ultimately the wish of the narrator for the heavy sin to break the heart of the Judge. In the breaking of the heart, the Judge would finally feel the suffering needed to change

and actually try to connect with those around him – "bold to love his fellow-man." However, the Judge had given himself over too completely to the public eye to even feel the weight of his guilt, and thus led the inauthentic life, for the authentic life will be a life that is in-tune with its own suffering and sin. But, as we have seen, the Judge was impervious to the pains of his own heart. He couldn't feel regret or remorse, and thoroughly believed the image of himself that the public eye gave him.

The idea that sin will break the heart under its suffering, opening it up to sympathy of others is glimpsed in *The Blithedale Romance.* In *The Blithedale Romance* Hollingsworth wishes to reform criminals by appealing to their higher instincts. Coverdale, for all his failings, realizes that this is the wrong approach. This method would place Hollingsworth above those he wishes to reform to try and point out what their higher instincts would, in fact, be. However, sympathy requires a horizontal relationship. It requires the sympathizer to be "on a level with the lowest" (i: 141). It is for this reason that Coverdale admits, "Much as I liked Hollingsworth, it cost me many a groan to tolerate him on this point. He ought to have commenced his investigation of the subject by perpetrating some huge sin, in his proper person, and examining the condition of his higher instincts, afterwards" (iii: 36). Implicit in Coverdale's prescription with Hollingsworth is the fact that sin has the ability to level the sinner. It is clear in the narrative that Hollingsworth does not feel for those around him, and this becomes his biggest condemnation throughout the book from both Coverdale and Zenobia. However, unlike Jaffrey Pyncheon, at the end of the book, Hollingsworth does realize his sin, and he begins to suffer for it.

In the last scene before Coverdale makes his confession, he runs into Hollingsworth and sees a completely different man. Instead of the proud and self-centered individual he has encountered throughout the story, he sees "in Hollingsworth's face a depressed and melancholy look, that seemed habitual; the powerfully built man showed a self-distrustful weakness, and a childlike, or childish, tendency to press close, and closer still, to the side of the slender woman whose arm was within his" (iii: 242). Upon asking him if he had reformed any criminals, Coverdale received the reply, "Not one! ... Ever since we parted, I have been busy with a single murderer!" (iii: 243). Although miserable, Hollingsworth only now has the potential to draw closer to humanity, for only in the despair and darkness of humanity's collective suffering can he find the shade that will bring out happiness and closer, ever closer, human relationships.

Conclusion

Thus we can see a strain running throughout Hawthorne's romances and only solidified and given voice in *The Marble Faun* of the nature of sin and suffering. Like Hick, Hawthorne seems to see in sin and suffering the power to make humans become moral and authentic creatures. However, rather than making humanity and salvation a certainty, Hawthorne aligns himself with a more existential position. He does not embrace fully the idea of a Fortunate Fall since he sees only a capacity being opened with sin and suffering. But this capacity is crucial, for it is sin and suffering that begin to tie individuals to each other. It is in suffering that individuals realize that they are not alone in the world as they are drawn into the large family of sufferers. It is through the suffering that channels are opened from one heart to the next to allow intuitive sympathy to begin to bind sufferers and sinners even more closely together Ultimately, however,

the power of sin and suffering to humanize a heart, create happiness in an individual, and produce authentic relationships between individuals comes down to the individual's willingness to let the sin and suffering work in that manner. Choice is firmly in place in Hawthorne's works, and those characters who see their choices and take responsibility for their choices end up growing and learning from the sin and suffering in their lives. Those who avoid or misunderstand sin and suffering end up staying trapped within the darkness of their cavernous hearts.

Chapter 5 Primacy of Intuitive Sympathy in the Teacher – Student Relationship: An Essay in the Theory and Application of Existential Education

Misunderstandings of Existential Education

Before going in depth about an existential theory of education, I want to clarify certain facets of existential thought. Of all the tenets of Existentialism, the one that has garnered the greatest attention (and misunderstanding) is the existential doctrine of freedom. Freedom is such an integral part of the existential outlook on human existence that Sartre quipped that "Man is condemned to be free" ("Humanism" 41). From this point about freedom, theorists and educators have tried to apply existential tenets to education. However, many times critics, even those who are sympathetic toward Existentialism, misapply the existential concept of freedom in their educational theories.

For those who oppose existential pedagogy, the focus on freedom seems give students permission to do whatever they wish (Ozman and Craver 215). With the stripping away of all the teacher's authority and pre-existing standards, as they think Existential pedagogy does, these critics tend to see in existential education an embracing of nihilistic lifestyles (Ozman and Craver 215). In response to these criticisms of existential philosophy, teachers and administrators avoid the messy implications of the philosophy and instead focus on standards and outcomes that are quantifiable and objective. However, the idea that existential freedom is a forerunner to a nihilistic lifestyle or classroom is a misunderstanding of freedom. Unfortunately, the critics of existential philosophy are not the only ones to misinterpret the concept of freedom; proponents of existential education are just as likely to make the same mistake.

Even those who are largely favorable toward Existentialism wrongly conclude that existential freedom is without bounds and without limitations of any sort. Van Cleve Morris, a supposed supporter of Existentialism, concludes in his book *Existentialism in Education: What it Means* that Existentialism in practice is as close to an "anything goes" philosophy as possible. After a review of a mostly Sartrean view of Existentialism, Morris begins to apply Sartre's ideas of freedom towards education. He gives as his Existential "paradigm school" Summerhill school in England. This school has few rules (no carrying guns, no running on the roof, and no arson being examples of the select few rules) and "no requirements, no homework, no regulations, no roll taking, no grades, no academic expectations, no tests, no institutional code of decorum, [and] no social conventions" (Morris 147, 149). The children are absolutely free to attend or not to attend class, to study or not to study. The students' freedom also means the demise of the authoritarian teacher, for all of the tools that teachers use to try to keep order or discipline are taken away. However, the students' (near) absolute freedom goes beyond destroying the authoritarian teacher. It also, fundamentally, calls into question the role and importance of the teacher. Morris quotes the founder of Summerhill, A.S. Neill, as saying,

> There is a timetable – but only for the teachers. The children have classes usually according to their age, but sometimes according to their interests. We have no new methods of teaching, because we do not consider that teaching in itself matters very much. Whether a school has or has not a special method for teaching long division is of no significance, for long division is of no importance except to those who want to learn it. And the

> child who wants to learn long division will learn it no matter how it is taught. (149)

It is easy to see how educators would bristle at this assertion. The craft of teaching is denigrated and denied in the face of extreme student freedom. This situation points to a fundamental problem with Morris' interpretation of existential freedom. In Morris' and Neill's commendable zeal to have students experience freedom, they are espousing a solution that is built on a problem. It comes down to Neill's statement that "for teaching long division is of no significance, for long division is of no importance except to those who want to learn it" (qtd. in Morris 149). This idea completely ignores or devalues a crucial part of the educational situation making the statement false. It might be true that "long division is of no importance" in and of itself. However, the reality of the intrinsic lack of value of long division does not mean that "teaching long division is of no importance." As soon as a subject is brought into a classroom to be taught, it has meaning. Explicitly, the subject has the meaning that the teacher gives it. Teachers imbue value and meaning into the subjects they teach. By pointing out that long division only has meaning "to those who want to learn it," Neill devalues and ignores the teacher and the teacher's values. This devaluing of a human being is not Existentialism. To bring Neill's statement into a truer existential reality, it would have to mention that long division has a deep meaning, value, and importance for the teacher who wishes to teach it.

Morris fails to see freedom's real function within the existential tradition. Looking at Sartre's insistence on responsibility in his thought goes to show that his is not a philosophy of anything goes. As Hazel E. Barnes has said, "As Sartre pointed out, even

if we want to give the student's freedom an unlimited range, we restrict it by our very reluctance to impose limitations. If we provide him with a world of absolute tolerance, we thereby prevent him from developing qualities which he might discover in a world less permissive" (290). The notion that freedom is the power to do whatever one wishes is wrong-headed. The idea that an individual can see the world however she wishes is a solipsism that Hawthorne's mode of existentialism also firmly rejects. As we have seen, Hawthorne sees that an individual gains authenticity only through the interaction with another. To deny that Other, is to deny one' own existential existence. We must define what the existentialists meant with their discussions of freedom in order to give an accurate description of an existential education.

Freedom and Society

In *Being and Nothingness,* Sartre promised to create a formal system of morality based on his existential philosophy (798). Although he never explicitly got around to doing this, his life partner, Simone de Beauvoir, in 1947, decided to take the challenge upon herself. The result of this project was the publication of *Ethics of Ambiguity*. In that work, she spends a great deal of time countering many of the claims that people have made about Existentialism and the idea of freedom. Using her claims, we shall construct a more accurate definition of existential freedom.

De Beauvoir posits that freedom must be the basis for all other virtues and values. No choice can be made without it, and human existence itself is simply freedom. For this reason, there can be no meaningful morality without the freedom of choice. There can be no becoming without freedom in place. There can be no engaging with the world without freedom. However, there are different types of freedom. As David Detmer points out, for

Sartre and de Beauvoir, there are two types of freedom: absolute or metaphysical freedom and practical freedom (81). Practical freedom is "a freedom that is present in varying degrees in varying circumstances, depending on the range and quality…of the options open to me, and on the degree to which I have the actual ability and available means to carry out my chosen option successfully" (81). Most of the conversations about freedom get caught up in the metaphysical aspect of freedom which simply ends up in arguing about determinism and free will; however, practical, political freedom serves as a way to open doors for the exercise of metaphysical freedom. For this reason, the two types of freedom are reliant upon each other.

If an individual lives under a totalitarian government that dictates and regiments his life choices – such as employment, education, and family life – his curtailed practical freedom will impact the exercising of the metaphysical freedom. It is disingenuous to say about individuals living in environments with little to no practical or political freedom that they still have the power to choose. The practical freedom opens up the possibilities for the metaphysical freedom to be used. This is the idea that de Beauvoir has in mind when she writes "my freedom, in order to fulfill itself, requires that it emerge into an open future: it is other men who open the future to me, it is they who, setting up the world of tomorrow, define my future" (82). Politicians, parents, and teachers create environments that will dictate to what extent the individual will be able to use his freedom. Here is the heart of what freedom is and what it is not: "to be free is not to have the power to do anything you like; it is to be able to surpass the given toward an open future" (de Beauvoir 91). If one focused simply on doing whatever one wants to do, freedom will ultimately lead to an unrestrained egoism, and it will, as was shown in the

discussion of Summerhill, ultimately end in the subjection of an entire group of people to maintain the freedom of another, e.g. curtailing teacher freedom in favor of student freedom. The idea that the expression of freedom can only come at the cost of another's freedom is expressed by James L. Walker, also known as Tak Tak, who was fundamental in introducing philosophical egoism into American with the publication of his essay *Philosophy of Egoism* in the later part of the nineteenth century:

> When I say: "if it be right for me-," I admit an authority. Now in fact I must often admit one-, that is a power, but I admit it simply as a power, not at all as the Moralist admits it. I do not bow down to it in my thought or regard it as anything but an enemy to my freedom, and if it cease to assert its power and to compel me by penalty or the prospect of penalty, I assert my full power to do my own pleasure and nothing but my own pleasure... We shall find our interests coincide or we shall give each other battle or we shall steer clear of each other, according to circumstances. (par. 60)

Thus we see that an unrestrained freedom that wills itself to do whatever it wants must end up only serving itself or being subjected to the power of another. As Walker points out, any authority whether institutional or individual is seen as a threat to freedom. This threat must mean that freedom pushes individuals toward conflict. But if we define freedom as being "able to surpass the given toward an open future," then we quickly realize that the freedom of others is a desirable thing because the freedom of others allows for greater opportunities of an open future. As de Beauvoir explains:

> For a freedom wills itself genuinely only by willing itself as an indefinite movement through the freedom of others; as soon as it withdraws into itself, it denies itself on behalf of some object which it prefers to itself... A freedom which is interested only in denying freedom must be denied. And it is not true that the recognition of the freedom of others limits my own freedom…the existence of others as a freedom defines my situation and is even the condition of my own freedom. (90-91)

What we see implicit throughout de Beauvoir's discussion of freedom is that the metaphysical freedom of the individual is in many aspects contingent upon the practical freedoms that are created by the Other's engagement in the world. And only through the mutual interaction with one another, through meeting one another in the neutral space, as Hawthorne says, and recognizing the responsibility that each has for the Other, can authenticity be found. For authenticity can only happen once freedom is properly understood.

Freedom, properly understood, also incorporates the idea of surpassing and going beyond. As de Beauvoir says, freedom must be able to go beyond itself into an open future (82). Freedom must beget more freedom. But the idea of going beyond and surpassing is also inherent in many of the writings of other Existentialists in regards to freedom. Sartre writes, "Man is all the time outside of himself: it is in projecting and losing himself beyond himself that he makes man to exist; and, on the other hand, it is by pursuing transcendent aims that he himself is able to exist. Since man is thus self-surpassing, and can grasp objects only in relation to his self-surpassing, he is himself the heart and center of his transcendence" ("Humanism" 61). Heidegger enthusiastically

writes about the projects that must fill Dasein: "Dasein exists as an entity for which, in its Being, that Being is itself an issue. Essentially ahead of itself, it has projected itself upon its potentiality-for-Being before going on to any mere consideration of itself. In its projection it reveals itself as something which has been thrown" (*Time* 458). Without the projects, surpassing, or going beyond, there is no existence, for the projects that Dasein engages in define its existence.

Within this strand of existentialist thought, freedom is manifested through an individual's projects, choices, and movements. Because many people have failed to understand the implications of freedom, they have made the mistake of assuming that individuals may take up any project they wish or that all projects are equally valid. This position implies that all means of existence are of equal worth. This assumption is not correct. It is clear in the writings of Sartre, de Beauvoir, Camus, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard that they do see certain ways of living as superior to other ways. Heidegger gave the existential ideal of living its name: authenticity. Although each existential thinker saw the result of authenticity differently, each agreed that authenticity entailed an active, passionate affirmation of one's existence and actions (Golomb 201). In this regard we can turn our attention more fully toward an existential educational theory and how education can show the individual a correct or proper way to live.

Purpose of Existential Education

Existential education should focus on the being of the student, for if teachers forget the student in an attempt to reach standards and institution goals, then "this kind of technological attitude means the abandonment of education and belongs accordingly to calculative thinking, to use Heidegger's terminology" (Kakkori and Huttunen 351-52).

Although each of the thinkers commonly labeled as existentialist share an interest in education, it is to the life-long educator and explicator of authenticity, Heidegger, that we will turn to in order to lay the groundwork for an existential theory of education while we supplement that groundwork with the insights that we have seen Hawthorne argue.

Ian Thomson claims that Heidegger had in mind a perfectionist[16] mode of education throughout his philosophical career ("Heidegger's Perfectionist" 440-41). By exploring Heidegger's perfectionist philosophy, we can better see how the other existentialists adopt and supplement his position. We will also be able to see how freedom, as properly understood, becomes an important part of existential education.

First, Heidegger's ontological thesis must explain what sets human beings apart from all other forms of life. As Heidegger explains, the human being or Dasein is the only entity that "understands itself in terms of its existence – in terms of a possibility of itself" (*Time* 33). Heidegger elucidates: "Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that in its very being that being is an issue for it" (*Time* 32). Dasein has the ability to be aware of itself and the ability to engage, modify, or reaffirm that self-awareness. As Thomson comments, "Heidegger is primarily concerned with the fact that the very way reality shows up for us is filtered through and circumscribed by the stands we take on ourselves, the embodied life-projects which organize our practical activities and so shape the intelligibility of our worlds" ("Heidegger's Perfectionist" 443-44). The fact that human beings can understand

[16] Philosophical perfectionism was most famously advocated by Aristotle in his book *Nichomachean Ethics*. Philosophical perfectionists have largely followed the pattern set by Aristotle in laying out an ontological thesis wherein a claim is given about what sets a human life apart and usually above other forms of life, giving an ethical thesis wherein a claim is given that "our greatest fulfillments or flourishing follows from the cultivation and development (hence the *perfection*) of these significantly distinctive skills or capacities," and finally elaborating on a linking principle that clarifies the relationship between the ontological and ethical theses (Thompson, "Heidegger's Perfectionist" 440-41).

who they are and who they wish to become means that they have the ability to become authentic. Only a Dasein can enjoy authenticity because only a human being can understand what is essential in its being and accept, modify, or reject it.

If the ontological thesis is the ability to recognize and stand by our lived essences, then the ethical thesis would argue that Dasein is able to create those essences – which Thomson calls our "existential possibilities" ("Heidegger's Perfectionist" 445). For Heidegger, these are the projects that we adopt or throw ourselves into. These "existential possibilities" are the roles, personas, values, and identities that we choose to adopt. These must be shaped, influenced, or informed by our lived experiences and our environments. If anything, Heidegger is highlighting what is practically possible for us to become. Education, then should be seen as the process wherein possibilities become opened (Ozmon and Craver 207).

Once we understand the ethical thesis as one that deals with the practical possibility of existentially becoming, we can better see the linking principle. "For Heidegger, this practical embodiment of an understanding of our being both precedes and makes possible any explicit theoretical articulation or construction of an understanding of being" (Thomson, "Heidegger's Perfectionist"445). In other words, before a human being can authentically formulate a statement such as "I am a teacher" wherein "teacher" authentically represents her essence, she must practically live the experiences, hold the desires, and engage in the projects of being a teacher. There must be an awareness of her actions and motivations and those actions and motivations must be chosen and affirmed. As Martin Buber states, "What counts is not the extent of spiritual possessions, not the thoroughness of knowledge, nor the keenness of thought, but to know what one knows

and to believe what one believes so directly that it can be translated into the life one lives" ("Teaching" 458). The individual's choices create an authentic lived experience only when knowledge and learning is allowed to shape "the life one lives." In the shaping and changing of lived experience, we see the surpassing that was referred to earlier. Heidegger summarized this perfectionist system thusly, "Only because the being of the there receives its constitution through understanding and its character as projection, only because Dasein is what it becomes (or does not become), can it say to itself with understanding: 'Become what you are!'" (*Time* 186). The entire thrust of existential education can be summed up with this statement: "Become what you are," or if we are to use Hawthorne's wording – discover the "inmost Me" (i: 4).

This perfectionist theory does not mean that the student should be absolutely free to explore or discover a self, for, as we pointed out earlier, absolute freedom will ensure that certain future selves will never be realized. Rather, there needs to be a mechanism in place that allows for exploration of a self within parameters. This mechanism, perhaps the most important mechanism in education, is the teacher.

The Existential Teacher

An immediate objection shows itself at the outset of our discussion. I have argued elsewhere in this dissertation that authenticity cannot be objectively explained or argued. To say that there are objective steps in reaching authenticity undermines what authenticity is. For this reason, authenticity must be approached obliquely in the classroom. What becomes apparent in existential education is the need for a teacher endowed with intuitive sympathy. As Hazel E. Barnes warns, there will be dire consequences if the teacher rejects intuitive sympathy in favor of pre-established norms

and standards: “The emphasis throughout [education] is on the ‘coming to,’ not on a self finally attained. The idea that a person is a free, continuous process of self-making…[means] we will be doing violence to the individual if we try to persuade him that in order to be his real or best self he must fit into some ready-made mold” (294). Just as Hawthorne saw that divorcing the intellect from the heart was the surest way to commit sin, the teacher who withholds intuitive sympathy in favor of pre-set course objectives will commit education’s major sin, for in that moment, the teacher will stop teaching individuals and will begin to talk to mere pupils.

The teacher’s role in teaching authenticity can begin to be understood by taking a step back and simply looking at what it is that a teacher should be teaching in the first place. Heidegger answers this question as he looks back on one of the most influential statements on education in Western thought: Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave.” At the heart of the “Allegory” is the Greek notion of *paideia* which, as Ian Thompson translates it, means “civilization, culture, development, tradition, literature, or education” (*Ontotheology* 155). However, it can also be seen as a nourishment of the mind. This concept of *paideia* should raise several concerns as we view the current trends in education. The word nourishment brings to mind ideas and concepts of concern, care, protection, and valuation. However, as Thompson points out, the trend in education has been to move away from these decidedly motherly attributes and towards the corporate: efficiency, standardization, equalization, and uniformity (*Ontotheology* 150-53).

The essence at the heart of the allegory of the cave is nourishment, not content delivery. If we think back to the “Allegory of the Cave,” we realize that at no point in the “Allegory” is any content delivery happening. True, the peculiar prisoner is released and

is led to various stops along the way, but at no point is there a lecture. At no point in the "Allegory" is there a test, quiz or worksheet because none of these is what teaching or education is. What, then, is the educator's job? In the "Allegory" there is someone who unchains the prisoner and leads him to the various stops along the path (the fire and the outside). Herein is the job of the teacher. As Thompson observes: "The English 'teach' comes from the same linguistic family as the German verb zeigen 'to point or show.'…To teach is to reveal" (*Ontotheology* 165-66). Just as the unnamed individual in the "Allegory" moves the prisoner along, the teacher does the same. The teacher reveals what is in the environment. Implicit in this "Allegory" is the notion that the teacher is showing the prisoner-student how to reach, how to deal with, and how to grapple with the realities that the prisoner faces. The teacher knows how to deal with reality. The teacher has already learned what reality is and has learned that there is even more to reality to learn. In other words, it is the job of the teacher to "be an exemplary learner, capable of teaching his or her students to learn, through a kind of exemplary learning-in-public, by actively responding to the emerging demands of each unique educational situation" (Thompson, *Ontotheology* 168). Through the ability of "learning-in-public" the students will be able to see how the teacher navigates the learning environment, and more importantly, incorporates what is learned into his behavior. As the teacher does this, he will have more freedom in the future when faced with similar situations. Thus his learning empowers his freedom. Once he is able to grasp that freedom, he is able to make authentic choices about who he is and who he is becoming.

The teacher's learning empowers her to see more possibilities in her projects. Knowledge must empower a door to open that before was closed. The increased

existential possibilities allow for a course of action to become possible that was not possible earlier either through lack of skill or ignorance. There remains an objection, at this point, that since existential education encourages the lived, practical experience it can't be taught in formal schooling that deals with the theoretical and abstract. Martin Buber deals with this objection head on. "Here, if anywhere, it is impossible to teach or to learn without living…either the teachings live in the life of a responsible human being, or they are not alive at all… The teachings do not center on themselves. They do not exist for their own sake. They refer to, they are directed toward the deed" (Buber, "Teaching" 456). The lived learning heads back into the purpose and the role of the teacher. The teacher must show how to learn. Learning is not simply collecting facts. Learning is taking reality and applying it to a lived experience. When viewed in this way, we can see how knowledge and learning have a close relationship to freedom. If freedom is the ability to open itself into an open future, and education is the means whereby those practical possibilities are opened, it is clear to see how education and learning enable freedom. Freedom, in turn, makes authentic living possible.

If, as de Beauvoir implies, the moral imperative is to increase freedom for freedom's sake and learning is perhaps one of the best ways to increase the actual possibility for freedom, then learning becomes a moral exercise. The obligation of the teacher is to make sure that learning is happening, not content delivery or even instruction. Ian Thomson quotes Heidegger at length in this very aspect:

> Why is teaching more difficult than learning? Not because the teacher must have a larger store of information, and have it always at the ready. Teaching is more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is

> this: To let learn. The real teacher, in fact, lets nothing else be learned than learning…The teacher is ahead of his apprentices in this alone, that he has still far more to learn than they – he has to learn to let them learn. The teacher must be capable of being more teachable than his apprentices. (*Ontotheology* 168)

The content that must be delivered, then, in any classroom is the teacher and her authentic existence as a teacher through the lessons that she learns while in the classroom. In this manner the teacher is teaching nothing other than herself. Through the teaching of the self, she can entice the learners into authentic learning and living as well.

The Relations

As Martin Buber said, the classroom is where life happens. The classroom, more than most places in life, is where the exchange of ideas can happen among various individuals for the sole purpose of learning together. Students must realize that what they bring to the classroom affects every individual in the room. For what they do or do not do affects the futures that will be opened up for the other students and the teacher. For this reason, the teacher should strive to create an open and welcoming atmosphere that encourages all students to participate in the learning process.

The teacher cannot properly show this unless he knows "the students' needs and students' perceptions of the world" (Ozman and Craver 257). It is by showing the students how to deal with the world as they experience it that an existential nourishment can take place. As Martin Buber repeatedly argues, this nourishment can only be achieved when both parties enter into a special relationship: "[knowledge of another] is only possible when I step into an elemental relation with the other, that is, when he

becomes present to me" ("Elements" 442). The "elemental relation" as one that is most basic – even pre-cognitive – should remind us of Hawthorne's intuitive sympathy. As Hawthorne believed, only intuitive sympathy has the ability to go beyond the veils that every person wears, so that not only the teacher but also the student must try to engage in intuitive sympathy. Only through this manner can the teacher "stand in some true relation with his [student]" (i: 4). As long as the teacher is engaging with "a student" and not with a unique individual comprised of a unique set of skills, talents, desires, fears, weaknesses, and strengths, the teacher will never know if learning is happening. And if the student only sees "the teacher" instead of an individual with strengths and weaknesses, learning will be compromised. It is for this reason that the relationship between the teacher and the student becomes important. When it comes to the authentic relationships in education, we must turn to Kierkegaard, for Kierkegaard was the first among the Existentialists to explain the power of relationships in producing an authentic individual.

Kierkegaard said that all education is a method of deception. For, when we recognize students on an existential level, we realize that their lives are built upon choices that cannot be rationally argued for or against. Ways of living, even authentic ways of living, must be chosen, and as Kierkegaard claims, there is no convincing way to argue for one life over another. So, he employs seduction.

Kierkegaard claims that before truth is learned, the learner must be transformed in such a way that the capacity for truth can be achieved:

> Now if the learner is to acquire the Truth, the Teacher must bring it to him; and not only so, but he must also give him the condition necessary for understanding it. For if the learner were in his own person the

> condition for understanding the Truth, he need only recall it. The condition for understanding the Truth is like the capacity to inquire for it: the condition contains the conditioned, and the question implies the answer. (*Philosophical* 17-18)

By likening it to the relationship between a question and answer, we can see what Kierkegaard is meaning. In order to be able ask a question looking for an answer, the questioner must have a general idea of what the answer could possibly be. However, if a student is in complete ignorance about a subject, then he would not even know how to formulate the question. If there is no way to formulate a question, any answer given to the student would be meaningless. So the student must be shaped in such a way as to be able to formulate a question. The capacity for the answer must be opened to the students, which requires a change in their existence. This change and shaping is impossible for a mere teacher to create (Kierkegaard, *Philosophical* 18).

The crux, then, of the change in the student to gain the capacity to be able to receive truth must come solely from the student's will (Kierkegaard, *Philosophical* 19). The act of the teacher is to somehow move the student into a position where the student would wish to make the change. Using Kierkegaard's terms, this is the work of deception. However, Kierkegaard warns, "Do not be deceived by the word *deception*. One can deceive a person out of what is true, and – to recall old Socrates – one can deceive a person into what is true. Yes, in only this way can a deluded person actually be brought into what is true – by deceiving him" ("On My Works" 467). Knowing how stubborn and defiant humans are, Kierkegaard realizes that a direct approach to changing an individual will not work. Oblique maneuvering and positioning is called for. By

pointing to Socrates and his method, Kierkegaard sees the manner for deception. The teacher does this by "taking the other's delusions at face value" ("On My Works" 467). Like Socrates, the teacher deceives the student by placing the student into a situation, without the student being aware, wherein the student must face the error of his thinking directly. Immediately, when the student realizes the error of his beliefs, the teacher can point to a way out. In this manner, the student can choose to abandon or modify preexisting notions in favor of the truth.

Although the word deception might sound harsh, when we recognize that the authentic relation of teacher and student is central to the dialectical deception, we see that the deception does not come from a mere egoistical urge. Through intuitive sympathy and a realization that life must ever be present in the classroom, the Socratic method of deception becomes an effective tool to help students begin to build an intuitive sympathy with their authentic selves.

There is no step-by-step chart that can be followed to meet the authentic individual. There is no test that can be administered to see if authenticity is found. For this reason, existential education is not concerned with what content is taught; rather, its focus rests on how the content is taught. The authentic individual can only be found in the lived experience of the teacher and the student that comes from the nourishment of the one for the other. In this manner authenticity is taught as the students are able to see the teacher go through the steps of becoming the authentic individual since the teacher is able to ask the questions, gain the insights, and engage reality in the way that it should be grappled with.

In Summation

The main points of the existential philosophy of education are:

1. Education is aimed at creating an authentic individual who knows what he or she knows, knows who he or she is, and readily accepts both.
2. Authenticity cannot be taught in any traditional sense. It must be found through the lived, existential life of the learner.
3. Learning is a moral imperative in that it increases the practical exercise of freedom.
4. Teaching is a "learning in public."
5. Through teaching, the teacher reveals the road to authenticity and nurtures the learners on their journey.
6. Teaching, nurturing, and lived knowledge ultimately come about when a teacher acknowledges that each student in class is a unique individual to be engaged with on his or her own terms through a Socratic process.

The second section of this essay will focus on how to this philosophy could practically be applied in a literature classroom.

Practical Considerations of the Existential Literature Classroom

Working in the confines of an established system, an existential classroom must work as much as possible to open futures for students. Rather than focusing on specific technical skill sets or occupational training, the classroom should only teach one thing, the ability to learn. The ability to learn, to adapt, to reason deeply, and to problem solve are the only real goals of an existential education, for these meta-skills can be applied to a wide variety of situations and to life itself. More importantly, these meta-skills will allow

a student to better able reflect upon who he is and the type of person he is becoming. In this way, these skills empower the students' existential ability to "become what [they] are!'" (Heidegger, *Time* 186).

The Content

As we saw above, in terms of existential pedagogy, it doesn't matter what specific content is taught in the classroom. However, some uniform content should be utilized in order for the students and teacher to have a common conversation. For this reason, it doesn't make much sense to have students in an algebra classroom solely study French history. Not only will doing this limit the number of conversations that could happen between student and teacher, it practically ensures that the student will not learn how to appreciate algebra. It is the structures and the guidelines that allow the students to find a reason to begin to care about the topic. Care is the most fundamental aspect of the existential educational experience, for care, more than anything else, will allow the student to find meaning within the subject and shape her life projects accordingly. Louise Rosenblatt, although not explicitly an existentialists, comments on the need to get students to find personal meaning in a text through care: "we are therefore concerned with the particular and personal way in which students learn to infuse meaning into the pattern of printed symbols…We are dealing with each student's awareness, no matter how dim or confused, of a certain part of the ongoing sequence of his life, as he seeks to marshal his resources and organize them under the stimulus of the printed page" (63). Because the goal for any classroom is to get students personally invested in their learning, the initial starting point for any literature teacher is to get her students to have a personal literary experience with the text.

Using *The Scarlet Letter* as an example, the teacher should help the student in finding personal meaning in the text and, then, using that personal meaning to open up futures in her lived experience. For example, if a student can find purpose and meaning behind Dimmesdale's own journey from hiding sin to public confession, that student will need to be able to see how that meaning can be applied to her own life. This does not mean that the teacher tells the student how to interpret the sin or Dimmesdale's confession; rather, the teacher helps the student explore that personal meaning. As the guide through literary and life experiences, the teacher should show her students what to do in order to open up to the text and find meanings and then give the student some space in applying those meanings and insights into her life projects. In this manner, classroom instruction moves away from the traditional focus on content and moves toward an existential focus on being. This approach also moves away from the traditional separation between school and the "real world" in order to show the student that there should be no distinguishing between the two parts of her experience.

The Assignment

Starting with the day that the book is assigned for the students, the teacher should explain to the students a brief synopsis of the book as well as themes and ideas that are in the book. The teacher's intellectual history with the writing can be given to show the students how the teacher is currently engaging with the book. If I were the teacher introducing *The Scarlet Letter* to a literature course, I would focus on my initial reaction the first time I read the book (not a good one) followed by the different experiences I had that helped to change my perception of the book. I would make sure to end with what about the book intrigues me currently, what I hope to learn during the current reading,

and what exists in my current lived experience that the reading could help to illuminate. In this manner, I show that through the teaching and reading of a text, I am building my own being.

Once this is accomplished, it is time for the students to build a foundation for the book. This foundation can come from reading reviews of the book, looking at background information about the author or time period of either the book's writing or setting. The purpose of this exploratory research is to simply begin to let the students start to formulate what aspect of the novel they wish to explore. The means for the exploration of the novel, and most of the class, for that matter, will be a learning journal.

Because authenticity cannot come unless the students know what they know, the journal should be employed as a means to foster reflection and meta-cognition. Students should be encouraged in their journal to ask such questions as

> What happened, not simply in the story, but rather within me as I read the story? What things struck me forcibly? What were the 'clues' in the story that 'added up' to a meaning for me? What puzzled me? What meanings did others see in it – my classmates, my teacher, perhaps critics in published comments? Do they defend their interpretation by pointing to things in the story that I overlooked? Does this help me to see my blind spots? Or did they overlook some things that make my interpretation at least equally possible? How can I make this reflection the means of arriving at a more complete response to this and other works? (Rosenblatt 70)

The journal entry, addressing questions like these Rosenblatt raises, allows the students to think about what it was they read and what they were thinking about as they read. It allows the students to monitor their thoughts, their reading, their distractions, and their outcomes in an effort to get the students to see the best way in which they can learn (Joseph 203; Risko, Roskos, and Vukelich 318). By bringing their thinking to their attention at every step along the learning process, students will be able to monitor their own decision making and make more informed choices about their learning and their educational goals. This will greatly increase the potential for authentic choices. In this manner, the journal moves away from traditional concepts of journaling as a means of note-taking or simple reflection upon course work. These journals are aimed to help the students bridge the gap between the supposed "real world" of their experience and their academic learning. The journal is a means whereby the student can see himself in all aspects of his life and can start to build a self that uses insights from literature and classroom conversation to build an authentic self.

The teacher, too, will keep a public learning journal to help guide the class through the assignments. This journal can easily be projected from the computer onto a screen if the classroom has those capabilities, or the teacher can write it on the board and simply transcribe it to a notebook afterwards. The first entry in the journal would simply be a detailed explanation of what those involved hope to find in the novel and why. Questions should be involved in the entry to help guide the readers through the work and help them begin to establish meaning.

If I were the teacher who is beginning to read *The Scarlet Letter* with my class, I would choose to focus on the relation of Pearl to the dark man. A sample journal entry I would write for this first entry would be:

> Pearl is seen as the precocious child that keeps Hester in life. She is also seen as a force for Dimmesdale's repentance as she is always trying to get him to join Hester and her on the scaffold. As the child of Arthur and Hester, it would make sense that she would want there to be a more complete union and family structure for herself. But there is another father figure in the book who ends up giving Pearl a fortune upon his death. Chillingworth is involved in the lives of these three individuals, so I am wondering what relationship exists between Pearl and Chillingworth. In a broader sense, since he is often associate with the Black Man or Devil, what is the relation between Pearl and the devil, or sin in general? What does this tell me about the nature of sin, purity, and innocence? Why do I find this topic so intriguing?

This journal will become a model in the class, and it will be a basis for large class conversations. This is not to say that the purpose of this activity is to simply show the students what the teacher thinks is interesting. If that is all that happens, then existential education has failed. The teacher must be willing to open himself up to the students and let his life into the classroom. The teacher bases classroom discussion upon his journals so the students can see how he merges his life outside the classroom with the ideas from the literature. By asking questions to the class, the teacher opens himself up to the

insights and comments of the class. By engaging with the teacher's journal, students will see how the teacher navigates the learning environment.

As students write their own questions in their journals, they will frequently turn those journals in to the teacher so the teacher can ask questions and point to different parts of the text that may help the student find more information. As the instructor engages with the journal entries, students can take their thinking into areas that they have yet to probe and incorporate into themselves (Elkins 171). These journals will also be shared among peers who are exploring similar themes in small learning communities. This will allow students to see, in a more intimate manner, the differing perspectives of students. For example, if a Protestant decided that he wanted to follow the theme of sin in the novel, he will probably see sin differently than a Catholic, Jew, Muslim, Buddhist, or Atheist would. By bringing each of these perspectives together, the student will not only have his own thinking clarified, he will learn even more about the topic that he is studying and trying to apply to life (Rodriguez and Barryman 1018). It is the insight that comes from multiple perspectives of the same topic that, more than anything else, helps empower the student with practical, existential freedom. If, for example, a student is following the theme of relationships and responsibility that is in *The Scarlet Letter* who romanticizes the notion of a one-night-stand and thinks that Hester advocates that type of relationship through her social defiance, he can be challenged by someone else who sees Hester's circumstance and insecurity as advocating against relationships that are not stable and socially sanctioned. In this manner, the second student gives the first student an opportunity to reflect on his beliefs and behavior. The presented option could, if taken, allow for future freedoms to be opened for the student. It is from the interacting with

others based upon what is written in the journals that the students will be able to begin to learn what it takes to navigate reality; that is, they will learn from each other how to incorporate their own readings into their lives.

The Discussions – Learning to Let Learn

Among the tools of learning, paramount is asking questions. For this reason, the teacher should use frequent questions. The questions should come from the teacher's journal. Students should be able to see where the questions came from and the context in which they were created. By doing this, students will be able to see not only how the teacher formulated the question, but why the questions were made in the first place. Above all, these questions should stem from a teacher's desire to learn. Going back to the example of the relationship between Pearl and Chillingworth, at the end of the novel, Chillingworth gives a considerable fortune to Pearl (i: 261). If I were the teacher, I could ask my students some of the following questions in order to help them see how I am making meaning: If Chillingworth was robbed from being a father, why would he bestow all he has on the very child that he was deprived of having? I have been wronged before, do I have the fortitude to bless in such an abundant manner the child of the man who wronged me? *The Bible* often says that God will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, how does Chillingworth's action respond to that idea?

As we discussed already, the function of a teacher is to learn in public, but in order to do this, the teacher must have a good idea of what it is she wishes to learn. Learning about the course material, learning about the students, and learning about the proper reactions between students and teachers are all worthwhile for the teacher. However, like everything in existential education, the most important job for the teacher

is to learn about herself. Rather than learning everything in the seclusion of an office and then presenting the findings to the students via a lecture, the existential teacher will engage the class with a specific learning project and show how that project intersects with her life. The teacher should let the class know of her questions and begin to work through those questions in front of and with the class. In this manner, the students are not positioned to be receptacles to receive knowledge, but as individuals to engage the teacher's world. The teacher's research should be at the forefront of the teaching. In this mode of teaching, research and teaching are really the same thing. This mode of discussion allows the students to see the teacher learn, and it allows the students to feel the trust from an individual who respects their insights. For the teacher should not be explicitly evaluating the comments, but showing students how to search through the comments in order to find deeper insight. In essence, the teacher must show the students how to figure out which questions will propel the learner further along the Socratic dialectic. This sort of discussion "holds as the aim a mutual search for a deeper and wider understanding. It is shared inquiry. It is not a battle or a debate and there are no opponents" (Parker and Hess 279-80).

However, there also should be a mode of discussion in smaller groups as well. Certain students will try to dominate larger group discussions. By breaking into smaller group discussions, students will be able to have stronger and more intimate discussions amongst themselves. There is also the problem of time; in a large group discussion, very few questions can be explored. By breaking into smaller groups which have been organized through similar themes, students can explore more questions. It is in this setting that they can begin to explore their own questions among their peers. As Parker

and Hess argue, "Discussion is important to understanding, both as a way of knowing and a way of being together. Participation in sustained discussion of powerful questions can be both a mind-expanding and community building endeavor" (273). This insight unfolds the existential purpose of small groups. As students engage in the groups to explore "powerful questions" they can get a wide variety of answers which can expand their minds. It is in the wide variety of answers that allows for a greater variety of existential freedom. With multiple perspectives and multiple answers to a "powerful question" students are now equipped with a greater variety of choices to use in answering their questions. In this way students literally open up the future for other students. By opening up the future for other students through empowering the students with multiple perspectives on "powerful questions," the students will be able to realize the importance of "being together." As Hawthorne was so adamant in conveying, an individual being can only find authentic existence through another being.

Small group discussions should emerge from the students' journals as they explore meaning and the text with one another. These small group discussions are "aimed at developing, exposing, and exploring meanings…the…primary purpose…[is] to reveal [the world] with greater clarity and nuance…the student is exploring not what to do so much as whom to be" (Parker and Hess 282). The temptation amid traditional literature classrooms it to engage in a traditional textual analysis. The work is studied as a piece of art for art's sake. This must be avoided. As Parker and Hess explain, the work of art is to "reveal [the world]" and show the student whom to be. The "powerful questions" that Parker and Hess talk about are what will open up the world. Literature, then, in existential education is not a piece of art that should be admired or understood, it is a way for the

students to enter their world and the world of others. Small group discussions are a means to allow more ways of entering the world to emerge. As each individual within the group speaks and shares his or her own perspective, those perspectives can enhance the understanding of the other group members and show them new ways to approach the world.

In addition to new ways of opening the world, the differing perspectives can help the student realize why she thought of her questions and insights in the first place. As Louise Rosenblatt argues, "When students share responses to transactions with the same text, they can learn how their evocations from the same signs differ, can return to the text to discover their own habits of selection and synthesis, and can become aware of, and critical of, their own processes as readers" (28). Through opening one's self to the Other, the exchange of ideas will not only convey new information but will act as a manner in which the individual can gain clarification about her own judgments and choices. This clarification can then help the student make choices about her own mode of being. For example, if one student is convinced that Hester, as an adulteress, is a poor role model, another student can show all the points in the text where Hester is shown to be charitable, selfless, and genuinely concerned about the welfare of those less-fortunate than herself. If the first student is honest with himself, he can ask what it is about Hester that led him to pass her off as a poor role model. If it was simply the act of adultery, that student should reflect upon what in his life or beliefs led him to associate one act of adultery to define an individual's entire character. This reflection can then allow the student to reject, modify, or confirm and take responsibility for his initial beliefs.

Group discussion, then, becomes yet another mode of self-discovery and learning. However, it is imperative that after these discussions, students are given time to write in their journals in order to solidify the meaning they explored in the discussion and write down new questions. During this time, the teacher will be doing the same. In this manner, both teacher and student become learners together. They all explore what they believe and who they are.

By the end of the book, it is doubtful that the students will have answered all of their questions. If discussion has gone well, students will ask more questions than they were able to answer. It is at this time that students must begin a project.

The Projects

Because more thinking and application can be shown in papers and projects, teacher should avoid giving quizzes and tests that contain simple fill in the blank, matching, or multiple choice questions. Papers are the preferred method for assessment in existential classrooms, for they allow students the needed time to explore their thoughts and commit those thoughts to a creative project. It is possible for students to develop non-traditional projects to reflect their learning; the problem with non-traditional projects such as art pieces would be that the instructor might not be qualified to assess those media and could not give good feedback. However, that does not mean that the professor should ban them outright, for "in an existentialist education the emphasis is not on scholarly debate, but on creation; that is, one can create ideas relevant to one's own needs and interests" (Ozmon and Craver 206). If a student approaches the professor with a plan and shows how the plan meets the desired outcome of the project, the project should be strongly considered. Above all, the teacher needs to make sure that the student is given

ample space in order to find the medium that will allow him to find a way to create meaning from the questions and ideas that the project prompts. However, because there are standards that must be fulfilled in most courses to maintain accreditation, such as number of pages written in a paper for any given class, those practical considerations and boundaries must also be honored. This does not mean that the teacher and student cannot discuss how those parameters will be met. For example, if a student wishes to create a film exploring the emotions of the final scaffold scene of *The Scarlet Letter*, the student should write a paper analyzing and reflecting on the final product. Rather than analyzing the text of the novel, the student can analyze the creative process and her creative decisions that led to her final project. By doing this, the page count is able to be maintained, and the student is able to find a creative outlet that helps her find personal meaning.

Overall, projects should focus on letting the students make applications with what they have learned and continue their own learning. Because so much of the existential approach is fundamentally creative and exploratory in nature, the teacher needs to stress that making personal applications of learned material is more than simply cataloging what the class did or what the student found interesting. Neither a catalog of activities nor an expression of interest are sufficient to bring about an authentic life. In other words, an unreflective, uncreative process will never produce results sufficient to bring about a change in being. Because even the class projects have the ability to bring a change in being and open up new futures and possibilities, students need to feel personal responsibility for their work. By joining the projects to the journals, the teacher can take a

crucial step in helping the students maintain a project that ultimately benefits them and their individual life projects.

Because of these considerations, papers and projects should not be simply assigned en masse and then become due over a weekend. Papers need to go through the same process of discussion and reflection as the rest of the class. These discussions are not like traditional brain-storming sessions, but these discussions are conversations that allow students to explore life meaning within the perspectives of the groups and the text. Drafts of the projects should be due well before the final projects are due in order to give the student opportunities to present and discuss his ideas within his learning community. The community's perspective on the project is not to check the grammatical or lower-order mechanics of the paper. Rather, the group helps the author navigate implications of her idea. By seeing the various interpretations of her idea, the student can see the many ways her idea can open possibilities and futures for her. For example, if the student is writing a paper about Hester's desire for Pearl to experience suffering in order to humanize her, the group and can explore ethical and practical implications of a mother letting her daughter experience suffering. Perhaps out of this conversation the student can see if and how she would actually incorporate those ideas into her life. Thus group members help the student expand her possibilities, and with more possibilities and futures opened for her through the ideas of her group members, her existential freedom is also increased. Only after her group discusses her project and she has had time to revise or add to it should it be turned in for assessment.

The Assessment

Within institutionalized education, teachers cannot ignore assessment, nor can they ignore grades. However, that does not mean that grades must hinder existential learning experiences. Teachers are under obligation to look for and grade students on their achievement of certain criteria set by department, university, and accreditation boards. However, teachers can largely decide how they will evaluate those criteria. In order to bring the assessment into alignment with an existential approach, two practices need to be observed: allow students to help with the creation of assessment practices and always assess with the view to help students integrate their learning into their lives.

Instead of working assessment standards out alone, the teacher should approach the problem with the students. Collectively, the teacher and students can work out the grading schemas and class administration. Just as all classes are not the same, a uniform syllabus will not work with every class. In determining assessment criteria, the teacher should be aware of the obligation he is under and the nature and character of the community of learners he must deal with. By showing the class how he navigates the (supposedly) competing interests of the students and the standards makers, he can show the class learning in public. Creating the standards of assessment with the class also allows the students to take responsibility for their ideas and choices. As they see the demands that must be met from the university or accreditation boards, they can make informed choices about what the class can do in order to fulfill those standards. Once the students help to make those choices, they are empowered to take responsibility for their choices that will affect them in real ways. Through this dialogue of assessment, the

teacher is opening possible futures for the students that can increase their "existential possibilities."

When standards are made, all assessment from the teacher should be with the focus of helping the students create more meaning and make more connections between the content and their lived experience and not on trying "to separate the sheep from the goats" (Bain 152). For this reason, the teacher needs to be involved in what the student knows and the learning journey that the student has undergone. In order to make assessment about learning, the teacher must explore the students' "ambitions, their approaches to and conceptions of learning, the ways they reasoned, the mental modes they brought with them, their temperaments, their habits of the heart and mind, and the daily matters that occupied their attention" (Bain 157). In other words, the teacher must know the individual. Assessment in existential education is never about how well an abstract ideal was performed; rather, the existential assessment is about how well an individual was able to find personal meaning in the course content and apply it to a lived experience. A practical way for teachers to find out how the students integrate the learning into their lives is to gather the students' journals at the same time the final project is gathered. The teacher can then evaluate the project based upon the information found within the journal. In assessing the project, the teacher should always refer back to the journal and the student's own thinking. Following the standards of assessment that the class set up, the teacher should always point the student back to his or her own thoughts and ideas as found within the journals. Questions are the greatest help for the teacher in this area. The teacher can ask questions that point to the connections that the student is trying to make and, through those questions, invite the student to reflect on those

connections to reexamine the assumptions being made to either reinforce the connection, alter it, or discard it. In this manner, as the teacher asks evaluative questions about the project, she can always have the students' own concerns and meaning making attempts in mind. In this manner "grades [represent] an assessment of students' thinking, not whether they [meet] some arbitrary rule" (Bain 155). More importantly than the grade, the assessment itself will always remain focused on the individual instead of the abstract concept or standard.

Conclusion

By keeping the students' own meaning making attempts at the forefront of their education, the students will be able to see that their own learning is what is at stake in the classroom. The teacher's learning in public is simply a vehicle to demonstrate, model, or show the students how to navigate a discussion landscape and begin to build meaning though the cycle of discussion, question, and reflection. As students see this and respond to this, they will see that the only thing that the class teaches is how to learn. This entails owning the ideas that one has and the realization that those ideas, and the insights that one gets to those ideas, are largely found through the Other. With this realization, the student is equipped to engage the many perspectives in the world in order to increase her existential freedom and construct an authentic self.

Works Cited

Aho, Kevin. *Heidegger's Neglect of the Body.* Buffalo: SU New York P, 2009. Print.

Astrov, Vladimir. "Hawthorne and Dostoevski as Explorers of the Human Conscience." *The New England Quarterly* 15.2 (1942): 296-319. *JSTOR*. Web. 10 September 2012.

Bain, Ken. *What the Best College Teachers Do.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2004. Print.

Barnes, Hazel E. *An Existentialist Ethics.* New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1967. Print.

Borges, Jorges Luis. "Nathaniel Hawthorne." *The American Renaissance*. Ed. Harold Bloom. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Pub, 2004. 77-94. Print.

Bruneau, Jean. "Existentialism and the American Novel." *Yale French Studies* 1 (1948): 66-72. *JSTOR*. Web. 1 Oct. 2013.

Buber, Martin. "Elements of the Interhuman." *Models of Man.* Ed. Paul Nash. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1968. 440-46. Print.

---. *I and Thou.* Trans. Ronald Gregor Smith. New York: Scribner Classics, 2000. Print.

---. "Teaching and Deed." *Models of Man.* Ed. Paul Nash. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1968. 456-58. Print.

Budick, Emily Miller. "Perplexity, Sympathy, and the Question of the Human: A Reading of *The Marble Faun*." *The Cambridge Companion to Nathaniel Hawthorne.* Ed. Richard H. Millington. New York: Cambridge UP, 2004. 230-50. Print.

Buell, Lawrence. *Literary Transcendentalism: Style and Vision in the American Renaissance.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1973. Print.

Calhoun, Richard James. "Existentialism, Phenomenology, and Literary Theory." *South Atlantic Bulletin* 28.4 (1963): 4-8. *JSTOR.* Web. 9 Oct 2012.

Camus, Albert. *The Fall.* Trans. Justin O'Brien. New York: Vintage International, 1984. Print.

---. "Herman Melville" *Lyrical and Critical Essays.* Trans. Ellen Conroy Kennedy. New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1968. 288-94. Print.

---. *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays.* Trans. Justin O'Brien. New York: Vintage International, 1983. Print.

---.*The Rebel.* Trans. Anthony Bower. New York: Vintage Books, 1956. Print.

---. *The Stranger*. Trans. Stuart Gilbert. New York: Vintage Books, 1946. Print.

Chai, Leon. *The Romantic Foundations of the American Renaissance.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1987. Print.

Chase, Richard. *The American Novel and Its Tradition.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1957. Print.

Cheyfitz, Eric "The Irresistibleness of Great Literature: Reconstructing Hawthorne's Politics." *American Literary History* 6.3 (1994): 539-558. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Oct. 2013.

Coale, Samuel Chase. *Entanglements of Nathaniel Hawthorne: Haunted Minds and Ambiguous Approaches*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2011. Print.

Cohen, B. Bernard. Preface. *The Recognition of Nathaniel Hawthorne*. Ann Arbor, MI: U Michigan P, 1969. Print.

Crane, Gregg. *The Cambridge Introduction to the Nineteenth Century American Novel.* New York: Cambridge UP, 2007. Print.

Crews, Frederick. "A New Reading of *The Blithedale Romance.*" *American literature* 29.2 (1957):147-70. *Academic Search Premiere.* Web. 18 Dec. 2013.

---. *Sins of the Fathers: Hawthorne's Psychological Themes.* Berkeley: U California P, 1989. Print.

Davis, Clark. *Hawthorne's Shyness: Ethics, Politics, and the Question of Engagement.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2005. Print.

Davis, Theo. *Formalism, Experience, and the Making of American Literature in the Nineteenth Century.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. Print.

de Beauvoir, Simone. *Ethics of Ambiguity.* Trans. Bernard Frechtman. New York: Citadel Press, 1948. Print.

Detmer, David. "Sartre on Freedom and Education." *Sartre Studies International* 11 (2005): 78- 90. *Academic Search Premiere*. Web. 8 May 2012.

Donoghue, Denis. "Religion and American Fiction." *Religion and Literature* 38.1 (2006): 31-51. *JSTOR*. Web. 8 May 2012.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. "Notes from Underground." *Great Short Works of Fyodor Dostoevsky*. Trans. David Magarshack. New York: Perennial Classics, 2004. 261-378. Print.

Dryden, Edgar A. *Nathaniel Hawthorne: The Poetics of Imagination*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1977. Print.

Duyckinck, Evert Augustus. "Nathaniel Hawthorne." *The Recognition of Nathaniel Hawthorne*. Ed. B. Bernard Cohen. Ann Arbor, MI: U Michigan P, 1969. 5-9. Print.

Eliot, T.S. "The Hawthorne Aspect." *The Recognition of Nathaniel Hawthorne*. Ed. B. Bernard Cohen. Ann Arbor, MI: U Michigan P, 1969. 157-62. Print.

Elkins, Marilyn. "Text, Subtext, Context, and Self: Getting Beyond Student Myopia." *Teaching Ideas for University English: What Really Works*. Eds. Patricia M. Gantt

and Lynn L. Meeks. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Pub. 2004. 169-76. Print.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "The American Scholar." *Emerson: Essays and Lectures*. Ed. Joel Porte. New York: Library of America, 1983. 51-71. Print.

---. "The Lord's Supper." *Emerson: Essays and Lectures*. Ed. Joel Porte. New York: Library of America, 1983. 1129-40. Print.

---. "Nature." *Emerson: Essays and Lectures*. Ed. Joel Porte. New York: Library of America, 1983. 9-11. Print.

---. "The Over-Soul." *Emerson: Essays and Lectures*. Ed. Joel Porte. New York: Library of America, 1983. 383-400. Print.

---. "Self-Reliance." *Emerson: Essays and Lectures*. Ed. Joel Porte. New York: Library of America, 1983. 257-82. Print.

Fairbanks, Henry G. "Sin, Free Will, and 'Pessimism' in Hawthorne." *PMLA* 71.5 (Dec. 1956): 975-989. *JSTOR.* Web. 20 Aug. 2012.

Fitzpatrick, Martin. "'To a Practiced Touch': Miles Coverdale and Hawthorne's Irony." *American Transcendental Quarterly* 14.1 (2000): 27-46. *ProQuest*. Web. 27 June 2013.

Fluck, Winfried. "'The American Romance' and the Changing Functions of the Imaginary." *New Literary History* 27.3 (1996): 415-457. *JSTOR.* Web. 8 May 2012.

Flynn, Erin E. "Intellectual Intuition in Emerson and the Early German Romantics." *Philosophical Forum* 40.3 (2009): 367-89. *Academic Search Premier.* Web. 10 March 2014.

Fuller, Randall. “Hawthorne and War,” *The New England Quarterly* 80.4 (2007): 655-686. *JSTOR*. Web. 31 May 2012.

Gilmore, Michael T. “The Artist and the Marketplace in *The House of the Seven Gables*.” *ELH* 48.1 (1981): 172-89. *JSTOR.* Web. 17 February 2014.

Glenn, Paul F. “The Politics of Truth: Power in Nietzsche’s Epistemology.” *Political Research Quarterly* 57.4 (2004): 573-583. *Academic Search Premiere.* Web. April 3, 2013.

Golomb, Jacob. *In Search of Authenticity: From Kierkegaard to Camus.* London: Routledge, 1995. Print.

Gregory, Maughn. “The Perils of Rationality: Nietzsche, Pierce, and Education.” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 33.1 (2001): 23-34. *Academic Search Premier.* Web. April 3, 2013.

Harrison, Les. *The Temple and the Forum: The American Museum and Cultural Authority in Hawthorne, Melville, Stowe, and Whitman.* Tuscaloosa, AL: U Alabama P, 2007. Print.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The American Claimant Manuscripts.* Eds. Edward H Davidson, Claude M. Simpson, and L. Neal Smith. Columbus, OH: Ohio State UP, 1977. Print. Vol. xii of *The Centenary Edition of The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne.* William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce, and Claude M. Simpson, gen. eds. 23 vols. 1962-95.

---. *American Notebooks.* Ed. Claude M Simpson. Columbus, OH: Ohio State UP, 1972. Print. Vol. viii of *The Centenary Edition of The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne.*

William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce, and Claude M. Simpson, gen. eds. 23 vols. 1962-95.

---. *The Blithedale Romance.* Ed. Fredson Bowers. Columbus, OH: Ohio State UP, 1964. Print. Vol. iii of *The Centenary Edition of The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne.* William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce, and Claude M. Simpson, gen. eds. 23 vols. 1962-95.

--. *French and Italian Notebooks.* Ed. Thomas Woodson. Columbus, OH: Ohio State UP, 1980. Print. Vol. xiv of *The Centenary Edition of The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne.* William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce, Claude M. Simpson, and Thomas Woodson gen. eds. 23 vols. 1962-95.

---. *The House of the Seven Gables.* Ed. Fredson Bowers. Columbus, OH: Ohio State UP, 1965. Print. Vol. ii of *The Centenary Edition of The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne.* William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce, and Claude M. Simpson, gen. eds. 23 vols. 1962-95.

---. *The Letters, 1813-1843*. Ed. Thomas Woodson. Columbus, OH: Ohio State UP, 1989. Print. Vol. xv of *The Centenary Edition of The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne.* William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce, Claude M. Simpson, and Thomas Woodson gen. eds. 23 vols. 1962-95.

---. *The Marble Faun: or The Romance of Monte Beni*. Ed. Fredson Bowers. Columbus, OH: Ohio State UP, 1968. Print. Vol. iv of *The Centenary Edition of The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne.* William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce, Claude M. Simpson, and Matthew J. Bruccoli gen. eds. 23 vols. 1962-95.

--. *Mosses from an Old Manse.* Ed. J. Donald Crowley. Columbus, OH: Ohio State UP, 1974. Print. Vol. x of *The Centenary Edition of The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne.* William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce, and Claude M. Simpson, gen. eds. 23 vols. 1962-95.

---. *The Scarlet Letter.* Ed. Fredson Bowers. Columbus, OH: Ohio State UP, 1962. Print. Vol. i of *The Centenary Edition of The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne.* William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce, and Claude M. Simpson, gen. eds. 23 vols. 1962-95.

---. *The Snow Image and Uncollected Tales.* Ed. J. Donald Crowley. Columbus, OH: Ohio State UP, 1974. Print. Vol. xi of *The Centenary Edition of The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne.* William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce, and Claude M. Simpson, gen. eds. 23 vols. 1962-95.

---. *Twice-Told Tales*. Ed. J. Donald Crowley. Columbus, OH: Ohio State UP, 1974. Print. Vol. ix of *The Centenary Edition of The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne.* William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce, and Claude M. Simpson, gen. eds. 23 vols. 1962-95.

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time.* Trans. John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper Perennial, 1962. Print.

---. *Being and Truth.* Trans. John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 2010. Print.

---. "On the Essence of Truth." *Basic Writings.* Ed. David Farrell Krell. London: Harper Perennial, 1993. 111-138. Print.

---. "The Origin of the Work of Art." *Basic Writings.* Ed. David Farrell Krell. London: Harper Perennial, 1993. 139-212. Print.

Hick, John. “Soul-Making Theodicy.” *God Matters: Readings in the Philosophy of Religion.* Eds. Raymond Martin and Christopher Bernard. New York: Longman. 265-76. Print.

Holifield, E. Brooks. *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2003. Print.

Hummel, Hermann. “Emerson and Nietzsche.” *The New England Quarterly* 19.1 (1946): 63-84. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 Sept 2012.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978. Print.

Jenkins, Scott. “Nietzsche’s Questions Concerning the Will to Truth.” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 50.2 (2012): 265-89. *Academic Search Premiere*. Web. 18 April 2013.

Johanyak, Debrah. “Romanticism’s Fallen Edens: The Malignant Contributions of Hawthorne’s Literary Landscapes.” *CLA Journal* 42.3 (1999): 353-64. *Academic Search Premiere*. Web. 23 Aug. 2013

Joseph. Laurice M. “The Role of Self-Monitoring in Literacy Learning.” *Metacognition in Literacy Learning: Theory, Assessment, Instruction, and Professional Development* Eds. Susan E. Israel, Cathy C. Block, Kathryn L. Bauserman, and Kathryn. Kinnucan-Welsch. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005. 199-214. Print.

Kakkori, Leena and Rauno Huttunen. “The Sartre-Heidegger Controversy on Humanism and the Concept of Man in Education.” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 44.4 (2012): 351-64. *Academic Search Premiere.* Web. 12 Oct. 2013.

Kelley, James. “Leading Students down Dark Paths: How Teachers Talk about Nathaniel Hawthorne’s ‘Young Goodman Brown.’” *Teaching American Literature: A Journal of Theory and Practice* 4.3 (2011): 63-85. Web. 8 May 2012.

Kelly, Sean. “Hawthorne’s ‘Material Ghosts’: Photographic Realism and Liminal Selfhood in *The House of the Seven Gables.*” *Papers on Language and Literature* 47.3 (2011): 227- 260. *Academic Search Premiere*. Web. 18 May 2012.

Kierkegaard, Soren. *Fear and Trembling* and *The Sickness Unto Death.* Trans. Walter Lowrie. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1968. Print.

---. *Philosophical Fragments.* Trans. David Swenson and Howard V. Hong. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1974. Print.

---. “From *On My Work as an Author* and *The Point of View for My Work as an Author.” The Essential Kierkegaard.* Eds. Howard V Hong and Edna H Hong. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2000. 449-81. Print.

Manning, Clarence Augustus. “Hawthorne and Dostoyevsky,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 14.41 (1936): 417-24. *JSTOR*. Web. 10 September 2012.

Marks, Barry A. “The Origin of Original Sin in Hawthorne’s Fiction.” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 12.4 (1960): 359-62. *JSTOR*. Web. 19 August 2013.

Martin, Terence. *Nathaniel Hawthorne* revised edition. Boston: Twayne Pub, 1983. Print.

Matthiessen, F.O. *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman.* New York: Barnes and Noble, 2009. Print.

Melville, Herman. “Hawthorne and His *Mosses*.” *The Recognition of Nathaniel Hawthorne*. Ed. B. Bernard Cohen. Ann Arbor, MI: U Michigan P, 1969. 29-41. Print.

McCullen, Joseph T. and John C. Guilds. "The Unpardonable Sin in Hawthorne: A Re-Examination." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 15.3 (Fall 1960): 221-237. *JSTOR.* Web. 20 Dec. 2013.

Milder, Robert. "Beautiful Illusions: Hawthorne and the Site of Moral Law." *Nathaniel Hawthorne Review* 33.2 (2007): 1-23. *Gale Cengage.* Web. April 3, 2013.

---."The Other Hawthorne." *The New England Quarterly* 81.4 (2008): 559-595. *JSTOR.* Web. 18 May 2012.

Miller, J. Hillis. *Hawthorne and History: Defacing It.* Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1991. Print.

More, Paul Elmer. "The Solitude of Nathaniel Hawthorne." *The Recognition of Nathaniel Hawthorne*. Ed. B. Bernard Cohen. Ann Arbor, MI: U Michigan P, 1969. 142-45. Print.

Monnet, Agnieszka Soltysik. *The Poetics and Politics of the America Gothic: Gender and Slavery in Nineteenth-Century American Literature.* Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010. Print.

Morris, Van Cleve. *Existentialism in Education: What it Means.* New York: Harper & Row, 1966, Print.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*. Trans. Thomas Common. New York: Barnes and Noble, 2008. Print.

---. *The Genealogy of Morals.* Trans. Horace B. Samuel. Mineola, NY: Dover, 2003. Print.

---. *Human, All Too Human/Beyond Good and Evil.* Trans. Helen Zimmern and Paul V. Cohn. London: Wordsworth Classics, 2008. Print.

---. “On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense.” Web. 20 March 2014. <http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl201/modules/Philosophers/Nietzsche/Truth_and_Lie_in_an_Extra-Moral_Sense.htm>.

---. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.* Trans. Clancy Martin. New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2005. Print.

---. *Twilight of the Idols.*Trans. R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Penguin, 1990. Print.

Normand, Jean. *Nathaniel Hawthorne: An Approach to an Analysis of Artistic Creation.* Trans. Derek Coltman. Cleveland, OH: Case Western Reserve UP, 1970. Print.

Ozmon, Howard and Samuel M Craver. *Philosophical Foundations of Education.* Columbus: Merrill Publishing, 1986. Print.

Parker, Walter C. and Diana Hess. “Teaching with and for Discussion.” *Teaching and Teacher Education* 17 (2001): 273-89. *JSTOR*. 12 Oct. 2013.

Perry, Dennis. “Fairy precincts of the real: recovering the miraculous in Hawthorne's The Marble Faun.” *Nathaniel Hawthorne Review* 36.2 (Fall 2010): 70-93. *Gale Cengage Literature Resource Center.* Web. 17 Dec. 2013.

Person, Leland S. “Bibliographic Essay: Hawthorne and History.” *A Historical Guide to Nathaniel Hawthorne.* Ed. Larry J Reynolds. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001. 183-200. Print.

Pfister, Joel. “Hawthorne as Cultural Theorist.” *The Cambridge Companion to Nathaniel Hawthorne*. Ed. Richard H. Millington. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 35-59. Print.

Plato. “Apology.” *The Trial and Death of Socrates: Four Dialogues.* Trans. Benjamin Jowett. New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1992. 19-41. Print.

Poe, Edgar Allen. “The Philosophy of Composition.” *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. 2nd ed. New York: WW Norton, 2010. 639-47. Print.

---. “Review of Twice-Told Tales.” *The Recognition of Nathaniel Hawthorne*. Ed. B. Bernard Cohen. Ann Arbor, MI: U Michigan P, 1969. 12-17. Print.

Porte, Joel. *The Romance in America: Studies in Cooper, Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, and James.* Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1969. Print.

Resetarits, C.R. "Experiments in Sex, Science, Gender, and Genre: Hawthorne’s ‘Dr.Heidegger’s Experiment,’ ‘The Birthmark,’ and ‘Rappaccini’s Daughter.” *Literary Imagination* 14.2 (2012): 178-193. *Oxford UP Journals*. Web. 20 Oct. 2013.

Reynolds, David S. *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville.* New York: Oxford UP, 1988. Print.

Reynolds, Larry J. *Righteous Violence: Revolution, Slavery, and the American Renaissance.* Athens, GA: U Georgia P, 2011. Print.

Risko, Victoria J., Roskos, Kathleen, and Vukelich, Carol. “Reflection and the Self-Analytic Turn of Mind: Toward More Robust Instruction in Teacher Education.” *Metacognition in Literacy Learning: Theory, Assessment, Instruction, and Professional Development* Eds. Susan E. Israel, Cathy C. Block, Kathryn L. Bauserman, and Kathryn. Kinnucan-Welsch. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005. 315-33. Print.

Rodriguez, Alberto J. and Berryman, Chad. “Using Sociotransformative Constructivism to Teach for Understanding in a Diverse Classroom: A Beginning Teacher’s

Journey." *American Educational Research Journal* 39.4 (2002): 1017-1045. *Academic Search Premiere.* Web. 8 May 2012.

Rosenblatt, Louise. *Making Meaning with Texts.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005. Print.

Rosenthal, Bernard. "American Romantics View Nature as a Metaphor for the Self." *American Romanticism.* Ed. Jennifer A. Hurley. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2000. 84-91. Print.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness.* Trans. Hazel Barnes. New York, Washington Square Press, 1992. Print.

---. "The Humanism of Existentialism." *Essays in Existentialism.* Ed. Wade Baskin. New York: Citadel Press, 1993. 31-62. Print.

---*No Exit and Three Other Plays.* New York: Vintage International, 1989. Print.

---. "On *The Sound and the Fury*: Time in the Work of Faulkner." Trans. Annette Michelson. New York: Collier Books, 1967. 84-93. Print.

--. "William Faulkner's *Sartoris*" *Literary and Philosophical Essays.* Trans. Annette Michelson. New York: Collier Books, 1967. 78-83. Print.

Shiner, Roger A. "The Ontological Necessity of Sin in Tillich's Theology." *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 15.2 (1977): 215-25. *Proquest*. Web. 10 Aug 2013.

Singleton, Charles S. "Dante's Allegory." *Speculum* 25.1 (1950): 78-86. *JSTOR.* Web. 17 February 2014.

Stack, George. "Emerson and Nietzsche: Fate and Existence." *Nineteenth Century Prose* 19.1 (1991): 1-11. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 11 September 2012.

Staebler, Warren. “American Romanticism Challenged the Values of America.” *American Romanticism.* Ed. Jennifer A. Hurley. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2000. 52-59. Print.

Stouck, David and Janet Giltrow. “’A Confused and Doubtful Sound of Voices’: Ironic Contingencies in the Language of Hawthorne’s Romances.” *The Modern Language Review* 92.3 (1997): 559-73. *Academic Search Premiere*. Web. 25 June 2013

Tharpe, Jac. *Nathaniel Hawthorne: Identity and Knowledge.* Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1967. Print.

Thomson, Ian. *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005. Print.

---. *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011. Print.

---. “Heidegger’s Perfectionist Philosophy of Education in *Being and Time.*” *Continental Philosophy Review* 37 (2004): 439-67. *Academic Search Premiere*. Web. 8 May 2012.

Tillich, Paul. *The Courage to Be.* New Haven: Yale UP, 1952. Print.

---. *The Essential Tillich: An Anthology of the Writings of Paul Tillich.* Ed. F. Forrester Church. New York: Macmillan, 1987. Print.

Vasquez, Mark G. Introduction. *Authority and Reform: Religious and Educational Discourses in Nineteenth Century New England Literature.* Knoxville, TN: U Tennessee P, 2003. Print.

Waggoner, Hyatt H. “Art and Belief.” *Hawthorne Centenary Essays.* Ed. Roy Harvey Pearce. Columbus, OH: Ohio State UP, 1964. 197-95. Web. 20 March 2014. <http://hdl.handle.net/1811/24662>.

---. “From *Nathaniel Hawthorne.” The Recognition of Nathaniel Hawthorne*. Ed. B. Bernard Cohen. Ann Arbor, MI: U Michigan P, 1969. 239-43. Print.

Walker, James L. *Philosophy of Egosim.* 1996. Web. 20 March 2014. <http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/coldoffthepresses/walker/egoism.html>.

Weldon, Roberta. *Hawthorne, Gender, and Death: Christianity and Its Discontents.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Print.

Wineapple, Brenda. *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Life.* New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2003. Print.