

Doctoral Dissertation

**Portraits of Spiritual Isolates:
A Study of Egotism in Nathaniel Hawthorne's Works**

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Doctoral Program in English and American Literature
Graduate School of Letters
Ritsumeikan University

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立命館大学審査博士論文

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孤独な魂の系譜—ナサニエル・ホーソーン作品にみられるエゴティズムの研究

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ABBREVIATIONS

<u>AN</u>	<u>The American Notebooks</u>
<u>BR</u>	<u>The Blithedale Romance</u>
<u>HSG</u>	<u>The House of the Seven Gables</u>
<u>L I</u>	<u>The Letters, 1813-1843</u>
<u>L II</u>	<u>The Letters, 1843-1853</u>
<u>MF</u>	<u>The Marble Faun</u>
<u>MOM</u>	<u>Mosses from an Old Manse</u>
<u>SI</u>	<u>The Snow-Image and Other Uncollected Tales</u>
<u>SL</u>	<u>The Scarlet Letter</u>
<u>TT</u>	<u>Twice-told Tales</u>

INTRODUCTION

The mid-nineteenth century in America, which is termed the American Renaissance by literary historians, produced many significant literary figures, such as Herman Melville, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Emily Dickinson, and Walt Whitman. It was a time when America was under rapid development in many ways, and this flourishing of literature was not utterly unrelated to the situation. In those days, America experienced a dramatic increase of the population by a flood of European emigrants. The territory expanded in the name of manifest destiny to reach the Pacific Ocean in the late 1840's. The industrial revolution took place and caused the enlargement of the markets. Under these circumstances, people's life and values underwent big changes. The old Puritan view of the world based on an individual relationship with God was almost passing. The center of the universe virtually shifted to the earthly world, where the individual human being came under the spotlight. People began to ask, "What am I?" and attached weight to their private emotions, intuitions, and imagination. In a word, the nineteenth century in America was the time when the value of the self was discovered. It may be natural in a sense that the first group of what we now call the literary masterpieces of America blossomed in this era.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) spent most of his writing

career in this very period. But he had something out of keeping with the optimistic and self-confident atmosphere prevailing in his contemporary New England society. His uncomfortableness may be symbolically shown by his relationship with Emerson, whose Transcendentalism seems to reflect an aspect of the dominant thought of the time. While Hawthorne and his wife Sophia lived in Concord during the first years of their marriage, they cultivated their friendship with Emerson, their neighbor. Sophia had been a whole-hearted admirer of Emerson.¹ Yet Hawthorne, though he probably liked the eminent philosopher, was rather cool. It is probably because he was not in genuine sympathy with Emerson's ideas that emphasized the limitless possibility of the human spirit. Hawthorne could not completely leave behind the religious principles inherited from his ancestors. Stemming from the belief that man's spirit was invariably flawed, the principles told him that there was something amiss in Emerson's free admiration of the self.

In consequence, Hawthorne went in the opposite direction from Emerson and the general tendency of his contemporary American society. Instead of celebrating the nobleness of humanity, he tried to call attention to the danger of putting too much faith on one's moral virtue. He described in many of his works the selfish people who behave as if they were perfectly noble-minded and eventually cause disasters to both others and themselves. It is not an exaggeration to say that Hawthorne's oeuvre is a catalogue of

egotists.

But this does not mean that Hawthorne describes every imaginable manner of egotism. When we say “egotism,” the word has a depth and breadth of the meaning, from the most general to the metaphysical. What kind of a person will we picture when we hear somebody called selfish or egotistic? Is it a person who boasts about their achievements? Or is it somebody who seeks to be valued far more highly than they deserve? Perhaps, Hawthorne’s egotists have one trait or another we conceive of. But these traits only draw the outline of them because egotism is not a matter of external behavior.

It is not a new attempt to discuss the problem of egotism in Hawthorne’s works. Since he portrays selfish people so repeatedly, the study of his literature almost always involves the consideration of egotism as long as it aims to analyze the nature of his fictitious characters. The study has been developed so far in a variety of contexts, such as psychologically, theologically, pathologically, anthropologically, and biographically. Today, egotism seems to be a somewhat worn-out topic in Hawthorne criticism. However, this does not mean that the study of egotism in Hawthorne’s works has been exhausted. The foregoing critics sometimes fail to grasp the meaning of egotism in Hawthorne’s own context. In consequence, the interpretation of several of his significant works remains obviously inadequate. Furthermore, extensive research into Hawthorne’s major works specifically in terms of egotism is not so

ordinary. Many of the arguments about the subject focus only on a story or the stories of a certain period, especially after the 1840's, such as "Rappaccini's Daughter" (1844) and The Scarlet Letter (1850). Hawthorne's earlier historical short stories are basically omitted. But they should not be ignored since they offered the author the place for the first development of the theme.

In the present thesis, we will methodically follow the beaten track. Our task on it is, first of all, to re-examine the nature of the egotistic characters in both Hawthorne's short stories in the early and middle phases, and his long works of fiction, which he composed after his career as a short-story writer. We also explore the implications carried by the details of the texts, which have been overlooked or flung away by the critics who went before us. Perhaps, the considerable narrowness of our concern sometimes makes our reading too schematic. But only through this means will we be able to understand Hawthorne's works on the most basic and comprehensive level. And we will be able to clarify what egotism might mean to the author. For this purpose, we divide our thesis into three chapters. We consider in each of them Hawthorne's early historical tales, his short stories in the middle phase, and his novels. Chapter one covers "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" (1832), "Roger Malvin's Burial" (1832), and "Young Goodman Brown" (1835). Chapter two studies "The Birth-mark" (1843), "Rappaccini's Daughter" (1844), "The Artist of the Beautiful" (1844), and "Ethan Brand" (1850). Chapter three takes up

Hawthorne's two novels, The Scarlet Letter (1850) and The Blithedale Romance (1852).

CHAPTER 1

Hawthorne's Early Tales:

Fictionalizing the Communal Egotism in History

After Hawthorne graduated from Bowdoin College in 1825, he returned to his mother's house in Salem to start writing essays and short stories for magazines under pseudonyms. According to his letter sent to his old schoolmate Longfellow, Hawthorne in this period was mostly secluded in his room and "like the owl . . . seldom venture[d] abroad till after dusk."¹ It was always his grievance that he lacked the direct contact with the world which might have offered his stories lifelikeness and a variety of materials. Yet during the seclusion Hawthorne had much opportunity to learn New England history and legends. They provided the young author with a fertile field for thoughts and imagination.

The three short stories taken up in this chapter, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," "Roger Malvin's Burial," and "Young Goodman Brown," were written in this period. Each of the narratives relates a New England historical incident that would have been familiar to the nineteenth-century American readers. However, this does not mean that the tales are faithful reproductions of the past events. The events Hawthorne chose as the materials include the circumstances that can tell of the cruelty and selfishness of the

early New England people. Giving far greater weight to their spiritual states than to the minute details of the events, Hawthorne expresses their egotism in a highly imaginative way.

Our choice of the stories for the discussion in this chapter is not purely out of necessity. It cannot be said that some other tale could never answer our purpose. But the three stories we pick up would be comparatively helpful for us to grasp how Hawthorne interprets egotism in his own way. And they would also enable us to see that, despite the critics' frequent forgetfulness of his early works in the argument about egotism in Hawthorne literature, most parts of his basic idea of the theme had been already formed in his youth.

We will first of all examine the protagonists of the tales to disclose their concealed characteristics. The examination will show Hawthorne's way of understanding egotism. Then we will consider how the author's description of the protagonists is related to the historical background of the narratives, and what kind of significance it can bear in the context of his contemporary American society.

■ "My Kinsman, Major Molineux"

"My Kinsman, Major Molineux" (1832) is a story concerning the country boy Robin's strange experience when he visits a town,

probably Boston, to see his kinsman Major Molineux. The scene appears to be laid in about the 1730's because the introductory paragraph states that the story occurs in "a summer night, not far from a hundred years ago" (SI 209). But some of the events in the tale apparently remind the reader of the activities of the patriot mob just before the American Revolution.² It is, therefore, generally agreed by the critics that Hawthorne tries to convey the tense atmosphere spreading around Boston and other colonies during the whole period before the Revolution rather than only to describe the time implied by the opening paragraph. Our young hero Robin, in this politically volatile situation, comes to receive his royalist relative's generous offer to help him to rise in the world. But he only finds the relative being ridiculed, tarred and feathered, by the fantastically disguised mob. Robin is affected by the mockery of the multitude and joins in the laughter at Major Molineux. In the end, a gentleman says to Robin, "[A]s you are a shrewd youth, you may rise in the world, without the help of your kinsman, Major Molineux" (SI 231).

Robin's experience has been frequently explained by the critics as an allegory of his initiation into manhood. They consider that the ritual completes when Robin mocks Major Molineux or that it will complete sooner or later. Daniel Hoffman, for example, states that "Robin now is free of the past, and has the power of self-determination" (123). T. Walter Herbert, Jr. says Robin "enacts the transition from deferential dependency and boyishness

to self-sufficient manhood” (24). Roger Wallins, putting absolute faith in the gentleman’s last words, opines that “the way is open for further growth and real independence” (179). Arthur Broes, on the other hand, denies the beneficial effect of Robin’s experience. Regarding his laugh as a sign of “his recognition of the triumph of evil” (183), Broes states that Robin just learns his affinity with the fiendish mob. “[W]ith maturity has come only an awareness of evil” (183) is his conclusion. But, as we will show later, his opinion that Robin finally recognizes his bond with the mob is incorrect. In addition, Broes is not different from the other critics in the respect that he views the narrative as Robin’s coming-of-age story.

It is not always irrelevant to read “My Kinsman, Major Molineux” as Robin’s initiation into manhood. This reading helps us to guess the untold motives of Robin’s sudden laugh at Major Molineux. As Peter Shaw aptly points out, Hawthorne skillfully describes Robin’s initiation, connecting his steps toward independence with the American Revolution. When Charles II voided the original charter in 1684, the colonists of Massachusetts Bay lost the right to elect their rulers and gradually became hostile to the government. They “looked with most jealous scrutiny to the exercise of power, which did not emanate from themselves” (SI 208). They ill-treated the royal governors, and sometimes assaulted the inferior royalists instead of the governors and the British kings. Major Molineux is one such royalist who was made a scapegoat. If

the kings and the governors are the fathers of the colonists in a political sense, Major Molineux's relationship to the mob can be parallel to his relationship to Robin. For the mob, the Major is a substitute for their political fathers; for Robin, who is going to rely on his financial support, he is a substitute for his own father (Shaw 561-62). This parallel implies that Robin secretly shares with the mob the jealousy and hostility towards paternal authority. These feelings would be the reason for Robin's attack on Major Molineux.

The conclusion in this case seems to be that Robin resists paternal authority by mocking Major Molineux and successfully reaches independent manhood in the end. In other words the participation in violence is necessary for Robin to enter human society. However, it is evident that Hawthorne strongly disapproves of the mob's cruelty towards Major Molineux. He compares them to "fiends that throng in mockery round some dead potentate" and "tramp[le] all on an old man's heart" (SI 230). Moreover, the interpretation fails to answer the question of why Robin's laugh is told to be the loudest within the mob. Though the narrator calls the malice spreading among the townspeople "contagion" in the passage below, Robin, one of the victims of it, strangely laughs more loudly than others.

The contagion was spreading among the multitude, when, all at once, it seized upon Robin, and he sent forth a shout of laughter that echoed through the street; every

man shook his sides, every man emptied his lungs, but Robin's shout was the loudest there. (SI 230)

Why is it said that Robin laughs more loudly than the other members of the mob? How should we interpret his laugh?

If there is something that distinguishes Robin from the rest of the mob, it is the point that Robin is dishonest about his cruelty and moral weakness while the mob members fully acknowledge their own. Most readers would believe that Robin is an innocent youth who is caught up in the riot involuntarily. One of the merits of this narrative would be the striking effect of dramatic irony that Robin's remarks consequently assume. The extremity of it can be seen in Robin's words when he hears the wild laughter and the disordered sounds of instruments during his quest for Major Molineux's house. Thinking that "some prodigious merrymaking" is going on in the town, Robin says to the gentleman, his chance acquaintance in the town, "I have laughed very little since I left home, Sir, and should be sorry to lose an opportunity. Shall we . . . take our share of the fun?" (SI 226). In this "merrymaking," the very man whose support Robin has journeyed for days to gain is debased. Robin in this scene is to all appearance innocent, or even foolish. However, there is still a possibility that Robin has a vague perception of the perverted purpose of the tumult even while uttering these words.

This view may seem to be bizarre and far-fetched at first glance. But Hawthorne's brief description of Robin's mental state

just before he joins the tumult is quite suggestive. When the procession of the disguised mob approaches Robin, he finds the mob leader riding on a horse in the midst of it. The leader looks like a master fiend within the fiendish mob. His eyes are glowing “like fire in a cave” (SI 213). One side of his face is painted red while the other black. The result is “as if two individual devils, a fiend of fire and a fiend of darkness, had united themselves to form this infernal visage” (SI 220). While this diabolic figure slowly passes by Robin, he “turned himself in the saddle, and fixed his glance full upon the country youth” (SI 228). Under the fiery gaze, “an indefinite but uncomfortable idea” springs up in Robin’s mind “that he was himself to bear a part in the pageantry” (SI 228). Robin was eager to join the tumult a little while ago. But when his wish is to be realized, the idea of involvement suddenly becomes “uncomfortable.” If Robin is really ignorant of the purpose of the procession, he will not feel this way.

Our surmise may be corroborated by the fact that the idea occurs to Robin while he is confronted with the fiend-like mob leader. Hawthorne’s fiendish characters usually have preternatural insight into man’s suppressed sinful passions and impulses. This insight can be in other words “dark sympathy,” which Hester Prynne, for example, gains as a result of committing adultery. Hawthorne’s fiendish men have it even without carrying out crime. They are also gifted with the power to activate the evil impulses they detect within people. In “Egotism; or, The Bosom-Serpent”

(1843), it is expressed in an allegorical way. Roderick Elliston, who is told to have a serpent in his bosom, says to a villainous shipmaster, “Hark, my serpent bestirs himself! He acknowledges the presence of a master-fiend!” (MOM 277). Then, a hiss is said to be heard from Elliston’s bosom, and “an answering hiss” from the shipmaster’s “as if a snake . . . had been aroused by the call of its brother-reptile” (MOM 277). “Ethan Brand” (1850) reports a similar phenomenon. When Bartram is alone with Ethan Brand, the relentless investigator of man’s sins, he becomes uneasy because the idea of Brand’s diabolic character makes him conscious of his own sins.

The lime-burner’s own sins rose up within him, and made his memory riotous with a throng of evil shapes that asserted their kindred with the Master Sin [of Ethan Brand]. . . . They were all of one family; they went to and fro between his breast and Ethan Brand’s, and carried dark greetings from one to the other. (SI 88)

Considering the allegorical patterns common to Hawthorne’s fiendish characters, it seems likely that the mob leader has an influence over the evil part of Robin’s heart. While he gazes at Robin, he perhaps exchanges the “dark greetings” with the boy and arouses his wicked impulses. If this argument is correct, the role in the procession Robin vaguely forebodes can be what he desires to do at the bottom of his heart. Behaving like an innocent passer-by, Robin might secretly expect to humiliate Major Molineux.

Interpreting Robin's character in this way, we can comprehend the reason why Hawthorne depicts the mob as composed of disguised people, and the mob leader as a man with a doubly colored face. We can also grasp the true meaning of the gentleman's question to Robin: "May not one man have several voices, Robin, as well as two complexions?" (SI 226). These suggest that Robin, too, is double-faced like the other rioters.

Unlike the rioters, however, Robin fails to recognize the ugliness of his nature. While the people carry Major Molineux away, Robin "instinctively clung" (SI 230) to a stone post as if trying not to be caught up in the flood.³ When they are completely gone, he plans to leave the town. Robin's behaviors indicate that he rejects the moral affinity between the corrupt revelers and himself. Robin hides his true character from himself. He is, as it were, the most skilful masker of all masqueraders in the night. This is the answer to the question we asked above. The reason why Robin is told to be the loudest laugher is that he is the most presumptuous of all the laughers. He is too proud to accept the reality that he is as depraved as other people. His laugh is, in a word, a symbol of his inflated ego. In this case, Hawthorne's frequent use of the adjective "shrewd" for Robin is not just an irony. The word originally means "evil in nature," and Hawthorne would have had this knowledge.⁴ Considering that pride and falsehood are the chief characteristics of Satan, Robin is certainly "shrewd."

Our reading of "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" demonstrated

that Robin is not an innocent but a self-deceptive boy. The dishonesty about one's true character is inherited by another young protagonist, Reuben Bourne, in "Roger Malvin's Burial." Reuben's delusion causes a terrible calamity at the end of the story.

■ "Roger Malvin's Burial"

According to the prefatory paragraph, "Roger Malvin's Burial" (1832) concerns a tragic sequel to "Lovell's Fight" in 1725, an episode in the long warfare between New Englanders on one side and French and Indians on the other side.⁵ Historical documents convey that the New England soldiers, when they retreated from the battlefield, were compelled to abandon some of their wounded fellows in the wilderness, and the bodies of the deserted ones were left unburied. In "Roger Malvin's Burial," Hawthorne invents two fictitious soldiers, Roger Malvin and Reuben Bourne, and makes an analysis of the influence of the severe experience on young Reuben, who abandoned his fatherly comrade Roger Malvin. The first half of the narrative carefully describes Reuben's psychological state until he decides to give up Roger Malvin. The latter half tells about the disastrous effect of Reuben's guilty feeling.

The key problem when we try to gain the basic understanding of "Roger Malvin's Burial" is how we should interpret its ending. The story closes when Reuben Bourne kills his son Cyrus under the

rock where Roger Malvin died eighteen years ago. Reuben's torment as a result of the desertion of Malvin has made him a hard-hearted man, so that he is compelled to leave his village for a new home in the wilderness. On the fifth day of the journey, Reuben goes hunting with Cyrus and shoots him to death. When his wife Dorcas finds the dead boy and collapses beside the body, an oak bough above them loosens itself "in the stilly air" (MOM 360). The bough is the one to which young Reuben bound his bloody handkerchief as a token of his vow to return to bury Malvin's bones and say a prayer over them. Reuben sees it fall "in soft, light fragments" (MOM 360) on himself, on his wife and son, and finally on Roger Malvin's bones.

Then Reuben's heart was stricken, and the tears gushed out like water from a rock. The vow that the wounded youth had made, the blighted man had come to redeem. His sin was expiated, the curse was gone from him; and, in the hour, when he had shed blood dearer to him than his own, a prayer, the first for years, went up to Heaven from the lips of Reuben Bourne. (MOM 360)

This ending can be read to mean that Reuben Bourne has atoned for his sin. But the text does not definitely say what kind of sin Reuben is guilty of. In consequence, the critics have offered various opinions about it. Gloria Erlich opines that Hawthorne deems the desertion of Malvin as Reuben's sin (384). Harry Levin thinks Reuben is guiltless in the deed (55). Yahagi Sanzo considers

that Reuben is guilty of his falsehood as a result of hiding the truth and making Dorcas believe that he gave Malvin, her father, a proper burial (190). Frederick Crews states that the question whether Reuben is guilty for such-and-such a reason or whether he is finally forgiven by God is off the point because his sin is no more than “subjective guilt” which “Reuben’s conscience manufacture[d]” (82). For all the lively discussion, however, the “sin” Reuben is told to have expiated evidently means his long-time failure to fulfill his vow. This is because the expiation is announced right after the oak bough covers Malvin’s bones, which would signify the completion of the burial. We cannot completely deny that Reuben’s “sin” of neglecting his vow is subjective as Crews says. But this “sin” is secondary after all, for it is not because of any act or omission that Reuben is truly sinful in Hawthorne’s view. We need to approach the text from a completely different point of view in order to explain the meaning of the ending.

Let us start our argument with the following question. Does Reuben Bourne kill his son totally by accident? It appears that the event is unexpected for Reuben. He fires instinctively into dense undergrowth when he perceives the motion of something, which happens to be his son. Critics seldom accept or even imagine the possibility that Reuben might kill Cyrus on purpose. It is Crews alone who provides us with corroborating evidence for the idea. He points out Hawthorne’s strange repetition of words right before the

shooting scene (131). When Reuben and Cyrus leave Dorcas in the encampment and go hunting separately into the forest, Cyrus makes a promise “not to quit the vicinity of the encampment” (MOM 354 emphasis added). After Reuben sees Cyrus enter the forest, he sets off in the opposite direction. But at his departure, Dorcas casually reminds him that the day is the twelfth of May, the very date of Reuben’s desertion of Malvin eighteen years ago. The coincidence confuses Reuben so deeply that he wanders into the forest “like a sleep-walker” (MOM 355). The narrator says, “[I]t was attributable to no care of his own, that his devious course kept him in the vicinity of the encampment” (MOM 355 emphasis added).

As Crews observes, Hawthorne’s repetition of the five words can raise a vague suspicion against Reuben. Though Crews does not trouble himself to try to confirm it, it seems to become deeper when the narrator hints that Reuben has other, unconscious motives for his journey than the removal to his family’s new home. Though Reuben had a planned course for his journey, he somehow strayed far from it and finds himself in the considerably remote parts of the wilderness. While he strolls through the trees like a sleepwalker, Reuben wonders what has brought him to the place.

He was musing on the strange influence, that had led him away from his premeditated course, and so far into the depths of the wilderness. Unable to penetrate to the secret place of his soul, where his motives lay hidden, he believed that a supernatural voice had called him

onward, and that a supernatural power had obstructed his retreat. (MOM 356)

If Reuben has been guided to the depths of the wilderness by some strange motives, it would probably be the same motives that keep his steps in “the vicinity of the encampment.”

The two points suggest that the nature of the motives can be morally wicked. First, by hiding his true purpose of his journey from himself, Reuben follows the same psychological steps as those he followed eighteen years ago. When Reuben proposed to die with Malvin, he was persuaded to survive for Dorcas. Malvin’s words made him aware of his desire for a happy life with the girl. His heroic resolve wavered. The narrator says, “Nor can it be affirmed that no selfish feeling strove to enter Reuben’s heart . . .” (MOM 340). Reuben felt his desire sinful and tried to deceive himself. Understanding his unease about his motives, Malvin told Reuben to go home to call a rescue party. He encouraged him with a story that he had once saved his dying companion in a similar situation. Given a noble reason for deserting Malvin, Reuben finally decided to leave him. His true motives were then driven out of his consciousness: “This example, powerful in effecting Reuben’s decision, was aided, unconsciously to himself, by the hidden strength of many another motive” (MOM 343). In view of the fact that Reuben once hid his true motives because they were selfish, his unconscious motives for coming into the wilderness and strolling around the encampment can also be selfish.

Second, the place where Reuben shoots Cyrus implies that there is a perverted desire in Reuben's heart. When the fatal shot is fired, Reuben finds himself "standing again, behind the earthy roots of the uptorn tree" (MOM 356). This spot is where he concealed himself to peep at Roger Malvin in his crisis. After Reuben departed for his settlement, he crept back and gazed at Roger Malvin, "sheltered by the earthy roots of an uptorn tree" (MOM 345). Reuben was probably curious about the psychological state of the man who was going to die alone. Therefore, the spot behind "the earthy roots of an uptorn tree" can symbolize Reuben's warped nature. The fact that he shoots Cyrus from this symbolic place can signify that he is not innocent but has a morally wrong motives for the deed.

If our argument is correct that Reuben kills his son for some selfish purpose, what can it exactly be? In order to make this point clear, we first of all need to explain Reuben's way of viewing Cyrus. After his return to his settlement, Reuben becomes self-absorbed, tormented by the guilty feeling for hiding the truth from Dorcas as well as neglecting his vow: "Reuben's secret thoughts and insulated emotions had gradually made him a selfish man; and he could no longer love deeply, except where he saw, or imagined, some reflection or likeness of his own mind" (MOM 351). Reuben loses proper respect for other people as an individual human being. He imagines Cyrus, a lively boy of fifteen years, as "what he had himself been in other days" (MOM 351). He loves the

boy deeply “as if whatever was good and happy in his own nature had been transferred to his child, carrying his affection with it” (MOM 351). To be brief, in Reuben’s mind, Cyrus is Reuben himself when he was free from the knowledge of his own moral defects which he gained through experiencing the desertion of Roger Malvin.

Reuben’s killing of Cyrus can signify his symbolic suicide in that case. What is significant is that it occurs in the same way as Reuben’s death could have occurred eighteen years ago. When Reuben says to Malvin that he will dig a grave for him under the rock, Malvin gently retorts, “[W]hen you have laid me in the earth, and are alone, and night is settling on the forest, you will feel all the bitterness of the death that may now be escaped” (MOM 341). The picture of Reuben’s solitary death is displayed with more vivid coloring when Reuben watches Malvin from behind the uprooted tree.

Death would come, like the slow approach of a corpse, stealing gradually towards him [Malvin] through the forest, and showing its ghastly and motionless features from behind a nearer, and yet a nearer tree. But such must have been Reuben’s own fate, had he tarried another sunset. . . . (MOM 346)

When we juxtapose Reuben’s imaginary death exhibited above with Cyrus’s actual death, several circumstances turn out to correspond. When Cyrus is shot by his father, Dorcas hears the

report of the gun and leaves the encampment to search for her son with a happy anticipation that he would have slain a deer. "The sun was now beneath the horizon, and the light that came down among the trees was sufficiently dim to create many illusions in her expecting fancy" (MOM 359). As Dorcas walks through the forest, she sometimes imagines to have seen Cyrus's "face gazing out from among the leaves" (MOM 359). She shortly comes across Reuben standing under a great rock. She speaks to him laughingly but immediately perceives that "her husband's face was ghastly pale, and his features were rigid" (MOM 359). In the next moment, the body of Cyrus beneath the rock comes into her sight and she faints. In this scene, some elements of Reuben's imaginary death, including the date of the twelfth of May, are repeated: the dusk gathering rapidly in the forest, the gaze from behind a tree, and a rigid and ghastly face turned toward a young man lying dead under the rock.

The remarkable resemblance between Hawthorne's descriptions of the death of the two men seems to denote that Reuben's filicide is a symbolic realization of the death that he had once escaped for his own life and happiness. By killing Cyrus, Reuben probably returns to the evening of the twelfth of May eighteen years ago in his fancy and lays his corpse beside the dead Malvin as he was predicted to do. By that means, it seems Reuben tries to cancel his uncomfortable past and makes himself believe that he is noble and innocent. Reuben's transformation into such a

madman as well as the disaster he finally causes seem to be really pitiable, given that they are the result of his too tender conscience, which Robin Molineux totally lacks. Still, Reuben is as dishonest as Robin. The sin he really needs to expiate is this dishonesty rather than his failure to fulfill his vow. Does he finally humble himself and acknowledge his selfishness? Now, let us go back to the final scene and consider how we should interpret Reuben's seemingly penitential tear.

It is uncertain whether Reuben somehow awakes from his delusive heroism at the sight of the oak bough falling upon Malvin's bones or whether he merely congratulates himself that his vow has been fulfilled miraculously. However, the increasing gloom in the ending seems to support the negative interpretation. As Crews says, Hawthorne intends the wilderness to represent the stage of Reuben's psychological drama (94). When Reuben fancies that a supernatural power has called him to the depths of the wilderness in order to give him a chance to find Malvin's bones, he hopes that they would be buried and "peace would throw its sunlight into the sepulchre of his heart" (MOM 356). Reuben's heart is embodied by the wilderness, and the "sepulchre" of his heart corresponds to the spot where Roger Malvin's bones lie. Contrary to Reuben's wish, the sunlight never shines on the spot. The night gloom covering the forest in the ending implies that Reuben is still morally blind. Like Robin, he is too proud to accept his spiritual flaws.

Now, we leave Reuben Bourne in his miserable fate and hasten into another haunted night forest to follow Goodman Brown, who is heading to its heart. Brown, too, suffers an ordeal that later causes a dismal transformation in his character. Let us catch up with him to examine why he must undergo such transformation and what the ordeal symbolically means for him.

■ “Young Goodman Brown”

“Young Goodman Brown” (1835) owes its inspiration to the witch trials that occurred in 1692 in Salem village, now Danvers, Massachusetts. Instead of describing the event itself, the narrative relates the young protagonist Goodman Brown’s experience when he partakes in the Witches’ Sabbath. Despite the plea from his wife, Faith, to stay with her, Goodman Brown leaves for the rendezvous with the Devil in the forest. On his way, he is shocked that Faith and the Salem villagers, whom he has believed to be totally pious, are in fact the Devil’s worshippers. “My Faith is gone!” (MOM 83), he desperately cries and rushes to the coven. Brown nearly receives the Devil’s baptism but ultimately rejects it. The next morning he returns to his village. But the awful experience changes him into a “stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man” (MOM 89). He dies a gloomy death long after the night.

“Young Goodman Brown” is a highly allegorical story as

shown by the characters' names and the summary above. The reader may be tempted to regard Goodman Brown as a good Christian who is nearly trapped by the Devil's clutches but successfully drives back the evil power as he regains his religious faith. Even some Hawthorne scholars cannot resist this temptation. Richard Harter Fogle, for example, calls Goodman Brown "a naïve young man" (15) with a "simple and pious nature" (21). Fogle asks whether Hawthorne loses control of his allegory, wondering why Brown is spiritually ruined in the ending for all his expulsion of the evil spirits. It is true that the ending is at variance with the allegorical meaning of the narrative. Fogle's question is after all our own. Fogle considers that Hawthorne's ambiguity is intentional because by that means he "enriches the bareness of systematic allegory" (32). Yet the question would be answered only inadequately as long as we read the narrative as a pure allegory. We need to make a close study of Brown's character in order to explain the reason why Hawthorne finally ruins him.

Let us start by considering why Brown goes to the Witches' Sabbath. Viewed in the traditional context, Brown's motive can be prurient interest. But the comment of Crews is worthy of notice that Hawthorne describes the coven in his own fashion because it is not just the power to use black magic that his fictitious Devil is going to give Brown. The Devil says, "This night it shall be granted you to know their [the Salem villagers'] secret deeds . . ." (MOM 87). He continues,

“By the sympathy of your human hearts for sin, ye shall scent out all the places . . . where crime has been committed, and shall exult to behold the whole earth one stain of guilt, one mighty blood-spot. Far more than this! It shall be yours to penetrate, in every bosom, the deep mystery of sin, the fountain of all wicked arts, and which inexhaustibly supplies more evil impulses than human power . . . can make manifest in deeds.

(MOM 87)

Crews draws attention to this passage and says, “Knowledge of sin . . . is the prize for which Goodman Brown seems tempted to barter his soul” (102). Actually, it is hard to think that Brown seeks for the life-long faculty of detecting man’s hidden sin because he states that he will resume the religious life “after this one night” (MOM 75). Yet it is likely at least that Brown’s motives include the desire to peep at other people’s evil or embarrassing aspects. This voyeurism is shared by Robin watching Major Molineux disgraced by the mob, and Reuben observing Roger Malvin in extreme peril. Their perverted curiosity seems to be a rudimentary version of the intellectual investigation into man’s evil nature Hawthorne repeatedly criticizes in his later works.

It appears Goodman Brown fully recognizes the corrupt nature behind his evil motives. When he leaves Faith for the forest, he thinks, “What a wretch am I, to leave her on such an errand!” (MOM 75). But his recognition soon proves to be superficial.

Brown says to himself that, after he spends the night apart from Faith, he will “cling to her skirts and follow her to Heaven” (MOM 75). Moreover, when he decides to give up his purpose on his way to the coven, he “applaud[s] himself greatly” (MOM 80) with the idea that he can go home with a clear conscience. Brown considers his sin only as a matter of deed. But sin is a matter of impulse and imagination. In “Fancy’s Show Box” (1837), Hawthorne states that sin is “[a] stain upon the soul” (TI 220) because the human soul is polluted with immoral thoughts and impulses no matter whether they are put into practice. Once Brown is interested in the coven, he should not regard himself to be morally pure even if he abandons the idea. Kiyoshi Takashima is right when he points out in his argument about “Young Goodman Brown” that Brown “refuses to see the reality of his heart and clings to the delusion of innocence” (19).

Brown’s refusal to be baptized by the Devil means his failure to awake from the delusion. When Brown rushes madly into the forest and finds a knot of fiend-worshippers, he involuntarily approaches them, feeling “a loathful brotherhood, by the sympathy of all that was wicked in his heart” (MOM 86). As Broes aptly observes, Brown’s relationship to the demoniac worshippers has a significant analogy with Robin’s relationship to the fiendish mob (183). Brown’s “loathful brotherhood” with the witches and the wizards can correspond to the “contagion” (SI 230) among the townspeople that urges Robin to join them. Like Robin, who

disclaims his share in the violence of the mob, Brown denies his connection with the witches. When the Devil is going to put the mark of evil baptism on his forehead, Brown shouts to Faith, “Look up to Heaven, and resist the Wicked One!” (MOM 88). On the allegorical level, Brown’s cry signifies his triumph over the temptation of the Devil. On the psychological level, however, it means his negation of “all that was wicked in his heart” and the “loathful brotherhood” with the fallen people. In short, his shout expresses his stubborn idea that he is innocent and is morally better than others.

Brown’s problem is not only his self-righteousness. Another remarkable characteristic of his nature is his firm conviction about other people’s depravity. Taking an evasive attitude toward his own faults, Brown is ready to believe that his fellow villagers are the disciples of the Devil. When Brown exorcizes the Devil, he finds that Faith and other people vanish in a moment, and discovers himself all alone in the night forest. The narrator wonders if Brown has been asleep there and only dreamed of the coven. But Brown never conceives of the possibility. Nor does the idea occur to him that his wife and the Salem villagers assembled in the forest might have been specters conjured up by the Devil. When he returns to the village and finds the people as pious as ever, he scorns them inwardly. He condemns Deacon Gookin as “the wizard” and his minister as “the gray blasphemer” (MOM 89). He “gazed sternly” at Faith and “turned away” (MOM 89) from her. Daniel Hoffman gets

the point when he comments that Brown “really believed in witches, rather than in men” (168). Though Brown is told to have become “distrustful” (MOM 89), he is not exactly distrustful. He is a great believer in the evil of the human soul.

Brown’s falsehood, lack of generosity to other people’s errors, and enthusiasm for evil seem to entitle him to be called a promising disciple of the Devil rather than a Christian. Hawthorne hints at Brown’s close affinity with the Devil soon after the scene of his exorcism. In order to press the mark of baptism on Brown, the Devil dips his hand in the blood-like water in a hollow of a rock. When Brown cries to Faith to reject the rite, everything vanishes. Then the narrator says,

Whether Faith obeyed, he knew not. Hardly had he spoken, when he found himself amid calm night and solitude, listening to a roar of the wind, which died heavily away through the forest. He staggered against the rock and felt it chill and damp, while a hanging twig, that had been all on fire, besprinkled his cheek with the coldest dew. (MOM 88)

The event of the last sentence is significant. Like Robin’s laughter, the dew sprinkled on Brown’s cheek is a mark Hawthorne puts in order to indicate Brown’s fiendish character. It is because of this character that Hawthorne ruins Brown in the end.

■ The Meaning of Egotism of Robin, Reuben, and Brown

We have studied the basic character of Robin Molineux, Reuben Bourne, and Goodman Brown. Our study sheds light on the fact that all of them are self-deceiving men, unwilling to acknowledge their own moral defects. They consequently deny their equal relationship with other people and become the spiritual isolates among humankind. This isolation, or the loss of the bond of human sympathy, is what Hawthorne specifically points out as “egotism.” He regards it as the most sinful and miserable state we can succumb to, because mutual sympathy between people is in his view the most essential thing for man’s salvation in the religious and spiritual sense. Hawthorne states in “Fancy’s Show Box” that the human soul is invariably polluted, so that “Man must not disclaim his brotherhood, even with the guiltiest” (TT 226). He believes that as long as we fail to acknowledge our share of the human imperfections, we would be shut out of Heaven as well as being cut off from the human race.

Our last purposes in this chapter are to explain how egotism of the protagonists is related to the historical settings of the stories, and what it can mean in the context of the nineteenth-century America. Each of the historical events Hawthorne fictionalizes includes unpleasant circumstances. During the revolutionary time, many of the colonists took part in or condoned the senseless violence toward the royalists.⁶ They justified their deeds in the

name of patriotism. “Lovell’s Fight” was a result of the night raid on Indians conducted by the scalp hunters on the Sabbath.⁷ New Englanders, as they spread the news, shifted the date to Saturday, and changed the bounty hunters into “selfless patriots and courageous heroes” (Colacurcio 118). In the Salem witch trial, many Salem villagers were thrown into confusion. Historical documents record that they were preoccupied with ideas about other people’s secret malice.⁸ In “Main-Street” (1849), Hawthorne depicts this state:

Among the multitude, meanwhile, there is horror, fear, and distrust; and friend looks askance at friend, and the husband at his wife, and the wife at him, and even the mother at her little child; as if, in every creature that God has made, they suspected a witch, or dreaded an accuser. (SI 77-78)

The circumstances listed above indicate New Englanders’ deception about their own nature or that of their community. Their attitudes are evidently embodied by Hawthorne’s untruthful protagonists. By the gloomy endings of their stories, the author seems to criticize the people’s self-deceptive egotism indirectly. But the protagonists represent not only New Englanders in the earlier time. They also symbolize the psychological states of many Americans in the nineteenth century who inherited the deception from their predecessors.⁹ John McWilliams, Jr. is correct when he points out that Robin “embod[ies] the attitudes of many

contemporary patriots, of those readers who, even when confronted with the violence and demagoguery of the Revolution, prove unwilling or unable to recognize them” (379). The stories of Robin, Reuben, and Brown seem to convey Hawthorne’s warning to his contemporary American readers that no bright future would come to their society unless they abandon their shallowly optimistic view of its character. We should not conclude, however, that the author’s purpose is solely to criticize. Rather, we take the opinion of Roy Harvey Pearce that the three works are Hawthorne’s attempts to “share” with his readers the responsibility for the past evil of American society (349).

In this chapter, it has been demonstrated that Hawthorne forms the major part of his idea about egotism in his early short stories. Characters who become spiritual isolates as a result of their failure to recognize the equal bond of humanity continue to appear in his later works. They change their costume, as it were, and often become intellectual investigators of human nature. We will examine in the next chapter the egotists of Hawthorne’s tales in the middle phase to see how they explore the issue.

CHAPTER 2

Hawthorne's Short Stories around the 1840's:

"The Unpardonable Sin," or the Egotism of Artist

In "The Prophetic Pictures" (1837), a nameless painter explains his professional creed: "The artist—the true artist—must look beneath the exterior" (TT 175). This is the brief manifestation of Hawthorne's own belief as an artist. It seems he always tried to be a keen observer of human life. The highly autobiographical narrators of his early sketches often enjoy watching people and sometimes even yearn for a godlike insight. The narrator of "Night Sketches" (1838), the self-appointed "looker-on in life" (TT 430), makes a busy observation of the people in the night-time street. The narrator of "The Old Apple-Dealer" (1843), another self-appointed "student of human life" (MOM 446), indulges in philosophical speculation upon the nature of an old apple-dealer sitting at the railway station. After the close examination of the man, he says with satisfaction, "I have him now" (MOM 445). In one of Hawthorne's earliest sketches, "Sights from a Steeple" (1831), the narrator watches passers-by in the street from a lofty steeple. His words can show that the young Hawthorne almost believed that the artist should look into man's inward lives unreservedly and, if possible, purely objectively in order to fully grasp them.

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

It was partly because of his relationship with Sophia that Hawthorne began to take seriously the moral problem of his detached, scholar-like attitude to the human heart. Hawthorne met Sophia in 1837, the very year when he issued his first book Twice-told Tales.¹ Having been secluded from society since his graduation from college, Hawthorne virtually stepped out of his isolated world of imagination and into the world of human relationships in that year.² In his letter of October 1840, Hawthorne reflects on his past days and confesses to Sophia that he had once fancied himself fully acquainted with the human heart through writing numberless stories: "I used to think that I could imagine all passions, all feelings, all states of the heart and mind; but how little did I know what it is to be mingled with another's being!" (L I 495). Hawthorne continues that, without Sophia's aid, he would have wasted his life, mistaking, as it were, the movement of his shadow on the wall for his real action. In a sense, the relationship with Sophia rescued Hawthorne from his delusion of perfect insight into man's nature. But the awakening might also mean his realization that he was too proud. He found himself

lacking in proper respect and sympathy for other human beings. Ironically, Hawthorne discovered in his own heart the egotism that he had treated mainly in the social context.

The most remarkable characteristic of Hawthorne's works after Twice-told Tales is that they are deeply influenced by the author's consciousness of his egotism. Perhaps, the consciousness was almost a guilty feeling. This can be guessed from the entry in his notebook concerning "the Unpardonable Sin." "The Unpardonable Sin" is originally a Christian traditional concept indicating blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.³ In 1844, Hawthorne reconsidered it and made a new interpretation.

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? (AN 251)

If the lack of love and respect for humanity is "the Unpardonable Sin" for Hawthorne, the three protagonists viewed in the first chapter may be guilty of it because their egotism seems to be almost synonymous with the definition of the sin. It is significant, however, that the passage sounds as if "the Unpardonable Sin" can include its consequent deed, and that the deed is defined as the

philosophical investigation into man's evil nature. The investigation is what Hawthorne carries out in order to unveil the reality of human life. It seems Hawthorne almost suspects his artistic activity to be the worst manifestation of egotism.

In this chapter, we will study four of Hawthorne's short stories written around the 1840's: "The Birth-mark," "Rappaccini's Daughter," "The Artist of the Beautiful," and "Ethan Brand." The main characters of the stories commit or possibly commit "the Unpardonable Sin." We will examine their nature to demonstrate that they are Hawthorne's ironical self-portraits as an artist. We will also try to clear up the widespread misunderstanding about Hawthorne's definition of "the Unpardonable Sin." Many critics have been confused by the ambiguous wording of Hawthorne's definition of the Sin in his notebook. They have put stress more on the intrusion into the human heart than on the coldness toward it. Accordingly, they have treated the problem of Hawthorne's "Unpardonable Sinners" only as a matter of deed. Furthermore, Hawthorne's speculation that "the Unpardonable Sin" may be "the separation of the intellect from the heart" has been accepted as a truth without detailed research into the texts. As a result, several important meanings of his tales are missed. Our discussion aims to reveal the overlooked meanings and thereby deepen the understanding of egotism of Hawthorne's "Unpardonable Sinners."

■ “The Birth-mark”

“The Birth-mark” (1843) is a didactic story demonstrating the general proposition that however earnestly the human spirit aspires for perfection, its earthly part always foils the pursuit. The spirit-matter dichotomy is allegorically expressed by the contrast between Aylmer and Aminadab. Aylmer is an expert of chemistry and every other branch of natural science in the late eighteenth century. According to the introductory paragraph, the period is when people’s interest in science was increasing. Some enthusiasts even believed that the science might produce life by itself if it could thoroughly elucidate the secret of the creative power of nature. Aylmer, one of those believers, has lived a studious life since his youth in order to achieve this kind of magical creativity. In consequence, he “redeemed himself from materialism, by his strong and eager aspiration towards the infinite” (MOM 49). The narrator even says that “the veriest clod of earth assumed a soul” (MOM 49) in Aylmer’s hand. On the other hand, his assistant Aminadab has no aspiration toward or understanding of science. He has “great mechanical readiness” (MOM 43) and practical skill. And he thinks his master’s idealism absurd. The contrast between Aylmer and Aminadab is explained plainly:

With his vast strength, his shaggy hair, his smoky aspect, and the indescribable earthiness that incrustated him, he [Aminadab] seemed to represent man’s physical nature;

while Aylmer's slender figure, and pale, intellectual face, were no less apt a type of the spiritual element. (MOM 43)

The story ends in the total defeat of spirituality represented by Aylmer. He has a young and beautiful wife Georgiana, on whose left cheek there is a tiny hand-shaped, crimson mark. Aylmer is eager to remove the mark because, in his "sombre imagination," it is "the symbol of his wife's liability to sin, sorrow, decay, and death" (MOM 39). In other words, it expresses "the ineludible gripe, in which mortality clutches the highest and purest of earthly mould, degrading them into kindred with the lowest, and even with the very brutes, like whom their visible frames return to dust" (MOM 39). In view of the symbolic meanings of the birth-mark, Aylmer's attempt to remove it can be understood as the re-creation of Georgiana as a perfectly innocent and immortal being on the earth like the prelapsarian Eve. With his utmost power of science, Aylmer almost succeeds in producing a potion that may make her such an ethereal creature. But when Georgiana drinks it and the symbol of man's imperfection on her cheek grows faint, she dies. Aylmer then hears Aminadab's chuckling laugh. The laugh means the exultation of "the gross Fatality of Earth" at "its invariable triumph over the immortal essence, which, in this dim sphere of half-development, demands the completeness of a higher state" (MOM 56).

"The Birth-mark" is thus easily understood as an allegory of

the conflict between spirit and matter. But examining Aylmer's character in the psychological light, he is far from being the type of man's spiritual nature. He hardly thinks of the spiritual world, nor does he have due regard and sympathy for the human heart. This is obvious when we see his manner to Georgiana. Planning to rectify her essentially so that she may be perfect in the spiritual as well as the physical sense, Aylmer strangely pays no attention to her individual nature. When Georgiana peeps at Aylmer making the miraculous potion in his laboratory, he gets angry, thinking that she doubts his power of science. Even when Georgiana demands that he should respect her and tell her the risk of his experiment, Aylmer will not listen. But when Georgiana says that she will drink whatever he gives her, Aylmer is deeply moved and says, "I know not the height and depth of your nature, until now" (MOM 51). Moreover, when Georgiana drinks the potion without hesitation, Aylmer exclaims in a fever, "There is no taint of imperfection on thy spirit. Thy sensible frame, too, shall soon be all perfect!" (MOM 53). It is only because Georgiana seems to have an absolute belief in his power of science that Aylmer thinks her spirit "perfect." In other words, her nature is unworthy of notice or even of existence for Aylmer unless she takes the exactly same view as his own. Aylmer is after all a selfish violator of the human spirit rather than the representative of it.

If somebody represents something spiritual in this narrative, it is Georgiana. She embodies the spiritual bond of every human

being since her birth-mark signifies man's common tendency toward corruption. Her former lovers were correct in a sense when they told her that the birth-mark had been given to her "in token of the magic endowments that were to give her such sway over all hearts" (MOM 38). The impression that people gain when they look at Georgiana is various according to their temperaments. Some think her all the more lovely for her mark, some scorn her for it, and others wish the mark were gone but like her in the end. Their opinions symbolically indicate their attitudes toward humanity. By rejecting Georgiana, Aylmer after all declines to join with humankind. Georgiana tells him with her last breath that he should not regret his choice: "Do not repent, that, with so high and pure a feeling, you have rejected the best that earth could offer" (MOM 55). In view of Aylmer's vain effort to rectify Georgiana's nature, her words are ironical as Robert Heilman aptly says, because they keep Aylmer back from rectifying his selfish nature (426-27). The words are told "with a more than human tenderness" (MOM 55). Probably, Georgiana means no punishment. But her words unintentionally condemn Aylmer to eternal banishment from the bond of humanity and, by extension, from Heaven.

The spiritual perfection Aylmer strives to achieve by his power of science can be realized only by the power of love in Hawthorne's fiction. Though such a miraculous moment is rare in his oeuvre, there is an example in the scene of Holgrave's proposal to Phoebe Pyncheon in The House of the Seven Gables. Surprised

by the young man's sudden proposal, Phoebe anxiously replies that she may not make him happy because she is just a simple girl and cannot fully sympathize with a thoughtful man like him. Holgrave still needs her and asks whether she loves him. Phoebe eventually confides her secret affection for Holgrave, whereupon a dramatic change occurs to their spirits.

And it was in this hour . . . that the one miracle was wrought, without which every human existence is a blank. The bliss, which makes all things true, beautiful, and holy, shone around this youth and maiden. They were conscious of nothing sad nor old. They transfigured the earth, and made it Eden again, and themselves the two first dwellers in it. . . . At such a crisis, there is no Death; for Immortality is revealed anew, and embraces everything in its hallowed atmosphere. (HSG 307)

The young lovers' hearts are united through the unselfish love they feel for each other. Then they unexpectedly succeed in experiencing the joy of eternity. In the conclusion of "The Birth-mark," the narrator says that Aylmer would have a heavenly happiness on the earth if he had had "a profounder wisdom" (MOM 56). It was not a wisdom told by a learned book but a very simple one about this power of love. What Aylmer had to do for the fulfillment of his ideal was to love Georgiana as she was.

■ “Rappaccini’s Daughter”

In “Rappaccini’s Daughter” (1844), Dr. Rappaccini has insulated his daughter Beatrice from human society and nourished her with poison for years. In consequence, Beatrice is such a poisonous girl as to kill a living thing with a touch or a breath. The reason why Rappaccini made her so awful a creature is untold in the text. But some critics hold that his motive underlying the experiment is love for Beatrice and that he is different from Hawthorne’s cold examiners of humanity like Aylmer.⁴ Their opinion is grounded on Rappaccini’s words in the climax of the tale. When Giovanni Guasconti, the young hero of the narrative and Beatrice’s lover, gains the same fatal power as the girl through his frequent visits to her, Rappaccini tells her that she is no longer lonely in the world. When Beatrice complains that it is a miserable doom that he imposes upon her, the physician rejoins that she is foolish because she cannot appreciate her “marvellous gifts, against which no power nor strength could avail an enemy” (MOM 127). He asks, “Wouldst thou, then, have preferred the condition of a weak woman, exposed to all evil, and capable of none?” (MOM 127). It is certainly possible to guess from these words that what inspired Rappaccini to make his daughter poisonous was his desire to protect her.

He strangely confuses the moral issue with the physical one as he tries to realize this desire. Though he is told to have a

horribly penetrating eye, Rappaccini can see only physical phenomena and imagines them as a manifestation of the heart of the matter. For example, when Giovanni's body becomes toxic and he fiercely criticizes Beatrice for her getting him into trouble, Rappaccini treats them as if they were a happy bridal couple. He must have seen Giovanni's scornful manner toward Beatrice a moment ago. But he pays no attention to it. He thinks that Giovanni and Beatrice have established a close rapport with each other, only because they have gained the same physical characteristic. It is probably because of this warped view that Rappaccini plans to protect Beatrice from evil, which is after all a spiritual matter, by using the theory of the medical science. According to Professor Pietro Baglioni, Rappaccini's rival physician, Rappaccini has a theory that "all medical virtues are comprised within those substances which we term vegetable poisons" (MOM 100). Rappaccini accordingly creates new kinds of poisonous plants and grows them in his garden. It would be on the same theory that he brought up his daughter to become a human poison. By making Beatrice poisonous so that she may conquer all the evil of humankind, Rappaccini seems to believe that he re-created her as possessing a perfect virtue, morally as well as physically, just like the potent medicines which he makes from his toxic plants to eradicate diseases.

But this does not mean that Rappaccini "has not subordinated human values to scientific ones" (Uroff 68). Discovering

Giovanni's toxic physical system, he appears in the garden "with a triumphant expression" and extends his hands over Beatrice and Giovanni "in the attitude of a father imploring a blessing upon his children" (MOM 126). Even when Beatrice expresses her grief over her doom, he is just annoyed. Like Aylmer, Rappaccini is deeply absorbed in playing the role of a god who has created a new Adam and Eve in his earthly Eden. He does not really think about his daughter's happiness, nor does he even recognize that she has her individual personality. For Rappaccini, Beatrice must be the "daughter of my pride and triumph" (MOM 127), the production that proves his divine power of science. Though we cannot say that his fatherly affection is all sham, Rappaccini loves his science more dearly than he does Beatrice.

At the bottom of Rappaccini's motives for the experiment, there would be a deep revulsion toward humanity and a perverted curiosity about its wickedness. As M. D. Uroff aptly points out, Rappaccini errs in thinking that the world outside of his garden is so wicked that his daughter cannot live without an armor of poison (68). He cannot conceive of the goodness of humanity and deems it totally corrupt. This is symbolically described by his manner in the garden, which is full of the ugly venomous plants, as an embodiment of the human heart. Rappaccini's manner is like "that of one walking among malignant influences, such as savage beasts, or deadly snakes, or evil spirits, which, should he allow them one moment of license, would wreak upon him some terrible fatality"

(MOM 96). This is quite opposite to the sisterly manner of Beatrice, who freely embraces the toxic shrub in the garden. Rappaccini's recoiling from the plants suggests his haughty idea that he has no share of the evil common to all other human beings. In spite of the rejection, however, Rappaccini closely examines the sinister plants to make a perfect analysis of their creative essence. He not only abhors humankind but also makes its moral corruption the subject of his scientific research. Probably Rappaccini made Beatrice poisonous and plans to let her fight against the evil of humankind because of this hatred and intellectual curiosity. He destroys her life for these selfish motives and commits "the Unpardonable Sin."

The man who lacks reverence for humanity and is guilty of "the Unpardonable Sin" in this tale is not only Rappaccini but also Giovanni Guasconti. Critics have thought of him almost exclusively in the romantic relationship with Beatrice. The analogy between Giovanni and Rappaccini has usually been passed over. But Hawthorne's characterization of Giovanni is basically the same as that of Rappaccini. Though Rappaccini is far more abnormal than Giovanni, and the latter is one of the victims of the former, they are both egotistic intellectuals, devoid of the clear insight into spiritual matters.

Giovanni is Beatrice's faithless lover. He is an inhabitant of the lodgings next to Rappaccini's precincts and is captivated by Beatrice's charm when he finds her in the garden. But when he tosses a bouquet to Beatrice from his window, he thinks himself to

have glimpsed it withering immediately in her grasp. Since then, confusing her physical quality with her moral quality, he is haunted by the fear that the simple, lovely girl may be a malicious monster at heart. Beatrice tells him that her “spirit is God’s creature, and craves love as its daily food” (MOM 125). Yet Giovanni is as inflexible a materialist as her father. He puts the greatest faith on the physical facts and cannot see the purity of Beatrice’s affection for him. While he deceives himself into thinking that he loves Beatrice from the bottom of his heart, he inwardly clings to the idea that the girl is going to exercise some disastrous influence on him. When Giovanni’s body becomes toxic at last, he fully expresses his loathing for what he considers Beatrice’s moral ugliness and breaks her heart completely.

Giovanni has another face than that as Beatrice’s lover. He is a university student of medicine. As Uroff appropriately emphasizes, he is a kind of scientist (69). In that case, it can be somewhat doubtful whether love is really Giovanni’s sole motive for keeping company with Beatrice. He may have a scientific interest in her peculiar physical system. When he first puts himself into contact with Beatrice by flinging down a bouquet to her, he is perhaps motivated not by an irrepressible passion for her but by the curiosity to see the evil influence that the girl’s direct touch may exercise on the fresh flowers. If this surmise is correct, Giovanni’s secret motive for approaching Beatrice is his desire for knowledge about her moral corruption, because he believes that her physical

harmfulness is an outcome of her spiritual condition. Giovanni's distorted way of looking at Beatrice's spirit is expressed by his behaviors in Rappaccini's garden, which is, as mentioned, a symbol of the human heart.

Many of the poisonous trees and herbs in the garden look very disagreeable. When Giovanni enters the garden for the first time, he has a chance to observe each plant. They are such that a wanderer will be "startled to find [them] growing wild, as if an unearthly face had glared at him out of the thicket" (MOM 110). Several of the plants may shock a delicate person because

there had been such commixture, and, as it were, adultery of various vegetable species, that the production was no longer of God's making, but the monstrous offspring of man's depraved fancy, glowing with only an evil mockery of beauty. (MOM 110)

Fogle keenly notices that there is a remarkable similarity in Hawthorne's phraseology between the description of the garden's condition and that of Giovanni's mental state (96). As we stated above, Giovanni is vexed by his complicated feelings toward Beatrice. Though he tries to believe that she is a simple and harmless girl, he is often "startled at the horrible suspicions that rose, monster-like, out of the caverns of his heart, and stared him in the face" (MOM 116). The emotional battle in Giovanni's breast is "a wild offspring of both love and horror," and "[i]t is the lurid intermixture of the two that produces the illuminating blaze of the

infernal regions” (MOM 105). Hawthorne deliberately creates similarities of the wording, thereby making the garden embody Giovanni’s heart and by extension the human heart.

What Giovanni starts as soon as he gains the first admittance to this symbolic garden is “a critical observation” (MOM 110) of the grotesque plants. Though he has long dreamed of the face-to-face interview with Beatrice, “a singular and untimely equanimity” (MOM 110) seizes upon him and, seeing that nobody is around him, Giovanni busily contemplates the plants. The narrator explains that his cold self-possession is quite natural because passion often subsides when a strong wish that seems to be impossible is unexpectedly realized. But, if Hawthorne intends the garden to be an allegory of heart, Giovanni’s “critical” approach to the venomous plants should be understood as an indication that he has no loving tenderness towards humanity and that his interest is unwholesome, confined exclusively to its defects. Giovanni’s motives for approaching Beatrice would be accordingly scientific to some extent. He tramples over her affection not only by labelling her a totally corrupt creature but also by studying the fancied corruption with nausea.

We have examined the character of those who commit “the Unpardonable Sin” in “The Birth-mark” and “Rappaccini’s Daughter.” Probably, we will first of all notice the fact that “the Unpardonable Sinners” in both tales are scientists. It is rather

unmistakable that they express Hawthorne's disapproval of the science in his time. We cannot tell whether Nina Baym is right when she supposes that Hawthorne utterly scorned science (38-39). At least, he was skeptical about its power and disagreed with his contemporaries' admiration for its achievements. His skepticism may be understandable in some measure, seeing the fact that science and quasi-science were confused at that time. Mesmerism was particularly the object of Hawthorne's criticism.⁵ He usually believed that the effect of mesmerism was all sham even if its practitioner appeared to assume control over the human spirit. If the practitioner more or less assumed it, Hawthorne regarded him or her as an unwarranted intruder. Mesmerism would have seemed to Hawthorne to be an exemplification of "science" as a menace to the spiritual values. In part, Hawthorne's fictitious scientists embody his apprehension about his countrymen's undue reliance on the power of science.

More importantly, however, they are Hawthorne's self-portraits. It is noteworthy that Hawthorne compares Aylmer to Pygmalion, and Rappaccini, when he is assured of the alteration of Giovanni's physical system, to "an artist who should spend his life in achieving a picture or a group of statuary, and finally be satisfied with his success" (MOM 126). For Hawthorne, Aylmer and Rappaccini could be artists in a figurative sense.⁶ Rather, it would be more accurate to say that they are Hawthornean artists in a figurative sense. They strive to create a perfect being as a result of

their obsessive, intellectual curiosity about man's imperfections. As he contrives the creative motives of his fictitious scientists, Hawthorne is obviously conscious that one of the principal sources of his creative impulse is a philosophical and monomaniac interest in the evil of the human heart. By destroying the scientists with his own significant traits, Hawthorne condemns himself for his unsympathetic approach to humankind.

Meanwhile, Hawthorne is quite sympathetic to the scientists in the respect that they are lofty idealists. We have explained that Aylmer, with his eager aspiration toward the infinite, makes a sharp contrast with the realistic Aminadab. In "Rappaccini's Daughter," there is a similar conflict between idealism and realism. Rappaccini dedicates everything to the pursuit of his scientific goal. Giovanni thinks that Rappaccini has "a noble spirit" because there are very few who can hold "so spiritual a love of science" (MOM 100). Rappaccini's rival physician Professor Baglioni lacks such a lofty quality. Baglioni appears to be a good physician and a good advisor of Giovanni. Therefore, the critics have sometimes overlooked his true character. Baglioni is actually a man engrossed in the earthly pursuit.

Professor Baglioni proclaims himself to be a worshipper of "the good old rules of the medical profession" (MOM 120). He has long been at odds with the immoral Rappaccini. He concocts an "antidote" (MOM 119) that may, in his opinion, save Beatrice by removing Rappaccini's poison from her body. We may be tempted

by Baglioni's words to take him as a high-minded scientist. But he turns to be the opposite in the end. When Beatrice drinks his medicine, she dies because her physical system is so thoroughly constituted by her father's poison. At the moment of her death, Baglioni appears and mocks Rappaccini "in a tone of triumph mixed with horror" (MOM 128). "Rappaccini! Rappaccini! And is *this* the upshot of your experiment?" (MOM 128). This is not the behavior of a worshipper of the good medical rules when his medicine kills the one who has taken it. Baglioni wants to thwart Rappaccini not for his scientific creed but for his jealousy of the man who is ranked above himself in the academic world. Baglioni may even wish Beatrice to die, for she is reported to be such a great scientist as to be able to deprive Baglioni of his professor's chair. At any rate, Baglioni is a gross realist and is quite a contrast to the idealistic Rappaccini.

Like Aminadab's complacent chuckle over Aylmer's failure, Baglioni's mocking exclamation to Rappaccini can signify the triumph of realism over idealism.⁷ But their triumph is achieved through the sacrifice of human life. Considering this fact, the egotism expressed by their delight is almost appalling. Hawthorne is no doubt in far deeper sympathy with the idealists than the realists (Niwa 96). He seems to consider that it is realism that makes people truly cruel by depriving them of respect for man's soul. Hawthorne's dislike of Aminadab and Baglioni mostly comes from his hostility to the materialism prevailing among the

nineteenth-century New Englanders. In “Passages from a Relinquished Work” (1834), Hawthorne utters his hatred clearly through a wandering story-teller. The story-teller says that his countrymen’s way of thinking has “a grossness” (MOM 407), so that they cannot conceive of the merit of what they deem useless, nor can they gain an appreciation of art. The nineteenth-century New Englanders’ scorn for art probably seemed to Hawthorne to be a sign of their disregard for the spiritual values. His horrifying description of the egotistic Aminadab and Baglioni would reveal his feeling that his countrymen’s cold realism may be more rightly called “the Unpardonable Sin” than his own idealism.

■ “The Artist of the Beautiful”

It may appear irrelevant that we take up “The Artist of the Beautiful” (1844) in the argument about “the Unpardonable Sin,” because Owen Warland is a harmless enthusiast of minute mechanisms. Though Owen is originally a watchmaker, he is occupied with the plan to create a mechanical butterfly that has perfect beauty and a soul all at once. Unlike Aylmer and Rappaccini, Owen hurts nobody in the course of his pursuit of supernatural power. He is just isolated from human society. For this reason, Nina Baym considers that Owen has nothing to do with any sins, let alone “the Unpardonable Sin.” She says,

Sins in Hawthorne's writings are forms of one sin, that of cutting oneself off from the human race by some deliberate act against one of its members. Merely to cut oneself off from mankind is not sinful. The writings abound in isolates who, neither helping nor hurting humanity, are neither good nor sinful: Owen Warland, Miles Coverdale . . . to name a few. Until a character actually hurts another character, he is not actually sinful. (33)

Probably with an impression similar to Baym's, many critics have ignored "The Artist of the Beautiful" in their argument about "the Unpardonable Sin."⁸ They have usually regarded Owen as unrelated to sin or egotism.

The most frequent interpretation of Owen Warland is that he is a rare example of Hawthorne's fictitious character who succeeds both in realizing a lofty ideal and in achieving moral growth. The idealism/realism or spirit/matter dichotomy exists in "The Artist of the Beautiful," too. The spiritual is represented by Owen while the material is by society, particularly three people, Robert Danforth, Annie Hovenden, and her father Peter Hovenden. Peter is Owen's arch-enemy with his "cold, unimaginative sagacity" that tolerates nothing but "the densest matter of the physical world" (MOM 456). Owen's fantastic attempt is frustrated by the frequent interference of the three people. But after several failures, he finally creates a "spiritualized mechanism" (MOM 469) that has a supreme beauty.

Though it is destroyed in the end, Owen is calm because

[w]hen the artist rose high enough to achieve the Beautiful, the symbol by which he made it perceptible to mortal senses became of little value in his eyes, while his spirit possessed itself in the enjoyment of the Reality. (MOM 475)

Critics have often interpreted this ending as evidence that Owen has matured through learning tolerance for the limits of materiality. Sheldon Liebman, for example, considers that Owen is at first “a half-person” (134) because he rejects the realistic as emphatically as Peter Hovenden does the unrealistic. Liebman states that at the end of the narrative Owen is perfected through “as much the marriage of opposites in his nature as his reconciliation to the limits of the material world” (136). James Gargano holds that Owen after the painful pursuit can impress the reader “not as a bodiless spirit but as a human being” (230) who has learned to accept material frailty. Gargano concludes that Owen “has not locked himself up in a lofty and exclusive spiritual tower” (230). R. A. Yoder opines that “the perfection of Art is not the work or object, but the man” and “Owen is perfected within the limits of Hawthorne’s own vision of man” (183).

It is true that “The Artist of the Beautiful” relates some kind of spiritual change of Owen Warland. But it is not his reconciliation with materiality but his complete divorce from it. Owen is always occupied with the yearning to realize the perfect

beauty that may exist only in Heaven. The narrator explains that this is the condition common to artists of every description. He complains that they must struggle endlessly to give their ideals a visible form because they cannot be satisfied with “the inward enjoyment of the Beautiful” (MOM 458). But Owen finally gains it and no longer cares what becomes of his production. This condition is similar to what the dead artists are supposed to enjoy in Heaven. When Owen is filled with fear that he may die before he completes the butterfly, the narrator states that many of man’s great projects must be finished in the other world because they are thwarted by death. Next moment, however, the narrator doubts that Milton in Heaven, where everything is perfectly pure and beautiful, will still care about his song that was left incomplete on the earth. Owen at the end of the story stands on this transcendental point. Seeking for heavenly beauty, Owen elevates his spirit into the heavenly state. Contrary to the critics’ opinions above, Owen finally cuts himself off from the material world.

Importantly, his divorce from materiality means his separation from humankind. Owen always longs for the warm sympathy of other people. Yet his artistic nature is the object of the townspeople’s contempt. He often suffers “a sensation of moral cold, that makes the spirit shiver, as if it had reached the frozen solitudes around the pole” (MOM 459). But when he succeeds in realizing the supreme beauty, Owen finds himself being above the region where the ordinary people live. He notices that “the reward

of all high performance must be sought within itself, or sought in vain” (MOM 473) because nobody can follow the artist who has reached such a height as he has now attained. Owen fully realizes it when he presents the butterfly to Annie. He has secretly worshipped Annie as an angel on the earth. So she could have been his sole liaison with the material world. But as he gives his butterfly to her, Owen perceives in her childlike delight a subtle scorn for his impractical work. At that moment, he labels Annie as “the representative of the world” (MOM 472). He withdraws all his faith in her, and smiles at her incomprehension. His attitude of aloofness toward Annie symbolically shows that his isolation from the human race is completed.

To all appearances, Hawthorne genuinely sympathizes with Owen’s moral isolation. Sometimes, he seems to even approve it. For example, the narrator says,

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

Owen fulfills these “necessary conditions for being an artist” after being repeatedly frustrated by the materialistic people. It is likely that Hawthorne half considers that the stage Owen finally reaches

is desirable. But to isolate oneself from humankind is what he usually criticizes. Does Hawthorne stand behind Owen in every respect?

A few critics keenly point out Hawthorne's critical distance from Owen Warland. For example, L. Hugh Moore, Jr. states that Owen's isolation is sinful because "[t]he values of normal human relationships to Hawthorne were infinitely preferable to the isolated, self-centered value of art" (282). Millicent Bell observes that Owen, like Aylmer and Rappaccini, is "a Faust" who "paid the price of dehumanization" (113) to obtain magical creativity. Bell thinks that Owen is finally "'damned' for being unable to love" (113). These critics spare themselves the trouble of trying to verify their opinions. But our following examination of the ending of the narrative will corroborate them as well as disproving Baym's theory.

When Owen gives Annie his mechanical butterfly, he keeps it in a small ebony box. The box is inlaid with a tracery of pearl describing

a boy in pursuit of a butterfly, which, elsewhere, had become a winged spirit, and was flying heavenward; while the boy, or youth, had found such efficacy in his strong desire, that he ascended from earth to cloud, and from cloud to celestial atmosphere, to win the Beautiful.
(MOM 469-70)

The picture obviously symbolizes the spiritual elevation Owen has

undergone as a result of his pursuit of the heavenly beauty. But it does not tell whether the boy, the representative of Owen, will reach his final destination. Will the boy find himself in Heaven at the end of his journey? What we should note in order to answer this question is that Hawthorne names Owen's arch-enemy Peter. "Peter" is in the Bible the name of Jesus's disciple who is nominated by his master as a keeper of the door of Heaven. Given the religious connotation of the name of Peter Hovenden, the feud between him and Owen can be quite significant. At the sight of Owen's crushed butterfly, Peter "burst into a cold and scornful laugh" (MOM 475). The endless feud between them implies that the heavenly beauty Owen achieved is only a selfish delusion. Furthermore, it even hints that Owen may be shut out of Heaven unless he gives up being an artist.

If our argument is correct, Owen Warland can be closely related to "the Unpardonable Sin" just because he is isolated. In view of Hawthorne's roundabout way of exhibiting the possibility, we cannot say flatly that Owen commits it. Yet our study at least showed that Hawthorne's religion imposes far more strict censorship on his artistic nature than critics generally consider. The conflict between art and religion is expressed in the same way in "The Birth-mark" and "Rappaccini's Daughter." Baglioni's first name is "Pietro," the Italian form of "Peter." Aminadab's biblical namesake is Jesus's ancestor.⁹ This coincidence can mean that Aminadab, Pietro Baglioni, and Peter Hovenden typify both man's

earthliness and the Christian principles. It seems strange that these apparently opposite elements are embodied by one person. But we will understand the reason when we remember that Hawthorne's portrayal of these characters is influenced by his feelings toward his contemporary New Englanders. Though their materialism was a nuisance to Hawthorne, to reject their basic principles could have led him to reject them and, by extension, the human bond. The community could have been for him both the object of hostility and the cause of guilty feelings. It would be because of this dilemma that the antagonists of Hawthorne's artistic figures combine these incompatible elements.

Our discussion about "The Artist of the Beautiful" has highlighted the evil side of Owen's isolation. But it must be mentioned that a certain temperament needs isolation in order to seek by means of imagination for a deeper involvement with others than the common human relationship can offer. In "The Custom-House," Hawthorne writes that when he sends his book to the world, he "addresses . . . the few who will understand him, better than most of his schoolmates and lifemates" (SL 3). For Hawthorne, art is an attempt to establish a close rapport with others as well as being the artists' self-centered pursuit of an ideal. This would be why the article Owen produces is a butterfly and he finally gives it to Annie. Owen's butterfly is, as generally acknowledged by Hawthorne critics, a symbol of his soul. Probably he hopes that Annie will accept it and will be "the interpreter"

(MOM 468) between the world and himself. He is only convinced that she is inadequate for the role. Certainly, Owen is in part a sinful egotist fancying himself to be spiritually superior to other people. But he is also a man whose yearning for human sympathy is never fulfilled. It seems Owen should be more readily pitied for being unloved than be damned for being unable to love.

■ “Ethan Brand”

“Ethan Brand” (1850) is Hawthorne’s only work that directly treats “the Unpardonable Sin.”¹⁰ It was originally designed as an extended work of fiction as suggested by the subhead, “A Chapter from an Abortive Romance.” But it appears to have been a great torment for the author to try to complete the work.¹¹ In December 1848, Hawthorne sent the unfinished manuscript to the editor Charles W. Webber and said, “At last, by main strength, I have wrenched and torn an idea out of my miserable brain; or rather, the fragment of an idea, like a tooth ill-drawn, and leaving the roots to torture me” (L II 251). The story was left unfinished and failed to be Hawthorne’s first novel. Despite the imperfection, however, “Ethan Brand” should not be passed over as a failure. Considering that it was intended as a novel about “the Unpardonable Sin,” it is likely that Hawthorne planned to make it a full-dress investigation into the theme.

The story was at first designed to tell of Ethan Brand's eighteen-year journey. But the completed part of it does not cover the process of the journey. The narrator's words fragmentarily reveal what happened to Brand during it. According to his words, Brand was originally a tender-hearted lime-burner. But he was preoccupied with the question whether there was a sin that could cause perdition. He undertook a journey to find "the Unpardonable Sin" and spent day after day analyzing man's malicious nature. He gradually became a fiend-like man leading people astray so that he might enjoy observing their crimes. At last, the idea occurred to Brand that "the Unpardonable Sin" was not in other people's hearts but in his own heart. Laughing at the ironical end of his research, he came back to his home, Graylock, one night.¹² "Ethan Brand" mainly relates the events of this night. When Brand tells his fellow villagers of his discovery of "the Unpardonable Sin," they put no faith in him and label him a madman. Brand still thinks that he has successfully fulfilled his sole aim in life. He finally burns himself to death in a lime-kiln.

At the head of this chapter, we quoted Hawthorne's somewhat ambiguous definition of "the Unpardonable Sin." In the definition, he wonders whether "the Unpardonable Sin" can be paraphrased as "the separation of the intellect from the heart" (AN 251). In "Ethan Brand," Hawthorne appears to answer the question in the affirmative. When the lime-burner Bartram asks Brand what "the Unpardonable Sin" is, Brand declares that it is "[t]he sin of an

intellect that triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man, and reverence for God, and sacrificed everything to its own mighty claims!” (SI 90). The idea is repeated by the narrator. He tells of the remarkable intellectual growth that raised Brand from “an unlettered laborer” to “a star-light eminence” whose level no scholar can reach. Then the narrator says, “But where was the heart? That, indeed, had withered—had contracted—had hardened—had perished!” (SI 99). The astonishing event after Brand’s suicide corroborates the death of his heart. When Bartram finds Brand’s skeleton at the bottom of the kiln, his heart is left unbroken in the ribs, completely changed into lime. This event will give the reader the strong impression that Ethan Brand’s heart was made of marble and that he was literally heartless.

Most of the critics follow this impression and equate “the Unpardonable Sin” with the monstrous intellect that utterly consumes humanity. The following remark of Donald A. Ringe is a clear example.

When the heart becomes completely withered, the intellect, which must necessarily be egocentric, assumes complete control and thereby destroys all possibility of the individual’s achieving remorse and insight through human understanding. The Unpardonable Sin is the result of the complete separation of head and heart.
(122)

Ringe’s view was presented in the middle of the last century. But

similar opinions are still expressed in recent studies. For example, in 2004, Eric Goldman calls “the Unpardonable Sin” “a sin of science, an intellectual curiosity that threatens to violate the sanctity of the human mind” (43).

It is perhaps Baym alone who firmly denies the possibility of the intellectual sin in Hawthorne’s theory. Baym states that Hawthorne’s so-called intellectual sinners like Roger Chillingworth, Aylmer, and Ethan Brand are dominated by their selfish desires, so that “none of the three is motivated by a passion for knowledge or science” (36). She considers that they deceive themselves about their true emotional motives, imagining that they are wholly driven by intellectual curiosity. Brand’s motive is “self-love” (45) in her view because to commit “the Unpardonable Sin” is “to prove God’s finiteness . . . and one’s own divinity” (46).

Baym’s observation is correct that the root cause of “the Unpardonable Sin” lies in the heart and that the inmost motives of its perpetrators are emotional. Still, it cannot be denied that one of the great inspirations for their relentless investigation into human nature is intellectual curiosity about its wickedness. Takashima’s comment about the analogy between “the Unpardonable Sin” and the original sin is very helpful in clarifying their motives. In his argument about “Ethan Brand,” Takashima states that, when Eve is told that the fruit of the tree of knowledge will let her see good and evil and will make her godlike, she obeys the serpent because of her strong curiosity more than her moral weakness (153). This

remark can suggest that in the traditional Christian context the desire for knowledge originates from pride, the desire to be equal to God. Hawthorne must have been aware of this diabolic aspect of man's curiosity, for curiosity almost always works not to save his characters but to drive them into wrongs and miseries. If the intellectual curiosity is the main motive of "the Unpardonable Sin" and the curiosity arises from self-love, the Sin is not the result of the separation of the intellect from the heart. This can mean that those who commit "the Unpardonable Sin" are not devoid of humanity as completely as some critics believe.

In that case, Hawthorne's "Unpardonable Sinners" may have a chance to be saved. Though it is their hearts that lead them astray, it is also their hearts that can make them repent. As we mentioned at the head of this chapter, "the Unpardonable Sin" originally means blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Actually, it has been believed in general that it can be forgiven when the blasphemer repents.¹³ Hawthorne apparently reconsiders "the Unpardonable Sin" in his own fashion. But his theory is basically faithful to the original idea because he does not really conclude that the violation of humanity is beyond the reach of God's mercy. "Ethan Brand" aims to cover this point, suggesting the possibility of Brand's salvation in the ending.

No critics have openly proclaimed so far that Ethan Brand may finally reconcile himself with God and humankind. They have deemed his eternal damnation as a matter of course. Fogle, for

example, states that Brand's suicide is "a death emblematic of total separation" (47). James E. Miller calls it "a dedication to eternal service in the war of Hell against Heaven" (101). In a sense, it is natural for many readers to understand Brand's death in this way. The narrator says that "Ethan Brand became a fiend" (SI 99) as a result of his pitiless research into man's soul. When Brand plunges into the burning lime-kiln, which is like "the private entrance to the infernal regions" (SI 84) on the Delectable Mountains of The Pilgrim's Progress, he makes a clean break with the earth and Heaven.

"Oh, Mother Earth," cried he, "who art no more my Mother, and into whose bosom this frame shall never be resolved! Oh, mankind, whose brotherhood I have cast off, and trampled thy great heart beneath my feet! Oh, stars of Heaven, that shone on me of old, as if to light me onward and upward!—farewell all, and forever! Come, deadly element of Fire—henceforth my familiar friend! Embrace me as I do thee!" (SI 100)

Certainly, the words of the narrator and Ethan Brand will make it difficult to doubt Brand's damnation. But if his death means his complete estrangement from the divine grace, how can we explain Hawthorne's mysterious description about the peaceful dawn after it? Heaps of the morning mist in fantastic shapes are scattered on Graylock and the neighboring mountains. In the sky, too, there are similar heaps of mist or cloud, brightened by the

golden radiance. The scene brings the narrator into a reverie as follows.

Stepping from one to another of the clouds that rested on the hills, and thence to the loftier brotherhood that sailed in the air, it seemed almost as if a mortal man might thus ascend into the heavenly regions. Earth was so mingled with sky that it was a daydream to look at it.

(SI 101)

The meaning of this morning scene has been mostly ignored. A few critics inadequately interpret it as the author's irony.¹⁴ What is important for the understanding of this scene is the geology of Graylock and the neighboring mountains. There are many lime-kilns on the mountains "for the purpose of burning the white marble which composes a large part of the substance of the hills" (SI 84). The fact that the place where Brand dies is made of marble hints that he, whose heart is supposed to be made of the same material, may return to the earth after his death despite his farewell to it. Under this circumstance, the purpose of the cloud path from the earth to Heaven in the passage above will be comprehensible. Hawthorne by that means implies the possibility of Brand's salvation.

But there is no convincing evidence in the text to show that Brand feels remorse for his cold-heartedness to humankind, without which salvation is impossible. Instead, he is proud of being a perfect sinner, calling other people "half-way sinners" (SI

89). Moreover, he feels morally superior to the materialistic villagers who cannot conceive of the events beyond the reach of their common sense. If there is any sign of his regret, it may be found in the fact that Brand recognizes that his lack of respect for humanity is “the Unpardonable Sin.” His recognition can paradoxically indicate that he regards respect for humanity as the most important thing, and that he has a guilty conscience about his cruelty to other people. This seems to be why his usually penetrating eye “quailed” (SI 94) under the unsteady gaze of the old father of Esther, whose soul Brand is told to have ruined in his ruthless experiment. Hawthorne here seems to hint that Brand’s natural tenderness may not be totally lost.

It is uncertain whether Brand finally chooses pride or penitence. The moment of his death is omitted from the text. Yet, by describing Brand’s possible salvation, Hawthorne seems to want to deny that the human heart can be so completely hard as to be unable to feel remorse. And he probably wishes that, with genuine remorse, the sinner would be forgiven even if he or she is a cold, isolated investigator of the human heart. This seems to suggest that Hawthorne retains the hope for the ultimate goodness of man’s nature, contrary to the general impression that he is a somber pessimist. Besides, given that he deems himself a coldly intellectual observer like Ethan Brand to some extent, Brand’s possible salvation can signify the author’s secret wish for the pardon for his own egotism.

Our reading of “Ethan Brand” showed that Hawthorne intends Brand to be not a completely single-minded self-worshipper but a more complicated figure invested with contradictory feelings about his philosophical attitudes toward human beings. Such ambivalence about one’s own aloofness clearly distinguishes Ethan Brand and the egotists in Hawthorne’s previous short stories like Rappaccini. The latter group fails to realize that their disregard for other people’s thoughts and feelings can be sinful. They are, as it were, Ethan Brands before the discovery of “the Unpardonable Sin.” It is not wholly impossible that they gain the same recognition as Brand does at the end of their pursuits. But the impression of their self-absorbed character is so striking that it seems difficult for the reader to conceive of their moral transformation. In all likelihood, dissatisfied with too frozen an image of his intellectual observers, Hawthorne wanted to unfold their human aspects which he had usually left to the reader’s imagination before “Ethan Brand.” This would be partly why he tried to deal with “the Unpardonable Sin” in a novel instead of a short story. “Ethan Brand” failed to be completed but Hawthorne’s late novels have a similar approach to the theme.

CHAPTER 3

The Scarlet Letter and The Blithedale Romance:

Tales of Human Frailty and Sorrow

About a year after Hawthorne gave up completing “Ethan Brand,” he published The Scarlet Letter (1850) and shifted his literary career from that of the storyteller/essayist for magazines to that of the novelist. He later produced two books successively, The House of the Seven Gables (1851) and The Blithedale Romance (1852). After a wide interval, he wrote his final completed novel, The Marble Faun (1860). In “Ethan Brand,” Hawthorne tried to carry out extensive research into the problem of “the Unpardonable Sin.” But the subject unexpectedly perplexed him so much that it was unfolded only partially and remained in his brain “like a tooth ill-drawn” (L II 251). In his following novels, Hawthorne again portrays the unsympathetic, morally isolated observers of humankind, and re-examines the theme.

Comparing Hawthorne’s way of approach to the problem of egotism and “the Unpardonable Sin” in his novels with that in his short stories, there does not seem to be a remarkable change. The meanings of the events and the characters of his short stories are, for the most part, within the limit of the Christian morality of good and evil. This can be because, as W. C. Brownell points out, Hawthorne often has a lesson to preach before a story to tell, and it

is his habitual way of creation to invent the events and the characters so that they may illustrate the lesson effectually (55).¹ Hawthorne's "Unpardonable Sinners" would be no exception. Throwing their diabolic aspect into a sharp relief, Hawthorne makes them embody pride and tries to develop a lesson, implicitly or explicitly, out of their failures. But this is of course not to say that Hawthorne's works are pure allegory. His fictitious characters are half the symbols of an idea or a quality and half human beings with their individual joys and sorrows. In other words, his story is half allegory and half psychological drama. In many cases, the latter phase hides its unfathomable depth under the former and, as it were, oozes subtly through the former. By that means, Hawthorne maintains in his short stories the delicate balance between the two levels of his texts.

Hawthorne's novels are composed basically in the same way. Egotism is, on the whole, a moral evil in them, too. But the egotists and "the Unpardonable Sinners" in his novels are not mere copies of those in his short stories. At the end of the last chapter, we stated that the characters who commit "the Unpardonable Sin" in Hawthorne's short stories like Aylmer can be Ethan Brands before the discovery of their fiendish nature. The egotists in Hawthorne's novels, then, may be Brands after the discovery of it. They are usually aware that they lack warm affection and sympathy for the human soul. Sometimes they are proud of their critical distance from other people and enjoy observing them. But sometimes they

suffer from a sense of alienation and wish they would free themselves from the bleak coldness of their own heart through human relationships. Nevertheless, they cannot always solve their problems because these problems have their roots in their nature. Though Aylmer, Rappaccini, and even Owen Warland can give us the impression that their separation from the human race ultimately depends on their own will, the loss of the bond with others is not really a matter of choice or will for the egotists of Hawthorne's novels. By letting them express their misery caused by their unsolvable difficulties, his novels cast light on the aspect of the egotists not only as morally perverted people but also as the members of the human race who cannot avoid the powerful influence of their inmost nature.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to demonstrate that Hawthorne's novels reflect an improvement in the author's human understanding and are, on that account, thematically better than his short stories. Indeed, there are characters in his very early pieces, like Reuben Bourne for example, who can convey the grief of the human being compelled to be a stony-hearted isolate by the overwhelming power of his or her own emotions or temperament. Since the early period, egotism has been for the author the problem that refused to fit into the good/evil morality system. So it would be appropriate to consider that Hawthorne's novels explore the meanings of egotism existing outside the closed system, which his short stories tend to leave untold. But as Hawthorne tries to depict

a more realistic picture of the human existence in his novels, it seems he gradually loses the proper control over his narrative. In other words, the subtle balance between the allegorical level and the psychological level of his texts begins to be disturbed. In consequence, the morals offered in his novels are often inadequate to summarize the contents, if not totally irrelevant to them. For example, the narrator says in the conclusion of The Scarlet Letter, “Be true! Be true! Be true!” (SL 260). But the book illustrates not so much that being “true” is important as that we cannot be “true” as long as we have a heart and that such imperfection makes us human after all.

We take up in this chapter Hawthorne’s two novels, The Scarlet Letter and The Blithedale Romance.² These books, particularly The Blithedale Romance, manifest the problem mentioned above, i.e. the discord between what the author wants to write and the form in which he tries to express it. Even so, the books are Hawthorne’s earnest attempts to write a human drama. And the characters, good or evil, of both of the works comparatively succeed in illustrating the psychological reality, not becoming frozen figures in a set of tableaux contrived to teach what is right or wrong. In the following pages, we will examine the three characters, Roger Chillingworth in The Scarlet Letter, and Hollingsworth and Miles Coverdale in The Blithedale Romance. Through the study of their egotism and its meanings, we will ascertain that the two novels are, to use the phrase in The Scarlet

Letter, “tale[s] of human frailty and sorrow” (SL 48).

■ Roger Chillingworth in The Scarlet Letter:

The Presumptuous Intellect or the Victim of the Heart?

Most generally, The Scarlet Letter is a story about the dismal influence of the adultery committed by Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale. When the readers think about sin or man’s evil nature described in this work, many of them will first of all think about these adulterers. But there is another sinner in this narrative, Roger Chillingworth, Hester’s husband and the victim of the couple’s crime. Unlike Hester and Dimmesdale, he does not violate the human law. But his revenge and Dimmesdale’s words quoted in the next paragraph make it manifest that Hawthorne tries to re-present through Chillingworth his idea of “the Unpardonable Sin” that he offered through Ethan Brand unsuccessfully. From the viewpoint of Roger Chillingworth, The Scarlet Letter is a story about the miserable process by which he falls into “the Unpardonable Sin” and transforms himself into a devilish egotist.

Chillingworth’s revenge is to gain control over Dimmesdale’s spirit and abuse it as thoroughly as to make him endure a living death. For that purpose, he approaches the minister in the guise of a kind doctor and delves into his nature relentlessly. After the investigation, “the very inmost soul of the latter [Dimmesdale]

seemed to be brought out before his eyes,” so that Chillingworth “could play upon him as he chose” (SL 140). He enjoys provoking the pangs of guilt in Dimmesdale’s heart and “gloated over” (SL 170) his tortures. Because of his cruelty and almost preternatural power over his victim’s soul, Chillingworth is, like Ethan Brand, said to have become a fiend by the narrator: “old Roger Chillingworth was a striking evidence of man’s faculty of transforming himself into a devil” (SL 170). Moreover, when Dimmesdale is told by Hester that Chillingworth is her husband, he states that the physician is the worst sinner because he intruded into man’s inmost soul with no love or reverence.

We are not, Hester, the worst sinners in the world. There is one worse than even the polluted priest! That old man’s revenge has been blacker than my sin. He has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart. (SL 195)

Dimmesdale’s remark is half unsubstantial, for it indicates his failure to recognize that he, too, did a great wrong to Chillingworth and is doing another by condemning him thus severely. But it is nonetheless true that Chillingworth is an unsympathetic investigator of the human soul, a member of Hawthorne’s “Unpardonable Sinners.”

This classification has often produced among Hawthorne critics a preconception about Chillingworth’s character. Since the idea is quite conspicuously displayed in “Ethan Brand” that “the

Unpardonable Sin” means the loss of the “heart” as a result of remarkable intellectual development, many critics have considered that Chillingworth’s “heart” is consumed by his vast intellect so irretrievably that he can no longer feel deep emotions like sympathy or sorrow. For example, Ringe maintains that Chillingworth commits the “sin of the intellect and the ego” (125) while his heart is too “withered” (125) in the process of the revenge to suffer remorse. Fogle, too, believes that Chillingworth’s spiritual ruin is absolute. He labels the physician as “[a character] of the head, a cold experimenter and thinker” (136). Even the more recent critics express similar opinions. In 2000, Preston Harper states that Chillingworth is spiritually dead and “becomes a veritable devil” (57). In the same year, Takaaki Niwa calls Chillingworth “a monster of intellect” (129).

We cannot deny that Chillingworth is intellectual to an extraordinary degree and his motives for the revenge are partly intellectual. Since his early years, Chillingworth has longed “to feed the hungry dream of knowledge” (SL 74). He spent all his youth for the study of alchemy and the European physic. He even mastered herbal remedies while he was held captive by the Indians. It might be the yearning for God-like omniscience rather than the yearning for God that motivated Chillingworth to come to the New World. He deems the human soul, too, as a subject of a scientific research. When he notices the uncommon connection between Dimmesdale’s bodily disease and his spiritual troubles,

Chillingworth almost forgets his revenge. "A rare case!" he says excitedly, "Were it only for the art's sake, I must search this matter to the bottom!" (SL 138). The scene after these words symbolically shows that Chillingworth's intellectual curiosity actually culminates in the violation of Dimmesdale's soul to its core (Niwa 140). Finding Dimmesdale in a deep slumber, Chillingworth strips his vestment and looks at his bosom. Next moment, "a ghastly rapture" (SL 138) bursts out of the physician's whole body. Probably he discovers the letter A, the manifestation of the blackest stain upon Dimmesdale's soul and the decisive evidence of the miraculous unity between his spirit and body.

The inexhaustible passion for knowledge is Chillingworth's most striking characteristic. It is this passion that distinguishes his egotism from that of Hester and Dimmesdale, who are as deeply absorbed in their own affairs as Chillingworth is. This will be shown by the comparison of the three characters' ways of treating their special sensitivity to man's hidden sins, or what is called "the dark sympathy." Hester and Dimmesdale gain the sense as a result of their crime. Hester's scarlet letter "gave her a sympathetic knowledge of the hidden sin in other hearts" (SL 86) and tells her with "a sympathetic throb" (SL 87) of the existence of a guilty fellow at hand. Dimmesdale, without the crime, was to become a saintly priest half living in the celestial world yet unresponsive to the earthly sufferings. But his guilty conscience "gave him sympathies so intimate with the sinful brotherhood of mankind"

(SL 142). Hester and Dimmesdale do not use the sense by choice, nor do they analyze the human sins revealed by it. Hester wants to abandon it because “there was nothing else so awful and loathsome as this sense” (SL 86-87). Hester’s fear of her own preternatural power to detect moral corruption of other people implies that she retains respect for the human soul. Unlike Hester, Dimmesdale accepts the sense. This is because he has genuine love and compassion as well as respect for people. Dimmesdale’s “heart vibrated in unison with theirs, and received their pain into itself, and sent its own throb of pain through a thousand other hearts . . .” (SL 142).

Meanwhile, Chillingworth is proud of his keen perception of man’s hidden sins. Like Roderick Elliston, Ethan Brand, and the mob leader in “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” he is one of those who have good command of this sense. In the fourth chapter, “The Interview,” Chillingworth confidently tells Hester, who refuses to reveal her lover’s identity, that she cannot hide it from him because he will turn the utmost power of the sense to the investigation.

I shall seek this man, as I have sought truth in books; as I have sought gold in alchemy. 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! (SL 75)

Chillingworth is presumptuous enough to take advantage of the

sympathy to wrench the secret out of a man's soul. He has an emotionally understandable reason for doing that. Still, the will to know whatever he wants to know is much stronger than respect for humanity in him. On that account Chillingworth is separated from the human bond and falls into what Hawthorne conceives as the most dreadful condition of the human existence.

There are a limited number of critics, especially around 1960's, such as Baym, Crews, and McCullen, who consider that Chillingworth should not be labelled as a man of cold intellect because the strongest motives for his revenge are anger and hatred as a cuckolded husband. This view perhaps seems to be quite natural to the common readers. But it has often been passed over in Hawthorne criticism, probably because the formula "the Unpardonable Sin'=the sin of intellect" is too deeply engraved on the critics' brains. The chief purpose of our discussion about Roger Chillingworth is to re-emphasize the minority opinion.

Though Chillingworth is certainly an earnest scientist, he is not as single-minded a lover of science as Rappaccini and Aylmer are. He married Hester because he could not completely sacrifice the value of human relationship for the study of science. In his interview with Hester in the prison, Chillingworth complains that his studious days before he met her were so lonely and cheerless that he "had lived in vain" (SL 74). Longing for the warmth of the household fire, he drew her into his heart, "into its innermost chamber" (SL 74). For Chillingworth, the marriage to Hester has

been almost sacred. So his anger and disappointment when he finds its failure is indescribable. At the sight of Hester standing on the scaffold, his features are contorted, revealing a “writhing horror” and “some powerful emotion” (SL 61). It is as if “a snake” is “gliding swiftly over them, and making one little pause, with all its wreathed intervolutions in open sight” (SL 61). Chillingworth’s violent emotions never weaken in his seven-year revenge. They gradually change him into a pitiless violator of the human heart.

It may seem to be selfish for Chillingworth to dwell upon his own sufferings for as long as seven years. He can be all the more so from a Christian point of view. But such criticism would be irrelevant because Chillingworth is no longer able to give up his hatred after the long revenge. This misfortune originates from his excessive reliance on his power of will. As we quoted above, when Hester refuses to reveal her lover’s name, Chillingworth tells her that he will find out the man sooner or later. He says this “as if destiny were at one with him” (SL 75). He totally believes that he can assume his enemy’s soul and can even destroy it if he prefers. Putting such a great faith in his power of will over other spirits, he imagines that he can rule his own with no difficulty. When “some powerful emotion” springs up in his mind at the sight of Hester on the scaffold, he immediately “controlled [it] by an effort of his will” (SL 61) and takes up his revenge as if full of “the severe and equal integrity of a judge” (SL 129). In his second interview with Hester after an interval of seven years, his dark passion betrays

itself through his fiery eyes. But he again “repressed [it] as speedily as possible, and strove to look as if nothing of the kind had happened” (SL 169). Chillingworth has long deluded himself in this way into thinking that his emotions were under the perfect control of his will. As a result, “he ultimately enslaves himself, through a persecution of Dimmesdale, to a hatred . . .” (McCullen and Guilds 230).³

Chillingworth awakes from the delusion in the middle of his revenge. In the fourteenth chapter, “Hester and the Physician,” he feverishly talks to Hester that Dimmesdale fancies himself in the clutches of a fiend, tortured unawares by the man whom he had wronged. Then the idea suddenly occurs to Chillingworth that he might have really transformed himself into a fiend. As he gives utterance to the idea, he lifts his hands with a look of horror as if he finds “some frightful shape, which he could not recognize, usurping the place of his own image in a glass” (SL 172). The event is “one of those moments . . . when a man’s moral aspect is faithfully revealed to his mind’s eye” (SL 172). Chillingworth “had never before viewed himself as he did now” (SL 172). He here makes the same awful self-discovery that Brand is supposed to have done in the course of his journey. Remembering that he was once a kind and upright man, Chillingworth notices that he has been changed into a monstrous creature existing only by hatred. The awareness totally depresses him. His absolute confidence in the power of his will is gone from him. When Hester tells

Chillingworth that he has a chance to humanize himself because “thou . . . hast it at thy will to pardon” (SL 174), he replies in a gloomy tone,

“It is not granted me to pardon. I have no such power as thou tellest me of. My old faith, long forgotten, comes back to me, and explains all that we do, and all we suffer. By thy first step awry, thou didst plant the germ of evil; but, since that moment, it has all been a dark necessity. Ye that have wronged me are not sinful, save in a kind of typical illusion; neither am I fiend-like, who have snatched a fiend’s office from his hands. It is our fate. Let the black flower blossom as it may!” (SL 174)

These words have often been accepted as an evidence that Chillingworth is a believer in fatalism (Niwa 129) or “a biased determinism” (McCullen and Guilds 230). They have given grounds for the idea that Chillingworth “tried to evade responsibility by making use of the fatal misstep theory” (Abel 222). Even as recently as 2012, John E. Alvis comments that Chillingworth is a believer in a kind of determinism acquired through his scientific study. Alvis considers that Hawthorne questions Chillingworth’s theory and “mak[es] a tacit comment on responsibility by situating the dependent Pearl on the margin of the desolate locale on which this dialogue takes place” (170).

What Chillingworth means to say by the words above is ambiguous. At least, as Crews correctly observes, it is not really

because Hawthorne wants to portray Chillingworth as a believer in the philosophical or theoretical doctrine that he makes him express the idea of necessity (140). Instead, Hawthorne tries to express Chillingworth's anguish at the discovery that he is under so absolute a control of his hatred toward Dimmesdale that the choice is no longer open to him. Such a sense of lacking the authority over one's own heart is plainly explained by Miles Coverdale in The Blithedale Romance. Perpetually vexed by the strong interest in his three friends whom he had loved but would rather forget now, Coverdale bitterly complains,

Our souls, after all, are not our own. We convey a property in them to those with whom we associate, but to what extent can never be known, until we feel the tug, the agony, of our abortive effort to resume an exclusive sway over ourselves. (BR 194)

The sense of helplessness like this seems to be at the bottom of Chillingworth's desperate speech. From one point of view, he can be not only a violator of Dimmesdale's heart but also a victim of his own heart.

The idea is certainly dangerous that man can be ultimately powerless against impulses and emotions. If it goes too far, it can mean that we are not to blame for our errors committed passionately or impulsively. In that case, neither Hester, who had yielded to her passion, nor Chillingworth, who is possessed by his resentment, turns out to be guiltless as Chillingworth declares.

Still, we fully agree with Crews when he states that Hawthorne does not make The Scarlet Letter a mere Sunday-school lecture. His comment is right that the emotional motives of the characters “successfully resist translation into terms of good and evil” (153). As Hawthorne tells us in the first chapter of The Scarlet Letter that his story will be “a tale of human frailty and sorrow” (SL 48), it certainly becomes such. Though the phrase is usually supposed to be about Hester and Dimmesdale, it also mentions Roger Chillingworth. Like the guilty couple, Chillingworth also embodies the grief and the weakness of human beings that cannot overcome the enormous power of their own hearts.

■ The Blithedale Romance

The Blithedale Romance consists of Miles Coverdale’s account of the entangled relationship of his three friends, Hollingsworth, Zenobia, and Priscilla. It seems to be Hawthorne’s original intention to illustrate the process by which Hollingsworth, the enthusiastic philanthropist, is deprived of his moral sense in his striving for an ideal. In his letter for E. P. Whipple, a critic and his friend, Hawthorne states that Hollingsworth is “the original figure about which the rest of the book clustered itself” (LII 536). Hawthorne half planned to call the book “Hollingsworth” before the publication, and designed to end the story not with Coverdale’s

confession of love for Priscilla but with the moral drawn from Hollingsworth's failure.⁴ In our discussion about The Blithedale Romance, we consider the problem of egotism of Hollingsworth first of all, paying due regard to the author's original intention. But the narrator Coverdale is as significant a figure as Hollingsworth for our purpose of clarifying the meaning of egotism in this book. So we will also examine the character of Miles Coverdale.

▣ Hollingsworth, A Philanthropic Misanthrope

Hollingsworth's remark on Fourierism in the early part of the book suggests that the egotism into which he later falls is "the Unpardonable Sin."⁵ But for what reason Hollingsworth can be an egotist, or in what respect he is guilty of "the Unpardonable Sin" is indistinct in the text. On that account, the critics often fail to grasp his character correctly.

When Coverdale asks Hollingsworth whether the Blithedale community should adopt Fourierism, Hollingsworth is outraged. He fiercely criticizes Fourier's theory since it can encourage man's selfish nature in his view.⁶

"I never will forgive this fellow! He has committed the Unpardonable Sin! For what more monstrous iniquity could the Devil himself contrive, than to choose the

selfish principle—the principle of all human wrong, the very blackness of man’s heart, the portion of ourselves which we shudder at, and which it is the whole aim of spiritual discipline to eradicate—to choose it as the master-workman of his system?” (BR 53)

Ironically, Hollingsworth follows the selfish principle he calls unpardonable here. He uses his friends to push forward his plan for the “reformation of criminals” (BR 21). When they are useless or will not take the precisely same view as his own, he rejects them like “a broken tool” (BR 218). He willingly sacrifices other people’s rights as individual human beings for his ambition, or in his words, “the great object of my life” (BR 57).

It may appear that Hollingsworth’s high-handed attitude toward his friends is the reason why he is guilty of “the Unpardonable Sin.” But what is significant is the motive behind his plan for the reformation of criminals, which is after all the cause of his selfish behaviors toward others. Niwa considers that it matters little to the author if Hollingsworth’s scheme is the liberation of slaves or something like that (214). Yet there is good reason for Hollingsworth to aim for the reformation of criminals. This is suggested by Coverdale’s comment on the plan. Urged by Hollingsworth to join him, Coverdale is almost moved but cannot help feeling nauseated at his plan: “A great, black ugliness of sin, which he proposed to collect out of a thousand human hearts, and that we should spend our lives in an experiment of transmuting it

into virtue!” (BR 134). Coverdale’s words can remind us of Aylmer, who experiments on Georgiana to remove her moral imperfection; or Rappaccini, who tries to re-create Beatrice as a perfectly virtuous creature; or even Chillingworth, who collects as ugly a defect as possible out of Dimmesdale’s heart. In short, Hollingsworth’s benevolent scheme is a different mode of the psychological experiments performed by many of Hawthorne’s “Unpardonable Sinners.”

Hollingsworth believes that he is motivated entirely by philanthropic desire. He says that by offering the criminals a moral, intellectual, and industrial education he wants to open to them “the possibility of a worthier life than that which had become their fate” (BR 131). Some may take in Hollingsworth’s apparently generous motive and conclude that he differs from Hawthorne’s stony-hearted egotists on a basic level. James Justus, for example, states that Hollingsworth’s scheme is “more admirable than heinous” because “its principle is unselfishness” (26). Yet Hollingsworth’s angry denunciation of Fourierism implies that his motives are actually far from generous. Hollingsworth states that the evil part of the human heart is what “we shudder at” and must “eradicate” (BR 53). This remark hints that Hollingsworth abhors man’s evil nature excessively like Goodman Brown, Rappaccini, and Hawthorne’s other egotists. He plans to reform the criminals not because he is a philanthropist but because he scorns humankind and fancies himself to be pure enough to have the right to correct

other people's errors. When Coverdale thinks that Hollingsworth "curses us in his heart" (BR 100), he astutely detects Hollingsworth's concealed motives. Hollingsworth's scheme is frustrated. He fails to perform the "experiment" on the criminals' souls. Yet he lacks warm sympathy for the human race, and makes it the subject of his scornful observation. This is why he is guilty of "the Unpardonable Sin."

Hollingsworth awakes to his own error when Zenobia kills herself, heartbroken at his betrayal. Still, the awakening does not rescue him from his egotism. Years after Zenobia died, Coverdale visits Hollingsworth, who has married Priscilla and lives with her in total seclusion. Hollingsworth is now "self-distrustful" and even "childish" (BR 242). Keeping his eyes on the ground, he closely presses to Priscilla as if he shrinks from Zenobia's "vindictive shadow" that "dogged the side where Priscilla was not" (BR 243). When Coverdale asks how many sinners he has reformed, Hollingsworth says without raising his eyes, "Ever since we parted, I have been busy with a single murderer!" (BR 243). Hollingsworth's mind, formerly full of ideas about his own enterprise, is now occupied with the idea of his own error.

There seems to be little hope that Hollingsworth will get over his egotism, because he has no more companion than Priscilla in his life. Priscilla is expected to play the role that is fulfilled by Rosina in "Egotism; or, The Bosom-Serpent" and Miriam in The Marble Faun. Their lovers, Roderick Elliston and Donatello, are

totally obsessed with thoughts of their own sins. But they humble themselves and recover their love for others when the infinite tenderness of the women touches their hearts. Rosina says to Roderick, “[F]orget yourself in the idea of another!” (MOM 283). As soon as he hears her voice, Roderick miraculously becomes “like a man renewed” (MOM 283) and apologizes to Rosina for his selfishness. Donatello, too, notices at last how cruelly he had rejected Miriam and how deeply she nevertheless cares for him. Donatello regains his moral flexibility and remorsefully says, “Forgive, Miriam, the coldness, the hardness, with which I parted from you!” (MF 320).

Priscilla is inadequate for the role performed by Rosina and Miriam. Though she is described like a totally selfless girl, she is actually as self-absorbed a figure as her husband is. From one point of view, she shares with Hollingsworth the responsibility for Zenobia’s death. When Zenobia blames Hollingsworth for having chosen Priscilla as his wife at the news that Zenobia’s great wealth would be passed to the girl, Coverdale wonders which Priscilla will take, the love for Hollingsworth or the love for her half-sister, Zenobia. Priscilla takes Hollingsworth’s side without hesitation. It is “the one principle at the centre of the universe” (BR 220) for Priscilla that Hollingsworth is right in every respect. She virtually flings away her desperate sister and leaves her to commit suicide. Yet she does not conceive of her responsibility, nor does she understand Hollingsworth’s agony correctly. Years after Zenobia’s

death, Priscilla shows “a veiled happiness in her fair and quiet countenance” (BR 242), arm in arm with the utterly ruined Hollingsworth. Coverdale comments that Priscilla’s heart “has room only for a single predominant affection” (BR 241). The affection is not really given to Hollingsworth but to the idealized image of him that she created in her mind. Priscilla’s view is extremely limited. She is unable to take Hollingsworth back into the bond of humanity through profound sympathy.

Hollingsworth’s spiritual ruin and the miserable fate he will suffer in his married life seem to be intended by Hawthorne as retribution for his egotism. Near the end of the story, Hawthorne offers the lesson that the person who attempts to rectify humanity in God’s place “ruins, or is fearfully apt to ruin, the heart” (BR 243) of himself as well as of his victims. As long as we focus our attention on Hollingsworth, Hawthorne’s manner of dealing with egotism in this book does not seem to be different from his manner in his earlier short stories. It is not too much to say that the lesson of the book is trite. But seeing that our lives are ultimately isolated from each other, confined in our individual narrow compass of view, Hollingsworth’s fate can represent an aspect of the reality of every human spirit. We stated in the former chapter that, in Hawthorne’s view, only unselfish love can establish a perfect rapport between people and can thereby bring infinite happiness. However, when we conceive ourselves to be in sympathy with others, how can we know whether we understand them correctly or whether we are actually in

a selfish delusion? Is it possible to sympathize with others?

It is Coverdale more than Hollingsworth who poses these questions. Hawthorne's choice of Coverdale as the narrator of The Blithedale Romance somewhat accidentally casts a new light on the problem of egotism in Hawthorne's fiction. In the following pages, we will think about Coverdale's character and his relationship with his three friends in order to elucidate the new aspect of the problem.

▣ Miles Coverdale:

On the Blurred Border between Sympathy and Egotism

Miles Coverdale evidently resembles Hawthorne both in personality and in experience. He is a minor poet, an artist of sorts. Being retiring, introspective, and inquisitive about man's inward lives, he has some of Hawthorne's basic characteristics. Several details of his life at Blithedale are based on Hawthorne's experience at Brook Farm.⁷ Owing to these outstanding affinities between the author and the narrator, Hawthorne fails to assume proper control over his narrative. As Niwa points out, Hawthorne's attention wanders from Hollingsworth to Coverdale as the story goes, so that The Blithedale Romance happens to be the tale of Coverdale for the most part (208).

In order to grasp the character of Coverdale as accurately as

possible, we need to explain first of all that he is Hawthorne's self-portrait as a calm observer of human life. Soon after the start of his life at Blithedale, Coverdale is interested in Hollingsworth's relationship to Zenobia and Priscilla, and begins an investigation into their hidden passions. One of the reasons for his interference is the same impulse as that of the narrator of "Sights from a Steeple," who longs to be "a spiritualized Paul Pry" (TT 192). Coverdale calls this impulse

that 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. (BR 160)

Though Coverdale wants to join his friends at heart, he becomes an observer of them, half willingly and half forced by this quality.

Unlike many of Hawthorne's egotists who impose their values on other people, Coverdale emphasizes that he is sympathetic. Comparing himself to "the Chorus in a classic play" (BR 97), which puts aside its personal interests and wholly sympathizes with the fortunes of the characters, he says that "this sympathy is the only bond" (BR 97) between his friends and himself. But it must be noted that Coverdale's sympathy does not

always come from tenderness. It is half based on his ambition for the perfect knowledge of other people's spirits. In Chapter X, for example, when Coverdale is interested in old Moodie, he "tried to identify [his] mind with the old fellow's, and take his view of the world" (BR 84). Imagining how lifeless the charming scene spreading out before him would appear to Moodie, Coverdale says that, when he grows as old as he, he will return to the place to look at the scene again and "see if I did not catch the tone of his mind aright" (BR 84).

It is not an overstatement to say that his strong curiosity almost dehumanizes Coverdale. He might be even responsible for Zenobia's death in consequence of the dehumanization. These possibilities have been often denied by critics because Coverdale's emphasis on his selflessness creates a little too favorable impression about him. James Justus states that Coverdale is "not quite a monster" and the destruction of Hollingsworth and Zenobia is merely "out of the strength of their own wills" (35). Only because Coverdale fails to have such control over his friends' minds as Westervelt seems to have over Priscilla's, Keith Carabine considers that Coverdale "avoids 'the cold tendency' which is truly embodied in the 'unhumanized' heart of Westervelt" (181). Fogle, too, says that Coverdale escapes the danger of dehumanization "since his interest is at bottom human and loving" (183). Fogle seems to take no account of Coverdale's responsibility.

Contrary to the critics' opinions, some of Coverdale's

attitudes certainly show his perverted nature. After the study of his friends' dispositions, Coverdale is almost sure of some tragic end of their relationship. But his study is so close and long that he half fancies his friends to be the actors in his "private theatre" (BR 70) rather than individual human beings. Coverdale's egotism reaches its peak when he returns to Blithedale in order to see what has become of his friends after Hollingsworth had rescued Priscilla from Westervelt. Coverdale explains that he returns Blithedale because he feels "a yearning interest to learn the upshot of all my story" (BR 205 emphasis added). The trouble of his friends becomes a "story" told solely for Coverdale here. And Coverdale evidently enjoys it. As he draws near to the community, "a wild exhilaration" (BR 205) runs through his body. He evades telling the reason of his excitement. But a few pages later, the idea repeatedly occurs to him that "some evil thing had befallen us, or was ready to befall" (BR 207). This implies that Coverdale is excited because "some evil thing" may happen to his friends. He goes to Blithedale to see their misfortune because it will provide a grand finale to his story and also because it will prove the correctness of his insight into their nature. Whether Coverdale goes so far as to foresee Zenobia's death is uncertain. But Zenobia is in a sense a victim of Coverdale's cruel voyeurism.

It seems doubtless that Hawthorne acknowledges that Coverdale's egotism is an exaggerated manifestation of his own characteristic. This is because he names the anti-hero of Zenobia's

legend Theodore. "Theodore" is the Greek form of "Nathaniel."⁸ Hawthorne sometimes uses the name to mention himself in his letters for Sophia. As some critics notice, Theodore, who is doomed to live a forlorn life in retribution for his vulgar curiosity about the inside of the veil of the Veiled Lady, is another Coverdale.⁹ Coverdale also suffers the miserable fate, pining vainly for Priscilla even in his middle-aged bachelorhood. Though Hawthorne states in the preface that the characters of the book are wholly fictitious, he certainly portrays Coverdale as an autobiographical figure. In The Blithedale Romance, he repeats his self-criticism as an artist.

The reason for Coverdale's interference in the private affairs of his friends is not only his philosophical curiosity about their hidden nature. He is also motivated emotionally. In some measure, Coverdale may be a slave of his own emotions like Chillingworth. He has affection for his friends, for Priscilla particularly. But Priscilla, as well as Zenobia, loves Hollingsworth. None of the three really cares about him. This circumstance sometimes irritates Coverdale and arouses in him jealousy at their close relationship. He half wants to stop his interference and escape the irksomeness. Yet his emotional connection with the three people is unexpectedly so strong that the irresistible desire to know their condition haunts him wherever he goes. Tired of the frequent thoughts of his friends, Coverdale bitterly says, "Hollingsworth, Zenobia, Priscilla! These three had absorbed my life into themselves" (BR 194). While

Coverdale seeks for a perfect grasp of the nature of his friends, he ironically discovers that they have absolute mastery over his heart.

It would be more accurate to say that Coverdale is controlled not by Hollingsworth, Zenobia, and Priscilla but by his own thoughts about them. Coverdale is aware that his ideas about them are not always correct. Even though he strives to appreciate them, he cannot but deform them in his imagination by exaggerating their traits that happen to attract his notice. Coverdale explains that this is “the kind of error into which [his] mode of observation was calculated to lead [him]” (BR 71). But the “error” he says that he has made is what we also tend to make when we try to understand somebody else. So Coverdale thinks, “What wonder, then, should we be frightened by the aspect of a monster, which, after all . . . may be said to have been created mainly by ourselves!” (BR 69). Coverdale feels guilty about judging his friends according to his inaccurate impression. He states that he misunderstands them all the more for the deepness of his feelings for them: “[I]f I erred at all, in regard to Hollingsworth, Zenobia, and Priscilla, it was through too much sympathy, rather than too little” (BR 154). Ironically, despite his attempt to establish a spiritual meeting point between his friends and himself, Coverdale is not very different from Hollingsworth and Priscilla, who never try to sympathize with others.

Coverdale embodies the fear of anybody who strives earnestly to understand other human beings. It is the fear that other

people may be always beyond the reach of our utmost sympathy and imagination, so that we may be ultimately isolated from each other. Rosina's advice to "forget yourself in the idea of another" (MOM 283) sounds rather empty in that case. There is a fine line between delusion and sympathy, or between being selfish and being unselfish. We doubt that Hawthorne is so cynical as to believe that egotism, or unconquerable moral isolation, is the fundamental principle of human existence and that the bond of human sympathy is impossible. At any rate, however, The Blithedale Romance seems to move the reader in the respect that it expresses the misery of human beings who cannot but struggle toward a close rapport with others, even if in vain.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis we have considered the problem of egotism in Hawthorne's works. We started our argument with the question of what "egotism" might be in Hawthorne's view. In order to answer the question, we examined his fictitious characters in both allegorical and psychological lights.

In the first chapter, we analyzed the young protagonists of Hawthorne's early historical tales, Robin Molineux, Reuben Bourne, and Goodman Brown. Though they behave themselves like innocent Christians, they are just deceiving themselves about their selfish nature. Our study of them made it clear that at the most basic level "egotism" means to Hawthorne the spiritual isolation produced by refusing to accept the human imperfection and thereby failing to join the bond of warm sympathy between people. As mentioned previously, the preceding research into the problem of egotism in Hawthorne's fiction has focused almost exclusively on his works written after Twice-told Tales. It was demonstrated in this chapter that the theme already lies at the center of Hawthorne's earliest tales and that they are not unrelated to his later works concerning the extremity of egotism, "the Unpardonable Sin."

In the second chapter, we focused our attention on the relentless investigators of man's corrupt nature, the so-called

“Unpardonable Sinners” in Hawthorne’s short stories written around the 1840’s. We showed that these perverted enthusiasts reflect Hawthorne’s self-criticism as an artist. While Hawthorne believed that the artist must be a keen and detached observer of human life, he feared that his intellectual approach to man’s moral defects might indicate his lack of respect and sympathy for humanity. He half regarded his art as the grossest representation of the egotism he had criticized in his earlier works. He called his scholar-like aloofness “the Unpardonable Sin.” But Hawthorne’s idea about “the Unpardonable Sin” is more complicated. As Niwa also points out, the idea mirrors not only the author’s self-criticism but also his antagonism to the materialistic New England society in his time (5). Furthermore, our research into “Ethan Brand” revealed Hawthorne’s feeling that human beings, however egotistic and fiend-like, may not be completely isolated from the bond of sympathy.

In the third chapter, we examined Hawthorne’s two novels, The Scarlet Letter and The Blithedale Romance. We particularly considered Roger Chillingworth, Hollingsworth, and Miles Coverdale. They commit “the Unpardonable Sin” as they try to dig up other people’s hidden defects without genuine sympathy for them. But their egotism is not always treated as a moral evil in the books. It is also described as a result of their innate imperfection, for they are caught in the swirling vortex of their own emotional motives rather than pursuing the blasphemous investigation all

willingly. It was shown in this chapter that the egotists in Hawthorne's novels express the grief and weakness of humankind, which cannot avoid falling into the inevitable entanglement.

Viewing Hawthorne's novels and short stories as we have done in this thesis, we can see that they are various manifestations of his idea about egotism. It is Hawthorne's way of creating stories to shed light sometimes on one side of the idea and sometimes on another. But why is he preoccupied with the situation of the lack of human sympathy so deeply? Let us consider this point to conclude our argument. At the end of the first chapter, we quoted the passage from "Fancy's Show Box" that warns the readers against rejecting their sense of equal brotherhood even with the guiltiest. We explained that the reason for the warning is because the bond of mutual sympathy between human beings is the most essential thing for salvation of the human soul in Hawthorne's view. "Fancy's Show Box" closes as follows:

He must feel, that, when he shall knock at the gate of Heaven, no semblance of an unspotted life can entitle him to entrance there. Penitence must kneel, and Mercy come from the footstool of the throne, or that golden gate will never open! (TT 226).

The sketch shows that Hawthorne considers sympathy for other people as a passport to Heaven since it signifies one's humble recognition that he or she is morally flawed like them. Then, does Hawthorne put considerable weight on sympathy just because it is a

tool to express the religious devotion essential to salvation through God's mercy? Moreover, is salvation simply of the religious kind for him?

These problems are significant because they are synonymous with the question, "Which will egotism ultimately be for Hawthorne, the error against God or the error against people?" Critics have left these points ambiguous. They have somewhat automatically believed that egotism of Hawthorne's fictitious characters means a sin against God in the first place. For example, Fogle makes a comment on Rappaccini like this: "His sin is primarily in striving to rival God . . . and secondarily in subordinating human values to scientific knowledge" (99). Also, Niwa holds that the chief reason why "the Unpardonable Sin" is unpardonable for Hawthorne is because it means an arrogant challenge to the Creator (22). Their comments indirectly indicate their impression that Hawthorne attaches the greatest importance to awe of God. However, it should be noted that, in his new interpretation of "the Unpardonable Sin," Hawthorne shifts its meaning from blasphemy against the Holy Spirit to a lack of love for humanity. His alteration naturally implies that he sets human values above religious ones. Though love for God and love for people are equally important for Hawthorne, he would still choose people if he must choose. The bond of sympathy between human beings probably means to him more than a mere step to attain religious salvation. It would be in itself spiritual salvation on a

personal level.

We started our thesis with the brief comment upon the American Renaissance. We said that the nineteenth century in America was a time when the enormous possibility of the individual human being was emphasized while the traditional Christian view gradually lost its influence. We also said that it might be natural in a sense that what is generally deemed as the first group of the great American writers appeared in the period when the "self" thus came into the spotlight. Hawthorne is certainly one of the writers reflecting the current of the period since his deepest interest always lies in human beings and how they should understand themselves. Because he could not agree with the self-admiring air of his contemporary American society and kept describing man's moral imperfection in his works, Hawthorne has been regarded somewhat schematically as a representative of the pessimistic side of the American Renaissance. The categorization is not really irrelevant. But we should not put too much stress on the pessimism of his works. Nor should we think that the gloominess and the religious sternness in his works mirror his personality faithfully. We need to pay due attention to Hawthorne's genuine affection for human beings at the bottom of his apparent sternness; for it is the essential quality that made him one of the great American writers as we find him today.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

¹Sophia wrote to her sister Elizabeth in 1838, “I think Mr. Emerson is the greatest man that ever lived. . . . He is indeed a ‘Supernal Vision.’ . . . I am rejoiced that Carlyle is coming to America. But I cannot help feeling that Emerson is diviner than he. Mr. Emerson is Pure Tone” (Julian Hawthorne 186-87).

CHAPTER 1

¹Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Letters, 1813-1843. Vol.15 of The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1984) 251. All future references to Hawthorne’s texts are to the Centenary Edition. Abbreviated title and page numbers will be indicated parenthetically after the quotation.

²For example, tarring and feathering are the means used by the Sons of Liberty against royalists especially during the Stamp Act crisis in 1765.

³Hisao Inoue aptly points out the significance of Robin’s clinging to the post while the procession passes by. But he interprets it as Robin’s objection to the violence of the mob. Inoue opines that it is because Robin disagrees with them that he laughs

louder than they (30-31). He fails to pay attention to the fact that Robin's laugh is the result of the "contagion" (230) spreading among the mob members.

⁴The adjective "shrewd" came from the noun "shrew," which originally means "evil person or thing." The word "shrew" is of Germanic origin, and the related words in Germanic languages have senses such as "dwarf," "devil," or "fox."

⁵On the 9th of May in 1725, Captain John Lovewell and his men made an expedition to the Abenaki town of Pequawket, now Fryeburg, in Main. The expedition resulted in the battle between the band and the Abenaki, now called "Lovell's (or Lovewell's) Fight." The battle continued for hours, many soldiers on both sides were slaughtered, and the survivors of Lovewell's band were forced to retreat at last.

⁶The famous example is the mob attack on the house of Thomas Hutchinson in 1765. Hutchinson was the lieutenant governor of Massachusetts at that time. Neal Doubleday's research tells that even the royalist members as well as the neutralist citizens stood by and permitted the assault (230) .

⁷A bounty of one hundred pounds was promised for every Indian scalp at the time of "Lovell's Fight." Lovewell's troops had previously succeeded in the raids and had been offered a good bounty price when they brought back ten scalps to Boston. For Lovewell himself, the raid is supposed to have meant revenge because members of his family had been murdered by Indians.

⁸We are much indebted to Chadwick Hansen's Witchcraft at Salem for our study of the Salem witch trial.

⁹Even in Hawthorne's time, ballads and poems were made to praise the soldiers of "Lovell's Fight." For example, Longfellow in his early teens composed "The Battle of Lovell's Pond" (1820). People commemorated the centenary in 1825, the year of Hawthorne's graduation from college.

CHAPTER 2

¹To be exact, Hawthorne published a small book, Fanshawe, anonymously in 1828. He paid the publisher \$ 100 to print the novella, but soon withdrew it from circulation as he deemed it a failure (Turner 50). He even told his sister Elizabeth not to reveal the authorship of the book (Turner 50).

²Hawthorne mournfully reflects on his seclusion in his letter to Longfellow in 1837: "For the last ten years, I have not lived, but only dreamed about living" (L I 251).

³The term, "the Unpardonable Sin," does not appear in the Bible, but the idea can be found both in the Old and New Testaments. See, Num. 15.30-31 and Matt. 12.31-32.

⁴See Baym 39 and Uroff 68.

⁵Mesmerism was brought to New England in 1836. Sophia received the mesmeric treatment for her headaches. When she mentioned the treatment, Hawthorne told her that the mesmeric

phenomena were merely “the result of a physical and material, not of a spiritual, influence” (L I 589). He advised her to give up the treatment to avoid some blasphemous influence on her spirit, “thy holy of holies” (L I 588).

⁶The view is also offered by Crews (156) and Fogle (124-25).

⁷We are indebted to Fogle and Niwa for our discovery of the similarity between the endings of “The Birth-mark” and “Rappaccini’s Daughter.” But we cannot agree with Fogle when he states that the conflict between the eccentric scientists and their antagonists allegorizes the head/heart dichotomy. It is doubtless that neither Aminadab nor Baglioni embodies humanity. See Fogle 100 and Niwa 95.

⁸For example, Niwa excludes “The Artist of the Beautiful” from his book, probably the most exhaustive of all the researches into the problem of Hawthorne’s “Unpardonable Sinners.”

⁹Some critics do not fail to examine the meaning of the name of Aminadab and Baglioni. Edward S. Van Winkle, for example, notices that the name “Aminadab” appears in the genealogy of Jesus in the Bible. Yet, perplexed at Hawthorne’s purpose in choosing the biblical name for the brutish man, he concludes that the name is intended only as an anagram of “bad anima” (131-32). Niwa notes the original sense of “Pietro” and considers that Pietro Baglioni, a stony-hearted man, is aptly named (95). But he also ignores the religious connotation of the name.

¹⁰“Ethan Brand” was called differently before it was

collected in Hawthorne's third book, The Snow Image (1851). At first the title included the term, "the Unpardonable Sin." When it appeared in the Boston Weekly Museum in early 1850, the story was called "The Unpardonable Sin. From an Unpublished Work." In the Dollar Magazine of May in 1851, the title was changed to "Ethan Brand; or, The Unpardonable Sin." See SI 381-84 and 417-18.

¹¹Even after Twice-told Tales was highly estimated, Hawthorne was still a relatively obscure writer. The ambition to produce a novel to establish his literary fame seems to have grown gradually stronger in him. He expresses his decision to stop writing short stories in the preface to his second collection, Mosses from an Old Manse (1846) and in a letter to Evert A. Duyckinck (MOM 34, LII 139). Actually, Hawthorne started working at the Salem custom house from April 1846 in order to solve his financial difficulties. The official duty spoiled his creative spirit.

¹²Graylock is a mountain in Berkshire, Massachusetts. Hawthorne made a trip there in 1838. The composition of "Ethan Brand" is largely based on the trip.

¹³The joint research of Joseph T. McCullen and John C. Guilds tells that the Christian theologians of different sects and periods unanimously state that the true penitent will be delivered from sin even if it is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Because God's mercy is infinite, it is only the rejection of it that can make a human being unpardonable. In short, "the Unpardonable Sin" means

the willful and unyielding disobedience to God in the strict sense. See McCullen and Guilds 223-24.

¹⁴See Harris 76-77 and Marx 438.

CHAPTER 3

¹To what extent Hawthorne is serious about his didacticism is open to debate. Michael Bell states that the mode of Hawthorne's tales is allegorical while his intentions are not so. Bell says, "His plots are not didactically generated by his efforts to tell us what his symbols mean, what abstract notions they picture forth . . ." (134). But it is certain at least that moral instruction is one of Hawthorne's creative motives. The American Notebooks makes this plain. For example, there is such an entry as this: "The good deeds in an evil life,—the generous, noble, and excellent actions done by people habitually wicked,—to ask what is to become of them" (30). Some connect Hawthorne's habit of allegorizing and lecturing with his moralistic temperaments inherited from his Puritan ancestors. They consider that Hawthorne preaches in his tales in order to settle the conflict between his artistic nature and his ethical principles. Jorge Luis Borges says that, since Hawthorne "never ceased to feel that the task of the writer was frivolous or, what is worse, even sinful," he "compose[d] moralities and fables" and thereby "tried to make art a function of the conscience" (411). Brownell likewise states that Hawthorne contents himself with the

“compromise” (53) between his creative imagination and his puritanical values. Though their opinions may be true in part, they do not completely explain why Hawthorne writes allegorical tales. Moreover, his way of using allegory is far more strategic than these critics consider. But further research is needed to develop this argument so we leave the topic here.

²The House of the Seven Gables and The Marble Faun are excluded to clarify the focus. They are not insignificant in the discussion about Hawthorne’s egotists. But, as for The House of the Seven Gables, the problems of the characters are settled a little too easily. Hawthorne seems to sacrifice some of the realities of the story in order to give his contemporary readers a healthy and cheerful impression. The Marble Faun mainly discusses the educational effect of sin, or “the fortunate fall.” We need a wider framework to consider how egotism is described in relationship with this idea, which is in itself very controversial.

³Chillingworth’s slavery to his emotions seems to be hinted at by his uneven shoulders. Niwa aptly states that they symbolize Chillingworth’s head-heart imbalance (129). But he ignores which shoulder is higher. He just interprets the imbalance as the symbol of the triumph of “the head” in Chillingworth’s nature. It must be noted, however, that the narrator makes a sketch of Chillingworth as follows: “This figure of the study and the cloister . . . was slightly deformed, with the left shoulder a trifle higher than the right” (SL 58). Hawthorne always associates the left side of the

body with the heart. In “Fancy’s Show Box,” the allegorical figure, “Conscience,” stands on the left side of Mr. Smith “so as to be next his heart” (TT 222). In “The Birth-mark,” Georgiana has the mark, the symbol of her moral flaw, on her left cheek. In “Ethan Brand,” Lawyer Giles, who lacks one hand and a part of one foot as a result of his misfortunes, still retains “the courage and spirit of a man” (SI 92). His hand which remains uninjured is revealed to be the left. In addition, the heartless Giovanni tries to pluck a toxic flower, the vegetable version of Beatrice, with his right hand. Given these examples, it is proper to think that Chillingworth’s left shoulder higher than the right implies the triumph of not “the head” but “the heart” in his nature.

⁴The penultimate chapter “Blithedale-Pasture,” which ends with the moral drawn from Hollingsworth’s errors, seems to have been designed as the last chapter because the entry in The American Notebooks reads, “Wrote the last page (199th manuscript) of the Blithedale Romance, April 30th. 1852. Wrote Preface, May, 1st. Afterwards modified the conclusion, and lengthened to 201 pages” (314). The added two pages would be the present final chapter, “Miles Coverdale’s Confession.” See BR “Textual Introduction” lii.

⁵Charles Fourier (1772-1837) is a French philosopher and socialist who proposed to divide society into self-sufficient communities called “phalanxes” organized according to 810 personality types he believed existed.

⁶Fourier argued that human desires and impulses should be gratified, not repressed, for social harmony. Hollingsworth is probably offended by this opinion.

⁷Hawthorne joined Brook Farm in April 1841. He was engaged to Sophia at that time. One of the reasons for his participation in the community would have been because he half hoped for the Arcadian life with Sophia there. But he made the same discovery as Coverdale does at Blithedale. Artistic activities and physical labors were incompatible in his view. Or, the latter did not suit him. Besides, he was not created for the communal life. It made him restless and hindered his meditation. In September, Hawthorne complainingly wrote to Sophia, "I have not the sense of perfect seclusion, which has always been essential to my power of producing anything" (L I 575). Hawthorne left the community in November.

⁸The origins of the names "Nathaniel" and "Theodore" are respectively the Hebrew and the Greek meaning "a gift of god." Hawthorne also used in some of his letters the Latin name, "Deodatus," which has the same meaning.

⁹See Hedges 307 and Carabine 128.

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