

HAWTHORNE'S ISOLATE AND THE HOLY HEARTH

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the major themes throughout the works of Nathaniel Hawthorne portrays an image of men and women who are physically and morally isolated from the world. So extensive was Hawthorne's interest in this problem that it emerges as a distinct concern in his philosophy.

This thesis will discuss the process, as put forth by Hawthorne, by which an individual is drawn apart from humanity and then will describe the only solution the author saw for the isolated individual. Only male isolates can be brought back to the world, and only love for a pure woman can accomplish this act.

Basic definitions and explanations of isolation of the heart or of the intellect will be given and supported by specific examples; the means of redemption will also be explained. Orientation to the life of Hawthorne will be provided, since the entire concept of isolation and redemption seemingly evolved from the author's personal experience and environment.

Characters other than those involved in this concept of isolation and salvation will be approached only as they serve to more clearly delineate and clarify this particular aspect of Hawthorne's philosophy.

CHAPTER II
ISOLATION AND SIN

To understand the works of Hawthorne, one must first project himself into the religious atmosphere of early nineteenth-century New England. The influence of the Puritans had imbued the religious sentiment with dark and somber hues. It encouraged the individual to look to himself, to see his spiritual condition, and to guard it carefully. Calvinistic influence spread the view that man is innately depraved, that man's tendency is toward sin and not away from it. Out of this atmosphere, as seen in "A Virtuoso's Collection," came Hawthorne's: "I gazed into that fire,--which, symbolically, was the origin of all that was bright and glorious in the soul of man,--and in the midst of it, behold, a little reptile, sporting with evident enjoyment of fervid heat!"¹

Hawthorne's beliefs embrace more than just Puritanism and Calvinism; his view that man's innate depravity reveals itself most frequently in the self-centered pride of the individual is as old as Christianity itself.² The importance of this belief in his thinking is revealed in the fact that most of the male and many of the female characters of his works suffer in varying degrees from this weakness of pride. These are the isolated people of his works; the scientists,

¹Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Complete Works, ed. George Parsons Lathrop (Boston, 1886), II, 550; hereafter cited as Works.

²Malcolm Cowley, "Hawthorne in the Looking Glass," Saturday Review, LVI (August 1948), 551.

humanitarians, artists, and a host of others who live apart from the majority of humanity.

Further study of this concept shows that Hawthorne developed, probably from his reading of seventeenth century literature,³ a very clear-cut philosophy concerning the head and the heart of man. Man is a being made up of these two basic parts. Furthermore, man's salvation from the sin of pride and isolation is to be found in a balance between the development of his head and the development of his heart.⁴ If one or the other of these parts takes precedence over the other, pride will result in the advanced accomplishments of that part, and this pride will isolate the individual from the chain of humanity. It is an act which the individual commits and for which the individual must be held responsible; man has the responsibility to look to his own spiritual condition.

As Chester Eisinger points out, this isolation is an "abnormal" condition;⁵ for, as Hawthorne reveals in The House of Seven Gables, a "sympathy or magnetism among human beings is more subtile and universal than we think; it exists, indeed, among different classes of organized life, and vibrates from one to another."⁶ James W.

³ Francis Otto Matthiessen, American Renaissance, Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman (New York, 1941), pp. 305-308.

⁴ Chester E. Eisinger, "Hawthorne as Champion of the Middle Way," New England Quarterly, XXVII (March 1954), 27-52.

⁵ Eisinger, pp. 27-52.

⁶ Works, III, 209.

Mathews aptly reveals this concept in relation to the older "Chain of Being" philosophy.⁷ Hawthorne's "Chain of Being" is easily visualized as a horizontal chain which emphasizes the likenesses between men rather than the differences. Hawthorne stresses man's need to conform to this linkage. Chaos is the result of trying to transcend these bounds, which are appointed by Providence.⁸ The result of pride, the attempt breaks ties which should exist and leaves the individual open to destruction.

The disintegration of those who fail to balance their intellect and reason with their heart and passion follows a definite and discernible pattern. All isolated individuals follow the same steps, though all do not complete the pattern. There are five possible steps: (1) The individual first elevates his intellect or passions to a triumphant position over the opposite part of his being. (2) This leads to a monomania or consuming drive to which all other human values are sacrificed. (3) The sin then manifests itself in pride, which severs the individual from common human sympathies, leaving him isolated from mankind. (4) The sinner now, having lost his regard for the sanctity of other human beings, feels free to use them for his purposes. (5) The final projection of this process

⁷"Hawthorne and the Chain of Being," Modern Language Quarterly, XIX (December 1957), 284.

⁸Mathews, p. 283.

is an attempt by the sinner to usurp the role of God.⁹

Ethan Brand is perhaps the "classic example" of the Hawthornesque isolate. Thus, to develop a definition of the sin of pride and isolation, one should begin the study of individual cases with him. Ethan's is the sin resulting from an elevated intellect; and when the reader first sees him, he is already a tormented soul. Through Ethan's memory the reader learns of the time when the lime-burner felt love and sympathy for the world about him, but "then ensued that vast intellectual development, which, in its progress, disturbed the counterpoise between his mind and his heart."¹⁰ He had been an ordinary man, but then came the desire to find the Unpardonable Sin. The two parts of his being lost their balance when his search demanded vast intellectual powers, and the imbalance thereafter continued:

. . . cultivating his powers to the highest point of which they were susceptible; it had raised him from the level of an uneducated laborer to stand on a star-lit eminence, whither the philosophers of the earth, laden with the lore of the universities, might vainly strive to clamber after him.¹¹

As the process evolved, it became a consuming passion, and all other values in his life were sacrificed to this single and overruling purpose. Pride in accomplishment followed, and this deprived him

⁹ James E. Miller, Jr., "Hawthorne and Melville: The Unpardonable Sin," PMLA, LXX, 1 (March 1955), 95. My listing differs in that Mr. Miller's interpretation of the "Unpardonable Sin" is that of an elevated intellect. More recent criticism shows that it can be either an elevated intellect or an elevated heart.

¹⁰ Works, XIII, 494.

¹¹ Works, XIII, 494.

of all human sympathies. Soon his heart, the other part of his being, was dead.

It had ceased to partake of the universal throb. He had lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity. He was no longer a brother-man, opening the chambers or the dungeons of our common nature by the key of holy sympathy, which gave him a right to share in all its secrets; he was now a cold observer.¹²

Raw native power, now unsupported by moral sympathy, left Ethan open to ultimate degradation. The ideal of his search was forgotten; he had become but a cold observer of the world, and he felt free to commit any wrong. He then imposed his will on another person, without any regard for her body or soul. He used Esther for a "psychological experiment, and wasted, absorbed, and perhaps annihilated her soul, in the process."¹³

Success in manipulating man can lead to only one further degradation--defiance of God. This act, completing the action of the story, brings final destruction to Ethan. It is the only possible ending. Ethan's journey has carried him too far for salvation.

Aylmer of "The Birthmark" and Rappaccini of "Rappaccini's Daughter," too, are men who allow a triumph of the intellect to

¹²Works, XIII, 495.

¹³Works, XIII, 489.

take them apart from man and God and past hope of salvation.¹⁴ Aylmer had "eager aspirations towards the infinite."¹⁵ He married, with a love that was "pure and lofty."¹⁶ But the love of another human being could exist for him only by "intertwining itself with his love of science, and uniting the strength of the latter to his own,"¹⁷ for he had "devoted himself . . . too unreservedly to scientific studies ever to be weaned from them by any second person."¹⁸ His had been a study to find perfection, a study which soon made the small birthmark, a mark of imperfection on his otherwise perfectly beautiful wife, incompatible; for his love could "accept nothing less than perfection nor miserably make itself contented with an earthlier nature than he had dreamed of."¹⁹ Desire to remove this birthmark and create perfection gradually becomes the passion of his life, a "tyrannizing

¹⁴The sin of Aylmer differs somewhat from that of Ethan Brand; for while Ethan intentionally destroys Esther, Aylmer destroys Georgiana unintentionally. Rappaccini's use of his daughter in his experiments corresponds to Aylmer's use of Georgiana in that the consequences are unintentional. His destruction of Giovanni, however, is deliberate and like Ethan Brand's use of Esther. William M. White, in "Hawthorne's Eighteen-Year Cycle: Ethan Brand and Reuben Bourne," which will soon be published in Studies in Short Fiction, reveals the difference in these men when he describes Ethan's as a sin without contrition. Ethan, and eventually Rappaccini, fit this description, while Aylmer and Hollingsworth, who will be discussed later, eventually feel contrition.

¹⁵Works, II, 61.

¹⁶Works, II, 65.

¹⁷Works, II, 47.

¹⁸Works, II, 47.

¹⁹Works, II, 65.

influence."²⁰ Even though he dreams that if he attempts the scientific experiment he will kill his wife, he feels he must continue; for, in truth, the experiment has come to mean more to him than Georgiana. At last he does sacrifice the sanctity of his wife's individuality. In doing so he also defies God, for to create perfection is the privilege of God alone. Thus, Aylmer's attempt is abortive. As the mark disappears, Georgiana dies, and with her goes his hope and future.

Just as Aylmer sacrifices his wife to his monomania, Rappaccini sacrifices his daughter. His too is "a face singularly marked with intellect and cultivation"²¹ He, like Brand and Aylmer, lives in a seclusion apart from mankind, pursuing a personal dream--the creation of plants that nature was unable to develop, the "offspring of his science, of his intellect"²² It is not only the creation of unnatural plants that has resulted from this elevated intellect, however; it is also a transformation of his daughter Beatrice and, eventually, her suitor Giovanni.

'My science and the sympathy between thee and him have so wrought within his system that he now stands apart from common men, as thou dost, daughter of my pride and triumph, from ordinary women. Pass on, then, through the world, most dear to one another and dreadful to all besides!'²³

Rappaccini has violated the sanctity of their individuality

²⁰Works, II, 52.

²¹Works, II, 112.

²²Works, II, 142.

²³Works, II, 146-147.

and destroyed their humanity. And he has done it with pride, like an "artist who should spend his life in achieving a picture or a group of statuary and finally be satisfied with his success."²⁴

The opposite extreme of development from that of Ethan Brand, Aylmer and Rappaccini, however, is equally dangerous. Overdevelopment of the heart also brings pride and monomania and often destruction. Here one can also find many of the characters of Hawthorne, the religious and social fanatics of his works. There is one character, however, who best exemplifies the exalted heart, the person ruled by passion.

Hollingsworth of The Blithedale Romance is a man led by a passionate desire for the reformation of criminals. When the reader first meets him, he has already become a man separated from the world: "his lonely and exclusive object in life had already put him at odds."²⁵ As the narrator points out:

. . . Hollingsworth had a closer friend than you ever 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,--as these men of mighty purpose so invariably do,--he had grown to be the bond-slave Sad, indeed, but by no means unusual: he had taught his benevolence to pour its warm tide exclusively through one channel; so that there was nothing to spare for other great manifestations of love to man²⁶

Already the sin has been manifested in an "all-devouring egotism"²⁷

²⁴Works, II, 146.

²⁵Works, V, 381.

²⁶Works, V, 382.

²⁷Works, V, 400.

which makes him dangerous and even "pernicious to the happiness of those who should be drawn into too intimate a connection with him."²⁸ All of this has come to make him something "not altogether human."²⁹

The inevitable pattern continues, having gone too far already for salvation, and the reader watches as the reformer manipulates his friends according to his monomania. He wins the members of the community to his friendship, waiting for the day when he can make the community itself his own, a puppet for his purposes. He too violates the individuality of another human being when he encourages Zenobia to fall in love with him. Her death is but an anticlimax to his destruction of her pride, the center of her personality. Though he differs from other isolates in not completing the pattern by defying God, he does destroy himself. When he is last seen, he is still alive, but is only the shell of his former self, broken and living in a "childlike"³⁰ vacuum.

Quakers and Puritans also fall under the category of the elevated heart. They allow their passions to completely overrule reason and intelligence. In their fanaticism, the first group teaches men and women to forsake all, including the rights and needs of family, and the second group teaches persecution in the name of religion. Both, in the view of Hawthorne, are sins of the heart.

Although the definition is complete and well exemplified in the art of Hawthorne, its origins in the thinking of Hawthorne are obscure.

²⁸ Works, V, 399.

²⁹ Works, V, 399.

³⁰ Works, V, 594.

Too, only those sinners who are past the possibility of salvation have been studied. How do those men who seem to stand on the edge between sin and salvation fit the presented pattern?

The answer to both questions is found in Hawthorne's concept of the artist and of himself. Artists, frequently found Hawthornesque characters, also fall into the category of isolates, almost without exception. Their pride, a pride of the intellect, a drive to find and capture the ideal, the truth, can best be seen through a comparison of the two most explicit statements made on the subject: "The Prophetic Pictures" and "The Artist of the Beautiful." The former story shows the artist who sins most deeply in his search for perfection. The second story shows the "ideal" artist, who is able to overcome the temptations yet attain his goal. Hawthorne saw himself between these two extremes, but he also saw himself as representative of all men. "I am merely telling what is common to human nature, not what is peculiar to myself."³¹ His resulting writings, then, are an expression of what Herman Melville called the "usable truth," an "apprehension of the absolute condition of present things . . ." and consequent expression of it to "the eye of the man who fears them not."³²

"The Prophetic Pictures" offers Hawthorne's concept of any artist who, in the search of truth, allows his sympathies for mankind to die. Hence, the main character, the artist, is always referred

³¹Quoted in Matthiessen, p. 239.

³²Quoted in Matthiessen, p. 192.

to as "the painter."³³ He is the artist who looks "beneath the exterior. It is his gift--his proudest, but often melancholy one--to see the inmost soul, and, by a power indefinable even to himself, to make it glow or darken upon the canvas" ³⁴ To find the truth, he looks into the "souls" of men. When asked to paint someone, "he fixed his piercing eyes on the applicant, and seemed to look him through and through."³⁵ To create the ideal, the truth, he reproduces what he sees, the soul of the applicant. To find and reproduce this truth is his passion, and he has "no aim--no pleasure--no sympathies--but what were ultimately connected with his art . . . [and] his heart was cold" ³⁶ His art is his downfall, for in it he "uses" people.

This painter, in the course of the story, paints the portraits of two young lovers on the eve of their marriage; and, in doing so, he catches the truth of their beings on canvas. How strange it is, though, that the pictures only vaguely resemble their physical expressions. There is another picture also, one that he shows Elinor. In it Walter is attacking her. The artist is a "prophet" of the future.

The resulting question is whether the painter has done his duty in warning Elinor of her future or whether he has actually been

³³ Mary E. Dichmann, "Hawthorne's 'Prophetic Pictures,'" American Literature, XXII (May 1951), 190.

³⁴ Works, I, 202.

³⁵ Works, I, 194.

³⁶ Works, I, 206.

responsible in precipitating that future, an agent of "Fate."³⁷ The answer is clearly seen within the story. The painter has produced, in result of his passion, and without true regard for his subjects, a "spell of evil influence."³⁸ Walter's material self is eventually molded, by the influence of the picture, into his true or ultimate self--his inner self.³⁹

The most explicit statement of the painter's sin is found in his own apostrophe to art. In it he claims omnipresence, which is God's alone:

'O glorious Art . . . thou art the image of the Creator's own. The innumerable forms, that wander in nothingness, start into being at thy beck. The dead live again. Thou recallest them to their old scenes, and givest their grey shadows the lustre of a better life, at once earthly and immortal. Thou snatchest back the fleeting moments of History . . . canst thou summon the shrouded Future to meet her there? Have I not achieved it? Am I not thy Prophet?'⁴⁰

This speech depicts the artist as he could become. This is one end of the scale, and it has another extreme. The ideal artist is found in "The Artist of the Beautiful." His is also a search for truth, but he finds it in nature. Thus, he violates no one's soul to reach his end.

'I have succeeded,' replied the artist, with a momentary light of triumph in his eyes and a smile of sunshine. Yet steeped in such depth of thought that it was almost sadness. 'Yes, my friends, it is the truth. I have succeeded.'⁴¹

³⁷ Works, I, 210.

³⁸ Works, I, 209.

³⁹ Dichmann, p. 201.

⁴⁰ Works, I, 207.

⁴¹ Works, II, 528.

He achieves his goal; but, though he lives apart, he retains a sympathy for mankind. His countenance is warm, like "sunshine."

He sees a look of scorn in the eyes of Annie, the girl he has loved:

Owen, in the latter stages of his pursuit, had risen out of the region in which such a discovery might have been torture. He knew that the world, whatever praise might be bestowed, could never say the fitting word nor feel the fitting sentiment which should be the perfect recompense of an artist who, symbolizing a lofty moral by a material trifle--converting what was earthly to spiritual gold,--had won the beautiful into his handiwork.⁴²

Owen has successfully combined the ideal and the real by transcending the world while still calling it a friend. Though the world withholds its sympathy from him, he can still look upon it with sad eyes. He has attained what Hawthorne felt is almost impossible for man to obtain by himself: "It is requisite for the ideal artist to possess a force of character that seems hardly compatible with its delicacy; he must keep his faith in himself while the incredulous world assails him with its utter disbelief"⁴³ Owen does this even without the "help and strength"⁴⁴ of the desired Annie. Owen achieves the ultimate beauty, harms no one, and is misunderstood by all; but he is successful in Hawthorne's eyes.

Herman Melville clearly felt the emotional power of Hawthorne's isolates when he recognized them as resulting from personal suffering.⁴⁵ "For tragic power springs not from the mind's recognitions, but from

⁴² Works, II, 532.

⁴³ Works, II, 512.

⁴⁴ Works, II, 517.

⁴⁵ Matthiessen, p. 190.

the depth to which the writer's emotions have been stirred by what he has recognized"46 Hawthorne's concept had developed under the fear of one extreme and the realization that he could not attain the other. He too had experienced the single purpose as a bread of life. He too had sought an ideal and isolated himself to attain it. He too had felt the agony of loneliness.

In 1825 Hawthorne graduated from Bowdoin College with the resolve to become a writer. He literally renounced the world at the same time, entering his mother's home in Salem for what would be almost twelve years of preparatory seclusion. He was committing the unusual, for while his classmates entered the world to become clergymen, lawyers, or doctors, he was leaving the world to take up a career not altogether respectable in his own day. He knew his act was "abnormal," for he had already witnessed the effects of seclusion in the lives of his mother and sister Elizabeth. Even at the age of sixteen he had known that the true role of man is to be found within the world. In The Spectator,⁴⁷ a paper whose production provided amusement for him, he wrote:

On Solitude: Man is naturally a sociable being
It is only in society that the full energy of his mind
is aroused. Perhaps life may pass more tranquilly,
estranged from the pursuits and vexations of the multitude,
but all the hurry and whirl of passion is preferable to
the cold calmness of indifference.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Matthiessen, p. 349.

⁴⁷The Spectator, 1820, was the product of Louisa and Nathaniel Hawthorne, a publication written by hand and circulated within the family. It contained poems and various essays.

⁴⁸Quoted in Matthiessen, p. 238.

Fanshawe, written either in college or in the beginning of his years at Salem, shows the ambivalence of his feelings toward seclusion at that time, and it also shows his decision to isolate himself for his ambitions. Fanshawe, the main character, is a sickly scholar-isolate who falls in love with the beautiful Ellen Langton. In her he sees the possibility of regained health and regained connection with the world. She bids him to enter the world with her, but he rejects the thought and ultimately re-enters his life of seclusion. Ellen eventually marries Edward Walcott, but in doing so she draws "her husband away from the passions and pursuits that would have interfered with domestic felicity" ⁴⁹ At approximately the same time, Hawthorne wrote Longfellow that he would not wed for ten years. ⁵⁰ Marriage and its contingent ties seemed, at this point in his life, incompatible with his desire to be a writer.

Thus, Hawthorne entered what he would later call the "Castle Dismal" to create stories from the materials of his mind and to concern himself with humanity mainly as a detached observer. True, there were outings in the later years, short trips, but even these became a laboratory for the contents of his journals, later to be included in his works.

Many of his early stories show him as the detached observer or "Paul Pry," as he called the role in "Sights from a Steeple." This

⁴⁹Works, XI, 218.

⁵⁰Arlin Turner, Nathaniel Hawthorne: An Introduction and Interpretation (New York, 1961), p. 10.

story itself, along with "Sunday at Home" and "A Rill from the Town Pump," serve as representative examples.

His early stories also show a growing sense of loneliness. The narrator of "Sights from a Steeple" wishes that he could go below and become a part of the multitude that he has so often watched. In "Sunday at Home" the narrator watches the street below "while a feeling of loneliness comes over me . . ."⁵¹ The theme of "Footprints on the Shore" describes the necessity of the individual to "melt into the indistinguishable mass of humankind."⁵² And Oberon, the writer in "Journal of a Solitary Man," dies with this realization:

'The truly wise, after all their speculations, will be led into the common path, and, in homage to the human nature that pervades them, will gather gold, and till the earth, and set out trees, and build a house. But I have scorned such wisdom. I have rejected, also, the settled, sober, careful gladness of a man by his own fireplace . . . Without influence among serious affairs, my footsteps were not imprinted on the earth, but lost in air; and I shall leave no son to inherit my share of life, with a better sense of its privileges and duties, when his father should vanish like a bubble; so that few mortals, even the humblest and the weakest, have been such ineffectual shadows in the world, or die so utterly as I must.'⁵³

One recognizes the personal quality of this tale when he learns that Oberon was the name given to Hawthorne by his classmates at Bowdoin.

Thus, Hawthorne saw the need for a new life, a "salvation" from the cold loneliness of his isolation and all of the dangers that were inherent in it. The answer, the medium of salvation, was not

⁵¹Works, I, 37.

⁵²Works, I, 514.

⁵³Works, XII, 25-26.

really found but remembered. Hawthorne was now not only ready for, but was definitely searching for an Ellen Langton. He could turn back, for he had violated neither man nor God.

Salvation of self would not be the only outcome of rejected isolation, however. Hawthorne felt that the very art he had secluded himself for was in danger. He later stated in the "Preface" to the Twice Told Tales: "Instead of passion there is sentiment . . . the Author's touches have often an effect of tameness . . ." ⁵⁴

The portrait is completed in "The Great Carbuncle." In this story a variety of persons are on a monomaniac search for a beautiful gem, the concept of perfection. Among them is an artist, a poet. He seeks the gem, but instead he finds a piece of ice, which he takes home, thinking that it is the perfection he sought. From that time onward, "if his poetry lacked the splendor of the gem, it retained all the coldness of the ice." ⁵⁵ Only a young couple eventually see the beauty of the gem, and it is because of their love for each other that they see it. The ideal Artist of the Beautiful found perfection apart from the world, but Hawthorne felt that for his own writings it was impossible.

⁵⁴ Works, I, 16.

⁵⁵ Works, II, 190.

CHAPTER III

SALVATION AND FULFILLMENT

Randall Stewart, in the opening remarks to his edition of The American Notebooks, divides Hawthorne's female characters into three "general" types: "the wholesome New England girl," "the frail, sylph-like creature," and the "woman with an exotic richness in her nature."¹

Only one of these three types can become the needed medium of salvation to the isolated individual. The sylph-like creature cannot help because she is an ideal creature,² also living apart from the mainstream of humanity. She is much like Owen, the Artist of the Beautiful, too purely ideal to be a part of the material world, the actual. Sylph Etherege, in the story by the same name, is a creature of this type; and she transforms to pure spirit when confronted by the world. There can be no link here. Priscilla, of The Blithedale Romance, is perhaps the only exception. When she is first seen, she has the frailty of this type; but at Blithedale she gradually takes on material substance. Thus, she becomes a possible medium, but comes at a time that is too late in the disintegration of Hollingsworth.

The "exotic" or "dark lady" of Hawthorne's works cannot act as a medium of salvation, for she is herself in need of it. Neal F.

¹Nathaniel Hawthorne, The American Notebooks, ed. Randall Stewart (New Haven, 1932), p. lv; hereafter cited as American Notebooks.

²American Notebooks, p. lix.

Doubleday aptly describes the adjustment of Beatrice in "Rappaccini's Daughter," Hester of The Scarlet Letter, Zenobia of The Blithedale Romance, and others of this kind, as "abnormal."³ They, in effect, are the female counterparts of the men just studied. Hester has "dignity" rather than the "delicate, evanescent"⁴ quality that is natural for women. This dignity has "the effect of a spell, taking her out of the ordinary relations with humanity"⁵ She has lost her warmth and tenderness; that "attribute had departed from her, the permanence of which had been essential to keep her a woman."⁶

All of this has been caused because she has allowed her intellect to be elevated above her heart.⁷ As with those women of her type, this is her sin, and it leads to her downfall. "She assumed a freedom of speculation"⁸ in an attempt to solve her problems. She did not realize, or had forgotten, that a woman's life must be led by the heart:

³"Hawthorne's Hester and Feminism," PMLA, LIV, 3 (September 1939), 825-828.

⁴Works, V, 74.

⁵Works, V, 74.

⁶Works, V, 195.

⁷Like Zenobia, Hester's original sin was the sin of passion. As will be discussed later, passion is not only important but also necessary as a part of the conjugal relationship, but Hester's passion took place outside of the proper conjugal state. Illicit passion resulted from a passionless marriage; and once she had sinned, she was severed from the Chain of Being and liable to further sin, which in her case took the form of the elevated intellect.

⁸Works, V, 199.

A woman never overcomes these problems by any exercise of thought. They are not to be solved, or only in one way. If her heart chance to come uppermost, they vanish. Thus, Hester Prynne, whose heart had lost its regular and healthy throb, wandered without a clew in the dark labyrinth of mind⁹

Thus, she cannot help the man of elevated intellect. Nor could Zenobia, also an elevated intellect, help Hollingsworth, an elevated heart. The abnormal cannot help the abnormal.

This leaves one clearly defined type, the wholesome New England girl. Zenobia, shortly before she ends her life, asks, "'How can she [woman] be happy, after discovering that fate has assigned her but one single event, which she must contrive to make the substance of her whole life? A man has his choice of innumerable events.'"¹⁰ "Fate" and "Providence" are interchangeable in the writings of Hawthorne. Together, they constitute the workings of God. Thus, woman has been assigned a very particular place in the universe. Perchance her place in life will bring her into union in a very ordinary way; or, perhaps, in the conjugal bond, she will fulfill even a greater role. The "third type" accepts her role, whatever it may be.

It has been seen that the man who can renew contact with the world is the man of elevated intellect, the elevated intellect who, though isolated, has violated neither man nor God. The woman accomplishes this not actively, through action, but passively, through mere presence. Her feminine tendencies counterbalance the male. She, a being of the heart, counters the opposed elevated intellect. And,

⁹ Works, V, 201.

¹⁰ Works, V, 387.

as there existed a definite pattern through which a man became isolated, there also exists a definite pattern through which he can be saved.

The first step occurs when the presence of the woman brings awareness to the man. The isolate, in seeing her tenderness in contrast to his coldness and her sympathy in contrast to his isolation, feels the imbalance of his nature. As Hawthorne said to his own wife, "Thou only hast taught me that I have a heart--thou only hast thrown a deep light downward, and upward, into my soul. Thou only has revealed me to myself" ¹¹ In seeing the imbalance he again realizes the importance of the heart to his total existence.

In the second step the woman's warm presence helps the isolate's heart to regain its balance. It is her warmth and tenderness that unlocks the heart of the other. Of this experience the main character of "The Village Uncle" says, "She kindled a domestic fire within my heart, even in that chill and lonesome cavern, hung round with glittering icicles of fancy. She gave me warmth of feeling, while the influence of my mind made her contemplative." ¹²

As the isolate joins to his new companion, he also begins to feel renewed warmth for the world around him and for God above.

¹¹Quoted in Malcolm Cowley, "The Hawthornes in Paradise," American Heritage, X (December 1958), 113.

¹²Works, I, 356.

Indeed, we are but shadows--we are not endowed with real life, and all that seems most real about 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.¹³

"Reality" is the world, the common link between man and man. "Eternity" is a word constantly interchanged with heaven in the works of Hawthorne. Once the isolate becomes aware of them both, he possesses "'the best the earth could offer.'"¹⁴ He holds the possibility of happiness and fulfillment. As is said in "The Village Uncle": "In chaste and warm affections, humble wishes, and honest toil for some useful end, there is health for the mind, and quiet for the heart, and prospect of a happy life, and the fairest hope of heaven."¹⁵ It is a measured happiness, to be sure, but it is real. The isolate is now ready to re-enter the world to take what is rightfully his.

Salvation does not end here, however, for it is a continuing and enlarging process. Thus far has been seen only the salvation itself; past this is spiritual exultation. In Septimius Felton the need for the continuing process is seen when the minister warns Septimius, an isolate, that people of "'your frame of character, of your ability . . . have to fight for their faith. They fight in the first place to win it, and ever afterwards to hold it.'"¹⁶ The isolate, once brought

¹³Nathaniel Hawthorne, Love Letters, 1839-1841 and 1841-1863 (Chicago, 1907), I, 225; hereafter cited as Love Letters.

¹⁴These are Georgiana's dying words in "The Birthmark." Works, II, 69.

¹⁵Works, I, 363.

¹⁶Works, XI, 238.

back to humanity, still contains within him tendencies which are dangerous.

This problem is partially solved by the renewed link with humanity; for, as stated in "Peter Goldwaite's Treasure," "It is one great advantage of a gregarious mode of life that each person rectifies his mind by other minds, and squares his conduct to that of his neighbors, so as seldom to be lost in eccentricity."¹⁷ One must remember, however, that the isolate once had this advantage before, and it was unable to hold him. His personality demands more of life.

Mr. Pike, a close friend of Hawthorne's, who, Hawthorne's only son claimed, knew the author more intimately than any other man, once wrote Hawthorne that "'men and women are not perfect without a true spiritual union with the opposite sexes'"¹⁸ This too is part of the solution. Once the hearts of the two lovers have been made compatible through the influence of the woman, spiritual union can begin. Of his own wife and of spring, Hawthorne said in 1842 in his notebook that "both have a power to renew and recreate the weary spirit. I have married the Spring."¹⁹ In the same year he wrote, "Had my wife been with me, I should have had a far deeper sense of beauty; for I should have looked through the medium of her

¹⁷Works, I, 447.

¹⁸ Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, A Biography (Boston, 1885), I, 444.

¹⁹American Notebooks, p. 183.

spirit."²⁰ After their marriage he wrote, "The longer we live together--the deeper we penetrate into one another, and become mutually interfused"²¹ It is this spiritual union which brings a kind of "heightened reality"²² which is necessary to the life of the isolate. This is the main force which keeps him from returning to the isolation he has known. It produces a viable existence, one which is suspended between the spirit or absolute truth or ideal and the world of matter or everyday existence. Too, as is seen in this quotation from "The Custom House," it is the only viable situation for the creative activities of a human being:

Moonlight, in a familiar room, falling so white upon the carpet, and showing all its figures so distinctly,--making every object so minutely visible,--is a medium the most suitable for a romance-writer to get acquainted with his illusive guests. . . . Thus, therefore, the floor of our familiar room has become a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairyland, where the Actual and Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other.²³

It would be a good deal easier to show the process of salvation through the influence and love of a woman by using Hawthorne's notebooks than by using his works. The main problem in using the works is that the entire process is rarely seen in any one work. Rather, one stage will be found in one work, and in another work a different stage will be seen. Particularly lacking are works which carry the process

²⁰American Notebooks, p. 149.

²¹American Notebooks, p. 183.

²²Matthiessen, p. 269.

²³Works, V, 54-55.

into the marriage bond itself. Most of the author's works which reveal this theme close as the man rejoins society under the influence of love. At this point, however, the isolate is just beginning to experience the spiritual union Hawthorne discussed so fully in his notebooks.

One story which does show the process rather fully is "The Village Uncle, An Imaginary Retrospect." In it an old man reminisces concerning the experience of his salvation from cold isolation and of the happiness that followed.

Oh, I should loath to lose my treasure of past happiness, and become once more what I was then; a hermit in the depths of my own mind; sometimes yawning over drowsy volumes, and anon a scribbler of wearier trash than what I read; a man who had wandered out of the real world and got into its shadow, where his troubles, joys, and vicissitudes were of such slight stuff that he hardly knew whether he lived, or only dreamed of living.²⁴

His is the typical isolation. He is an artist who, allowing himself to lose contact with humanity, has lived in the "shadows" of life.

Susan, his wife, is the typical pure maiden, or representative of femininity fully developed:

What a picture was Susan behind the counter! A slender maiden, though the child of rugged parents, she had the slimmest of all waists, brown hair curling on her neck, and a complexion rather pale, except when the sea-breeze flushed it. A few freckles became beauty-spots beneath her eyelids. How was it, Susan, that you talked and acted so carelessly, yet always for the best, doing whatever was right . . . frank, simple, kind-hearted, sensible, and mirthful²⁵

²⁴Works, I, 350.

²⁵Works, I, 355-356.

This passage is important because it points to so many of the attributes of the pure maiden. First, she is immediately associated with the world. Susan is a shopkeeper, a part of the flow of life. She is fully human, being the child of "rugged" parents. Both of these facts point out that she will make a capable housekeeper, the visible sign or manifestation of a feminine nature. She will have both the resources (she is "sensible") and the strength to create a home, that possession so valued by an isolate. At the same time, however, there is a spiritual quality about her, personified in her pale, slight being. This does not indicate a great development of the spiritual faculties; for, indeed, Susan is "simple." Rather, it means the preservation of those qualities which are innately feminine. The former qualities enable her to rescue the artist, to bring him back to the world. The last quality will enable her to create the spiritual bond so necessary to his continuing existence.

Susan "kindles" the artist's "chill and lonesome heart,"²⁶ and he again becomes a part of society. "How like a dream it was, when I bent over a pool of water one pleasant morning, and saw that the ocean had dashed its spray over me and made me a fisherman!"²⁷

She changes too, becoming more contemplative as he becomes more robust with life. He comes into her world, but simultaneously he teaches her to understand a part of his. In this process, the two

²⁶Works, I, 356.

²⁷Works, I, 352.

young people literally grow toward each other, blending and sharing a part of their beings, until there develops a "deeper poetry."²⁸ Thus, the spiritual bond is created.

The relationship that develops between Septimius and Rose in Septimius Felton also gives a concise view of the process, though one can see it drawn to no conclusion, for Hawthorne never seems to have decided how to end this book. As the book progresses, Septimius becomes more and more a fiend beyond redemption.

Septimius lives in an "artificial, intellectual, and moral atmosphere which he derived from his books, instead of living healthfully in the open air among his fellow-beings."²⁹ The passion which has thrown his heart and intellect out of balance is the desire to live forever. Rose, a childhood friend, becomes what Hawthorne originally saw as a saving influence.³⁰ She is all that Susan is--young, lovely, innocent, housewifely in her ways, and unconsciously providing the qualities Septimius needed: "Rose, whose orderly, womanly character, with its well defined orb of daily and civilized duties, had always appeared to strike her [Aunt Keziah] as tame"³¹ Aunt Keziah's adjustment to life has involved the development of

²⁸Works, I, 357.

²⁹Works, XI, 236.

³⁰Approximately half way through the book, Hawthorne changes the roles of several of his characters, making Rose the sister of Septimius. Septimius is recast in the fate of Ethan Brand.

³¹Works, XI, 355.

qualities unnatural to women. This is the reason Rose seems "tame" to her. But it is this tame sense of order and duty in life which acts as a balance to Septimius. Her healthy body and mind balance Septimius' sick ones. When he tells Rose that he wants to live forever to fill his mind with knowledge, she answers, "'Ah, there would come many, many thoughts, and after a while we should want a little rest.'"³² Hers is the "natural" approach to life. Youth is kept alive by love in her thoughts.

Inevitably, as the relationship continues, her "kindness of heart"³³ begins to change him:

She reconciled him, in some secret way, to life as it was, to imperfection, to decay; without any help from her intellect, but through the influence of her character, she seemed, not to solve, but to smooth away, problems that troubled him; merely by being, by womanhood, by simplicity, she interpreted God's ways to him; she softened the stoniness that was gathering about his heart.³⁴

Here again the pattern is clear. It is the influence of a feminine nature, an unconscious influence, which changes Septimius. Rose is an "interpretation" of life as it should be. The process is slow, but gradually she warms him to life.

Septimius changes to the extent that he envisions future wedlock with "its sweetest hopes; its holy companionship, its mysteries, and all that warm mysterious brotherhood that is between men"³⁵

³²Works, XI, 234.

³³Works, XI, 269.

³⁴Works, XI, 287-288.

³⁵Works, XI, 418.

He envisions the whole process, conservation and exultation.

For further study of the relationship of women toward men in isolation, it is perhaps best to take the two most extended discussions of the role of women as saviors, using each woman to point out those aspects she reveals most conspicuously.

The most extended depiction of the "conservative" role of women, the bringing of the man back to the world, is in The House of Seven Gables. Phoebe is the medium; and, indeed, she is the center of the book, spreading her conservative influence to all the other main characters of the book. Judge Pyncheon is an isolate who is beyond redemption; but Hepzibah, Clifford, and Holgrave are all isolates who are in differing degrees affected by the feminine Phoebe.

Her effect on Hepzibah is perhaps the least. An old maid who has cut herself off from human ties by aristocratic feelings of pride and by an unnatural concern for her brother Clifford, Hepzibah regains but a small part of her link with the world. Toward her Phoebe takes an almost maternal attitude. The inept Hepzibah is befriended and cared for by the young girl. "'What a nice little housewife you are!'"³⁶ says Hepzibah in a tone of friendliness which had become rusty in her secluded ways. To her Phoebe brings remembrance of the outside world and a living presence of it, which inevitably softens, to some extent, the elderly woman. Her vision of the world is still "near-sighted," however, at the end of the book.

³⁶Works, III, 100.

Phoebe's effect on Clifford is more dramatic. He is a sensitive man who had been warped by a seclusion unjustly forced upon him by others. This is not the typical isolation, nor have its effects been the same. They seem to have left him in a torpor, a self-protective twilight zone from which he cannot rouse himself.

"[Clifford] . . . whose images of women had more and more lost their warmth and substance, and been frozen . . . to him, this little figure of the cheeriest household life was just what he required to bring him back into the breathing world."³⁷

Towards Clifford, as toward Hepzibah, Phoebe develops "an odd kind of motherly sentiment" ³⁸ She gives him the physical comforts of home in all the little ways he has needed for so long. With insight and energy she cleans away the dirt that has accumulated for years in the House of Seven Gables and adds small feminine touches of color and freshness. She also gives Clifford her tenderness in long hours of attention. Indeed, she cares for all of his physical needs; but it is her presence, her overwhelming evidence of the "Actual,"³⁹ that gives to him a new if impaired vision:

She was real! Holding her hand, you felt something; a tender something; a substance, and a warm one: and so long as you should feel its grasp, soft as it was, you might be certain that your place was good in the whole sympathetic chain of human nature. The world was no longer a delusion.⁴⁰

³⁷Works, III, 170.

³⁸Works, III, 258.

³⁹Works, III, 170.

⁴⁰Works, III, 171.

These moments of vision are but short-lived, however, for "It seemed rather a perception, or a sympathy, than a sentiment belonging to himself as an individual."⁴¹ The change cannot be made complete because the elements of ultimate union are not present. Clifford is already an old man. The conjugal relationship, physical and spiritual, is not possible.

The other main character, the isolated daguerreotypist, does have the qualifications for salvation and perfect union. He is a sensitive man; this is what isolated him. He is not, however, so fully isolated from life that he cannot return to it. And he is at a period in life when the pull of a woman is at its strongest.

Holgrave had elevated his intellect above his heart as a result of the desire to study life and humanity. For this he had travelled a large part of the United States and Europe and had even spent some months with a community of Fourierists. He seemed to have a restless desire to accomplish something, but lack of self-definition of the drive had led him into numerous but unfruitful paths.

Pride has begun to manifest itself in the young man, and he is already living apart from mankind. Even the trusting Phoebe realizes that "his law differed from her own."⁴² The elevated intellect, too, has initiated him to the world of sin. Being aware of sin, he can see it around him in the house and in Judge Pyncheon. The photograph of the Judge mirrors to him an evil that he can understand. Of this

⁴¹Works, III, 172.

⁴²Works, III, 23.

ability to see sin and of its effect on his character, he tells Phoebe, "'I am morbid.'"⁴³ Phoebe herself recognizes that "he was too calm and cool an observer,"⁴⁴ and of his observance of the characters of the story, "he cared nothing for them, or, comparatively so little, as objects of human affection."⁴⁵

The separation point, the fact that gives Holgrave possibility of salvation is that, though he had inherited from his ancestors the ability of Mesmerism, to hold sway over another individual's body and soul, "he had never violated the innermost man, but had carried his conscience along with him."⁴⁶ The inner man has not been violated; it is still relatively pure. He has never used his power to destroy another human being. Thus, he did not put his knowledge to use to gain power over Phoebe, though he clearly could have. He has still retained some "generous impulses" that give him a "certain efficacy," protection from becoming solidified into a pure "theorist."⁴⁷

It is important next to see Holgrave's initial reaction to Phoebe: "he fancied he could look through Phoebe, and all around her, and could read her off like a page of a child's story-book."⁴⁸ The first reaction is coldly analytical.

⁴³Works, III, 260.

⁴⁴Works, III, 213.

⁴⁵Works, III, 213.

⁴⁶Works, III, 212.

⁴⁷Works, III, 217.

⁴⁸Works, III, 218.

Phoebe actually is more child than woman when she first appears in the book; but it is evident that womanhood is developing, and is retaining with it the purity of childhood.

Her figure, to be sure,--so small as to be almost childlike, and so elastic that motion seemed as easy or easier to it than rest . . . her face--with the brown ringlets on either side, and the slightly piquant nose, and the wholesome bloom . . . graceful as a bird . . . as pleasant about the house as a gleam of sunshine⁴⁹

She again is the prototype of cheerfulness and tenderness. She is like a bird, as much as is her name. She is like the bud of a flower, but always the comparison is to a tamed rose or the bud of a fruit tree, flowers that bloom for man's beneficence. In this she is as far as imaginable from Zenobia's exotic flower of self-seeking pride.

Phoebe reveals the best of the material world. She is the medium between the ideal and the actual. Bringing loveliness to everything she does, she reveals "the cheeriness of an active temperament, finding joy in its activity, and, therefore, rendering it beautiful; it was a New England trait,--the stern old stuff of Puritanism with a gold thread in the web."⁵⁰ While Holgrave is withdrawn, Phoebe is active. While Holgrave is morbid, Phoebe is always fresh and happy. While the world seems old and imperfect to Holgrave, Phoebe is beautiful and loving. While Holgrave is undisciplined, searching for guidelines for his

⁴⁹Works, III, 103-104.

⁵⁰Works, III, 99.

life, Phoebe is guided by a gentler Puritanism. Indeed, they are "as unlike, in their respective interiors, as if their native climes had been at world-wide distance."⁵¹

The unconscious influence of Phoebe upon the daguerreotypist is inevitable. "Without such purpose on her part, and unconsciously on his, she made the House of Seven Gables like a home to him, and the garden a familiar precinct."⁵² Arlin Turner in his critical study of Hawthorne has pointed out that until the end of the book, Phoebe and Holgrave are usually seen together outside of the house.⁵³ It would seem that this has its significance in the fact that the house is the center of Holgrave's unnatural and cold observation. Although Phoebe makes the house as much of a home as is possible, it still holds dangerous temptations for Holgrave. Is this not, then, the young woman drawing the young man away from danger?

As the days pass in the House of Seven Gables, Holgrave and Phoebe gradually change, though in the former it is great and in the latter it is less perceivable. After spending hours together one day, Holgrave remarks, "'I never watched the coming of so beautiful an eve, and never felt anything so very much like happiness as at this moment. After all, what a good world we live in!'"⁵⁴ Surely Hawthorne's envisioned isolate could not express this

⁵¹Works, III, 211.

⁵²Works, III, 218.

⁵³Turner, p. 77.

⁵⁴Works, III, 255.

sentiment. Holgrave is no longer analytical. He now perceives the warmth of humanity and is beginning to partake of the happiness a man possesses when he resumes his proper place.

Phoebe then remarks, "'I never cared much about moonlight before. What is there, I wonder, so beautiful in it to-night? . . . It seems as if I had looked at everything, hitherto, in broad daylight . . .'"⁵⁵ She is becoming a woman, and at the same time is blending into a compatibility with Holgrave. She can now see good and evil in the world. "Her eyes looked larger and darker, and deeper; so deep, at some silent moments, that they seemed like Artesian wells, down, down, into the infinite."⁵⁶ Her intellect, before underdeveloped to Holgrave's ultimate needs, now gives her a fuller view of the world. Thus, her fear, when their love is pronounced, "'I have not scope enough to make you happy,'"⁵⁷ is unfounded. Holgrave knows that "'You are my only possibility of happiness!'"⁵⁸ He knows also that his fulfillment will be found in "'conform[ing] myself to laws, and the peaceful practice of society. Your poise will be more powerful than any oscillating tendency of mine.'"⁵⁹ The conservative process is complete. Holgrave is again a part of the Chain of Being.

⁵⁵ Works, III, 256.

⁵⁶ Works, III, 210.

⁵⁷ Works, III, 362.

⁵⁸ Works, III, 362.

⁵⁹ Works, III, 363.

The chapter in which these last statements are found, "The Flower of Eden," ties in with Hawthorne's constant use of flower symbology. Exotic flowers correspond to passionate natures in Hawthorne's works. Beatrice of "Rappaccini's Daughter" and Zenobia of The Blithedale Romance both point to this. Here, the use recognizes the dual aspects of the present union. In the conjugal union, two young people become physically not only one with humanity, but also one with each other. The conjugal bond signifies the union between the physical and the ideal, passion and spirit, matter and eternity.

"The Shaker Bridal" well explains the need for physical union in the conjugal bond. In it Adam Colburn and Martha Pierson, two lovers, are kept from marrying for lack of money. As the years pass, though, Adam comes to think more highly of distinction among men than the quiet fireside of marriage. For this reason, he persuades Martha to join a Shaker community with him; and, though she complies, she pales under the realization that Shakers live only in a "cold fraternal" brotherhood where "natural sympathy"⁶⁰ is stifled. The climax of the story can be aptly compared to a marriage ceremony. Adam and Martha, chosen to be the community's leaders, make their celibate vows. But as the ceremony closes, Martha, who has a "woman's heart, and a tender one"⁶¹ dies. Her natural role in life

⁶⁰Works, I, 474.

⁶¹Works, I, 475.

has been prevented, and in the process it has taken life with it. Man and woman are meant to live in spiritual and physical union. Without it they are as severed from mankind as the Shakers, who taught celibacy in order to eradicate humanity.

In "The Canterbury Pilgrims" the physical relationship between man and wife is clearly related to the physical relationship between the conjugal pair and the world around them. It is the story of two young Shakers who have found "'a gift to love each other and [who are] . . . going among the world's people, to live after their fashion.'"⁶² As they leave, they meet a group of pilgrims who, having wearied of the toils of the world, are coming to join the community. One middle-aged couple with the group tries to discourage the young lovers, telling of the cares of the world and the sorrows of marriage. The young couple goes on into the world, however, for "cold and passionless security" is no exchange even for "mortal hope and fear" ⁶³ Thus, one couple rejects the world and the physical bond between them and the other couple accepts them both. These lovers enter the world with "chastened hopes, but more confiding affections" ⁶⁴ The world is not an easy place to live in, but in the conjugal bond it does offer the greatest possibility of happiness.

⁶²Works, III, 520.

⁶³Works, III, 530.

⁶⁴Works, III, 530.

Another affirmative statement of this relationship between the world and the conjugal union is in "The Maypole of Merry Mount." Here two young people have lived an idyllic life of pleasure apart from the realities of life and the mainstream of humanity. Their wedding is marked by the arrival of a band of Puritans. Youth is contrasted with maturity and the past is contrasted with the present. The couple must decide whether or not to accept the present and reality. Their decision agrees with the decision of the Canterbury Pilgrims. "They went heavenward, supporting each other along the different paths which it was their lot to tread."⁶⁵

Physical union must be coupled with spiritual union between the conjugal pair to complete the pattern of salvation. Holgrave tells Phoebe:

'Our first youth is of no value But sometimes . . . there comes a sense of second youth, gushing out of the heart's joy at being in love . . . and this profound happiness at youth regained,--so much deeper and richer than that we lost,--are essential to the soul's development.'⁶⁶

The redeemed isolate, by his very nature, demands more than the companionship of men and the day-to-day life of a husband. Annette Baxter states that for the sensitive man the equilibrium between the ideal and the actual, or art and society, "must be consonant with

⁶⁵Works, I, 84.

⁶⁶Works, III, 256-257.

the strictures of art."⁶⁷ The woman now must serve her second purpose. She must create, within the orb of humanity, a higher reality, the holy hearth. The narrator of "The Ambitious Guest" describes it as "the consciousness of unity among themselves, and separation from the world at large, which, in every domestic circle, should keep a holy place where no stranger may intrude."⁶⁸ This "consciousness of unity" becomes, in its highest form, the mingling of two spirits, which in turn unites the lovers in a mystical way with Providence.

Heaven, in the works of Hawthorne, is usually referred to as the "Eternal home."⁶⁹ In the notebooks, Hawthorne speaks constantly of himself and Sophia living "in eternity" in their conjugal union: "we have been living in eternity, ever since we came to this Old Manse . . . our Paradise"⁷⁰ The religious or spiritual aspect of their union is further revealed by the fact that Hawthorne often referred to his wife as "thee" and "thou." He also speaks of many experiences in the notebooks as being spiritualized by the presence of his wife. Perhaps the most extreme example is the following: "I am ashamed to eat alone; it becomes the mere gratification of animal appetite--the tribute which we are compelled to pay to our grosser nature; whereas, in thy company, it is refined,

⁶⁷"Independence vs. Isolation," Nineteenth Century Fiction, X (1955-1956), 230.

⁶⁸Works, I, 367.

⁶⁹See Works, I, 348.

⁷⁰American Notebooks, p. 145.

and moralized, and spiritualized."⁷¹

Sophia reveals this concept of spiritual union also. In a letter written to her mother she says, "'In perfect, high union there is no question of supremacy. Souls are equal in love and intelligent communion.'"⁷² In another letter to Hawthorne himself she reveals how "words cannot tell, how immensely my spirit demands thee."⁷³ And while he speaks of having an "'awe'" of Sophia,⁷⁴ she reveals after his death that "'I never dared to gaze at him, even I, unless his lids were down. It seemed an invasion into a holy place.'"⁷⁵ Obviously, Sophia and her husband considered their union to be a spiritual one. The concept of spiritual union has come from his own experience. The works written soon after his marriage reflect this joy at being again a part of the flow of life. The House of Seven Gables is the perfect example. Now, in the years that followed, there are also works which reveal more fully the spiritual aspects of women. Phoebe could have been used for this purpose, but there are other works which show it more completely.

Woman, to Hawthorne, was not only beautiful and pure but also spiritual in nature. A concise description of this quality is in "The Snow-Image." The woman of this story exists in union with

⁷¹American Notebooks, p. 179.

⁷²Julian Hawthorne, I, 257.

⁷³Quoted in Cowley, "The Hawthornes in Paradise," p. 114.

⁷⁴Julian Hawthorne, I, 205.

⁷⁵Julian Hawthorne, II, 352.

a "matter-of-fact sort of man."⁷⁶ She, however, sees the truths of life as "clear as crystal,"⁷⁷ "truths so profound that other people laughed at them"⁷⁸ The power comes from that tenderness of heart which marks all of Hawthorne's ideal women. Hers is a heart which has "a strain of poetry in it, a trait of youth"⁷⁹ Because of it she sometimes hears "the trills of celestial music, when often people can hear no thing of the kind."⁸⁰ She is like her children, who, as Hawthorne tells his readers in the "Preface" to The Wonder Book, "possess an unestimated sensibility to whatever is deep or high, in imagination or feeling"⁸¹ Because of this, the pure woman has the ability to feel the sensitivity of the isolated lover, and she is compatible with it.

Hilda of The Marble Faun provides Hawthorne's most complete description of the spiritual qualities of the ideal woman. Kenyon, the isolate drawn to her, describes her role when he states that "man never derives any intimate help . . . from his brother man, but from woman"⁸² Coverdale of The Blithedale Romance had likewise

⁷⁶Works, III, 391.

⁷⁷Works, III, 391.

⁷⁸Works, III, 403.

⁷⁹Works, III, 391.

⁸⁰Works, III, 395.

⁸¹Works, IV, 14.

⁸²Quoted in Morton Cronin, "Hawthorne on Romantic Love and the Status of Woman," PMLA, LXIX, 1 (March 1954), 96.

stated the role when he said that he "never found it possible to suffer a bearded priest so near my heart and conscience as to do me any spiritual good."⁸³

Indeed, Hilda is often accused of being too spiritual.⁸⁴ As a result, such critics refer to her as insipid and cold and completely overshadowed by the exotic Miriam, one of Hawthorne's dark women. Indeed, a study of this novel must point out the vast difference between these two women and the fact that Miriam does draw the sympathies of the twentieth-century reader. Those critics who devalue Hilda also suggest that psychologically Hawthorne must surely have preferred the mysterious woman over the childlike simplicity of Hilda. Whether he did or not is irrelevant, because in the story of the novel he thoroughly denies it. The pattern of salvation through the medium of a spiritual woman is very clear, whereas Miriam, like all her dark counterparts, brings nothing but unhappiness to the men of her life.

The best way to approach this novel's characters is through a study of their own works of art, the mirrors of their souls.

Miriam creates pictures which depict unhappy women who have lived lives of tragedy and who have brought unhappiness to the men of their lives. Her opposite, Hilda, copies the paintings of the

⁸³Quoted in Cronin, p. 96.

⁸⁴Frederic J. Carpenter, "Puritans Preferred Blondes: The Heroines of Melville and Hawthorne," New England Quarterly, IX (June 1946), 267.

masters. It is said that she could have been almost as great as they but chose instead to give the world more of their greatness. Indeed, at times she seems to perfect the original, giving the world what the original artist had intended. Miriam's art reaches for self-attainment; Hilda's art, however, is a medium for the perfection of someone else.

Kenyon, the one who eventually enters the spiritual bond with Hilda, is also an artist, a sculptor. The major work seen by him is his Cleopatra, which in some ways resembles Miriam in its "discordant elements."⁸⁵ Kenyon contrasts the womanhood of the statue with Hilda, whose "'womanhood is of the ethereal type, and incompatible with any shadow of darkness or evil,'"⁸⁶ and thereby reveals his knowledge of sin. Miriam reinforces this fact when she tells him he is as "'cold and pitiless as your own marble.'"⁸⁷ Kenyon, however, has come to feel the existence of the pure woman, as evidenced in the exquisitely delicate and pure duplicate of Hilda's hand. When the book opens, her influence has already begun its course; and, though we cannot discern where it began, we can ascertain its eventual depth.

When Hilda is introduced, she is almost immediately associated with certain symbols which suggest her spiritual nature. First, she lives above Rome in a tower that is free from the squalor and noise below her. Next, the tower is known throughout the city as

⁸⁵Works, VI, 154.

⁸⁶Works, VI, 154.

⁸⁷Works, VI, 155.

a shrine to the Virgin. Besides this religious association is the fact that a flock of white doves have made the tower their home; and the spiritual emblem is duplicated in the flame of the shrine, which Hilda keeps burning. The young girl herself is introduced with the sunshine, warm and bright; and she is dressed all in white. Miriam thinks that "the other doves know her for a sister, I am sure."⁸⁸ The two women are as far apart as women can be. "They might gaze at one another from the opposite side, but without the possibility of ever meeting more; or, at least . . . it was as if Hilda or Miriam were dead, and could no longer hold intercourse without violating a spiritual law."⁸⁹ Once a woman has stepped into sin, there is no one to bring her back to her original purity. The pure woman's role is to save the isolated man.

The presence of Hilda continues, and "Kenyon's genius unconsciously wrought upon by Hilda's influence, took a more delicate character than heretofore."⁹⁰ The climax of this conservative process occurs when Kenyon suggests to Hilda that sin has educated Donatello and even elevated him. When Hilda denies it, Kenyon concedes to her.

'Forgive me, Hilda! . . . I never did believe it. But the mind wanders wild and wide; and, so lonely as I live

⁸⁸ Works, VI, 70.

⁸⁹ Works, VI, 241.

⁹⁰ Works, VI, 426.

and work, I have neither pole-star above nor light of cottage-windows below, to bring me home. Were you my guide, my counsellor, my inmost friend, with that white wisdom which clothes you as a celestial garment, all would go well. O Hilda, guide me home!"⁹¹

In his Italian notebooks Hawthorne had said that it is the intellect that is drawn to Rome and makes a bonds slave of the heart to stay with it.⁹² Presumably, then, the balance is made in the move toward Hilda, and "home" is mankind. Too, since Hilda has vicariously experienced sin and accepted its existence in the world in her acceptance of Miriam's wedding present, she has moved toward Kenyon, a broader person than heretofore. All of the elements are now present for the spiritual bond, and Hilda's spiritual nature guarantees that it will exist.

The pattern is completed, from sin and loneliness, to salvation and happiness, to the beginning of spiritual union and heightened reality. Hawthorne experienced it, and he thought of the experience in terms of all isolates. He stated in "A Select Party" that "a great heart burns as the household fire of a grand intellect."⁹³ This was his belief; and if critics are to call Kenyon a "fool of Fate,"⁹⁴ they must call Hawthorne one also.

⁹¹ Works, VI, 520.

⁹² Works, X, 221.

⁹³ Works, II, 79.

⁹⁴ Carpenter, p. 267.

Salvation by a pure woman may be hard for this age to agree with, but to him it had complete efficacy. "'How strange it is, tender and fragile little Sophie, that your protection should have become absolutely necessary to such a great, rough, burly, broad-shouldered personage as I!'"⁹⁵

His son Julian attests to the power of women also. Sophia, whom Hawthorne had called "the Spring," remained a rejuvenating source throughout his life. In the personal relationship of the family, Julian remembers his father as maintaining until the end a kind of "primitive freshness."⁹⁶

On his art there was an influence too. Shortly before his marriage he wrote Sophia, "Years hence, perhaps, the experience that my heart is acquiring now will flow out in truth and wisdom."⁹⁷ Critics may disagree, saying that his early works are best, but it was Hawthorne who said after each of his major novels that the most recent was the best. His son believed it too, saying, "He was already a highly cultivated man, but his culture had proceeded in the direction of humanity and nature rather than of art."⁹⁸ Since Hawthorne placed humanity and nature above art, one cannot help thinking this appraisal would have pleased him.

⁹⁵ Julian Hawthorne, I, 216.

⁹⁶ Julian Hawthorne, II, 205.

⁹⁷ Love Letters, I, 31.

⁹⁸ Julian Hawthorne, II, 220.

The critics could also argue that Hawthorne's was a rather static position, preventing any further philosophical development, but obviously Hawthorne was satisfied with it and believed it the best the world could offer. Of Melville he wrote, in the later years of his life:

'It is strange how he persists--and has persisted ever since I knew him, and probably long before--in wandering to and fro over these deserts, as dismal and monotonous as the sandhills amidst which we were sitting. He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief'⁹⁹

These are the words of a man on the inside looking out, and they reveal no desire to return to that outside which had been once experienced. Perhaps life was not perfect, but he had found an acceptable compromise. Or, as Emerson said, "Hawthorne rides well his horse of the night."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Julian Hawthorne, II, 135.

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in George Parson Lathrop's biographical sketch of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Works, XII, 481.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The process of isolation in the works of Hawthorne recurs in a definite pattern. An elevated intellect or passion leads to a consuming drive which isolates the individual from the Chain of Being. The resulting pride of accomplishment gives the isolate feelings of superiority over man and God, leaving him totally unconcerned with the laws of the universe. When these beliefs are followed by actions, the isolated individual is destroyed.

Salvation comes only to the male isolate of elevated intellect who has not yet attempted to defy man or God, for this person can find a counterpoise in pure womanhood. In the presence of a pure woman, who is directed by the heart, the isolated man gradually comes to understand the imbalance of his nature and is led to the correction of his imperfection. As this occurs, the isolate again becomes a part of the chain of man and God. Salvation then continues under the influence of a spiritual bond and the creation of the holy hearth.

Finding and maintaining one's proper place in the universe is man's greatest challenge in life. Only in finding it can he fulfill his destiny as an individual or as an artist.

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HAWTHORNE'S ISOLATE AND THE HOLY HEARTH

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is twofold. First, it defines the plight of the isolated man as posed by Hawthorne. Secondly, it reveals Hawthorne's solution to the problem, salvation through the development of a physical and spiritual relationship with a pure woman.

Hawthorne's concept of the isolated man envisioned a danger inherent in all mankind. Man is a being made up of head and heart. Normalcy requires a balance of these two elements. The danger is that man will allow these parts of his being to lose their balance and thus isolate the individual. Extended exemplification in the works of Hawthorne is given of the two types of imbalance, supremacy of the heart and supremacy of the head.

Careful study of Hawthorne's works shows that the author saw but one force which could oppose the imbalanced isolate and restore him to his proper relationship with the universe. This is Hawthorne's ideal woman, seen early in Fanshawe and realized in his own relationship with his wife Sophia.

The importance of this cyclical theme of isolation and salvation is evident in all of Hawthorne's novels. Extended attention to the concept of salvation for the isolate is particularly clear in The House of Seven Gables and The Marble Faun, the former showing the initial steps in the process and the latter bringing the process to its conclusion.