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**Painter, Alice Lorraine**

A RHETORICAL SEARCH FOR THE IMPLIED AUTHOR AND HIS CREATED  
READER IN THE NOVELS OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

*Middle Tennessee State University*

D.A.

1984

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A Rhetorical Search for the Implied Author  
and His Created Reader in the Novels  
of Nathaniel Hawthorne

Alice Lorraine Painter

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A Rhetorical Search for the Implied Author  
and His Created Reader in the Novels  
of Nathaniel Hawthorne

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## Abstract

### A Rhetorical Search for the Implied Author and His Created Reader in the Novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne

by Alice Lorraine Painter

Nathaniel Hawthorne clearly states in his prefaces that he is writing his four novels for a genial, understanding friend. In the "Custom-House" sketch preceding his first novel, Hawthorne admits that he writes with "the inmost Me behind its veil." One task confronting the student of Hawthorne is to discern the consistent views of the figure called the "implied author" by Wayne C. Booth in The Rhetoric of Fiction. In the sketch Hawthorne also admits that he hopes to reach an understanding and sympathetic reader who will share his views, Booth's "created reader." In order to develop a well-defined impression of Hawthorne's created reader and to detect the beliefs of the implied author, one must examine closely the complex rhetoric and themes contained in The Scarlet Letter, The House of the Seven Gables, The Blithedale Romance, and The Marble Faun. Since the created reader is expected to assume the beliefs

Alice Lorraine Painter

of the implied author, they come to agree on the role of women in society, the value of the past, the necessity for authority, and the conflict between the individual and society. However, by constructing this mythical created reader who is "sympathetic" and "understanding," Hawthorne also raises a barrier for some readers, particularly twentieth-century women. Hawthorne's created reader is a middle-class, middle-aged man with traditional masculine beliefs on the position of women in society. If the twentieth-century woman is to read his novels with enjoyment and appreciation, she must be prepared to set aside her own contemporary, perhaps totally divergent, views and assume those shared by these two nineteenth-century men. In spite of this difficulty, however, the search for the created reader has a value for both men and women of the twentieth century. The real reader can more easily experience an age and culture not his own, can sustain a deeper insight into the author's intentions, and can intensify his appreciation for the writer's art.

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## Introduction

When Geoffrey Chaucer wrote Troilus and Criseyde in 1385, he not only knew his audience, but he also knew that he would read his poetry to them and be able to gauge their reactions. However, in the Palinode to Troilus and Criseyde, Chaucer voices a concern with his future audience. After addressing his work and praying that he might be permitted to write again, he writes:

And for ther is so gret dyversite  
In Englyssh and yn wrytyng of cure tonge,  
So prey I God that noon mysywryte the,  
Ne the mys metre for defaute of tonge.  
And red whereso thow be, or elles songe,<sup>1</sup>  
That thow be understonde, God I beseche--<sup>1</sup>

In these lines Chaucer has more than his listening audience in mind, for a diversity in language does not concern only a listening audience. Chaucer stresses that "red whereso thow be, or elles songe, / That thow be understonde." Thus he is expressing his concern with what might happen when his work is read by an audience quite different from that in a room filled with his close friends and other members of the court. Chaucer realizes the difficulty of communicating

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde, in The Complete Poetry and Prose of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. John H. Fisher (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1977), p. 539.

with his audience once his work is outside his personal control. Two hundred years after Chaucer, Edmund Spenser manifests a certain amount of anxiety over how his first published work, The Shepheardes Calender, will be received. Spenser addresses his work with the words, "Goe little booke: they selfe present / . . . / To him that is the president / Of noblesse and of chevalree."<sup>2</sup> After suggesting that the work might arouse envy from those who read the book, Spenser says, "And when his honor has thee redde, / Crave pardon for my hardy heade." Although Spenser's concern is slightly different from Chaucer's, both writers reveal an interest in the reading public. The writer's involvement with his reader does not die out but, instead, continues to escalate until the appearance of the eighteenth century novel. The novelists of that period, moreover, were actively interested in creating a dialogue with their readers.

In The Created Self, a study of the role of the reader in eighteenth century novels, John Preston says that "the novelists of this period were interested in exploring different ways of relating to their readers and did not try

<sup>2</sup> Edmund Spenser, The Shepheardes Calender, in Edmund Spenser's Poetry, ed. Hugh Maclean (New York: Norton, 1968), p. 407.

to disguise their interest."<sup>3</sup> Preston maintains that Henry Fielding, Samuel Richardson, Daniel Defoe, and Laurence Sterne considered their works as a dialogue between the reader and themselves. He says, for example, that Fielding uses humor in order to translate "the lonely process of reading into a friendly encounter."<sup>4</sup> Paul Hunter also comments on the ways in which these novelists attempt to dispel the loneliness of the reading process through their efforts to create an "illusion of convivial companionship."<sup>5</sup> In a brief description of the evolution of the novel, Hunter points out that the early first-person narratives, moving from an oral tradition into print, cry out to be heard. By this Hunter means that the novelist opens his soul to an audience in an attempt to establish some kind of relationship. Likewise, in the epistolary novel the correspondent reaches out and invites the reader to be not only an observer but also a participant. However, even in the eighteenth century, there is still the barrier of cold print which the author tried, as in previous centuries, to dissolve through two practices in particular. One was the

<sup>3</sup> John Preston, The Created Self: The Reader's Role in Eighteenth-Century Fiction (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Preston, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> J. Paul Hunter, "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Reader," Genre, 10 (1977), 472.

direct address to the reader as "indulgent," "gentle," "courteous," "curious," "pious," or "candid." Hunter suggests that an author's use of this method results from a belief that he needs to involve the reader more than he would be through mere print. A direct address to the reader personalizes the audience as well as underlines a possible close relationship between audience and author. The second practice, that of including prefaces, introductions, and other messages of this type, not only illustrates an attempt to involve the reader but also accepts the premise that a reader must have some direction before he approaches the work.<sup>6</sup> Regardless of the methods they chose to use, it is obvious that authors have shown a concern for their audience or readers from the time of Chaucer onward. It is interesting, however, that even though authors have always shown an interest in their readers, the critics largely have ignored this element until this half of the twentieth century.

It is Walker Gibson, in an article in College English in 1950, who first raises the issue of the reader's position vis-a-vis the author. Gibson contends that every time we open a book we become a new person created through the language of the author. "We assume," Gibson says, "for the sake of the experience, that set of attitudes and qualities which the language asks us to assume, and, if we cannot

<sup>6</sup> Hunter, pp. 472-73.

assume them, we throw the book away."<sup>7</sup> Therefore, Gibson argues that there are actually two readers; one who actually sits with the book open in front of him, and a second, a fictitious reader or "mock reader," who assumes the attitudes of the author. Assuming these attitudes involves a "nimble and sympathetic" conversation between the speaker in the work and the mock reader. Gibson goes on to say that "there is great variation from book to book in the ease and particularity with which one can describe the mock reader, but he is always present."<sup>8</sup>

Although Gibson proposed his theory of the "mock reader" as early as 1950, it was not until after the publication of Wayne Booth's The Rhetoric of Fiction in 1961 that there was a proliferation of criticism based upon the reader's role in fiction. Booth examines the rhetorical methods which authors use to impose a fictional world on their readers. In a general discussion of how authors attempt to achieve artistic purity, Booth includes two premises which influence this study. First of all, Booth maintains that a general criterion among most authors is that they should be neutral toward all values or, in other words, work toward total objectivity. Although this type

<sup>7</sup> Walker Gibson, "Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers," CE, 11 (1949-50), 265.

<sup>8</sup> Gibson, p. 267.

of objectivity is impossible to attain in fact, Booth contends that in fiction, authors manage to get their readers to forget the author as an individual person with a background, ideas, feelings, and personal attitudes. In order to negate this personal identity, the author creates a figure embodying the values he wishes to explore, so that the reader can sense this new presence. Booth maintains that the picture the reader gets of this new person is one of the most important effects of the author. Booth goes on to call this newly created figure the "implied author," a means to create objective distance between the reader and himself. The real author and the implied author may or may not share the same attitudes and values. It is the implied author, however, that the reader encounters. The position of the implied author helps the reader "to know where, in the world of values, he stands--that is, to know where the author wants him to stand."<sup>9</sup> Having created the implied author, the real author can then commit this figure to a moral or emotional stance different from that of his own if he so desires. Booth goes on to state that this ideal, created version of the real author can be discovered in the work through an analysis of the implied author's tone, style, and technique. Thus, the implied author chooses what we

<sup>9</sup> Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 73.

read. As Booth carefully points out, it is only after distinguishing between the real author and the implied author that we can discuss the sincerity or objectivity of a work. If we accept Booth's premise that authors strive for objectivity in fiction, then we should also accept his subsequent theory that it is through the created, implied author that the real author expresses this objectivity. The reader can then discern the ideas and attitudes of the implied author rather than those of the real author.

Along with his examination of the ways in which authors view their work, Booth also explores the position of the author in relation to his reader. Booth maintains that what an author "requires is intelligence, discrimination, and analytical interest and although . . . he is willing to accept responsibility in raising the reader to this level, he still presupposes a reader ready for the proper analytical response."<sup>10</sup> Unable to control the actual "intelligence, discrimination and analytical interest" of his real reader, an author will then create a reader who embodies these characteristics. In establishing this concept, Booth refers to the comments of writers ranging from Henry James to Saul Bellow. The real author wants a reader who not only understands his position on a particular matter but also shares his beliefs. In addition, Booth states that if the

<sup>10</sup> Booth, p. 121.

reader is to enjoy a work, reader and author must agree in their beliefs. This reader, as Gibson also says, is quite different from the real person who does the ordinary things in life, such as buying the groceries or repairing the furnace. Only as he reads does the real person temporarily become someone else. In order to become this new person or reader, the individual must put aside his own real beliefs and attitudes in the interests of objectivity. Thus, Booth says:

The author creates . . . an image of himself and another image of his reader; he makes his reader, as he makes his second self, and the most successful reading is one in which the created selves,<sup>11</sup> author and reader, can find complete agreement.

Thus the "created reader" is a fiction, but the real reader must adopt this fiction to accept the beliefs of the implied author. The real reader now becomes the created reader if he is to understand the intention of the implied author and enjoy the work. As both Booth and Gibson stress, the created or mock reader may be a person whose mask we--the real readers--refuse to put on, and thus reject the book. In this sense, the role we are asked to play affects our enjoyment of the work.

The impact of Booth's concept upon the field of criticism is shown by the numerous books and articles dealing

<sup>11</sup> Booth, p. 138.

with the role of the reader which have been published since The Rhetoric of Fiction. Along with these many works has come a proliferation of ways in which to refer to the fictionalized reader, some of them dividing along national lines. In an attempt to bring together the English and German critics, Daniel Wilson, in "Readers in Texts," summarizes these various types of readers as "ideal readers, fictive readers, intended readers, implied readers, abstract readers," and "virtual readers."<sup>12</sup> Although these terms are often used interchangeably, Wilson attempts to make a distinction among some of them, as well as to make a distinction between the English and German language criticism, drawing upon the theories of Erwin Wolff, Wolfgang Iser, Walter Ong, Hannelore Link, and Gerald Prince. The German critics tend toward a theory that there may be different types of reader envisaged by the author within one work. For example, these critics use the term "fictive reader" to refer to the author's direct address, such as "How could you, Madam," or addressing the "gentle reader." The English critics, on the other hand, are inclined to use more general terms by which to refer to a single fictitious reader. Wilson stresses that the German tendency toward drawing fine lines between different types of reader tends

<sup>12</sup> W. Daniel Wilson, "Readers in Texts," PMLA, 96 (1981), 848.

to become cumbersome and too restrictive. Moreover, Wilson goes on to point out that this method encourages the creation of even more phrases which only add to the confusion. Although Wilson goes on to adopt Wolfgang Iser's term "implied reader" as the most valid one, it is his definition of this implied reader which provides the foundation of our inquiry.

Wilson maintains that the implied reader can be discovered through "the behavior, attitudes, and background--presupposed or defined, usually indirectly, in the text itself--necessary for a proper understanding of the text."<sup>13</sup> This "idealized reader" or implied reader is conceived consciously or unconsciously by the author and exists in every work. Booth, Iser, and Wilson agree with this concept, as well as that of the "implied author." Wilson, following Booth's initial statement, defines the "implied author" as one who stands behind the narrator and "is never identical with the real author in all stages of life as we experience him or her in other documents; the author fictionalizes himself or herself in order to meet the demands of a particular fictive world."<sup>14</sup> There are, therefore, two authors to every work, and we must be careful not to confuse the "real author" with the "implied author." For the purposes of our

<sup>13</sup> Wilson, p. 848.

<sup>14</sup> Wilson, p. 848.

discussion, we are interested only in the attitudes and values assumed by the implied author.

Despite the danger of introducing yet another term for this fictional reader, we shall, while adopting Wilson's premise, refer to the "created reader." This term, both broad and simple, encompasses Booth's concept that an author creates "an image of his reader," as well as the German concepts of the "fictive," "implied," or "intended reader." An author writes with one person in mind, not several different ones throughout one work; thus, a "created reader" can be characterized in the sense that he may be directly addressed as "gentle," or he may also be less visible and thus recognized through the rhetoric and tone of the implied author. Booth and others agree that there is a figure who stands between the real author and his reader. We shall use Booth's term "implied author" to indicate this figure. The "implied author" creates his fictive world and the reader for whom he is writing. Our contention is that these created figures can be realized by studying the language of the works themselves. The "implied author" and the real author are two different figures, and whether or not the real author kept a notebook or journal to draw upon when creating his world has no bearing on our discussion. If in order to enjoy the work the reader is to assume the beliefs of the author, this can be accomplished easily only through the language of the work itself. The

real author keeps his journal or notebook as a personal record. He may never actually intend that this record be published, and certainly it is not available for the reader at the time of the publication of the work itself. While the extraneous materials may be valuable for certain critical purposes, they are not necessary in order to discover either the person of the "created reader" or the "implied author."

Having accepted that the real author creates an implied author through which to illustrate certain values, ideas, and beliefs and a reader to agree with these beliefs, what is the purpose of such an inquiry? Walter Ong, in "Beyond Objectivity: The Reader-Writer Transaction As An Altered State of Consciousness," lists four possible ways in which this discovery can influence scholarship and teaching. First, the identification of a created reader can correct earlier theories such as those credited to New Criticism; second, the discovery of the reader can force us to recognize writing as an artificial activity; third, we can reach a deeper understanding of our past which would be otherwise unavailable; and fourth, an examination of the reader's relationship to the text can increase our understanding of genre, character, plot, and style.<sup>15</sup> In addition, Nancy and

<sup>15</sup> Walter J. Ong, "Beyond Objectivity: The Reader-Writer Transaction As An Altered State of Consciousness," CEA Critic, 40 (1977-78), 12.

Peter Rabinowitz stress the teaching application of the identification of the created reader, for it can enable us "to teach our students to be flexible as readers, not to see all texts as mirrors of themselves, nor to see them all as embodiments of formal critical abstractions, but rather to recognize the particular qualities of the text in front of them."<sup>16</sup> There is, especially for the modern woman, an even greater implication in this kind of reader identification. Such feminist writers as Nina Baym, Judith Fetterly, and Susan Lanser have pointed out how masculine authors writing for a masculine reader tend to portray a restricted, traditional, and one-dimensional role for their women characters. In the past, women have meekly accepted those roles envisaged and portrayed by male authors. A modern woman who considers herself as equal to a man in intelligence, as equally discriminating, and as equally capable of performing the same role as a male in society may experience anger rather than pleasure when reading these masculine novelists. Therefore, if the modern woman is to be able to read and enjoy the works of these authors, she must be able not only to discern the attitudes and beliefs of the implied author but also to realize that she must assume the mask of the created reader.

<sup>16</sup> Nancy Rabinowitz and Peter Rabinowitz, "The Critical Balance: Reader, Text, and Meaning," CE, 41 (1980), 925.

Many of the critical studies on the "created reader" have dealt with novelists of the eighteenth or twentieth centuries but very little with nineteenth century American novelists. This failure is surprising since the nineteenth century American writers were as concerned about their readers as either their predecessors or successors. Nathaniel Hawthorne, for example, not only includes a preface with each of his four novels and directly addresses his reader, as did Richardson, Fielding, and Sterne before him, but he also clearly defines his "created reader" through his language. Hawthorne also clearly states that he is writing behind a veil. The purpose of this dissertation is to examine each of Nathaniel Hawthorne's four novels, to distill the relevant ideas and attitudes, and to come to a completed portrait of Hawthorne's "created reader." The delineation of the "created reader" will help the real reader to recognize those attitudes he needs to assume in order to accept the novel as a work of value and to understand it.

Nathaniel Hawthorne completed his four novels between the years 1850 and 1859: The Scarlet Letter, 1850; The House of the Seven Gables, 1851; The Blithedale Romance, 1852; and The Marble Faun, 1859. In these novels, Hawthorne has a clear idea of his reader. In "The Custom-House" preface to The Scarlet Letter which is Hawthorne's first encounter with his reader, he writes:

The truth seems to be, however, that, when he casts his leaves forth upon the wind, the author addresses, not the many who will fling aside his volume, or never take it up, but the few who will understand him, better than most of his school-mates and life-mates. Some authors, indeed, do far more than this, and indulge themselves in such confidential depths of revelation as could fittingly be addressed, only and exclusively, to the one heart and mind of perfect sympathy; as if the printed book, thrown at large on the wide world, were certain to find out the divided segment of the writer's own nature, and complete his circle of existence by bringing him into communion with it. . . . But as thoughts are frozen and utterances benumbed, unless the speaker stand in some true relation with his audience--it may be pardonable to imagine that a friend, a kind and apprehensive, though not the closest friend, is listening to our talk; and then, a native reserve being thawed by this genial consciousness we may prate of the circumstances that lie around us, and even of ourself, but still keep the inmost Me behind its veil.<sup>17</sup>

In these sentences Hawthorne shows that he is consciously creating a writing persona--the "implied author"--but more importantly he is writing with a particular reader in mind --Booth's "created reader." A number of key words in this passage contain clues to the kind of reader Hawthorne envisages. First of all, he refers to "the few who will understand him" and further on to "a friend" who "is

<sup>17</sup> Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, Vol. I of The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. William Charvat et al. (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 3-4. All subsequent references to Hawthorne's work will be to this edition published by Ohio State Univ. Press and will be designated in the text by volume numbers: The House of the Seven Gables, II (1963); The Blithedale Romance, III (1964); and The Marble Faun, IV (1968).

listening to our talk." Although Hawthorne is very quick to point out that he is not writing as some authors do "to the one heart and mind of perfect sympathy," he does, however, make it quite clear that an author must have some kind of "true relation with his audience." Although the author, at this point, gives no more specific details concerning either the reader he pictures or the narrator of his novels, it is possible to make a number of assumptions based upon Hawthorne's later rhetoric and narrative tone.

A study of all four novels shows a reader who is genteel, middle-class, classically educated, well-read, travelled, well-versed in art--ancient and modern--urban, most at home in comfortable surroundings, a smoker and drinker, and middle-aged. Above all, he is male. Not only do we see a male created reader, but it is also obvious that the "implied author" is male. Thus we have a middle-aged male implied author writing to a middle-aged male created reader. It is not until The Marble Faun, however, that Hawthorne states this masculine quality so plainly. In commenting in that book on a difference between the sexes, Hawthorne writes:

There is something extremely pleasant, and even touching--at least of very sweet, soft, and winning effect--in this peculiarity of needle-work, distinguishing women from men. Our own sex is incapable of any such byplay aside from the main business of life; but women--be they of what earthly rank they may, however gifted with intellect or genius, or endowed with awful beauty--have

always some little handiwork ready to fill the tiny gap of every vacant moment. (IV, 39)

Rarely is Hawthorne so straightforward, however, and so, one must examine carefully the rhetoric and tone in the novels to construct a detailed picture of Hawthorne's understanding male reader. Because Hawthorne speaks directly to his reader so rarely, we must judiciously scrutinize the author's more subtle remarks. Hawthorne's cunning turn of phrase, his shrewd manner of slyly dropping an ironic comment in the middle of a sentence, his artful references to works of other artists, and his swift change of direction in the middle of a chapter or paragraph--all provide fertile ground for our search for this elusive fictitious creation of the author's mind. Although we are searching for a representative type rather than an actual person, our nineteenth century middle-aged male becomes realized in the person of John Lothrop Motley. Motley, an acquaintance of Hawthorne's, wrote to him praising The Marble Faun. Hawthorne, in return, referred to Motley as the "Gentle Reader" for whom he was writing. This happy coincidence only serves to strengthen our perception of the created male reader. We must stress that the created male reader of Hawthorne's novels is an historical construction. As we have already mentioned, modern women will have difficulty reading these novels unless they learn to don the mask. But the twentieth century man may also find that he

might have to accept certain changes in his own ideas and beliefs in order to fully understand and appreciate Hawthorne's intentions.

Along with the characteristics of the "created reader," it is also possible to discover the attitudes which the "implied author" expects his sympathetic reader to assume. The "implied author" expects his reader to have traditional male attitudes toward the role of women in society. Even though he recognizes that the limitations of society keep women in a role of subjugation to men and he understands that some women will feel imprisoned by these rules, he still cannot accept the idea that a woman can find happiness outside of marriage, home, and family. The "created reader" must also understand that humanity can be imprisoned both by the past and by society as a whole. These themes we shall see developed throughout all four novels. In the following chapters, we shall examine each novel separately, analyzing the language and demonstrating how each successive novel develops and extends the attitudes of the "created reader" and also adds to our portrait of this middle-aged man.

## Chapter I

### The Scarlet Letter: Hawthorne's Reader, Feminist or Anti-Feminist?

The Scarlet Letter, Nathaniel Hawthorne's first novel, was published in 1850. With this novel, Hawthorne not only introduces the technique of focusing his narrative on four characters, but he introduces two themes which develop throughout the body of his work: the role of women in society and the role of authority. Arlin Turner, in his Nathaniel Hawthorne: An Introduction and Interpretation, says, "The Scarlet Letter is superlative in unity and concentration."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, although there are four characters, Hester Prynne is the center of interest for most of the novel with The Reverend Mister Arthur Dimmesdale and Roger Chillingworth treated as satellites and Pearl, Hester's daughter, more a symbolic figure than an actual character. Thus, the reader's attention and sympathy are directed largely toward Hester, and the themes or attitudes which the author wishes his created reader to adopt are developed through Hester Prynne's interaction with Dimmesdale and

<sup>1</sup> Arlin Turner, Nathaniel Hawthorne: An Introduction and Interpretation (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1961), p. 139.

Chillingworth, as well as with the Puritans of Salem. Although this novel is comparatively short, it is generally considered Hawthorne's best work.

Hawthorne's subject, adultery, is a daring one for mid nineteenth century America. In Love and Death in the American Novel, Leslie Fiedler says that The Scarlet Letter is "our only classical book which makes passion a central theme."<sup>2</sup> However, Hawthorne circumvents possible criticism from his reading public by beginning his story after the adultery has taken place, and Hester has already been in prison several months for bearing an illegitimate child. Hester's subsequent attempt to overcome the ostracism of Puritan society, Dimmesdale's refusal to claim Pearl as his child, and Chillingworth's endeavor as the wronged husband to get Dimmesdale to confess bring these three characters into conflict with one another. The working out of this conflict has led to various critical interpretations. Charles Child Walcutt summarizes these into five major readings: one, the orthodox Christian view which finds sin permanently corrupting--the book is a Greek tragedy;<sup>3</sup> two,

<sup>2</sup> Leslie A. Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel (1960; rpt. London: Paladin, 1970), p. 221.

<sup>3</sup> See Dan Vogel, "Hawthorne's Concept of Tragedy in The Scarlet Letter," NHJ, 1972, ed. C. E. Frazer Clark (Washington, D.C.: Microcard Editions, 1973), pp. 183-93; William L. Vance, "Tragedy and 'The Tragic Power of Laughter': The Scarlet Letter and The House of the Seven Gables," NHJ, 1971, ed. C. E. Frazer Clark (Washington, D.C.: Microcard

the concept of the Fortunate Fall;<sup>4</sup> three, the Romantic theory that individuals are being punished for a natural urge;<sup>5</sup> four, a transcendental view that the sin is not important but the concealment is;<sup>6</sup> and five, the psychological implications of guilt.<sup>7</sup>

Along with these varied interpretations of the novel itself are the critics' views on Hawthorne's inclusion of "The Custom-House" preface. Edward Wagenknecht, for example, states that this preface has "no real connection with the story of "The Scarlet Letter."<sup>8</sup> This preface,

Editions, 1971), pp. 232-54; and Malcolm Cowley, "Five Acts of The Scarlet Letter," CE, 29 (1957), 11-16.

<sup>4</sup> See R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1955); Leslie Fiedler discusses the concept of the fall of love in the New World.

<sup>5</sup> See F. O. Matthiessen, American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1941); and Mark Van Doren, Nahaniel Hawthorne (New York: Viking Press, 1949).

<sup>6</sup> See Percy Boynton, Literature and American Life (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936).

<sup>7</sup> Charles Child Walcutt, "The Scarlet Letter and Its Modern Critics," NCF, 7 (1953), 252-55. Walcutt suggests authors other than those listed above who develop these five interpretations. Frederick C. Crews, The Sins of the Fathers: Hawthorne's Psychological Themes (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966) also discusses a psychological interpretation.

<sup>8</sup> Edward Wagenknecht, Cavalcade of the American Novel (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1952), p. 44; and Marshall Van Deussen, "Narrative Tone in 'The Custom House' and The Scarlet Letter," NCF, 21 (1966-67), 61-71. Van Deussen discusses

however, does provide a number of valuable clues for the reader. First of all, the narrator describes the kind of reader the author has in mind as he writes. His created reader is a "kind and apprehensive" friend who will allow the author to "prate of the circumstances that lie around us." Even so, this sympathetic and understanding friend will allow the author to "keep the inmost Me behind its veil" (I, 4). Here Hawthorne very clearly states that he is writing with a figure between the narrator and himself. This is a definite link to Wayne Booth's concept of the implied author. Thus in a few sentences Hawthorne demonstrates that he is creating a writing persona, and therefore the ideas and attitudes expressed may not be those of the real author but only assumed by the implied author. In commenting on these particular words quoted from Hawthorne, Robert Lee says,

The "true relation with his audience", then, can be itself no more than a fiction, an agreed contract of intention and goodwill between the two consenting parties. The "rights" of each are so preserved, Hawthorne will "play" author and the reader his assigned part.

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in great detail the differences between the preface and The Scarlet Letter.

<sup>9</sup> A. Robert Lee, "'Like a Dream Behind Me': Hawthorne's 'The Custom-House' and The Scarlet Letter," in Nathaniel Hawthorne: New Critical Essays, ed. A. Robert Lee (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble Books, 1982), p. 53.

Not only has Hawthorne introduced the concept of implied author, but also he pointedly states that his created reader must have the same sympathies.

"The Custom-House" also provides Hawthorne's documentary evidence, or authority for his narrative. After describing the embroidered letter and the documents written by Mr. Surveyor Pue, the narrator says, "It should be borne carefully in mind, that the main facts of that story are authorized and authenticated by the document of Mr. Surveyor Pue." However, he continues a few sentences further on, "I have allowed myself, as to such points, nearly or altogether as much license as if the facts had been entirely of my own invention" (I, 32-33). These two sentences seem to be in conflict, but this kind of contradiction is an excellent example of the way in which the author establishes the narrative tone, which is a clear link between the preface and the novel itself. The author frequently states an idea, then quickly through a parenthetical statement or phrase casts doubt on his previous thought.

Finally, the rhetoric which the author uses provides another link. He sets the mood for his romance, not only through his description of finding the letter and documents but also through the passage in which he is sitting in a darkened room waiting for "imaginary scenes, which, the next day, might flow out on the brightening page in many-hued description" (I, 35). Likewise, the descriptive words he

uses for those men in the Custom-House whom he admires are echoed in the novel in the implied author's references to Hester. Thus, the perceptive created reader is actually prepared for The Scarlet Letter by the implied author through "The Custom-House" preface.

Through the rhetoric of his narrator and his characters, this implied author creates a sympathetic, as well as an unsympathetic, response toward his characters and the attitudes they represent. By analyzing the rhetoric, one can see how the author's keen and perceptive created reader is left in no doubt as to the way he should react to these views. One of the techniques which the author uses in this novel is, through the narrator, to play games or manipulate his reader. The implied author frequently makes it quite clear that his reader will agree with him, for he uses expressions such as "it may safely be assumed." There are areas, on the other hand, where the implied author presents certain possibilities for interpretation, seemingly leaving his reader to decide for himself. In describing the wild rose bush which is growing beside the prison door, the narrator suggests two possibilities, one natural and one supernatural; then he says, "We shall not take upon us to determine" the real reason for its existence. It makes no difference whether the reader believes the natural explanation that the rose bush was merely a hardy survivor of the wilderness, or the supernatural one that it had "sprung up

under the footsteps of the sainted Ann Hutchinson," for the author says that the rose bush is a symbol of hope. Another example occurs in the incident of the meteor which appears while Dimmesdale is standing on the scaffold at midnight. Although the narrator presents the reasons why people of that time believed in supernatural signs, he contrasts Dimmesdale's interpretation with that of one of the townspeople. However, he has very subtly manipulated the reader to reject both of these interpretations, for he says that the credibility of the interpretation of the sign "rested on the faith of some lonely eye-witness, who beheld the wonder through the colored, magnifying, and distorting medium of his imagination and shaped it more distinctly in his after-thought" (I, 155). In addition, the narrator very clearly contends that it is "solely to the disease in his own eye and heart, that the minister, looking upward to the zenith, beheld there the appearance of an immense letter. . . . But with no such shape as his guilty imagination gave it." That is to say, it was nothing more than a meteor with no supernatural interpretation. We see a contrast between the explanation of the rose bush and the flaming letter. The reader does not reject both explanations of the rose bush, for it really exists outside the prison door. However, the reader is led to reject the possibility that the meteor forms a letter in the sky because an interpretation of this relies too heavily on guilt and imagination.

In response to the final scene on the scaffold, the narrator once again presents all of the possible explanations the townspeople gave for the appearance of a scarlet letter on Dimmesdale's breast. He says,

Most of the spectators testified to having seen, on the breast of the unhappy minister, a SCARLET LETTER--the very semblance of that worn by Hester Prynne--imprinted in the flesh. As regarded its origin, there were various explanations, all of which must necessarily have been conjectural. (I, 258)

After listing all of the possible theories as to how the letter came to be there, the narrator comments,

The reader may choose among these theories. We have thrown all the light we could acquire upon the portent, and would gladly, now that it has done its office, erase its deep print out of our own brain; where long meditation has fixed it in very undesirable distinctness. (I, 259)

Although the implied author, through the narrator, does not seem to consider of any importance how the letter came to be there, he does intend his reader to believe that something was on Dimmesdale's breast. At the opening of this chapter, the narrator states that most of the spectators said they had seen a letter. This observation naturally leads to the possibility that there were some who said that they had seen nothing there at all, and that the minister had simply demonstrated that by dying in Hester Prynne's arms he had

only proved that we are all sinners. The narrator discounts this possibility very firmly by saying:

Without disputing a truth so momentous, we must be allowed to consider this version of Mr. Dimmesdale's story as only an instance of that stubborn fidelity with which a man's friends--and especially a clergyman's--will sometimes uphold his character. (I, 259)

The implied author indirectly says here what he has so plainly stated elsewhere. People see what they wish to see and believe what they wish to believe. Seeing is not always believing. Therefore, the author leaves no doubt in his reader's mind--and his discerning reader will already have reached this conclusion--that regardless of how the letter or some form of stigmata has come to appear on Dimmesdale's breast, there is something present indicating his guilt.

The implied author of The Scarlet Letter demonstrates a very definite point of view on the role of women. First of all, through a contrast between Hester and the other Puritan women, we see a preference for youth. Through Hester, the narrator also explores the differences between femininity and feminism. At the same time, the contrast between Hester and Dimmesdale illustrates those qualities which the implied author admires most in human beings, whether male or female. Through the narrator, the implied author of The Scarlet Letter very early establishes a contrast between Hester Prynne and the Puritan women. In describing the scene

outside the prison, where the crowd waits for Hester to appear with her illegitimate child, the narrator portrays the women as seeming "to take a peculiar interest in whatever penal infliction might be expected to ensue." He goes on, "Morally, as well as materially, there was a coarser fibre in those wives and maidens of old English birth and breeding, than in their fair descendants." These women have "broad shoulders and well-developed busts," "round and ruddy cheeks," and "a boldness and rotundity of speech . . . that would startle us at the present day, whether in respect to its purport or its volume of tone." These "hard featured," "iron-visaged," "autumnal matrons" disagree with the sentence handed down by the magistrates. Making it quite clear that the magistrates have been far too merciful, one matron says that "it would be greatly for the public behoof, if we women, being of mature age and church members in good repute should have the handling of such malefactresses as this Hester Prynne" (I, 51). One can hear the stress of the implied author on those words "mature age" emphasizing the difference of years between the older Puritan women and the younger Hester, while ironically casting doubt that maturity necessarily brings wisdom. The phrase "church members of good repute" also is laden with irony, as later on Hester is able to perceive that appearances differ from reality as far as some of these "good" women are concerned. Another of these women adds that the magistrates "should have put the

brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne's forehead. . . . But she--the naughty baggage,--little will she care what they put upon the bodice of her gown" (I, 51). A third woman, whom the narrator describes as "the ugliest as well as the most pitiless of these self-constituted judges," suggests that Hester should be put to death.

The only voices to speak out in favor of Hester are those of a young woman and a man. The young woman, speaking in a soft tone, twice points out that Hester's punishment is not light: "Let her cover the mark as she will, the pang of it will be always in her heart." The one male voice is heard in response to the suggestion that Hester should be put to death as a warning to all women. This man says, "Is there no virtue in woman, save what springs from a wholesome fear of the gallows? That is the hardest word yet" (I, 52). There is no doubt that the narrator and the created reader see older women as more harsh, less forgiving, inflexible, unable to remember the feelings of their own youth, and perhaps even jealous.

In contrast to these old harpies, Hester is described as being "tall, with a figure of perfect elegance," with dark and glossy abundant hair, with a face which "had the impressiveness belonging to a marked brow and deep black eyes." She is ladylike with natural dignity. Richard Chase says that "Hester Prynne, about whom there is something queenly, imperious, and barbaric, as well as fallible

and appealing and enduring, represents the eternal woman, perhaps, indeed, the eternal human."<sup>10</sup> In fact, at this point, the implied author and the created reader would agree with Chase. Hester is the eternal woman. In describing some of the men in "The Custom-House," the implied author uses words such as "strong," "noble and heroic qualities," "weight," "solidity," "firmness," "sturdy force," "courage and constancy," "self-reliance and all that gives the emphasis to manly character." These "manly" qualities could apply equally to Hester. That the implied author approves, at least at this point in the story, of a woman exhibiting masculine qualities is further supported by the narrator's comment that the "man-like Elizabeth had been the not altogether unsuitable representative of the sex" (I, 50). The portrayal of a serene, regal Hester, which dominates most of the novel, easily suggests a comparison with Queen Elizabeth I. Thus, the narrator completes a picture of a young woman set apart from society not only through her offense against the Puritan laws but also, and more importantly, through her appearance and deportment. The narrator goes on to describe her dress which "seemed to express the attitude of her spirit, the desperate recklessness of her mood, by its wild and picturesque peculiarity."

<sup>10</sup> Richard Chase, The American Novel and Its Tradition (1957; rpt. New York: Gordian Press, 1978), p. 77.

In addition to her wild and reckless dress, however, the narrator also stresses Hester's serene, almost haughty manner as she walks toward the scaffold. As Hester stands there, the center of all eyes, the narrator, with one of his manipulative techniques used so frequently in this novel, suggests that a Papist "might have seen in this beautiful woman, so picturesque in her attire and mein, and with the infant at her bosom, an object to remind him of the image of Divine Maternity" (I, 56). The narrator's use of the modal phrase "might have seen" suggests only a possibility that her appearance was that of the Madonna. In other words, Hester is a shining example of motherhood.

Hester chooses to remain in New England rather than make a new start elsewhere. Her reason for doing this, the narrator says, "was half a truth and half a self-delusion." He continues, "Here, she said to herself, had been the scene of her guilt, and here should be the scene of her earthly punishment; and so, perchance, the torture of her daily shame would at length purge her soul and work out another purity than that which she had lost; more saint-like, because the result of martyrdom" (I, 80). It is noted that the narrator adds to his implication of "Divine Maternity" by calling Hester "saint-like." A few paragraphs later he refers to her as a "martyr." To further enhance this reference to Hester as a martyr, the narrator twice

compares Hester to Anne Hutchinson. In his description of the prison, he suggests that the rose bush growing outside the prison door might have "sprung up under the footsteps of the sainted Ann Hutchinson, as she entered the prison-door" (I, 48). Anne Hutchinson and Hester occupied the same prison. Later in the narrative, when the narrator is commenting on Hester's independent spirit and freedom of thought, he says that if Pearl had not been born, Hester "might have come down to us in history, hand in hand with Ann Hutchinson" (I, 165).

Continuing to construct layer upon layer to create this superhuman figure, the narrator next suggests that the wearing of the letter gives Hester a supernatural power. He says that Hester "felt or fancied, that the scarlet letter had endowed her with a new sense. . . . It gave her a sympathetic knowledge of the hidden sin in other hearts" (I, 87). Not only can she discern misconduct in the hearts of the young maidens of the community, but she also senses a "mystic sisterhood" with some of the matrons. Hester can now sense the "hidden sin" in those women who profess to be "church members in good repute" and earlier felt suitable to decide Hester's punishment. The implied author's irony is double-edged. If these women would admit their sin, they would, indeed, be more merciful. The men of the community are just as vulnerable to Hester's powers, for the narrator comments that "the red infamy upon her breast would give a

sympathetic throb, as she passed near a venerable minister or magistrate, the model of piety and justice, to whom that age of antique reverence looked up as to a mortal man in fellowship with angels" (I, 87). Thus, the implied author creates a figure who stands apart yet, at the same time, is in a type of sympathetic union with certain members of this community. The letter "A" brands her as a sinner under Puritan law, but this very brand has a psychological effect on Hester, for she believes she can recognize the hidden sin in others. This brand also has an effect on the community, for some--particularly the young maidens--realize that they, too, could be wearing the same letter. The created reader sees Hester as regal, saint-like, and courageous--an ideal woman, indeed.

The narrator, however, is still not content with his image. During the time span of the novel, seven years, Hester has become a necessary part of life in the colony, even though remaining apart. The narrator comments that "she never battled with the public, but submitted uncomplainingly to its worst usage; she made no claim upon it, in requital for what she suffered; she did not weigh upon its sympathies" (I, 160). Instead Hester answers every call of mercy. Like the widow in the biblical parable, she gives out of her own poverty. No one is more selfless than Hester. The narrator says that "in all seasons of calamity, indeed, whether general or of individuals, the

outcast of society at once found her place." Hester thus becomes "self-ordained a Sister of Mercy" (I, 161). The townspeople therefore begin to interpret Hester's "A" to mean "Able" and to view it as a cross on a nun's bosom, giving sacredness to the wearer. However, as James Janssen points out, all is not well with Hester. Janssen says that "the sisterhood of mercy, aiding the poor and tending the sick, is one she has been forced into by her aggrieved mental state and its attendant position."<sup>11</sup> The comment by the narrator that the townspeople look upon Hester's letter as a badge of honor actually tells us more about the community than about Hester. Nevertheless, the created reader's sympathies are still with Hester.

But, having created this supernatural woman, the implied author, through the narrator, begins to view her womanhood in a different light. Two pages later in the novel the narrator presents a figure which is an absolute contrast to the Hester pictured earlier. The narrator says:

all of the light and graceful foliage of her character had been withered up by this red-hot brand, and had long ago fallen away, leaving a bare and harsh outline, which might have been repulsive had she possessed friends or companions to be repelled by it. (I, 163)

<sup>11</sup> James G. Janssen, "Pride and Prophecy: The Final Irony of The Scarlet Letter," NHJ, 1975, ed. C. E. Frazer Clark (Englewood, Colo.: Microcard Editions Books, 1975), p. 243.

In the sentence which precedes this quotation, the narrator says that wearing the symbol has had an effect on Hester's mind. We now see how her mental state is reflected in her appearance. Instead of the "light and graceful foliage of her character," her outline is "bare and harsh." Hester has no friends, but one must keep in mind that this is as much Hester's own doing as it is the result of her ostracism. In fact, as we pointed out in the previous paragraph, the townspeople have begun to view her in a different light; thus, the implied author wants his created reader to perceive that Hester's isolation is a symptom of her mental condition. The narrator describes her changed appearance, commenting on "the studied austerity of her dress" and the "lack of demonstration in her manners." These phrases imply coldness, not only through her dress but also through her inability to show affection by touching others or even smiling. One is reminded here of the loving portrait of "Divine Maternity" which the narrator has used earlier in connection with Hester. The Madonna implies warmth and care, but the impression the implied author is now giving his reader is that Hester tends the sick without tenderness. James Janssen comments that Hester's good works are "performed almost uncaringly, coldly and dutifully"; and, thus, what we see here is the "difference between intentional goodness born of love, and Hester's good deeds born of a

prideful determination to assert her claims in a world where she wanders in a moral maze."<sup>12</sup> Equally important is one's sense that, even with Pearl, Hester is not the loving mother she should be. In addition to her change in dress, "her rich and luxuriant hair had either been cut off, or was so completely hidden by a cap, that not a shining lock of it ever once gushed into the sunshine." By hiding her hair, Hester removes her badge of femininity.

But other changes, the narrator says, can be seen in Hester:

there seemed to be no longer anything in Hester's face for Love to dwell upon; nothing in Hester's form, though majestic and statue-like, that Passion would even dream of clasping in its embrace; nothing in Hester's bosom, to make it ever again the pillow of Affection. (I, 163)

Although Hester still has the same regal bearing, her dress and manner repel the created reader, as they would her friends, for there is nothing to love, nothing to inspire passion, and nothing to elicit affection. Hester has lost all of her feminine qualities. The narrator says that "she who has once been woman, and ceased to be so, might at any moment become a woman again, if there were only the magic touch to effect the transformation." There is almost a wistful note in the narrator's phrase "if there were only

<sup>12</sup> Janssen, p. 243.

the magic touch." In this way, the implied author shows his sorrow that he has felt the need to change his attitude toward his character. The created reader, too, begins to understand that his sympathies must change. He must see that Hester's withdrawal from society and her pride have made her less than a woman; she exhibits only a "marble coldness." Hester consciously casts "away the fragments of a broken chain."

Another element in Hawthorne's characterization of Hester bears on his thinking about women. By first examining the occupations open to women in Puritan society, the implied author leads his created reader to discern that because of her skill Hester has the time to exercise her intellect. The narrator says that Hester "possessed an art that sufficed, even in a land that afforded comparatively little scope for its expertise, to supply food for her thriving infant and herself. It was the art--then, as now, almost the only one within a woman's grasp--of needlework" (I, 81). One cannot quarrel with this statement, for there is no doubt that there were very few opportunities at that time for a single woman, or any woman, to earn a living. Certainly Hester, through her needlework and nursing skills, pursues the only occupations available to her. However, because Hester is not burdened by the needs of husband, large family, and community, she is able to exercise her mind. The narrator says that "the world's law was no law

for her mind" (I, 164). Hester speculates on the role of women in society. This in itself is an interesting development, for the implied author has his seventeenth century character thinking as a nineteenth century woman might do. But what is even more provocative is that these thoughts are expressed from a masculine point of view.

The narrator says,

a dark question often arose into her mind, with reference to the whole race of womanhood. Was existence worth accepting even to the happiest of them? As concerned her own individual existence, she had long ago decided in the negative, and dismissed the point as settled. (I, 165)

This is, indeed, a depressing thought. Hester feels her own life is not worth living and thus decides that most women feel the same way. Hester's gloomy state of mind arises through her "tendency to speculation," for as the narrator comments, she sees "such a hopeless task before her." The implied author has Hester taking the extreme position that feminists often adopt. First of all, Hester assumes that since she is unhappy with her existence, all women must be unhappy. A second feminist argument is that in order to bring about change, "the whole system of society is to be torn down, and built anew," and it must be done now. It is not difficult to understand why Hester views this as a "hopeless task." Although the implied author admits that the nature of men must be "essentially modified, before

woman can be allowed to assume what seems a fair and suitable position," he maintains that "woman cannot take advantage of these preliminary reforms, until she herself shall have undergone a still mightier change." Putting aside the probably outraged reaction of the modern woman, one finds it difficult to accept that an intelligent, thinking woman, as Hester is supposed to be, would agree that in order for the role of woman to become more equitable, the woman must make a greater change than the man. Of course, the male created reader does not hold the same views as the modern woman. In fact, one must also keep in mind that this is a nineteenth century male agreeing with the masculine author that women have greater changes to make than men. By depicting the marble-like Hester as adopting an extreme feminist approach, the implied author destroys some of the sympathy the reader has for Hester.

Even should woman bring about such a change, "the ethereal essence, wherein she has her truest life, will be found to have evaporated." The narrator thus emphasizes that reform will mean a loss of femininity. Of course, the narrator also goes on to stress another age-old masculine idea that "a woman never overcomes these problems by an exercise of thought. They are not to be solved, or only in one way. If her heart chance to come uppermost, they vanish" (I, 165-66). Women can solve their problems only through passion or the heart, according to the narrator.

Ehis means love and submission in the terms of the implied author. Because she has allowed her head to take precedence over her heart, Hester has given up her role as a woman.

The narrator continues:

Thus, Hester Prynne, whose heart had lost its regular and healthy throb, wandered without a clew [sic] in the dark labyrinth of mind: now starting back from a deep chasm. There was wild and ghastly scenery all around her, and a home and comfort nowhere. . . . The scarlet letter had not done its office. (I, 166)

Neal Doubleday maintains that

this is not the splendid example of self-reliance some of Hester's interpreters would have her be; it is, rather, an infinitely pathetic Hester, in whom . . . passion and feeling have given away to thought . . . and to whom is lost the sense of human reality.<sup>13</sup>

Doubleday is surely correct. Although the implied author and created reader do not sympathize with Hester's views, they do not dislike Hester; instead, there is pity for this lonely, pathetic creature. We now see a divergence of views not only between the modern woman and the implied author but also between the contemporary male and the nineteenth century male.

<sup>13</sup> Neal Frank Doubleday, "Hawthorne's Hester and Feminism," PMLA, 54 (1939), 827.

Hester has chosen to engage her head instead of her heart. This matter of the role of the heart causes the implied author to state his views on marriage. The author analyzes the relationship between Hester Prynne and her estranged husband Roger Chillingworth. Chillingworth appears for the first time in the novel when Hester is standing on the scaffold. He asks her not to tell anyone who he is; but, at the same time, he insists that Hester tell him who Pearl's father is. Hester refuses, and Chillingworth vows he will find out on his own. In a scene between Hester and Chillingworth toward the middle of the novel, Chillingworth depicts himself as having been "a man thoughtful for others, craving little for himself--kind, true, just, and of constant, if not warm affections" (I, 172). Chillingworth continues, "And what am I now? . . . A fiend! Who made me so?" By replying, "It was myself," Hester allows Chillingworth to lay the burden of guilt on her.

This incident causes Hester to remember the circumstances of their marriage. She remembers how Chillingworth needed her support during the years they lived in England. The narrator says:

She thought of those long-past days, in a distant land, when he used to emerge at eventide from the seclusion of his study, and sit down in the fire-light of their home, and in the light of her

nuptial smile. He needed to bask himself in that smile, he said, in order that the chill of so many lonely hours among his books might be taken off the scholar's heart. . . . (I, 176)

Chillingworth needs only Hester's smile to warm his heart after a day spent with his books. This thought asks for sympathy for Chillingworth from the reader.

Although Chillingworth appears to have expected very little from his marriage and Hester had judged herself to be happy, she now considers her marriage to be a serious crime. The narrator continues:

She deemed it her crime most to be repented of, that she had ever endured, and reciprocated the lukewarm grasp of his hand, and had suffered the smile of her lips and eyes to mingle and melt into his own. And it seemed a fouler offense committed by Roger Chillingworth, than any which had since been done him that, in the time when her heart knew no better, he had persuaded her to fancy herself happy by his side. (I, 176)

So what the implied author has led his reader to is an examination of marriage. Hester not only considers herself responsible for Chillingworth's downfall because she has committed adultery but also because she married him in the first place. The sympathy which the implied author builds for Chillingworth by commenting that he only wanted the warmth of Hester's smile is destroyed when Hester refers to his "lukewarm grasp." These words imply very little love on either side of this relationship. Although Hester considers herself guilty by having endured this loveless match,

she considers Chillingworth to have committed "a fouler offense" because he had convinced her that she was happy. The implied author, through the narrator, goes on to warn men that they could find themselves in the same position as Chillingworth. The narrator comments, "Let men tremble to win the hand of woman, unless they win along with it the utmost passion of the heart" (I, 176). Thus he and Hester, too, are arguing that marriage should be based upon love.

Certainly both attitudes toward marriage expressed by the implied author were prominent at the time of the story. Arranged marriages, like Hester's marriage of convenience, were more the rule rather than the exception. However, as Hawthorne through his narrator makes clear, a new attitude is emerging. If a marriage is to be a happy and successful one, it must be based upon love. The implied author has Hester, his representative of a "thinking" woman, realize that she ought to have been able to exercise more independent thought. It is interesting to note, however, that even though the narrator warns men to marry for love or suffer Chillingworth's fate of losing his wife to another man, Hester is not totally blameless. The narrator says, "But Hester ought long ago to have done with this injustice" (I, 177). Hester has continued to dwell on a situation which cannot now be changed.

The character of Chillingworth is a complex one. Although the implied author does not approve of

Chillingworth, he does provoke considerable sympathy for him. In the first conversation between the married couple after their long separation, Chillingworth says that Hester has fallen through his folly and weakness. He says:

Misshapen from my birth hour, how could I delude myself with the idea that intellectual gifts might veil physical deformity in a young girl's fancy. . . . My heart was a habitation large enough for many guests, but lonely and chill, and without a household fire. I longed to kindle one! It seemed not so wild a dream--old as I was, and sombre as I was, and misshapen as I was,--that the simple bliss, which is scattered far and wide, for all mankind to gather up, might be mine. And so, Hester, I drew thee into my heart, its innermost chamber, and sought to warm thee by the warmth which thy presence made there! (I, 74)

These words--spoken with gentleness, longing, regret, and forgiveness--seem strange coming from a character whom the narrator describes as having a look that causes Hester to shrink and shudder. As Chillingworth first stands at the foot of the scaffold looking at Hester, the narrator comments,

His look became keen and penetrative. A writhing horror twisted itself across his features, like a snake gliding swiftly over them. . . . His face darkened with some powerful emotion, which, nevertheless, he so instantaneously controlled by an effort of his will. . . . (I, 61)

The narrator seldom uses any terms more favorable than these to describe Chillingworth. Thus, we have this evil-visaged man speaking in honeyed, forgiving tones to his wife early

in the novel. Years later, the honeyed tones turn to the kind of invective one would expect from a character having "something ugly and evil in his face" (I, 127). Why does the implied author have Chillingworth at first tell Hester that she is not to blame for what has happened and then later accuse her of destroying him? Hester withholds the information about Pearl's father that Chillingworth is so desperate to obtain. Thus, in spite of the fact that the physical description of Chillingworth, as well as his relentless pursuit of Arthur Dimmesdale, tends to arouse little sympathy for Hester's husband, the male implied author does evoke a fellow feeling from his male created reader. These two men sympathize with Chillingworth's charge that Hester has destroyed him. They are sorry, first of all, that Chillingworth has lost his wife, and secondly, that she refuses to give him the name of the man who seduced her.

In fact, Hester is judged guilty of withholding information by both Chillingworth and Dimmesdale. Thus, Dimmesdale, too, considers Hester responsible for his deterioration. The implied author, however, never attempts to create any sympathy for Dimmesdale as he has done for Roger Chillingworth. Through the words of the narrator and through Dimmesdale himself, we see a picture of a weak young man unable to admit his wrong and to act with masculine courage. The narrator describes Dimmesdale as having

"eloquence and religious fervor," a "striking aspect, with a white, lofty, and impending brow, large, brown, melancholy eyes," a "tremulous" mouth, and "an apprehensive, a startled, a half-frightened" air (I, 66). He is also shown as simple and child-like with a voice which is "tremulously sweet, rich, deep, and broken" (I, 67). One can contrast these adjectives with the words and phrases which the narrator uses to describe the figures the narrator considers manly. He uses the words "sturdy force," "courage and constancy," "truth," "self-reliance," none of which can be applied to Arthur Dimmesdale. Like Chillingworth, Dimmesdale is a scholar, but he lacks the determination and keen perception of the old man. The narrator comments that even though Dimmesdale finds everything about Chillingworth odious, he continues to live with him. In fact, Dimmesdale considers it his fault that he does not like Chillingworth, and thus he fails to realize that he alone is responsible for his suffering.

There is an interesting comparison between Hester and Dimmesdale in that their suffering gives them new insight. The comment which the narrator makes concerning the results of Dimmesdale's suffering and that of Hester referred to earlier may be compared. The narrator says that his burden "gave him sympathies so intimate with the sinful brotherhood of mankind; so that his heart vibrated in unison with theirs, and received their pain into itself, and sent its own throb

of pain through a thousand other hearts, in gushes of sad, persuasive eloquence" (I, 142). Although his burden of guilt may make him more sympathetic and more eloquent, it does not make Dimmesdale more courageous. Dimmesdale, like Hester, feels a psychological union with the people of the community, and both of them receive respect from the townspeople in return. The Puritan community regarded Reverend Mister Dimmesdale as a saintly man and Hester as an angel of mercy, but the created reader sees both of them as they really are: Dimmesdale, a weak, cowardly man, and Hester, a proud, cold woman.

Time after time Dimmesdale deludes himself that he has confessed to his congregation that he is Pearl's father. But, as the narrator points out, although he speaks the truth, he transforms it to a lie and makes himself even more loathsome. To complete this picture of a man unable to deal satisfactorily with his guilt, the narrator describes in extremely disapproving tones how Dimmesdale turns to the "corrupted" practices of the Roman Catholics and even carries accepted religious rituals, such as fasting and vigils, to an extreme. There is an interesting contrast here between Dimmesdale and Hester. When the implied author approves of Hester, he describes her as a Madonna--a Roman Catholic image; however, the implied author disapproves of Dimmesdale and depicts him as turning to corrupt practices of the Roman Catholics. The implied author wants his

created reader to agree that the extreme physical discomfort to which Dimmesdale needlessly subjects himself is unacceptable. At the same time, however, the implied author views Hester through masculine eyes which see motherhood as the highest accolade given to women, and he expects the male created reader to agree with him.

Even when Dimmesdale mounts the scaffold to confess his sin, this is a cowardly action, for he does this the first time at midnight, when the town is asleep and there is no danger of discovery. In addition, the shriek, which he believes will bring everyone in town to the scaffold, is heard only in his own ears. Then, when Hester and Pearl come to stand beside him in the darkness, Dimmesdale refuses to reenact the scene the next day in daylight. The narrator comments that, as Dimmesdale refuses, "all the dread of public exposure, that had so long been the anguish of his life, had returned upon him; and he was already trembling at the conjunction in which--with a strange joy, nevertheless--he now found himself" (I, 153). The narrator's use of the phrase "a strange joy" implies that Dimmesdale experiences a perverse satisfaction at the thought of facing public disapproval. Dimmesdale is enjoying his suffering. The implied author allows Chillingworth and Pearl to be Dimmesdale's chief tormentors. When Chillingworth appears at the foot of the scaffold and Hester refuses to tell Dimmesdale who he is, Pearl says, "I can tell thee who he is!" She, however,

only mumbles gibberish in his ear and laughs. Dimmesdale reproachfully says, "Dost thou mock me now?" Pearl's reply succinctly characterizes Dimmesdale, "Thou wast not bold!-- thou wast not true!" (I, 157).

This portrayal of a cowardly man is further expanded in the incident when Hester and he meet in the forest. First of all, Dimmesdale maintains that Hester's punishment has been lighter than his because her letter has been worn openly and his has been in secret. The implied author shows how Dimmesdale plays upon Hester's sympathy, saying:

What can a ruined soul, like mine, effect towards the redemption of other souls?--or a polluted soul, towards their purification? . . . Canst thou deem it, Hester, a consolation, that I must stand up in my pulpit, and meet so many eyes turned up to my face, as if the light of heaven were beaming from it!--must see my flock hungry for the truth, and listening to my words as if a tongue of Pentecost were speaking!--and then look inward, and discern the black reality of what they idolize? (I, 191)

Dimmesdale's plea succeeds only in the sense that Hester tells him that everything is all right. Twice Hester tells Dimmesdale that his good works should give him the peace he seeks. She says of him,

Your sin is left behind you, in the days long past. Your present life is not less holy, in very truth, than it seems in people's eyes. Is there no reality in the penitence thus sealed and witnessed by good works? And wherefore should it not bring you peace? (I, 191)

Hester cannot understand why Dimmesdale refuses to see that he could have found the peace he needed years before. But the created reader sees that Dimmesdale is caught in a dilemma. He can achieve peace only through public confession, but he cannot bring himself to do this. He does not want kind words from Hester. When he asks for sympathy, he does not want Hester to tell him that he can repent in his heart. The created reader realizes that Dimmesdale wants Hester to agree that his punishment has been greater and that, in addition, Dimmesdale would not object if Hester made his confession for him.

Dimmesdale goes on to tell Hester that his life would have been much easier if he had had a friend or even an enemy to share his thoughts and agony. It is at this point that Hester reveals Chillingworth's true identity. Although Dimmesdale has had uneasy feelings concerning Chillingworth and says, "was not the secret told me in the natural recoil of my heart, at the first sight of him, and as often as I have seen him since" (I, 191), he still holds Hester wholly responsible for not telling him sooner. Dimmesdale says, "Woman, woman, thou art accountable for this. I cannot forgive thee!" (I, 194). Even now Dimmesdale cannot accept the blame for his own action or for his refusal to act on his own intuition. Moreover, he goes on to ask Hester to tell him what to do. He says, "Think for me, Hester! Thou are strong. Resolve for me!" A little later he says again,

"Be thou strong for me" (I, 196). The weakness of this man is further exemplified when he is unable to act on the plan to leave New England as Hester proposes. Furthermore, his final attempt at confession results in as much ambiguity as the earlier ones had.

Thus, Dimmesdale lacks the masculine trait of courage which Hester, a mere woman, demonstrates from her very first session on the scaffold. It is certainly obvious to the created reader that, of these three characters, the implied author disapproves of and expects his masculine reader to disapprove of Dimmesdale most. Rarely in the course of the novel does the narrator, or the implied author through the characters, describe the minister in any terms other than those considered feminine. His inability to admit his guilt publicly and accept his punishment is cowardly, reprehensible, and feminine. Chillingworth, on the other hand, although described as an evil man, would arouse a modicum of masculine sympathy because he is first of all a wronged man who magnanimously agrees that he is as much to blame for this as is Hester, and secondly because he says that he married Hester in order to experience the joy and warmth that other men had. However, Chillingworth's failure is that he allows his search for the truth, or revenge, to govern and, therefore, destroy his life. The narrator comments:

Old Roger Chillingworth was a striking evidence of man's faculty of transforming himself into a devil. . . . This unhappy person had effected such a transformation by devoting himself, for seven years, to the constant analysis of a heart full of torture, and deriving his enjoyment thence, and adding fuel to those fiery tortures which he analyzed and gloated over. (I, 170)

After Dimmesdale has died and therefore escaped from Chillingworth, the narrator says that all of Chillingworth's

strength and energy--all his vital and intellectual force--seemed at once to desert him, insomuch that he positively withered up, shrivelled away, and almost vanished from mortal sight, like all uprooted weed that lies wilting in the sun. (I, 260).

Seven years of this man's life had been devoted to his evil pursuit. Once Dimmesdale is dead, there is "no more devil's work on earth for him to do."

But it is with the character of Hester that the implied author seems to have the most difficulty. At the opening of the novel, she exhibits all of the characteristics which the implied author appreciates. She is serene, strong, intelligent, courageous, and of independent mind, as well as young. As she grows older, however, these characteristics, most of them usually considered masculine by the implied author, cause Hester to become a colder, coarser, less loving person. Judith Fryer, in The Faces of Eve, contends that "what makes Hester so interesting is that she has chosen both her act of illicit love and her feminist philosophy.

She is a woman who acts, not a woman who is acted upon."<sup>14</sup> In the terms of the implied author and male created reader, Hester loses her womanhood or femininity precisely because she acts on her own. Furthermore, even though the author is concerned that the relationships between men and women need to be reexamined and redefined, this can take place only through a different kind of woman than Hester has become. The narrator comments, "The angel and apostle of the coming revelation must be a woman, indeed, but lofty, pure, and beautiful; and wise, moreover, not through dusky grief, but the ethereal medium of joy; and showing how sacred love should make us happy, by the truest test of a life successful to such an end!" (I, 263). Thus, Hester has committed too many sins and is too old to become the new woman the implied author envisages. Nina Baym, in "Thwarted Nature: Nathaniel Hawthorne as Feminist," makes a comment which indicates that she interprets Hester differently. She says that Hester's "achievements in a social sense come about as by-products of her personal struggle to win a place in the society; and the fact that she wins her place at last indicates that society has been changed by her."<sup>15</sup> Hester,

<sup>14</sup> Judith Fryer, The Faces of Eve: Women in the Nineteenth Century American Novel (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1976), p. 79.

<sup>15</sup> Nina Baym, "Thwarted Nature: Nathaniel Hawthorne as Feminist," in American Novelists Revisited: Essays in

indeed, does make a place for herself in Puritan society, but she is not, nor will she ever be, the kind of reformer Hester herself envisages. Hester does not fit the definition given above. She is not "pure," she has suffered "dusky grief" rather than ethereal joy, and she has not been happy. Judith Fryer more accurately summarizes Hester's position by saying that when Hester "tempts others to her own brand of lawlessness, she threatens with destruction the society in which the Dimmesdales and the Hawthornes do live and serve."<sup>16</sup> A woman other than Hester will be the "apostle of the coming revelation."

Along with his views on the role of women and marriage, the implied author also explores an attitude towards the Puritans and authority in general. Here again, as with the change in attitude toward Hester, Hawthorne expects his empathetic created reader to agree with his disapproving view of the harsh Puritan justice at the opening of the novel and to accept a more approving attitude towards authority at the close of the novel. As he has done with the main characters, the implied author conveys much through his use of description.

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Feminist Criticism, ed. Fritz Fleischmann (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1982), p. 73.

<sup>16</sup> Fryer, p. 84.

The opening chapter, which sets the tone for the novel, is wholly concerned with a description of a prison. Set as it is at the very opening of the story, this description leaves no doubt in the mind of the reader as to the connections among the prison, justice, and the Puritans. As the narrator points out, the new colony felt the necessity to mark out from the first two plots of land, for a cemetery and a prison. He describes the prison, only some twenty years old, as:

already marked with weather-stains and other indications of age, which gave a yet darker aspect to its beetle-browed and gloomy front. The rust on the ponderous iron-work of its oaken door looked more antique than anything else in the new world. . . . It seemed never to have known a youthful era. (I, 47-48).

Continuing with his description, the narrator refers to the prison as "the black flower of civilized society." Standing in front of this ugly building with its iron-spiked door is a group of people just as stern and grim as the building itself. The narrator describes them as rigid, severe, and dressed in sad-colored garments. He continues:

There was very much the same solemnity of demeanor on the part of the spectators; as befitted a people amongst whom religion and law were almost identical, and, in whose character both were so thoroughly interfused, that the mildest and the severest acts of public discipline were alike made venerable and awful. Meagre, indeed, and cold, was the sympathy that a transgressor might look for, from such bystanders at the scaffold. On the other hand, a penalty which, in our days, would

infer a degree of mocking infamy and ridicule, might then be invested with almost as stern a dignity as the punishment of death itself. (I, 50)

Having clearly stated that the Puritans' civil and religious laws were identical, and that they made no attempt to levy a punishment which fit the crime, the narrator goes on to cast doubt upon their ability to sit in judgment on any case involving the heart. Governor Bellingham, the ultimate authority in the colony, is depicted as well-suited to govern a community which owes its development not to youth but "to the stern and tempered energies of manhood, and the sombre sagacity of age, accomplishing so much, precisely because it imagined and hoped so little" (I, 64). In this way, the implied author makes the same distinction between youth and age as he has done with the contrast between Hester and the mature women outside the prison door. The emphasis seems to be that age, rather than bringing wisdom and understanding to the Puritans, has created rigidity and intolerance.

The narrator continues:

The other eminent characters, by whom the chief ruler was surrounded, were distinguished by a dignity of mien, belonging to a period when the forms of authority were felt to possess the sacredness of divine institutions. They were, doubtless, good men, just, and sage. But, out of the whole human family, it would not have been easy to select the same number of wise and virtuous persons, who should be less capable of sitting in judgment on a erring woman's heart, and

disentangling its mesh of good and evil, than the sages of rigid aspect towards whom Hester Prynne now turned her face. (I, 64)

Although the narrator says "doubtless" these men were good, just, and sage, the implied author intends his reader to question, as he does, these very qualities. Although irony often is detected through the tone of the words in a passage, Hawthorne also uses a comma or a dash to set off his ironical comment within a sentence. For example, "doubtless" is set off by commas in the sentence above and "just" precedes the adjectives upon which the author wishes to cast doubt. Hawthorne also drops expressions such as "or so it seems," or "so it seemed to be" in the middle of a sentence, again set off by commas or dashes, which serve to call attention to and emphasize his irony. The quotation above, furthermore, is a good example of the way in which Hawthorne makes an ironical comment--"they were, doubtless, good men"--and then a few sentences later makes sure that his reader understands his point--"it would not have been easy to select . . . persons . . . less capable of sitting in judgment." These men so meagre, cold, and crabbed are incapable of recalling and understanding the passions of youth. The implied author thus evokes in his male created reader an unsympathetic reaction toward these cold, harsh magistrates and a warm, empathetic response to the young Hester.

The picture of this narrow-minded group of men is intensified with the description of John Wilson, the representative of the clergy. The narrator points out that Wilson had been a "man of kind and genial spirit" but had not developed this side of his character because it was more "a matter of shame than self-congratulation." The narrator goes on,

He looked like the darkly engraved portraits which we see prefixed to old volumes of sermons; and had no more right than one of those portraits would have, to step forth, as he now did, and meddle with a question of human guilt, passion, and anguish. (I, 50)

Even though Wilson may not, in the eyes of the narrator, have the right to meddle, he steps forth to ask Arthur Dimmesdale to do his duty as Hester's minister and convince her to name the father of her child. Wilson labels Dimmesdale's opposition to this as the over-softness of a young man. Once again the implied author stresses the difference in attitude between young and old toward Hester's sin. Dimmesdale, representing youth, maintains that it wrongs "the very nature of woman to force her to lay open her heart's secrets in such broad daylight, and in the presence of so great a multitude" (I, 65). Wilson, however, says that "the shame lay in the commission of the sin, and not in the showing of it forth" (I, 65). Wilson's attitude

of course prevails, and Dimmesdale is forced to speak to Hester, but Hester refuses to cooperate.

Of course, Hester's punishment does not end with her appearance on the scaffold and her wearing of the scarlet letter. As the narrator says, everywhere she goes she is reminded of the "undying, the ever-active sentence of the Puritan tribunal." However, seven years pass before Hester is put to another test. She has heard rumors that the authorities wish to take Pearl away from her, and so she goes to appeal to Governor Bellingham. During the account of this interview, the implied author, both through the narrator and his characters, begins to hint of a change in his attitude. In contrast to the earlier grim and somber tone, the governor's hall is described as having a "cheery aspect" with a brilliancy which "might have befitted Aladdin's palace, rather than the mansion of a grave old Puritan ruler" (I, 103). Governor Bellingham and even John Wilson might be stern in public but are not averse to surrounding themselves with good comfortable things. The narrator comments that

it is an error to suppose that our grave forefathers--though accustomed to speak and think of human existence as a state merely of trial and warfare, and though unfeignedly prepared to sacrifice goods and life at the behest of duty--made it a matter of conscience to reject such means of comfort, or even luxury, as lay fairly within their grasp. (I, 108)

Thus, with the narrator having demonstrated that the Puritan authorities were not as one-sided as they seem earlier in the novel, it comes as no great surprise that John Wilson no longer considers it important to know the name of Pearl's father. Chillingworth, who is present during this interview, suggests that despite Hester's refusal, the authorities could analyze Pearl's nature and make a shrewd guess as to her father. Wilson replies that it would be better "to leave the mystery as we find it, unless Providence reveal it of its own accord. Thereby, every good Christian man hath a title to show a father's kindness towards the poor, deserted babe" (I, 116). This is an especially interesting comment since, just before Chillingworth makes his suggestion, the implied author has Wilson say to Dimmesdale that Pearl has "witchcraft in her. . . . She needs no old woman's broomstick to fly withal!" It is a sign of unusual Puritan tolerance "to leave the mystery as we find it," despite such implications. Moreover, the affair is satisfactorily settled as far as Hester and Pearl are concerned. The reader thereby begins to sense the change in attitude that becomes more evident at the end of the novel when the colony celebrates election day.

Election day is a signal for the colony to rejoice. In Hester's words, this means the installation of a "new man." The narrator continues by explaining that on this day the Puritans seem no different from any other community. In

fact, he goes on, "we perhaps exaggerate the gray or sable tinge, which undoubtedly characterized the mood and manners of the age" (I, 230). This suggestion that the earlier impression of the Puritans has perhaps been over-emphasized is further strengthened when the narrator suggests a reason for the sternness of authority. He says:

In that old day, the English settler on these rude shores,--having left king, nobles, and all degrees of awful rank behind, while still the faculty and necessity of reverence were strong in him,--bestowed it on the white hair and venerable brow of age; on long tried integrity; on solid wisdom and sad-colored experience; on endowments of that grave and weighty order, which gives the idea of permanence, and comes under the general definition of respectability. These primitive statesmen . . . had fortitude and self-reliance, and, in time of difficulty or peril, stood up for the welfare of the state like a line of cliffs against a tempestuous tide. The traits of character here indicated were well represented in the square cast of countenance and large physical development of the new colonial magistrates. (I, 237-38)

Indeed, the implied author has moved a long way from describing the stern, rigid men incapable of judging an affair of the heart to the venerable figures defending the colony against the onslaught of a "tempestuous tide" of thinking women like Hester Prynne. Hawthorne's male reader cannot help but agree that, while the colonists had not chosen leaders of great intellect, they had chosen men who of necessity had protected them and provided the stability necessary for growth.

Through an analysis of The Scarlet Letter, we discover that Hawthorne's created reader is a man with a preference for young women. Although he likes women to exhibit some masculine qualities such as courage, self-reliance, and strength, he is not a feminist. The implied author and his reader feel threatened by a woman who is too self-reliant and independent of male domination. The role of paternalistic authority in this society is one of protection, not destruction. Authority should not exist to legislate on the passions of men and women, but to protect society as a whole from the "tempestuous tide." Society and its institutions must change, but this cannot take place rapidly. Finally, the author and his reader believe that relationships, either those of marriage or between the individual and the law, must be based upon love and understanding in order to survive.

## Chapter II

### The House of the Seven Gables:

#### Hawthorne's Reader as Mirror

The House of the Seven Gables, published in 1851, is Hawthorne's second novel. Like The Scarlet Letter, this novel is set in Salem, although the Salem of The House of Seven Gables is that of the mid nineteenth century, not the Salem of The Scarlet Letter. In The House of the Seven Gables, there are also four major characters as in the previous novel. However, Hawthorne focuses more equally on all four characters--Hepzibah, Clifford, and Phoebe Pyncheon and Holgrave--rather than on one major character as he does in The Scarlet Letter. Although Hawthorne's second novel is not as concentrated and unified as the first one, the action is as limited in that the narrative is almost totally centered on the Pyncheon house in Pyncheon Street. Richard Gray comments that

the shape of the house precedes all the action, then. The characters belong to it, in the sense that they are defined by it, and to the extent that what happens to them is literally or

figuratively a product<sup>1</sup> of their being there in that particular place.

The Pyncheon house, therefore, not only becomes the center of the action in the narrative but also shapes the characters.

Henry James characterizes The House of the Seven Gables as "a magnificent fragment."<sup>2</sup> He also says:

It is vague, indefinable, ineffable. . . . Its vagueness is a drawback, for it is difficult to point to ethereal beauties; and if the reader whom we have wished to inoculate with our admiration informs us, after looking awhile, that he perceives nothing in particular, we can only reply that, in effect, the object is a delicate one.

James goes on to point out that because of this vagueness the reader needs to read between the lines and to study carefully the "indirect testimony" of Hawthorne's tone. This, James says, "renders, to an initiated reader, the impression of a summer afternoon in an elm-shadowed New England town."<sup>4</sup> Similarly, F. O. Matthiessen, in American Renaissance, notes that "when Hawthorne centers directly on

<sup>1</sup> Richard Gray, "'Hawthorne: A Problem': The House of the Seven Gables," in Nathaniel Hawthorne: New Critical Essays, ed. A. Robert Lee (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble Books, 1982), p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> Henry James, Hawthorne (1879; rpt. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1956), p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> James, p. 98.

<sup>4</sup> James, p. 98.

the presentation of his individuals, he can ordinarily manage no more than to give a careful notation of their traits . . . instead of revealing them gradually through significant incidents. Even in their conflicts with one another, description nearly always usurps the place of immediate action."<sup>5</sup> Thus both James and Matthiessen point to what they consider to be Hawthorne's failures in this second novel. Matthiessen's comment on Hawthorne's lack of detail in characterization echoes James's observation of "vagueness." However, the intentional vagueness, lack of detail, or seeming ambiguity would not bother the created reader.

James perhaps recognizes this when he uses the expression "an initiated reader," and as we have seen with The Scarlet Letter, Hawthorne writes with such a particular reader in mind. In fact, in The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne reminds us that "the author needs great faith in his reader's sympathy; else he must hesitate to give details so minute, and incidents apparently so trifling, as are essential to make up the idea of this garden-life" (II, 150). Because he is writing for an understanding reader, or in James's terms "an initiated reader," Hawthorne feels that he can be intentionally vague in some respects--using

<sup>5</sup> F. O. Matthiessen, American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman (1941; rpt. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981), p. 325.

indirect testimony--and can unhesitatingly include minute details in others. He does not need to convince his reader; his created reader will follow his indirect argument.

In The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne, through his narrator and the implied author, expands and develops attitudes and views introduced in The Scarlet Letter. In particular we see an even greater contrast between youth and maturity, between the past--representing authority--and the present, an expansion of the author's ideas on the roles of women and love, and further examples of what he means by "manly" courage. All of these attitudes are reflected by the created reader as though he were a mirror.

As well as developing the themes and attitudes presented in The Scarlet Letter, Hawthorne also broadens his narrative technique in The House of the Seven Gables. In The Scarlet Letter, the omniscient third person narrator remains separated from the action, and he challenges the reader by occasionally presenting multiple interpretations for a particular incident. Also in the same work, the implied author introduces his reader to the background of the story through "The Custom-House" sketch. Thus, before the reader begins with chapter one, he is already aware of the circumstances surrounding the story. In The House of Seven Gables, however, the implied author not only uses both first and third person narration and increases the levels of ambiguity but also has his narrator appear as a character.

In the preface to The House of Seven Gables, the implied author states three ideas which he wishes his reader to understand before reading the novel. It is necessary, even in Hawthorne's prefaces, to examine the rhetoric and tone, for he not only manipulates his reader but he also makes assumptions on behalf of his reader in the same way as he does in the novels. For example, the implied author says that "many writers lay very great stress upon some definite moral purpose, at which they profess to aim their works. Not to be deficient, in this particular, the Author has provided himself with a moral" (II, 2). The tone of the words "has provided himself" implies that the moral is an afterthought. In addition, the author does not wish to be called "deficient"; therefore, he includes a moral. The created reader senses the irony in this passage and thus realizes that the moral is more central to the novel than the author maintains it is. Having established that his story has a moral, the implied author then briefly sketches what this moral is to be. He then says, ironically, he does not flatter himself that "any one man" will be convinced through this romance; for

when romances do really teach anything, or produce any effective operation, it is usually through a far more subtle process than the ostensible one. The Author has considered it hardly worth his while, therefore, relentlessly to impale the story with its moral, as with an iron rod. (II, 2)

The implied author, of course, does expect that he will convince his reader, for his created reader already is in sympathy with him. With his created reader, the implied author can be subtle because they are of one mind; and while the author does not "impale the story . . . with an iron rod"--for this would render it lifeless and stiff--he does, however, make his moral point, that "the wrong-doing of one generation lives into successive ones, and . . . becomes a pure and uncontrollable mischief," strongly enough that even an uninitiated reader understands.

Having made it clear that the story has a definite moral, the implied author then turns to the matter of the setting of the story. He says, "The Reader may perhaps choose to assign an actual locality to the imaginary events of this narrative" (II, 3). Once again the implied author assumes that his reader will do what he expects him to. Through the minute details and the tone of the opening paragraphs, the implied author clearly intends for his created reader to visualize an actual locality, despite his assertion that "the reader may choose" a particular locality. Richard Gray maintains that "to some extent, the importance of the house can be gauged from the opening description."<sup>6</sup> "The venerable mansion" affects the narrator "like a human countenance" (II, 5). Through rhetoric and

<sup>6</sup> Gray, p. 96. Gray discusses this point in detail.

tone, the implied author establishes the house as a living presence, a driving force or organic metaphor which, as Richard Fogle maintains, is developed over the entire narrative.<sup>7</sup> The created reader, thus, is persuaded to view the pervasive influence of the Pyncheon house from the same stance as the narrator.

In the opening chapter of the novel, the implied author introduces a technique of narration which he did not use in The Scarlet Letter--first person narration. The familiar tone gives the created reader the impression of being taken gently by the arm and led down the street. The narrator says:

Half-way down a by-street of one of our New England towns stands a rusty wooden house, with even acutely peaked gables, facing towards various points of the compass, and a huge, clustered chimney in the midst. The street is Pyncheon-street; the house is the old Pyncheon-house; and an elm-tree, of wide circumference, rooted before the door, is familiar to every town-born child by the title of the Pyncheon-elm. On my occasional visits to the town aforesaid, I seldom failed to turn down Pyncheon-street, for the sake of passing through the shadow of these two antiquities,--the great elm-tree and the weather-beaten edifice.  
(II, 5)

With these opening sentences, the rhetoric establishes the name of the street, the name of the house, the position of the house on the street, and one of its most obvious

<sup>7</sup> Richard Harter Fogle, Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and the Dark (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1952), pp. 162-67.

features. The narrator's use of "I" not only gives the reader a sense of the narrator's familiarity with the scene but also serves to establish the narrator's, or implied author's, authority. He continues, "Thus the great house was built. Familiar as it stands in the writer's recollection--for it has been an object of curiosity, with him from boyhood" (II, 10). This technique is very similar to the one the author uses in "The Custom-House" when he finds the scarlet letter. Through the implied author's use of minute details in the description of the Pyncheon house, Hawthorne limits the reader's ability to visualize the setting, and, at the same time, illustrates his belief that his created reader will understand the necessity of including tiny details and trifling incidents.

After establishing the background and authority for his story, the implied author begins a subtle movement in the level of narrative. The introduction of Hephzibah Pyncheon provides the opportunity for the implied author to move from first to third person narrator. The narrator is a male with a problem. In order to give his reader some idea of what Hephzibah is like, he needs to describe her bedroom and morning toilet. He says, "Far from us be the indecorum of assisting, even in imagination, at a maiden lady's toilet! Our story must therefore await Miss Hephzibah at the threshold of her chamber" (II, 30). Although the narrator says that he will not even use his imagination to describe what

is happening in the room, he proceeds to do exactly that. He listens to her prayers, commenting that the sounds are "audible to nobody save a disembodied listener like ourself" (II, 30). With a description of the various sounds in the room and a series of suggestive phrases--such as "we suspect," "is probably looking," and "she seems to have put aside"--the narrator manages to convey the impression that he not only is standing outside the door but is also in the room with Hepzibah. This tone of comic irony which underlies this passage serves to establish an unsympathetic attitude toward Hepzibah. The narrator mocks her all through his description of her preparation for the day. Hepzibah's prayers are described as "now whispered, now a groan, now a struggling silence." Ironically commenting that "evidently this is to be a day of more than ordinary trial to Miss Hepzibah," the narrator says that "not with such fervor prays the torpid recluse, looking forward to the cold, sunless, stagnant calm of a day that is to be like innumerable yesterdays!" (II, 31). The created reader understands that Hepzibah actually has less to pray about this particular day, for she has something active to do, and her prospects of a "cold, sunless" day are gone.

The narrator almost becomes a character in the novel when he speaks directly to Clifford and Judge Pyncheon, although neither one can hear him. Speaking briefly to Clifford, the narrator gives him some much-needed advice,

which Clifford does not take. This technique appears again in the chapter entitled "Governor Pyncheon." At the opening of this chapter, it is as though the narrator and reader are standing side-by-side looking at the dead judge. The narrator addresses the reader directly, saying, "You must hold your own breath, to satisfy yourself whether he breathes at all. It is quite inaudible. You hear the ticking of his watch; his breath you do not hear" (II, 268). There is a vast difference for the reader between the scene with the judge and the one in Hepzibah's bedroom. Although the reader could assume that he is both outside and inside Hepzibah's bedroom with the narrator, the scene is still being described to him. The atmosphere is subtly different when the reader is told to listen for himself to decide whether or not the judge is breathing. Even though the narrator is still describing the scene to the reader, the familiar and personal tone of the passage has the effect of drawing the reader into and making him a part of the action. All through the chapter, the narrator speaks directly to the dead judge with such statements as, "may the peaches be luscious in your mouth, Judge Pyncheon!" (II, 272); "Pray, pray, Judge Pyncheon, look at your watch, now!" (II, 273); and "Would you like to sip it now, Judge Pyncheon?" (II, 274). Of course, both narrator and the created reader know the judge is dead; but this technique allows the implied author to make the very clear point that

the past, and its authority as symbolized by Judge Pyncheon, is dead. In commenting on the familiar tone used by the author in this novel, Richard Gray says:

Hawthorne assumes an extraordinary intimacy of approach with his characters. He speaks to them directly, in love or hatred, almost as if he were one of them. Indeed, apostrophe, a vivid and often exclamatory form of address, is one of the characteristic devices of the novel: whether the author is chaffing Hepzibah, arguing with Holgrave, or revealing an almost<sup>8</sup> embarrassingly personal sympathy for Clifford.

Gray goes on to mention the heavy sarcasm directed at Judge Pyncheon and the hymns of affection sung to Phoebe. The sympathetic created reader reacts to the personal tone of the author and allows himself to become almost a part of the novel.

All through this novel, the implied author asks a series of questions, some of which he answers immediately in the next sentence, but many which are rhetorical with an authorial assumption that his sympathetic reader will answer correctly. The chapter with Judge Pyncheon provides an excellent example of this rhetorical style. He begins by asking,

Will Judge Pyncheon now rise up from his chair?  
Will he go forth, and receive the early sunbeams  
on his brow? Will he begin this new day . . .  
with better purposes than the many that have been  
spent amiss? (II, 282)

<sup>8</sup> Gray, p. 90.

The narrator goes on in the next paragraph, asking ten long, involved questions, none of which have stated answers. However, the reader understands exactly that the implied author intends the answer to be "No."

The implied author's rhetorical questions are much less ambiguous than are his varied explanations for particular events. With the rhetorical questions the created reader can more accurately respond in the expected manner. In The House of the Seven Gables, the reader is given a weaker indication than he is given in The Scarlet Letter as to which interpretation he is to accept. Hyatt Waggoner says that "the ambiguity device, allowing multiple interpretations of a single incident, is an expression of Hawthorne's way of viewing things from all possible vantage points, circling round them to discover all the implications."<sup>9</sup> Although the implied author may be asking his reader to consider all possible explanations--whether relevant or irrelevant--he does not necessarily expect his reader to resolve all of these ambiguities. The implied author provides both supernatural and natural explanations for certain incidents; however, the reader is either left to decide for himself which construction to accept or gently led toward one. A good example occurs in the chapter

<sup>9</sup> Hyatt H. Waggoner, Hawthorne: A Critical Study (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1955), p. 163.

where the narrator contemplates the past behavior of Judge Pyncheon. The narrator describes a series of figures which move through the room, then brushes them all away, saying, "The fantastic scene, just hinted at, must by no means be considered as forming an actual portion of our story. We were betrayed into this brief extravagance by the quiver of the moonbeams" (II, 281). The ghostly figures may be only figments of the reader's imagination.

There is one final and brief point to make concerning the techniques of narration used in this novel. Thus far we have seen how the implied author, through the narrator, manipulates the response of his reader, moves from first to third person, and uses his narrator as a character. In addition to this, at one point in the story this narrator disappears completely and another takes his place. The chapter entitled "Alice Pyncheon" is Holgrave's story. Holgrave is not only a daguerreotypist but also an aspiring author. He tells Phoebe that he has written a story about an incident in the Pyncheon family history and intends to submit it for publication. Phoebe asks him to read it to her, which he does. This reading provides an entire chapter, as well as a tale within a tale, and a different, deeper level of narrative technique. The implied author, through Holgrave, thus establishes the method and the authority for including the story of Alice Pyncheon in the narrative. At the same time, the implied author is

introducing the concept of the artist/writer which he does not develop at this point. However, the idea is firmly planted in the mind of the created reader.

Much has been written by various authorities on Hawthorne's use of light and dark imagery and, in particular, his creation of characters that are more symbols than people.<sup>10</sup> Unlike The Scarlet Letter, The House of Seven Gables provides controversy over who the main character is, although most agree with Marcus Cunliffe that "each character 'stands' for something distinct."<sup>11</sup> Indeed, there is no doubt that Hawthorne, through his implied author, intends his characters to represent attitudes or ideals which he feels his created reader will recognize. Are Hepzibah and Clifford treated with sensitive sympathy, as Marcus Cunliffe maintains?<sup>12</sup> Is Hepzibah the real heroine of this book? Fogle, in Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and the Dark, not only calls her thus but goes on to characterize her as "a soul led astray." He also says that she "stands amid her

<sup>10</sup> See Walter Blair, "Color, Light, and Shadow in Hawthorne's Fiction," NEQ, 15 (1942), 74-94; Richard Harter Fogle, Hawthorne's Imagery: The "Proper Light and Shadow" in the Major Romances (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1969); Fogle, Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and the Dark; and Waggoner.

<sup>11</sup> Marcus Cunliffe, "The House of the Seven Gables," in Hawthorne Centenary Essays, ed. Roy Harvey Pearce (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1964), p. 84.

<sup>12</sup> Cunliffe, p. 88.

weakness for the strength of love by which she is preserved and ennobled."<sup>13</sup> However, if one examines closely the rhetoric and tone which the narrator uses in describing Hepzibah and the incidents involving her, the perceptive created reader immediately senses the antipathy of the implied author. Thus Fogle and Cunliffe are mistaken.

One might be tempted to accept the view that the implied author has sympathy for Hepzibah if the tone and terms which the narrator uses to describe her were not so similar to those used in describing the matrons standing outside the prison door in The Scarlet Letter. There is an underlying tone of mockery running all the way through the chapter in which the narrator introduces Hepzibah. In fact, as he describes Hepzibah's dressing for the day, the narrator says that it would be "mockery to term her getting dressed the adornment of her person" (II, 30). As Hepzibah continues to move about the room, she stands upon a chair to look at herself in the mirror. The narrator says:

Truly! Well, indeed! Who would have thought it! Is all this precious time to be lavished on the matutinal repair and beautifying of an elderly person, who never goes abroad--whom nobody visits --and from whom when she shall have done her utmost, it were the best charity to turn one's eyes another way! (II, 31)

<sup>13</sup> Fogle, The Light and the Dark, p. 126.

This very masculine attitude, that a woman wastes her time with her appearance if no one is going to see her, explains much about the narrator's attitude toward Hepzibah. He emphasizes age by mentioning "the creaking joints of her stiffened knees," "her rigid and rusty frame," and "the life-blood gradually chilling in her veins." The implied author has Hepzibah refer to herself as "a dismal and lonesome old woman" (II, 74).

Hepzibah is not just old. There are other qualities about the character that the implied author wishes his reader to perceive as unbecoming in women. She is described as dressed in "black silk, with a long and shrunken waist," "gaunt and dismal," and "pale-faced." All of the adjectives describing her figure suggest angularity rather than feminine roundness and softness. For example, Phoebe Pyncheon, who is considered by the implied author to be the finest "example of feminine grace," is described as having an "elastic body," "graceful," and "with a wholesome bloom." Along with being referred to as "gaunt," Hepzibah is "stiff" and "rusty." Her features also have a forbidding look. She is constantly referred to as scowling. One of the townspeople says that "her face is enough to frighten the Old Nick himself. . . . People can't stand it, I tell you! She scowls dreadfully reason or none, out of pure ugliness of temper!" (II, 47). The narrator points out that the scowl is a result of Hepzibah's near-sightedness and goes on to say

that the "scowl had done Miss Hepzibah a very ill office in establishing her character as an ill-tempered old maid" (II, 34). Thus, the narrator tempers his otherwise unsympathetic description of Hepzibah.

In addition to her angular, scowling, and otherwise depressing appearance, there is yet another defect in Hepzibah. She is an Old Maid! The narrator at first refers to her sympathetically as "a maiden lady." His references, however, become disapproving of her unmarried state. He calls her a "time-stricken virgin," "an ill-tempered old maid" (II, 34), and "a forlorn old maid" (II, 80). In addition, he not only says that she has never had a lover but implies that no one could possibly ever love her. In the scene when he first describes her, the narrator depicts her gazing at a likeness of a young man. He comments, "Can it have been an early lover of Miss Hepzibah? No; she never had a lover--poor thing, how could she?--nor ever knew by her own experience what love technically means" (II, 32). Notice the words which the narrator inserts between the dashes: "poor thing, how could she?" Of course, "poor" is an adjective which the narrator uses more frequently than any other in connection with Hepzibah. In fact, the implied author refers to Hepzibah at least twenty-eight times as "poor Hepzibah." The effect of the adjective is heightened by his use of it occasionally two or three times on one page. A majority of the time the

tone of comment is mocking and ironical. In this case, the narrator is expressing the masculine viewpoint that women without lovers are unhappy and are, thus, "poor things," and at the same time suggesting that no self-respecting male would want her. In other words, "how could she," as unfeminine and unattractive as she is, possibly attract a lover? The narrator also stresses that Hepzibah does not know "what love technically means."

Yet he goes on to say that "her undying faith and trust, her fresh remembrance, and continual devotedness towards the original of that miniature, have been the only substance for her heart to feed upon" (II, 32). The person in the picture is, of course, Hepzibah's brother, Clifford. There is no doubt that Hepzibah loves her brother. The narrator says:

Truly was there something high, generous, and noble in the native composition of our poor Hepzibah! Or else--and it was quite as probably the case--she had been enriched by poverty, developed by sorrow, elevated by the strong and solitary affection of her life, and thus endowed with heroism, which never could have characterized her in what are called happier circumstances. . . . In her own behalf, she had asked nothing of Providence, but the opportunity of devoting herself to this brother, whom she had so loved--so admired for what he was, or might have been--and to whom she had kept her faith, alone of all the world, wholly, unflinching, at every instant, and throughout life. (II, 133).

Why does the narrator say at one point that Hepzibah technically does not know what love means and then a hundred

pages later suggest that she loved her brother dearly? There are a number of possibilities here. First of all, the narrator is suggesting that true or real love for a woman should be realized with a lover, not a relative. A woman's true expression of her womanhood can be expressed only through a sexual relationship. A second possibility is that Hephzibah's love cannot be a truly noble love for she loves someone who is not worthy of that kind of devotion. Once again, the narrator's irony is heavily underlined with the phrase between the dashes referring to Clifford as "so admired for what he was, or might have been." As we shall see later in this discussion, neither the implied author nor the narrator considers Clifford an admirable character; thus, Hephzibah's love cannot be "high, generous, and noble" but instead is wasted on an unworthy recipient. While it might be considered "romantic" to love an unworthy person, it is obvious that the implied author has some reservations about this, or he would use terms other than the pejorative ones directed at Hephzibah.

In addition to being a dried-up, misused old virgin, Hephzibah has still another strike against her. She considers herself a lady. Although neither the implied author nor the narrator uses quotation marks around the word "lady," the tone which underlies the word is always mocking and sarcastic. It is clear from the beginning, when the narrator

describes Hepzibah's attempt to get her shop ready, that the narrator has no sympathy for her position. He says,

There, again, she has upset a tumbler of marbles, all of which roll different ways, and each individual marble, devil-directed, into the most difficult obscurity that it can find. Heaven help our poor old Hepzibah, and forgive us for taking a ludicrous view of her position.

This situation, familiar to most readers, is frustrating and awkward. Any attempt to gather up a glassful of marbles which have rolled in every direction is going to appear ridiculous to an observer. The implied author could not have chosen a more foolish incident for Hepzibah. Although he says, "forgive us for taking a ludicrous view of her position," the tone is still one of mockery rather than sympathy. However, the narrator goes on to comment that because the picture of Hepzibah's "rigid and rusty frame" going "down upon its hands and knees" provokes so much laughter, it ought also to cause one to feel some sympathy. Thus far, the narrator presents a situation in which most people would feel awkward and somewhat ridiculous. However, we find Hepzibah in this situation with the added difficulty of being "rigid and rusty." Furthermore, she is a "lady." The narrator says:

Here is one of the truest points of melancholy interest that occur in ordinary life. It was the final term of what called itself old gentility. A lady--who had fed herself from childhood with the shadowy food of aristocratic reminiscences, and

whose religion it was, that a lady's hand soils itself irremediably by doing aught for bread--this born lady, after sixty years of narrowing means, is fain to step down from her pedestal of imaginary rank. (II, 38)

This is the closest the implied author comes to a definition of what he means by the word "lady." First of all, the term should have died with the era it represents, the "old gentility." The implied author wants his created reader to understand that society has changed, but that some remnants of the "aristocratic" concepts still remain. Hepzibah, who considers herself an aristocrat, believes that a lady does not dirty her hands by earning a living. Thus, Hepzibah is awkward not only because her body is stiff but also because her mental view of herself is ancient and rigid. After sixty years of increasing poverty, she must "step down from her pedestal of imaginary rank." This last phrase is even more unsympathetic. Hepzibah has a rank in society only in her own mind. The narrator comments:

Poverty, treading closely at her heels for a lifetime, has come up with her at last. She must earn her own food or starve! And we have stolen upon Miss Hepzibah Pyncheon, too irreverently, at the instant of time when the patrician lady is to be transformed into the plebeian woman. (II, 38)

This small incident with the marbles serves as a miniature of the larger process of Hepzibah's moving into the plebeian, ordinary world of a woman who works.

Time and again the narrator stresses the fact that Hepzibah is, or has been, a lady, and this fact, therefore, keeps her isolated from the rest of society. Through both Hepzibah and Holgrave, the implied author emphasizes that there is a difference between being a woman and being a lady. Hepzibah says to Holgrave, "But I am a woman! . . . I was going to say a lady,--but I consider that as past." Holgrave replies that she should "let it go! You are the better without it." This does not satisfy Hepzibah, as she answers, "But I was born a lady, and have always lived one--no matter in what narrowness of means, always a lady." In reply to this, the implied author, through Holgrave, stresses the difference between being a woman and a lady that Hepzibah herself had already mentioned above. He says, "I will leave you to feel whether it is not better to be a true woman, than a lady" (II, 44-45). The difference that the implied author seems to be making is that a true woman does not mind soiling her hands with honest work or associating with common people while a "lady" always keeps herself aloof and does no work. Thus, Hepzibah embodies all that the implied author dislikes in women. She is elderly, gaunt and angular in appearance, virginal without ever having had her heart engaged by a "worthy" love, and isolated from common society through her attachment to class.

In contrast to the elderly old maid Hepzibah, is young, bright Phoebe. Hyatt Waggoner comments that

one of the stumbling blocks in the novel for the modern reader is in fact the way in which Hawthorne has made Phoebe, "the bright young girl . . . whose fresh and maidenly figure was both sunshine and flowers" and whose name in Greek meant shining--the way he has made her seem, more like a ray of sunshine, than like a person.<sup>14</sup>

While Phoebe may well present a difficulty for the modern reader, she certainly would not do so for Hawthorne's created reader. Phoebe comes close to representing the implied author's conception of true womanhood. Waggoner continues by characterizing Phoebe as

first cousin to . . . the unnamed maidens with the hearts of dazzling white who fortunately appear only on the periphery of The Scarlet Letter; to Priscilla in The Blithedale Romance, that most shadowy of Hawthorne's heroines; to Hilda in The Marble Faun.<sup>15</sup>

Richard Fogle, however, says that of all the characters in The House of the Seven Gables, "Phoebe is closest to the center of human nature. . . . She represents the truth of the heart. She is the best of human ties and human feelings."<sup>16</sup> The implied author and created reader agree with Fogle that Phoebe does embody the qualities they admire in women. In other words, they are close to what this male author envisages as the epitome of woman.

<sup>14</sup> Waggoner, p. 160.

<sup>15</sup> Waggoner, p. 171.

<sup>16</sup> Fogle, The Light and the Dark, p. 127.

The most often-noted contrasts between Phoebe and Hepzibah in The House of the Seven Gables are the contrast between the dark Hepzibah and the light Phoebe and the contrast between the patrician and the plebeian. However, by introducing Phoebe into the novel in the chapter entitled "May and November," the implied author indicates that he intends the created reader to perceive yet another contrast--that of youth and age. In comparison to Hepzibah's stiff-jointed, creaking-kneed, vain attempt at a morning toilet, the narrator pictures the morning light stealing into Phoebe's bedroom. He says:

Finding the new guest there--with a bloom on her cheeks, like the morning's own, and a gentle stir of departing slumber in her limbs, as when an early breeze moves the foliage--the Dawn kissed her brow. It was the caress which a dewy maiden--such as the Dawn is, immortally--gives to her sleeping sister, partly from the impulse of irresistible fondness, and partly as a pretty hint, that it is time now to uncloset her eyes. (II, 70)

Thus, Phoebe is awakened gently by another young "dewy" maiden. Although she is in a bedroom very similar to Hepzibah's, Phoebe sets about moving furniture from one place to another, and the narrator says that

no longer ago than the night before, it [the bedroom] had resembled nothing so much as the old maid's heart; for there was neither sunshine nor household-fire in one nor the other, and save for ghosts and ghostly reminiscences, not a guest, for many years gone by, had entered the heart or the chamber. (II, 72)

By comparing the bedroom to "the old maid's heart," the narrator begins to draw his contrast between Hepzibah and Phoebe, as well as to show the effect which Phoebe will have on the house and its inhabitants. Bedrooms, the narrator comments, are chambers "of very great and varied experiences"--the happiness of wedding nights, childbirth, and death. The narrator adds:

But whether it were the white roses, or whatever the subtle influence might be--a person of delicate instinct would have known, at once, that it was now a maiden's bed-chamber, and had been purified of all former evil and sorrow by her sweet breath and happy thoughts. (II, 72)

Phoebe--whether through her presence, the changed furniture in the room, or the added flowers--has cleansed the bedroom of "all former evil and sorrow." This is an interesting choice of words, for the implied author mentions the three important events in life, then says that "all" evil and sorrow are gone. Most readers will agree that the reference to "sorrow" means the deaths that have occurred in the room. But what "evil" has Phoebe banished? The narrator has said that there had been no warmth and love--"household-fire"--in the chamber, and he does make a reference to the ghosts which haunt the room. Perhaps the implied author could mean that the lack of love, pain, illness, or even aristocratic pretensions are evil. Whatever the evil represents, Phoebe has banished it. As the singing Phoebe moves around the

kitchen preparing breakfast, he compares her to a "bird in a shadowy tree," and a stream warbling as "a brook sometimes warbles through a pleasant little dell" (II, 76). Thus, Phoebe is happy and joyful alongside the scowling ill-tempered Hepzibah.

Although there are many differences between Hester in The Scarlet Letter and the young Phoebe in The House of the Seven Gables, the narrators in both novels note their angelic qualities. In The House of Seven Gables, the narrator comments:

There was a spiritual quality in Phoebe's activity. The life of the long and busy day--spent in occupations that might so easily have taken a squalid and ugly aspect--had been pleasant, and even lovely, by the spontaneous grace with which these homely duties seemed to bloom out of her character; so that labor, while she dealt with it, had the easy and flexible charm of play. Angels do not toil, but let their good works grow out of them; and so did Phoebe. (II, 82)

Along with being an Angel and making even the worst tasks seem light and easy, Phoebe also can prepare food fit for the gods. The narrator describes her Indian cakes as "befitting the rustic altars of the innocent and golden age--or, so brightly yellow were they, resembling some of the bread which was changed to glistening gold, when Midas tried to eat it" (II, 100). In contrast to Phoebe's cooking from which the vapor "arose like incense from the shrine of

a barbarian idol," the narrator notes that "Hepzibah had no natural turn for cookery."

But an even greater contrast is made evident by the implied author through Clifford's reactions to the two women. The narrator says that Clifford is distressed by Hepzibah's croaking voice and has an "invincible distaste" for her appearance:

Her features, never the most agreeable, and now harsh with age and grief, and resentment against the world for his sake; her dress and especially her turban; the queer and quaint manners, which had unconsciously grown upon her in solitude,-- such being the poor gentlewoman's outward characteristics, it is no great marvel, although the mournfullest of pitiees, that the instinctive lover of the Beautiful was fain to turn away his eyes!  
(II. 135)

Clifford cannot help himself. Although he appreciates the love which Hepzibah showers upon him, he will gratefully close his eyes at death if only in relief that he will not have to look at her any longer. In contrast, the narrator comments that "nothing more beautiful--nothing prettier, at least--was ever made, than Phoebe" (II, 140), and that Clifford "was a man . . . and recognized her as a woman. She was his only representative of womankind" (II, 141). The narrator continues, saying that Clifford

took unflinching note of every charm that appertained to her sex, and saw the ripeness of her lips, and the virginal development of her bosom.

All her little, womanly ways, budding out of her like blossoms on a young fruit-tree, had their effect on him, and sometimes caused his very heart to tingle with the keenest thrills of pleasure. (II, 141)

One could, indeed, repeat with the narrator, "poor Hepzibah." Phoebe has everything, including Clifford's complete attention, while Hepzibah is left with nothing.

The narrator continues to build contrast upon contrast between these two women. He emphasizes the differences between youth and age by describing an incident when Phoebe waits upon a customer in the shop. He says:

It was worth while to hear the croaking and hollow tones of the old lady, and the pleasant voice of Phoebe, mingling in one twisted thread of talk; and still better, to contrast their figures--so light and bloomy--so decrepit and dusky--with only the counter betwixt them, in one sense, but more than three-score years, in another. (II, 79)

There is still another outstanding difference between these two women. As we have already discussed, the implied author disapproves of Hepzibah because she is more a lady than a woman. Hepzibah, holding fast to the conception that family and breeding are important, says of Phoebe, "What a nice little body she is! If she could only be a lady, too!--but that's impossible! Phoebe is no Pyncheon. She takes everything from her mother!" (II, 79). The narrator, however, steps in at this point to make sure that his reader

understands the distinction between "lady" and "woman." He says of Phoebe:

She shocked no canon of taste; she was admirably in keeping with herself, and never jarred against surrounding circumstances. . . . Instead of discussing her claim to rank among ladies, it would be preferable to regard Phoebe as the example of feminine grace and availability combined, in a state of society, if there were any such, where ladies did not exist. There, it should be woman's office to move in the midst of practical affairs, and to gild them all--the very homeliest, were it even the scouring of pots and kettles--with an atmosphere of loveliness and joy. (II, 80)

The narrator goes on to contrast this picture of Phoebe happily washing the pots and pans with that of Hepzibah playing her harpsichord, dancing a minuet, and stitching on a tapestry.

These opposing scenes provide one of the most forceful statements in this novel. Not only does the implied author indicate his strong disapproval of educated and well-born ladies, he also makes a definitive statement on the role of women in society. Phoebe shocks "no canon of taste" nor does she jar "against surrounding circumstances." Hepzibah, however, "jars" in the sense that she is still trying to live in the past. As we have seen with Hester in The Scarlet Letter, the implied author believes that women who are of an independent or speculative turn of mind lose all of their femininity. Thus, Phoebe, as the implied author's "example of feminine grace" very carefully and wisely

follows the current--meaning masculine--point of view. Coupled with this suggestion, that a woman should allow her thoughts to be guided by minds more capable than hers, is the allied implication that a woman's true calling is practical, and that she should perform even the lowliest duty "with an atmosphere of loveliness and joy." Of course, in modern terms the narrator is saying that a woman's place is in the home but not in the drawing room talking with the men or turning her hand to artistic endeavors.

The implied author does recognize, however, that there are circumstances under which a woman might have to earn her living. In commenting on Hepzibah's opening a shop in the Pyncheon house, he says, "This business of setting up a petty shop is almost the only resource of women, in circumstances at all similar to those of our unfortunate recluse" (II, 38). He goes on to suggest that there are only three means of earning a living open to women. Besides running a small shop, a woman can work as a seamstress--Hepzibah's ability to produce only ornamental needlework and her poor eyesight make this impossible--or she can open a school. Of these three practical occupations, Hepzibah has no choice but to open a small shop. This theme, that of occupations suitable for a woman, Hawthorne returns to and expands in both The Blithedale Romance and The Marble Faun.

There is another concept to examine in connection with Phoebe. The implied author has emphasized a definite

distinction between a "lady" and a "woman," and, as we have already seen, he considers Phoebe to be more of a woman than Hepzibah. But toward the end of the novel, he suggests yet another attribute of womanhood. During the course of the novel, Phoebe begins to change. As the narrator points out, she begins to see the vast difference in spirit between Hepzibah, Clifford, and herself. The narrator comments that "a flower, for instance, as Phoebe herself observed, always began to drop sooner in Clifford's hand, or Hepzibah's than in her own; and by the same law, converting her whole daily life into a flower fragrance for these two sickly spirits, the blooming girl must inevitably droop and fade" (II, 174). The created reader understands that the Pyncheon house, which represents the past, might have the same effect of killing Phoebe's spirit or imprisoning her as it has done with Hepzibah and Clifford. Using the symbol of the house, the implied author wants the created reader to see the overwhelming influence that the past, or the authority represented by the past, has on the present. The implied author, through Phoebe herself, stresses the effect which Hepzibah and Clifford have had on her. Phoebe says,

I have grown a great deal older, in this little time. Older, and, I hope wiser, and--not exactly sadder--but, certainly with not half so much lightness in my spirits. I have given them my sunshine and have been glad to give it; but, of course, I cannot both give and keep it.  
(II, 214-15)

Phoebe realizes what is happening to her, so she decides that she must leave for awhile.

Through the narrator's comments on the changes taking place in Phoebe, the implied author, first of all, makes the point that anyone who remains in the kind of closed society as seen in the Pyncheon house will sooner or later become just as sickly and diseased; and second, he maintains that this kind of experience causes her to grow into womanhood. The narrator says that "she was less girlish than when we first beheld her, alighting from the omnibus; less girlish, but more a woman" (II, 175). On the other hand, by saying that Phoebe becomes "more of woman" through her experiences in the Pyncheon house, the implied author suggests that in order to achieve true womanhood, Phoebe must experience sorrow. Thus, some of the brightness has gone out of Phoebe's life, changing her from a girl into a woman. We are reminded here of the comment which the narrator makes concerning Pearl's tears at the end of The Scarlet Letter. He says that "as her tears fell upon her father's cheek, they were the pledge that she would grow up amid human joy and sorrow, nor for ever do battle with the world, but be a woman in it" (I, 181). To be a part of the world, a woman must experience both sorrow and joy. Phoebe has learned about sorrow by living in the Pyncheon house; but she does not allow the house and the past to dominate her as Hepzibah

does. Thus, Hepzibah does not achieve full womanhood, but Phoebe does.

While living in the Pyncheon house, Phoebe achieves womanhood not only through the experience of sorrow but also through the experience of joy in her relationship with Holgrave. This marriage has aroused much controversy among the critics. Waggoner calls it "perfectly unconvincing" because "we have had no preparation for it, since there is little evidence before the betrothal is announced of any growing love between the two."<sup>17</sup> Perhaps the modern reader may agree with Waggoner that this marriage is unconvincing, but Hawthorne's created reader would not. In The Scarlet Letter, the implied author makes it quite clear that marriage can be successful only when both partners are truly in love with each other. In addition, in The House of the Seven Gables, Hepzibah's spinsterhood is a definite defect. Therefore, Hawthorne's male created reader will expect him to provide the only acceptable outlet for a woman's passion and affection. Phoebe, if she is to become a woman in every sense that has been illustrated in this novel, must fall in love with Holgrave and marry him. The narrator says:

And it was in this hour, so full of doubt and awe, that the one miracle was wrought, without which every human existence is a blank. The bliss, which makes all things true, beautiful,

<sup>17</sup> Waggoner, p. 172.

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. (II, 307)

The transforming power of love is so strong that it gives each couple the opportunity of creating a new world upon the ashes of the old. Thus Phoebe is able to achieve womanhood through sorrow and joy and to express herself fully in the only way acceptable to the male created reader--marriage.

Allied to the implied author's views on femininity and the role of women in society are his ideas on the proper conduct and attitudes of men. As we have seen in our examination of The Scarlet Letter, the implied author shows very strong disapproval of Arthur Dimmesdale because of his lack of courage. We see the same attitude toward Clifford in The House of the Seven Gables. As with Dimmesdale, Clifford Pyncheon is described in almost wholly feminine terms. In describing the miniature of Clifford, the narrator says that Hepzibah sees Clifford as

soft, mildly, and cheerfully contemplative,  
 with full, red lips, just on the verge of a  
 smile, which the eyes seemed to herald by a  
 gentle kindling-up of their orbs! Feminine  
 traits moulded inseparably with those of the  
 other sex! . . . You inevitably thought of  
 the original as resembling his mother.  
 (II, 59-60)

Phoebe describes his face as "almost too soft and gentle for a man's" (II, 92). To add to this feminine impression given

by the implied author, the narrator suggests that Clifford is self-indulgent. He describes Clifford's smile as feeble and fleeting and then goes on to comment that "it was followed by a coarser expression. . . . There was nothing intellectual to temper it. It was a look of appetite. He ate food with what might almost be termed voracity" (II, 107), and he later says that it seems "Clifford's nature to be a Sybarite" (II, 108). Clifford seems to represent the worst qualities of both sexes. Moreover, Clifford sees himself, as the narrator points out, as

an example and representative of that great chaos of people, whom an inexplicable Providence is continually putting at cross-purposes with the world; breaking what seems its own promise in their nature, withholding their proper food, and setting poison before them for a banquet; and thus--when it might, so easily, as one would think, have been adjusted otherwise--making their existence a strangeness, a solitude, and torment. (II, 149)

Thus, we see a man more feminine--softer--than masculine, who feels himself caught in a situation out of his control. Clifford sees his torment as something being placed upon him and sees himself as having nothing to do with it.

At the end of the chapter entitled "The Pyncheon-Garden," Clifford says to himself, "I want my happiness! . . . Many, many years have I waited for it! It is late! It is late! I want my happiness!" (II, 137). However, in

one of the unusual scenes in which he speaks directly to a character, the narrator says:

Alas, poor Clifford! You are old, and worn with troubles that ought never to have befallen you. You are partly crazy, and partly imbecile; a ruin, a failure, as almost everybody is--though some in less degree, or less perceptibly, than in their fellows. Fate has no happiness in store for you; unless your quiet home in the old family residence, with the faithful Hepzibah, and your long summer-afternoons with Phoebe, and these Sabbath festivals with Uncle Venner and the Daguerreotypist, deserve to be called happiness! Why not? If not the thing itself, it is marvellously like it, and the more so for that ethereal and intangible quality, which causes it all to vanish, at too close an introspection. Take it, therefore, while you may. Murmur not--question not--but make the most of it. (II, 157-58)

This speech by the narrator succinctly sums up what is wrong with Clifford. He is "old," "crazy," an "imbecile," and weighed down by events out of his control. Notice that the narrator agrees partly with Clifford that fate has played a part in what has happened to him. The narrator goes on to call him "a ruin" and "a failure"; but, with that technique we have examined before--the use of dashes--the narrator makes it quite clear that everyone is to some extent a ruin and a failure, although most do not allow themselves to be totally defeated by this. There is also an indication here that the implied author may be unsure as to the extent to which man is controlled by fate. Clifford will not realize happiness by wallowing in self-pity or by standing at the window murmuring, "I want my happiness now!"

The important point that the implied author is making through the narrator here is that happiness comes through making the best of a bad situation. By enumerating the various pleasant activities that Clifford can enjoy, he is trying to get the created reader to see that happiness can be within his reach and his control.

Unfortunately, Clifford cannot hear the narrator and thus does not take his advice and instead finds himself unable to cope with even the simplest situation. Like Hepzibah's determined effort to remain a lady, Clifford is determined to live in the past, to become--as Hepzibah is--an embodiment of "suspended animation," which causes the narrator to comment on the "sense of decay" that this inability to deal with "unaccustomed things" brings about. In other words, Clifford lacks the courage to face not only his own situation but also any unusual occurrence that might arise. He is even unable to leave the house to attend church, and the narrator says, "What other dungeon is so dark as one's own heart! What jailer so inexorable as one's self!" (II, 169). When Clifford is finally jolted by Judge Pyncheon's death strongly enough to grab Hepzibah's hand and to flee with her down the street, Hepzibah remarks to herself that "he had been startled into manhood and intellectual vigor; or, at least, into a condition that resembled them, though it might be both diseased and transitory" (II, 258).

Hepzibah's judgment is correct, for although Clifford has for once taken the lead, is forcing her to follow him, and says that his "soul needs air; a wide sweep and frequent change of it" (II, 260), his mood of elation is only transitory. As they are swept along on the feeling of Clifford's exhilaration, Hepzibah and Clifford find themselves in the railway station and decide to get on the train. During the journey, Clifford's "wild ideas" embarrass the old gentleman he talks to. The old man finally comments, "You are a strange man, sir!" By the end of their railway journey, the narrator says:

the wild effervescence of his [Clifford's] mood-- which had so readily supplied thoughts, fantasies, and a strange aptitude of words, and impelled him to talk from the mere necessity of giving vent to this bubbling up-gush of ideas--had entirely subsided. A powerful excitement had given him energy and vivacity. Its operation over, he forthwith began to sink. (II, 266)

This mood of elation which allows Clifford to demonstrate a modicum of courage is very similar to the mood which overtakes Dimmesdale when he is in the forest with Hester. But like Dimmesdale, who turns to Hester and says, "Think for me, Hester! Thou art strong. Resolve for me!" (I, 141), Clifford turns to Hepzibah and says, "You must take the lead now, Hepzibah! . . . Do with me as you will" (II, 266). In the view of the implied author and created reader, Clifford

is as weak, unperceptive, and lacking in manly courage as Arthur Dimmesdale is.

Both of these weak men are released from their torment by death. Dimmesdale's release is, of course, brought about by his own death. Clifford does not die; his release is brought about through the death of Judge Pyncheon. The narrator says:

The shock of Judge Pyncheon's death had a permanently invigorating and ultimately beneficial effect on Clifford. . . . The first effect of freedom . . . was a tremulous exhilaration. Subsiding from it, he did not sink into his former intellectual apathy. He never, it is true, attained to nearly the full measure of what might have been his faculties. But he recovered enough of them partially to light up his character. . . . He was evidently happy. (II, 313-14)

Clifford, therefore, is set free through someone else's death, not through his own courage to face his situation and make the best of it. Perhaps he does achieve happiness. The narrator's choice of the phrase "evidently happy" leaves some doubt, however. Clifford would have been a stronger, happier man if he had had the masculine courage to take control of his life. He would have gained the admiration of both the implied author and the created reader.

In contrast to Clifford, Holgrave represents the qualities which the implied author admires. If Hepzibah can be said to represent the past and Phoebe the present, Holgrave is the character that represents the bridge between the two.

Holgrave is an artist and an intellectual. Harry Levin sums him up as "the hopeful young American of his generation, self-made self-taught, self-reliant."<sup>18</sup> Holgrave does have the qualities the implied author admires in the new American, but at the same time he also illustrates those qualities of the Emersonian self-reliant man which the author seems to believe need to be softened.

Although Holgrave appears in connection with various characters throughout the novel, it is in the chapter entitled "The Daguerreotypist" that the implied author most illustrates the attitudes which this young man embodies. First of all, he is very young; but in spite of his youth, he has held a number of different jobs. In spite of this, the narrator comments,

He had never lost his identity. Homeless as he had been--continually changing his whereabouts, and therefore responsible neither to public opinion nor to individuals--putting off one exterior, and snatching up another, to be soon shifted for a third--he had never violated the innermost man, but had carried his conscience along with him. (II, 177)

Unlike Clifford, Holgrave is his own man. No one will control him in the way that Clifford allows himself to be manipulated. When Phoebe first observes Holgrave, she voices an uneasiness which she senses in this character.

<sup>18</sup> Harry Levin, The Power of Blackness: Hawthorne, Poe, Melville (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), p. 83.

Phoebe feels that Holgrave is "too calm and cool an observer." She feels "his eye, often; his heart, seldom or never" (II, 177). Perhaps the implied author is suggesting through Phoebe that a true artist must engage his heart as well as his head.

However, the implied author does not allow this defect to mar the impression which he intends his artist to make. Holgrave sees "that in this age, more than ever before, the moss-grown and rotten Past is to be torn down, and lifeless institutions to be thrust out of the way, and their dead corpses buried, and everything to begin anew" (II, 179). The narrator goes on to agree that Holgrave is right, but observes that Holgrave makes an error in supposing that all can be torn down at once rather than one piece at a time. One cannot fault Holgrave for his "enthusiasm," "inward strength," and "personal ambition." The narrator does point out, however, that one of the difficulties of youth is that the brilliancy often seen so early, just as quickly fades. He says:

The effervescence of youth and passion, and the fresh gloss of the intellect and imagination, endow them with a false brilliancy, which makes fools of themselves and other people. Like certain chintzes, calicoes, and ginghams, they show finely in their first newness, but cannot stand the sun and rain, and assume a very sober aspect after washing-day. (II, 181)

Thus, the narrator is suggesting that youthful enthusiasm is fine but must be tempered by maturity. This is exactly what happens to Holgrave. He begins in a burst of enthusiasm to suggest that all symbols of the past should be destroyed. By the end of the novel, Holgrave discovers that his new ideas "cannot stand the sun and the rain."

At one point the implied author has Holgrave make a long and impassioned plea for cutting all ties with the past. Nothing, including buildings, should be allowed to remain from one generation to another. He concludes:

The house, in my view, is expressive of that odious and abominable Past, with all its bad influences, against which I have just been declaiming. . . . To plant a family! This idea is at the bottom of most of the wrong and mischief which men do. (II, 184-85)

Holgrave, along with the created reader, understands what has happened to Hepzibah and Clifford. They have "become imprisoned by the Pyncheon house and, thus, by the past. It is odious and abominable," and both the past and the house have destroyed two lives. The youthful, enthusiastic Holgrave wishes to tear down everything from the past. His ideas are later aired in the sun and the rain. Holgrave meets and falls in love with Phoebe who "shocks no canon." With a change of heart, Holgrave says,

The happy man inevitably confines himself within ancient limits. I have a presentiment, that, hereafter, it will be my lot to set out trees, to

make fences--perhaps, even, in due time, to build a house for another generation--in a word, to conform myself to laws, and the peaceful practice of society. (II, 306-307)

Barton Levi St. Armand comments that "the ending of The House of the Seven Gables . . . actually traces a change of heart. Holgrave becomes in effect, an activist rather than a destructive by enlarging his philosophy to include the positive as well as the negative."<sup>19</sup> The created reader realizes with Holgrave that the moral stated at the beginning of the novel holds true only to a point. Holgrave and the reader learn to see the positive side to the past as well as the negative.

What we see here is the transforming strength of love. Just as in The Scarlet Letter the implied author pictures the Puritans first as grim, cold men without the necessary passion to judge an affair of the heart and then at the end of the novel shows them as necessary bulwarks against the "tempestuous tide," we see here a change in the implied author's attitude towards the past and the maintaining of the roots of a family from one generation to the next. It makes no difference whether this change in attitude is brought about through maturity or love and marriage, for the

<sup>19</sup> Barton Levi St. Armand, "The Golden Stain of Time: Ruskinian Aesthetics and the Ending of Hawthorne's The House of the Seven Gables," in NHJ, 1973, ed. C. E. Frazer Clark (Washington, D.C.: Microcard Editions, 1973), p. 149.

implied author strongly believes that human beings must experience all these events in order to live happy, successful lives. Such lives are predicted for Holgrave and Phoebe.

Through this examination of The House of the Seven Gables, we have been able to gain a deeper insight into the mind of Hawthorne's created reader. We realize that he definitely believes that women should express their femininity through marriage and the practical affairs of the home. This created reader prefers his women to remain youthful and somehow retain this youthfulness even as they grow older. He prefers men who have the courage to take control of their own lives and destinies. The created reader understands that an artist must engage his heart, not just his head. Although Hawthorne's "initiated reader" recognizes that constantly dwelling in the past casts a pall over the present, he also realizes that one can use the elements of the past to build upon in the future. Finally, the new man cannot be solely self-reliant, since he must exist in a society with laws and limitations. Thus, the created reader becomes a mirror that reflects the thoughts and ideas of the implied author.

### Chapter III

#### The Blithedale Romance: Hawthorne's Reader as Anti-Reformer

Nathaniel Hawthorne's third novel, The Blithedale Romance, published in 1852, has certainly generated extremes of critical opinion. Mark Van Doren charges the novel with a vagueness of plot, with having no virtues of any kind, as well as being one of the poorer novels produced by a first rate writer.<sup>1</sup> Hyatt Waggoner refers to the novel as disappointing reading, both as history and romance, and suggests that the reader should read it as a poem rather than a novel.<sup>2</sup> Richard Chase also maintains in The American Novel and Its Tradition that this attempt of Hawthorne's to write longer fiction does not succeed. Chase goes on,

His books [sic] falter at various points and then, not knowing how to re-establish the progression, he trots out a traveling puppet show, a masquerade, a symbolic well, an old legend, a mesmerist,

<sup>1</sup> Mark Van Doren, Nathaniel Hawthorne (New York: Viking Press, 1949), pp. 189-97.

<sup>2</sup> Hyatt H. Waggoner, Hawthorne: A Critical Study (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1955), pp. 174-75.

as if he were an entertainer on the stage who must improvise in order not to lose his audience.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, Robert Elliott contends that Hawthorne's difficulty lies in his attempt to bring together the illusionary and the actual, and he says, "We would gladly trade veiled ladies and handsome villains with false teeth and snake-headed canes for a Flemish portrait of Brook Farm."<sup>4</sup>

In addition to Van Doren, Waggoner, Chase, and Elliott, Frederick Crews also has doubts about the novel. He calls it confused and indecisive. Crews continues,

The Blithedale Romance is a book in which Hawthorne's customary equivocation about social and moral ideas has been extended to include such apparently elementary matters as his moral estimate of his characters, his notion of their feelings about one another, and even his factual knowledge of their previous lives.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast to these assertions that Hawthorne's novel leaves much to be desired is Henry James's comment in 1879 that The Blithedale Romance "is the lightest, the brightest,

<sup>3</sup> Richard Chase, The American Novel and Its Tradition (1957; rpt. New York: Gordian Press, 1978), p. 83.

<sup>4</sup> Robert C. Elliott, "The Blithedale Romance," in Hawthorne Centenary Essays, ed. Roy Harvey Pearce (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1964), p. 105.

<sup>5</sup> Frederick C. Crews, The Sins of the Fathers: Hawthorne's Psychological Themes (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), p. 195.

the liveliest, of . . . unhumorous fiction."<sup>6</sup> James goes on to point out that the novel is a mixture of elements. It is this "mixture of elements" that has aroused more recent critical commentary. Although contemporary criticism tends to repudiate those earlier authorities who called the novel a poor one, these recent critics also have difficulty agreeing among themselves on interpretations of the many different elements which Hawthorne brings together in this novel. Rather than centering on the novel as a whole, contemporary criticism examines components such as the form of the novel,<sup>7</sup> the function of the narrator,<sup>8</sup> the allegorical basis of the novel,<sup>9</sup> the functions of the

<sup>6</sup> Henry James, Hawthorne (1879; rpt. Ithaca, N.Y.: Great Seal Books, 1956), p. 105.

<sup>7</sup> See Louis Auchincloss, "The Blithedale Romance: A Study of Form and Point of View," in NHJ, 1972, ed. C. E. Frazer Clark (Washington, D.C.: Microcard Editions, 1972), pp. 53-58.

<sup>8</sup> See James H. Justus, "Hawthorne's Coverdale: Character and Art in The Blithedale Romance," AL, 47 (1975-76), 21-36; Irvin Stock, "Hawthorne's Portrait of the Artist: A Defense of The Blithedale Romance," Novel, 5 (1977-78), 144-56; and Richard Vandeweghe, "Hawthorne's The Blithedale Romance: Miles Coverdale, His Story," in NHJ, 1977, ed. C. E. Frazer Clark (Detroit: Bruccoli Clark Publishers, 1977), pp. 289-303.

<sup>9</sup> See Kent Bales, "The Allegory and the Radical Romantic Ethic of The Blithedale Romance," AL, 46 (1974-75), 41-53.

female characters,<sup>10</sup> and the probable relationships between the male and female characters.<sup>11</sup> Although the purpose of this study is to examine the role or person of Hawthorne's created reader rather than evaluate all of the current theories, we shall see during our discussion how widely varied the current criticism is. We must keep in mind, however, that, as Hawthorne states in "The Custom-House," he is writing to and for the sympathetic few who will understand him. Thus, his initiated reader will very quickly perceive the ideas and arguments presented in this novel. In fact, it is with this novel that we begin to have a clear picture of the reader Hawthorne has in mind. The Blithedale Romance not only allows us the opportunity to develop our understanding of the created reader's attitudes towards nineteenth century ideas, but also gives us a more definite visualization of this reader's probable age, social class, place of residence, and educational background.

<sup>10</sup> See Nina Baym, "The Blithedale Romance: A Radical Reading," JEGP, 67 (1968), 545-69; Frank Davidson, "Toward a Re-Evaluation of The Blithedale Romance," NEQ, 25 (1952), 374-83; Terence J. Matheson, "Feminism and Femininity in The Blithedale Romance," in NHJ, 1976, ed. C. E. Frazer Clark (Englewood, Colo: Information Handling Services, 1976), pp. 215-26; and Ellen E. Morgan, "The Veiled Lady: The Secret Love of Miles Coverdale," in NHJ, 1971, ed. C. E. Frazer Clark (Washington, D.C.: Microcard Editions, 1971), pp. 169-181.

<sup>11</sup> See Frederick C. Crews, "A New Reading of The Blithedale Romance," AL, 29 (1957-58), 147-70; and Allan and Barbara Lefcowitz, "Some Rents in the Veil: New Light on Priscilla and Zenobia in The Blithedale Romance," NCF, 21 (1966-67), 263-75.

In The Blithedale Romance, the implied author presents the same basic attitudes as he has earlier in The Scarlet Letter and The House of the Seven Gables. This does not mean that we see the same ideas, such as the role of women, the problem of authority, or the domination of the past, simply reiterated. Instead, the implied author approaches these subjects from a different direction, as well as presenting new concepts for consideration. The author also uses a different narrative technique in this novel. In one sense, one can say that the use of the first person narrator is a development of the technique which has been introduced in The House of the Seven Gables. In The Blithedale Romance, however, the entire narrative is told from the viewpoint of Miles Coverdale. Nina Baym charges that this

narrator, though recognized as a familiar Hawthorne "type," is regarded as unwisely chosen for the circumstances: his coldness keeps him too remote from the action to convey its life, his prying makes him unpleasant company for the reader, and his ignorance almost suggests the possibility of an unreliable narrative.<sup>12</sup>

Although Baym's estimate of Miles Coverdale as a "Hawthorne type" may be true when one considers the whole body of Hawthorne's work, Coverdale is a unique narrator as far as the four novels are concerned. Because The Blithedale Romance

<sup>12</sup> Baym, p. 546; Crews, Auchincloss, and Justus also take up this point.

is the only novel in which the story is told in the first person, the narrator is as much a character as are the others he describes. Although there is an element of first person narration in the opening chapter of The House of the Seven Gables where the narrator describes a familiar scene, the implied author relies usually on third person omniscience. In The Blithedale Romance the shift from third to first person is almost complete. Miles Coverdale tells the story from what Baym correctly sees as his imperceptive viewpoint, and thus the created reader is forced to follow the arguments of the implied author through the actions and speeches of all of the characters and to question the attitudes and statements of the narrator more than in the previous novels.

Perhaps it is because Hawthorne has chosen in this novel to combine narrator and character that both reader and critic have come to evaluate this narrator in such widely conflicting terms as "prudish, passionate, romantic, realistic, reliable, unreliable, mysterious, fully realized, gentle, an ass, simple, complex, dull, intriguing, skillful, inartistic, great and ineffective."<sup>13</sup> In spite of all of these contradictory views, Allen Flint maintains that Miles Coverdale "represents Hawthorne's point of view in the

<sup>13</sup> Vandeweghe, p. 290, provides this list of the various critical evaluations of Coverdale.

story" and that "since the reader tends to dislike Miles," this is evidence that Hawthorne "really did not like that part of himself which could go to Brook Farm."<sup>14</sup> Flint is clearly mistaken. Apart from Hawthorne's statements in the "Preface" that he had Brook Farm in mind when writing the novel and that he had participated in the experiment for a short period of time, there is no textual evidence that Coverdale and Hawthorne are one. Certainly, Coverdale is treated no more or less sympathetically than any of the other main characters in this novel. One can see, however, that in this novel, more than through The Scarlet Letter or The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne is able to establish a more concrete concept of the implied author. As Kenneth Dauber points out in Rediscovering Hawthorne, Coverdale's unreliability or unworthiness as a narrator is not what is important in the novel; instead, one should consider the creation of Coverdale, the narrator, as a means of establishing greater distance for Hawthorne himself.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the narrative technique is unique as far as his two

<sup>14</sup> Allen Flint, "'essentially a day-dream, and yet a fact': Hawthorne's Blithedale," in NHJ, 1972, ed. C. E. Frazer Clark (Washington, D.C.: Microcard Editions, 1972), p. 78.

<sup>15</sup> Kenneth Dauber, Rediscovering Hawthorne (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977), p. 156; also Keith Carabine, "'Bitter Honey': Miles Coverdale as Narrator in The Blithedale Romance," in Nathaniel Hawthorne: New Critical Essays, ed. A. Robert Lee (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble Books, 1982), pp. 110-30.

previous novels are concerned, and, more significantly, this technique is more unifying for the created reader.

One technique which the implied author uses in both The House of the Seven Gables and The Blithedale Romance is that of delegating authority. In The House of the Seven Gables, Holgrave is allowed to read his story of Alice Pyncheon to Phoebe, and in The Blithedale Romance, Coverdale has both Zenobia and Old Moodie tell stories which give the reader background information. This technique seems more natural in The Blithedale Romance, as there is no other way for the first person narrator to present the material. Thus, in The Blithedale Romance, the created reader more readily perceives a clarity of intent and attitude on the part of the implied author. The use of Coverdale as both character and narrator allows the real author to place greater distance between author and reader, and it also allows him to include background knowledge of his characters in a less artificial way.

The Blithedale Romance contains a wealth of ideas which the implied author would assume the created reader to recognize as current matters of concern, but he also expects his reader to share his views. Arlin Turner, in his well-respected Nathaniel Hawthorne: An Introduction and Interpretation, states that "The Blithedale Romance is not a book about Brook Farm or about socialism, nor is it in fact significant as autobiography." He maintains that it is a book

that "has something to say or implies something about communal living, social, economic, and political theories, humanitarianism, woman's rights, reform movement, mesmerism, spiritualism, authorship and other matters."<sup>16</sup> As a result, this novel, more than The Scarlet Letter or The House of the Seven Gables, gives us a more definite picture of the person of the reader for whom Hawthorne is writing.

From our analysis of the two previous novels, we have gained an insight into the mind of Hawthorne's created reader through an assumption that created reader and implied author share the same views. We know of his preference for younger women rather than older ones. His preference for the lightness and the gaiety of young Phoebe and his stress on the mature Holgrave's acceptance of authority in The House of the Seven Gables indicate further that this male reader is most likely middle-aged. Psychologists and sociologists have recognized for many years that the older male becomes more and more attracted to the younger female, perhaps as a means of proving his own youthfulness or of refusing to accept the aging process. In The Blithedale Romance, Miles Coverdale, in describing the inhabitants of the community, also stresses age. He says that "thoughtful, strongly-lined faces were among them, sombre brows, but eyes

<sup>16</sup> Arlin Turner, Nathaniel Hawthorne: An Introduction and Interpretation (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1961), p. 81.

that did not require spectacles, unless prematurely dimmed by the students' lamplight, and hair that seldom showed a thread of silver" (III, 62). The adjectives used here further emphasize mature men but not ancient ones. As a further stress on the value of the middle years, the narrator goes on, "Age, wedded to the past, incrusting over with a stony layer of habits, and retaining nothing fluid in its possibilities, would have been absurdly out of place in an enterprise like this" (III, 62). As a result of this unwillingness to accept the wisdom of old age or anything with "a stony layer of habits" and this insistence on "thoughtful, strongly-lined faces," one is led to speculate that this reader's age could be in the early to mid fifties. Consistent with his reaction to the very old is his response to the very young. Youth is acceptable, but, he says, "Youth, too, in its early dawn was hardly more adapted to our purpose" (III, 62). Thus very young people, those in their "early dawn"--young teens and children--could prove as disturbing for the community as the very old. The very young "would behold the morning radiance of its own spirit beaming over the very same spots of withered grass and barren sand, whence most of us had seen it vanish" (III, 62). These attitudes toward the very old and the very young, therefore, accentuate the impression that Hawthorne's created reader is middle-aged.

In The House of the Seven Gables, the implied author mocks Hepzibah Pyncheon's aristocratic background. The narrator stresses that because of her patrician upbringing she has become too attached to the past and untrained for facing a life in poverty or in the present. Although the implied author's attitude toward Hepzibah is not sympathetic, he recognizes that differences between classes exist and will probably continue to do so. The attitudes and expectations of both major and minor characters in The Blithedale Romance lead one to speculate that Hawthorne's created reader is not only from the genteel middle class but, equally important, also a middle-class town dweller. The implied author, through Miles Coverdale, makes a great distinction between the main inhabitants of Blithedale-- Coverdale, Zenobia, and Hollingsworth--and Silas Foster, the farmer. From the beginning, it is clear that the new arrivals have very little idea of what living in the country entails. Coverdale says,

The exuberance of this household fire would alone have sufficed to bespeak us no true farmers; for the New England yeoman, if he have the misfortune to dwell within practicable distance of a wood-market, is as niggardly of each stick as if it were a bar of California gold. (III, 23)

Thus, sitting before their "abundant fire," the Blithedale recruits are about to test their ideas of brotherhood.

Coverdale remarks that the looks which pass among the group are awkward; but, he goes on,

we people of superior cultivation and refinement (for as such, I presume, we unhesitatingly reckoned ourselves) felt as if something were already accomplished towards the millennium of love. (III, 24)

Notice the irony which heavily underscores Coverdale's phrase "we people of superior cultivation and refinement." The implied author wants his reader to question Coverdale's sincerity in accepting the idea of brotherhood upon which the community is to be founded.

Thus, one already has an impression of a gulf between the two groups of people, and Coverdale stresses this by referring to "our unpolished companions" and by saying that it is "easier to condescend than to accept condescension." How can a "millennium of love" or brotherhood be established if even one member of the community acknowledges the presence of condescension? Coverdale is attempting to fit into a different way of life, but ironically, refusing to give up his middle-class values. The implied author, through Coverdale, goes on to describe in great detail how Silas Foster eats his meal. He gulps "it down with no more sense of its exquisiteness than if it were a decoction of catnip," and he behaves "less like a civilized Christian than the worst kind of an ogre." Again, as in earlier novels, the tone of the passage is as important as the rhetoric. Foster is "grim";

he "gulps," uses the "flat of his blade-knife," drops half of his toast on the table, perpetrates "terrible enormities with the butter-plate"; when "fully gorged" he drinks from the water pitcher, and he finishes the meal by talking "out of an unwiped mouth" (III, 30). No part of this description is meant to be pleasant, although one must be careful not to look upon Foster with ridicule. However, the implied author is making a necessary distinction here both with what he says and what is left unsaid. First of all, table manners or customs of eating are ways of making a distinction between classes or groups of people in every culture. Thus, this emphasis on Silas Foster's table manners marks him as being different. Secondly, by stressing Foster's eating habits but not mentioning those of Coverdale, Hollingsworth, or Zenobia, the implied author assumes that his reader knows and uses proper table etiquette and, therefore, is part of the middle class.

Another aspect of the difference between the classes is demonstrated in the contrast between physique and intelligence. The implied author, through Coverdale, describes how the Blithedale community began to change physically as a result of their labor on the farm. Coverdale says their faces "took the sunburn," chests gained in compass, "shoulders grew broader, and great brown fists looked as if they had never been capable of kid gloves" (III, 64). The narrator goes on to stress that they were able to handle the

implements of the farm almost as easily as Silas Foster could. But as their physical skills improve, their intellectual ones disappear. Coverdale says:

Our thoughts, on the contrary, were fast becoming cloddish. Our labor symbolized nothing, and left us mentally sluggish in the dusk of the evening. Intellectual activity is incompatible with any large amount of bodily exercise. The yeoman and the scholar--the yeoman and the man of finest moral culture, though not the man of sturdiest sense and integrity--are two distinct individuals, and can never be melted or welded into one substance. (III, 66)

As in the passage describing Silas Foster's table manners, the tone implies that while there is nothing wrong with physical exercise, intellectual activity is better. A few paragraphs later, Zenobia underlines this idea by pointing out that Coverdale will become like Silas Foster and be content with the Farmer's Almanac and never get "so far as the newspaper." At the end of the work day, she says, he "will fall asleep and make nasal proclamation of the fact," and on Sundays he will "think of nothing else to do, but to go and lounge over the stone-walls and rail-fences, and stare at the corn growing" (III, 67). The implication here is that, with increased physical activity, all intellectual activity stops. There is no doubt that the created reader understands the need for reading and thinking, for he, like the main characters at Blithedale, is an educated man and well-read.

Before going on to examine the educational background of Hawthorne's created reader, however, there is one final example of his refinement which should be pointed out. As we have earlier mentioned, the main inhabitants of the Blithedale community are town dwellers rather than rural ones. But there are distinctions between townspeople as well. When Miles Coverdale leaves Blithedale and returns to the city, the implied author devotes an entire chapter to Coverdale's description of his hotel room and the view from his window. Coverdale's description of "a young man in a dressing-gown, standing before the glass brushing his hair, for a quarter-of-an-hour together" (III, 150) contrasts nicely with his earlier description of the "lank, stalwart, uncouth, and grisly-bearded" Silas Foster. Foster has just come in from the fields, and Coverdale goes on:

He greeted us in pretty much the same tone as if he were speaking to his oxen, took a quid from his iron tobacco-box, pulled off his wet cow-hide boots, and sat down before the fire in his stocking feet. The steam arose from his soaked garments, so that the stout yeoman looked vaporous and spectre-like. (III, 18)

This picture of Foster in his stocking feet, chewing his tobacco, is in stark contrast to the young man in his boarding-house room who spends much time arranging his cravat and finally makes "his appearance in a dress-coat" which Coverdale suspects "to be newly come from a tailor's, and now first put on for a dinner-party" (III, 150). The

contrast between these two persons--the simple, rustic Silas Foster and the fashionably dressed young man-- emphasizes Coverdale's preference for the refined, leisured life of the town-dweller. Repeatedly, the implied author makes the point to his created reader that those with Coverdale's attitudes are unsuitable candidates for the creation of a new society as represented by Blithedale.

Earlier in this passage, in answer to Coverdale's question about the families who live in the opposite house, the waiter replies that the one right opposite is a rather stylish boarding-house. . . . Two of the gentleman-boarders keep horses at the stable of our establishment. They do things in very good style, sir, the people that live there" (III, 150). Here again, as in the passage describing Foster's table manners, the tone and the rhetoric are very important. Coverdale himself uses the word "condescension" when speaking of the New England yeoman, but there is nothing but admiration in his voice when describing and commenting on what he sees in the stylish boarding-house. There is also evidence that Coverdale wishes to move upward on the social scale, for when he returns to the town he says,

I established myself, for a day or two, in a certain respectable hotel. It was situated somewhat aloof from my former track in life; my present mood inclining me to avoid most of my old companions. (III, 145)

While in his hotel room, Coverdale becomes quite absorbed with the view of the rooms opposite. His attention is drawn from the young man earlier described toward a "middle-aged gentleman" kissing "prettily dressed children." He watches as the parents move softly behind the children and kiss noiselessly, "for the children did not turn their heads." Although Coverdale has spent several months among rural people, dressing in work clothes and learning to use farm implements, he comments on the genteel scene before him, "I bless God for these good folks. . . . I have not seen a prettier bit of nature in all my summer in the country, than they have shown me here in a rather stylish boarding-house" (III, 151). Certainly the implied author assumes that his created reader will understand and sympathize with Coverdale's attitude; however, he gently underscores his point when Zenobia and Priscilla return from Blithedale, take up residence in this stylish boarding-house, and dress in the latest fashion. The genteel created reader expects this, for it mirrors his own reactions to a choice between town and country living.

As we have mentioned above, Hawthorne assumes his created reader is intellectual and well-read. While this is not so evident in the two earlier novels, in The Blithedale Romance it is very much so. For example, while he is ill in bed, Miles Coverdale reads. The implied author, through Coverdale, only alludes to the works which Coverdale

reads and, therefore, assumes that his created reader will recognize the literary figures and be familiar with the works and ideas of these writers. In one sentence Coverdale mentions reading the essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson; The Dial, a transcendental periodical published between 1840 and 1844 and first edited by Margaret Fuller; the works of the English philosopher Thomas Carlyle; and the romances of George Sand. Coverdale's reference to the works of George Sand--lent to him by Zenobia--provides an excellent contrast to the rest of his reading. First of all, these works by George Sand are the only novels Coverdale reads. In addition, they represent the most extreme views of the institutions of society published at that time. Emerson and Carlyle were highly respected figures and The Dial, a well-respected publication of the mid nineteenth century. George Sand, on the other hand, a Frenchwoman writing under an assumed name, was a notorious figure in her time both for her flaunting of the rules of conventional society and for her novels which attacked marriage and other accepted institutions. It is fitting that these are Zenobia's books, although certainly the well-read gentleman would immediately recognize the allusion.

In the same passage on his reading, Coverdale also refers to Fourier's socialistic ideas. Although he never fully explains what these ideas are, the modern reader does grasp the implication that although Blithedale is founded

on somewhat the same principles, there are vast differences. Hawthorne's well-read created reader, on the other hand, would know all about Fourier's system and would grasp more fully the point that new communities can be founded and individuals can join such communities for vastly different reasons. Fourier, for example, claimed no source of inspiration but his own intellect. Hollingsworth, Coverdale maintains, joined the Blithedale experiment not because of his sympathy with their ideals but because they were withdrawing from a world with which he was at odds. In addition to these references, when describing the appearance of the community working in the fields, he calls them "denizens of Grub-street." He further compares them to people straight out of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's sonnet "Pantisocracy," which describes the founding of a new world, and he compares them to "Candide and his motley associates at work in their cabbage-garden," which is a reference to a satirical, philosophical novel by Voltaire who suggests work as an antidote to everything. Finally, Coverdale suggests that "they might have been sworn comrades to Falstaff's ragged regiment," which, of course, is an allusion to William Shakespeare's play, I, Henry IV (III, 64). In addition, in this same paragraph, Coverdale quotes a line of Virgil to Silas Foster. He translates the Latin for Foster but not for the reader. Hawthorne, or the implied author, sees no need to explain Coleridge, Voltaire, Shakespeare, or

Virgil, because he is writing for a well-read, well-educated reader. Elsewhere in the novel there are brief references to the Scottish poet Robert Burns, as well as numerous allusions to mythology and mythological characters. Although a classical education was certainly the rule rather than the exception in the nineteenth century, it is also obvious that even though the "Silas Fosters" of New England could read, they were not the readers for whom Hawthorne was writing.

Through The Blithedale Romance we are able to add yet another trait to our portrait of the male created reader. Hawthorne expects his genteel, well-read reader also to appreciate a good cigar and bottle of wine. Coverdale certainly enjoys both, and when he wishes to create a pleasant, cosy atmosphere he mentions this. Before leaving the comfortable town for the rigors of Blithedale, Coverdale says:

The greater, surely, was my heroism, when, puffing out a final whiff of cigar-smoke, I quitted my cosey pair of bachelor-rooms--with a good fire burning in the grate, and a closet right at hand, where there was still a bottle or two in the champagne-basket, and a residuum of claret in a box, and somewhat of proof in the concavity of a big demijohn--quitted, I say, these comfortable quarters, and plunged into the heart of the pitiless snow-storm, in a quest of a better life.  
(III, 10)

There is irony pouring out of this passage. His "heroism" is demonstrated merely by leaving male human comforts behind. Coverdale associates comfort with a good cigar and a glass of wine, and he is being heroic by leaving these

comforts behind. Surely the implied author is questioning, and wishes his created reader to question, not only Coverdale's conception of "a better life" but also his zeal. The created reader perceives Coverdale's insincerity. Obviously, he cannot take his "good fire" with him, but he could take both his cigars and his wine instead of leaving them behind in his "quest of a better life." How can he really mean that he is going to a better life if he must leave all of his pleasures behind? Coverdale's true feelings are further illustrated through his actions after leaving Blithedale. When he leaves Blithedale and moves into a hotel, he spends all of the first day and most of the second "in the laziest manner possible, in a rocking-chair, inhaling the fragrance of a series of cigars" (III, 147). This, indeed, is his true idea of "a better life." Although Coverdale does not mention actually drinking at this time, he does think about it, for as he looks out of his window he sees that "in two or three places, grape-vines clambered upon trellises, and bore clusters already purple, and promising the richness of Malta or Madeira in their ripened juice" (III, 148). The allusions to Malta and Madeira show that Hawthorne expects his reader not only to know the kinds of wines that come from these areas but also to be able to distinguish taste through memory alone. This is one of the best indications that the implied author is writing to a male reader. What woman--apart from George Sand according

to rumor--in the middle of the nineteenth century would have an intimate knowledge of the benefits of inhaling the "fragrance of a good cigar" or would be able to identify the wines of Malta and Madeira? The scenes of comfort which the implied author depicts appeal to male readers, not to female ones.

Besides these references to the pleasures of smoking and drinking, the implied author, through Miles Coverdale, presents yet another description of a group of men--without the presence of women--enjoying their drink in a saloon. One might almost call it an anti-temperance speech. While waiting for Old Moodie to meet him in a local saloon, Coverdale says, "The more patiently to await him, I lighted a cigar, and establishing myself in a corner, took a quiet, and, by sympathy, a boozy kind of pleasure in the customary life that was going forward" (III, 175). In surveying his surroundings, Coverdale makes the point that "the temperance-men may preach until doom's day" but not be able to persuade men to stop drinking, for "human nature . . . has a naughty instinct that approves of wine, at least, if not strong liquor." There is nothing in Coverdale's description of this saloon, from the pictures on the wall to the "tiny fountain, which threw up its feathery jet," which does not contribute to a scene of contentment and enjoyment. Even the narrator's description of the men in the saloon--a barkeeper artfully mixing a gin-cocktail

and "staunch, old soakers"--accentuates that "agreeable to the Yankee habit, under whatever circumstances, the deportment of all these good fellows, old or young, was decorous and thoroughly correct" (III, 177). Again and again throughout this passage, the emphasis is on the benefits of drinking--"the renewed youth and vigor, the brisk, cheerful sense of things present and to come"--as well as the supposed necessity for the temperance movement to find an adequate substitute. The atmosphere in this passage is that of a contented group of men socializing in their home away from home. This concept of the saloon as the one place where men are safe from the influences of women has remained as a part of our culture even into the present half of the twentieth century. In addition, although the implied author refers to "temperance-men," the temperance movement was developed and led largely by women. Thus, Hawthorne's created reader can see and understand the benefits of a good cigar and bottle of wine, experience the consolation of men in an all-male establishment, and discern that women could destroy this cosy habitat. Only a man would feel this way. Hawthorne is a man writing for a male created reader.

Although The Blithedale Romance gives us a clearer and more detailed picture of Hawthorne's created reader, there is, as we have mentioned earlier, a less clear consensus among the critics as to Hawthorne's intended

theme. Beginning with Frederick Crews' psychosexual analysis in The Sins of the Fathers, where he not only refers to the pornographic ideas in this novel but also suggests that Hawthorne develops the theme of incest, there have been a number of authorities who have proposed that the novel has an underlying sexual interpretation. Allen and Barbara Lefcowitz, for example, go so far as to propose Priscilla as Hawthorne's depiction of a prostitute.<sup>17</sup> However fascinating these conjectural theories may be, we must keep in mind that Hawthorne is writing behind a veil. In "The Custom-House," Hawthorne refers to "the divided segment of the writer's own nature" which his sympathetic reader will recognize and understand. He stresses this by saying that "we may prate of circumstances that lie around us, and even of ourself, but still keep the inmost Me behind its veil." Crews and other critics have attempted to tear aside Hawthorne's veil and argue that Hawthorne shows a deep and disturbing fascination with the subject of human sexuality. Our discussion, however, is based upon Hawthorne's statement that he wishes to "keep the inmost Me behind its veil." Thus, he does not intend his reader to scrutinize the real author's views but to sympathize with and accept the implied

<sup>17</sup> See Crews, Sins of the Fathers, pp. 201 ff. Allen and Barbara Lefcowitz, Baym, and Morgan also take up this point.

author's beliefs. The "veil" must remain intact and in place.

Thus, in The Blithedale Romance, as in The Scarlet Letter and The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne, through the implied author, simply presents the "circumstances that lie around us" for his created reader to consider. These basic circumstances--the role of women in society, the acceptance of authority, the conflict between past and present--do not change in the development of the novels, but the implied author presents them in different lights for the reader's attention. Therefore, through his four main characters--"the self-concentrated Philanthropist; the high-spirited Woman, bruising herself against the narrow limitations of her sex; the weakly maiden, whose tremulous nerves endow her with Sibylline attributes; the Minor Poet, beginning life with strenuous aspirations, which die out with his youthful fervor" (III, 2-3)--brought together in an experiment in communal living, the implied author explores the themes he has introduced in the two previous novels.

The tone of the preface to The Blithedale Romance is very similar to that in the prefaces to the earlier novels. Once again, the created reader is able to detect the irony. Although Hawthorne admits that he has used his experience at Brook Farm as a foundation, he goes on to warn his reader that

his whole treatment of the affair is altogether incidental to the main purpose of the Romance; nor does he put forward the slightest pretensions to illustrate a theory, or elicit a conclusion favorable or otherwise, in respect to Socialism. (III, 1)

However, the created reader knows, as A. N. Kaul says, that Hawthorne means just the opposite, that the romance "is in reality a characteristically modulated projection of the main society-community theme."<sup>18</sup> The founding of the Blithedale community is an attempt to break away from the past and is an echo of the narrator's comment in The House of the Seven Gables on Holgrave's belief "that in this age, more than ever before, the moss-grown and rotten Past is to be torn down, and lifeless institutions to be thrust out of the way, and their dead corpses buried, and everything to begin anew" (II, 179). As Miles Coverdale leaves for Blithedale, he is moving toward "the better life." While riding through the storm, he suggests that the footprints in the snow are the tracks "of an old conventionalism." When his cheery greeting is returned in a churlish manner, Coverdale comments, "This lack of faith in our cordial sympathy, on the traveller's part, was one among the innumerable tokens how difficult a task we had in hand, for the reformation of the

<sup>18</sup> A. N. Kaul, "The Blithedale Romance," in Hawthorne: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. A. N. Kaul (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 158.

world" (III, 12). In order to stress this break with the past, Coverdale continues:

We had left the rusty iron frame-work of society behind us. We had broken through many hindrances that are powerful enough to keep most people on the weary tread-mill of the established system, even while they feel its irksomeness almost as intolerable as we did. (III, 19)

Coverdale equates this attempt to break with the past and establish a new society with the efforts of the Puritans, and the created reader certainly recognizes the parallels between this society and the one described in The Scarlet Letter. The narrator in The Scarlet Letter stresses the importance the Puritans placed upon setting aside a plot of land for a cemetery and one for a prison. Coverdale says to Hollingsworth that he will not "feel as if this were a real, practical, as well as poetical system of human life, until somebody has sanctified it by death." In his next speech, he stresses this by saying, "Would it not be well, even before we have absolute need of it, to fix upon a spot for a cemetery?" (III, 130).

Along with the concept of a cemetery is the image of a prison. Of course, in The Scarlet Letter, the prison is the center of the novel's opening. In that novel it is part of the establishment of Puritan authority. Even though an actual prison is not the focal point of The House of the Seven Gables, the implied author implies that the house is a

prison for both Hepzibah and Clifford Pyncheon. Once again we see how this prison acts as an agent to keep Hepzibah and Clifford tied to the past, as well as acting as an element of established authority--the house as center of the Pyncheon tradition. This connection between society, the past, and a prison is illustrated in The Blithedale Romance through the character of Hollingsworth. All four of the main characters have joined the Blithedale community for different reasons. Through Coverdale, we learn that Hollingsworth intends to build a prison, principally on the grounds of the community itself. Hollingsworth's idea is an obsession. Coverdale describes him as spending most of his free time drawing pictures of his intended structure. Although Hollingsworth's object is "to devote himself and a few disciples to the reform and mental culture of our criminal brethren" (III, 56), the implication of the connection between the new society and a prison is very clear.

Earlier attempts to completely break from the past do not succeed. Hester Prynne is unable to escape into the forest or to remain in England. The mature Holgrave admits that change can only take place slowly and that he will eventually build a house and found a dynasty. So, the Blithedale community fails also. Coverdale begins to long for the patina of age. He says,

But I do long for the cottages to be built, that  
the creeping plants may begin to run over them,

and the moss to gather on the walls, and the trees--which we will set out--to cover them with a breadth of shadow. This spick and span novelty does not quite suit my taste. (III, 129-30)

Since the implied author is writing for an understanding reader, it comes as no surprise that soon after Coverdale utters these words the community begins to break apart. The new society is as much affected and imprisoned by the old values as the society which has been left behind. This nineteenth century attempt at social reform through brotherhood has failed. Zenobia sums it up, saying, "I am weary of this place, and sick to death of playing at philanthropy and progress. Of all varieties of mock-life, we have surely blundered into the very emptiest mockery, in our effort to establish the one true system" (III, 227).

The implied author has Zenobia using phrases such as "playing at philanthropy and progress" and "blundered into the very emptiest mockery." No truly workable system can be established through blundering or playing. The implied author is suggesting a lack of serious purpose or proper thought. A system founded on such a basis can only fail. Zenobia continues, "It was, indeed a foolish dream! Yet it gave us some pleasant summer days, and bright hopes, while they lasted" (III, 227). Thus, this new society, this attempt to break from the past, is only "a foolish dream." The created reader will recognize the wishes of the mature Holgrave: "The happy man inevitably confines himself within

ancient limits. I have a presentiment, that, hereafter, it will be my lot . . . to conform myself to laws, and the peaceful practice of society" (II, 306-307). Social reform cannot be achieved through a sudden severing of all ties with the past. Although Coverdale equates the Blithedale community with that of the Puritans, the comparison does not extend very far. The two groups did found new communities, and they both felt the need to establish a cemetery and a prison. To be specific, however, only Hollingsworth wanted to turn the Blithedale community into a prison, and only Coverdale felt the need for a cemetery. But the Puritans did not fail as the Blithedale community did. The Puritans did not sever all ties with the past; they retained many of the old laws and traditions. Even though change was very slow, change did occur. The Puritans did not fail, for unlike the Blithedale community, they did not blunder into "playing at philanthropy." The created reader senses, thus, that both Coverdale and Zenobia are right.

Along with the implied author's concern with the conflict between past and present, the created reader will also quickly recognize the author's anxiety about the related question of authority. The philanthropist Hollingsworth is the character who most represents authority in The Blithedale Romance. Although Coverdale estimates Hollingsworth's age to be about thirty, he also says he looks several years older. All of the adjectives used to describe this man

suggest strength and power. He has "a shaggy head," "heavy brow," "dark complexion," "abundant beard," and "rude strength with which his features seemed to have been hammered out of iron, rather than chiselled or moulded from any finer or softer material" (III, 28). Coverdale goes on to point out that although Hollingsworth is not tall, his figure is "massive and brawny, and well befitting his original occupation . . . that of a blacksmith." Hollingsworth has no "external polish" but is more like a "tolerably educated bear." Coverdale concludes his description saying that although "there was a tenderness in his voice, eyes, mouth, in his gesture, and in every indescribable manifestation, which few men could resist, and no woman," Hollingsworth could also look "stern and reproachful" (III, 28). Coverdale recognizes in Hollingsworth qualities "which few men could resist, and no woman." Certainly both Zenobia and Priscilla, as well as Coverdale, are drawn to him. Hollingsworth, however, points out how imperceptive Coverdale is by replying,

And you call me tender! . . . I should rather say, that the most marked trait in my character is an inflexible severity of purpose. Mortal man has no right to be so inflexible, as it is my nature and necessity to be. (III, 43)

Hollingsworth's use of the phrase "inflexible severity" to describe himself brings out the particular quality which the implied author has emphasized so often in his

representation of authority. Of course, Coverdale comes to accept Hollingsworth's judgment of his own character and when he characterizes Hollingsworth as having "no heart, no sympathy, no reason, no conscience" (III, 70), Hawthorne's created reader will recognize qualities heard before in the descriptions of the Puritans of Salem as well as the Pyncheon ancestors.

There is a resolution to the question of authority. However, as Hollingsworth is looked upon as a "father" figure, the resolution in this novel involves destruction rather than acceptance. Miles Coverdale describes Hollingsworth as "all that an artist could desire for that grim portrait of a Puritan magistrate" (III, 214), and he yearns--at the beginning of the novel--to be accepted by Hollingsworth. Hollingsworth becomes a "father" figure for Coverdale in the sense that he represents male authority. Although Coverdale sometimes describes Hollingsworth in tones of admiration, he and Hollingsworth ultimately reject each other. Hollingsworth is so obsessed with the value of his own project that he is unable to befriend anyone who does not agree with him. He says to Coverdale, "Be with me, . . . or be against me! There is no third choice for you" (III, 135). Thus, Coverdale, who cannot "be with" Hollingsworth and feels he cannot remain at Blithedale "against" him, leaves the community and returns to town. If Coverdale is mature, he does not need a "father."

As Coverdale mentions early in the novel, both Zenobia and Priscilla are drawn toward Hollingsworth. The implied author creates a stark contrast between the strong, capable, self-confident Zenobia and the weak, childish, trusting Priscilla. Yet both these women reach out to the authority represented by Hollingsworth. Zenobia is the epitome of the nineteenth century feminist, yet in the chapter entitled "Eliot's Pulpit," she endures a tirade from Hollingsworth which Coverdale says has "the intensity of masculine egotism. It centered everything in itself, and deprived woman of her very soul, her inexpressible and unfathomable all, to make it a mere incident in the great sum of man" (III, 123). But, instead of replying strongly to Hollingsworth's words, Zenobia capitulates to him, saying, "I, at least, have deep cause to think you right. Let man be but manly and godlike, and woman is only too ready to become to him what you say!" (III, 124). In spite of her capitulation, however, Zenobia is rejected by Hollingsworth, who chooses instead the clinging Priscilla. Hawthorne's male created reader does not find this unusual, for however much Zenobia is willing to debase herself in order to win Hollingsworth's love, she is still a challenge to the male authority figure. Priscilla, on the other hand, looks at Hollingsworth with "entire acquiescence and unquestioning faith, happy in its completeness." Coverdale says:

She seemed to take the sentiment from his lips into her heart, and brood over it in perfect content. The very woman whom he [Hollingsworth] pictured--the gentle parasite, the soft reflection of a more powerful existence--sat there at his feet. (III, 123)

Priscilla says nothing but meekly accepts everything that Hollingsworth says. She is content to be "the gentle parasite" and to remain a "soft reflection of a more powerful [Hollingsworth's] existence." Naturally a figure whose most marked trait is his "inflexible severity" will choose a woman whose outstanding trait is her passivity. Although the male created reader understands Hollingsworth's rejection of Zenobia and his acceptance of Priscilla, the reader does not sympathize closely with Hollingsworth's basic qualities. Hollingsworth has too many failings to be an agreeable authority figure.

It is through Zenobia, however, that the implied author points out the failings of this man. She says to Hollingsworth, "I see it now! I am awake, disenchanted, disenthralled! Self, self, self!" (III, 218). Hollingsworth is concerned only with himself. It is his "self" to which Zenobia refers. She goes on to charge him with aiming a "death blow" and destroying the Blithedale community, with tossing Coverdale aside because he would not be a slave, with taking her in and then throwing her away, "a broken tool," and, finally, with being ready to sacrifice Priscilla for his own ends. As the created reader knows, all of

Zenobia's charges are true, and the reader understands that this is the effect of "inflexible" authority. What makes the resolution of the authority question in this novel so different, however, is that rather than a final acceptance of the necessity for authority, we see the destruction of the authority figure himself. When Coverdale sees Hollingsworth some years later, he says,

I observed in Hollingsworth's face a depressed and melancholy look, that seemed habitual; the powerfully built man showed a self-distrustful weakness, and a childlike, or childish, tendency to press close, and closer still, to the side of the slender woman whose arm was within his.  
(III, 242)

Hollingsworth is a broken man, no longer interested in building his prison but imprisoned by guilt arising from Zenobia's suicide and looking for strength and comfort in the "deep, submissive, unquestioning reverence" of Priscilla. The authority figure must be destroyed, not because he represents authority, but because he is an "inflexible" authority. The created reader accepts the concept and the necessity for authority, but it must be a type of authority which can adapt to change.

Another issue which the initiated, or created, reader also accepts is the implied author's view concerning intelligent, speculative women. We have seen how the implied author becomes unsympathetic toward Hester Prynne in The Scarlet Letter. He makes the very strong point

that, as Hester begins to think for herself, she becomes less passionate and loving. In other words, Hester becomes less feminine. Phoebe Pyncheon, however, is the ultimate in femininity. She is young, happy, and fulfilled by performing the most mundane household tasks. In The Blithedale Romance, Zenobia and Priscilla are as starkly contrasted as are Hester and Phoebe, but the implied author wants his reader to move from a simple conception of the qualities which make the ideal woman to the broader concerns of a woman's relationship to society, her relationship to other women, and her own self-fulfillment.

Terence Matheson maintains that Zenobia represents feminism and Priscilla femininity.<sup>19</sup> Whether or not the implied author wishes his reader to see Zenobia as only a feminist and Priscilla as femininity is not really an important issue. The created reader is already aware of the basic concepts and is able, thus, to follow the implied author's argument that the real concern is the "narrow limitations" within which a woman exists. The emphasis can be as much on the ways in which Zenobia and Priscilla are alike as on the ways in which they are different. Perhaps the author is as interested in their similarities as in their differences.

<sup>19</sup> Matheson's article, cited above, discusses this point.

The Blithedale community is an attempt to set up a new society, and a major consideration must be the roles which men and women are to play in this new society. In the discussion over a division of labor--certainly the first one encountered by any such group--Zenobia says that at the beginning it is necessary to keep the traditional division. "We of the softer sex," says Zenobia, "will take the domestic and indoor part of the business, as a matter of course" (III, 16). She goes on, however, to say that "by-and-by, perhaps, when our individual adaptations begin to develop themselves, it may be that some of us, who wear the petticoat, will go afield, and leave the weaker brethren to take our places in the kitchen" (III, 16). The reader is reminded of Zenobia's suggestion of a future reversal of roles later in the novel when Coverdale is ill. During his illness, Coverdale is taken care of by Hollingsworth, and this leads Coverdale to observe that

there was something of the woman moulded into the great, stalwart frame of Hollingsworth; nor was he ashamed of it, as men often are of what is best in them, nor seemed ever to know that there was such a soft place in his heart. (III, 42)

Hollingsworth, indeed, could take his place in the kitchen while Zenobia worked in the fields. Although the community never gets to the point at which this actually happens, the implied author does go on to demonstrate that not all

"feminine" women are successful domestically. Nina Baym says that Zenobia "is a depiction of the eternal feminine as earthy, maternal, domestic, natural, sensual, brilliant, loving, and demanding," and that she "is described mainly in images of softness, radiance, warmth, and health, none of which are even slightly ambivalent or ambiguous in their emotional import."<sup>20</sup> Even though Baym refers to Zenobia as "domestic," Miles Coverdale comments that during his illness "Zenobia brought me my gruel, every day, made by her own hands (not very skilfully, if the truth be told,) and, whenever I seemed inclined to converse, would sit by my bedside" (III, 43-44). He continues a few paragraphs later:

Her gruel was very wretched stuff, with almost invariably the smell of pine-smoke upon it, like the evil taste that is said to mix itself up with a witch's best concocted dainties. Why could not she have allowed one of the other women to take the gruel in charge? Whatever else might be her gifts, Nature certainly never intended Zenobia for a cook. (III, 48)

Thus, while Zenobia might be domestic in the sense that she knows what to do in the kitchen, the demonstration of her skills seems to contain an echo of Hepzibah Pyncheon rather than that of Phoebe.

Despite Zenobia's domestic ineptness, Miles Coverdale experiences a sexual attraction for her. He describes her

<sup>20</sup> Baym, p. 553.

as "truly a magnificent woman. The homely simplicity of her dress could not conceal, nor scarcely diminish, the queenliness of her presence. The image of her form and face should have been multiplied all over the earth" (III, 44). He even speculates, as we shall see later, about the extent of her sexual knowledge. However, at the end of the novel, Coverdale says that he is in love with Priscilla. Unfortunately, Coverdale has the misfortune to be attracted to two women who not only do not return his feelings but also are failures at domesticity. Priscilla is even more inept in the kitchen than Zenobia. Coverdale comments that

she met with terrible mishaps in her efforts to milk a cow; she let the poultry into the garden; she generally spoilt whatever part of the dinner she took charge; she broke crockery; she dropt our biggest pitcher into the well; and--except with her needle, and those little wooden instruments for purse-making--was as unserviceable a member of society as any young lady in the land. (III, 74)

Although both women have their domestic difficulties, there is a difference in the implied author's attitude toward them. The implied author's tone is certainly more critical of Zenobia's efforts and more forgiving of the youthful Priscilla's. Coverdale says, "Yet everybody was kind to Priscilla; everybody loved her and laughed at her to her face, and did not laugh behind her back; everybody would have given her half of his last crust, or the bigger share of his plum-cake" (III, 74). Priscilla is young, appears helpless, and, thus, appeals to everyone's protective

instincts--except Zenobia's. On the other hand, Zenobia's failure as a cook only brings out Coverdale's sarcastic, unforgiving comparison of her gruel to a witch's brew.

Another element of the traditional role of women involves a possible conflict between the expectation of society and the woman's own sense of self-fulfillment. In the two earlier novels, the implied author makes a very strong point that there is very little for a woman to do outside the home. In fact, as Hester Prynne so ably demonstrates in The Scarlet Letter, the easiest way for a woman to earn a living is through needlework--in itself a "domestic" occupation. The created reader agrees with the traditional view that the only real place for a woman is at the side of a man, for he has seen in The House of the Seven Gables how love and marriage transform both sexes. Coverdale speculates that Zenobia could have achieved her freedom of behavior only as a result of a previous marriage. He says, "the freedom of her deportment . . . was not exactly maidenlike. . . . Her unconstrained and inevitable manifestation, I said often to myself, was that of a woman to whom wedlock has thrown wide the gates of mystery" (III, 47). Of course, Coverdale's use of the phrase "the gates of mystery" is a reference to sexual intercourse. Coverdale maintains that Zenobia could have achieved her "unconstrained" behavior only through sexual knowledge gained in marriage. Even though these words are tinged

with jealousy and disappointment--Zenobia will not tell him about her past--Coverdale is also simply stating the traditional masculine viewpoint, as well as that of society in general, that a woman's true fulfillment must be within the bounds of marriage. Zenobia, however, asks Coverdale one day when they are watching Priscilla,

Did you ever see a happy woman in your life? . . . How can she be happy, after discovering that fate has assigned her but one single event, which she must contrive to make the substance of her whole life? A man has his choice of innumerable events. (III, 60)

Zenobia, thus, is emphasizing the lack of choice for women. Marriage is not the means through which Zenobia believes women achieve the freedom that Coverdale admires in her. As far as Zenobia is concerned, a grown woman cannot be a happy woman. Coverdale replies with an answer that the created reader would agree with until he hears Zenobia's reply. He says, "A woman, I suppose, . . . by constant repetition of her one event may compensate for the lack of variety" (III, 60). Zenobia, of course, treats that response with the contempt which it deserves and simply replies, "Indeed!" Through Zenobia's ironic "Indeed," the created reader realizes that Coverdale may not have the answer after all.

In addition to Coverdale's belief that Zenobia could have achieved her free behavior only through marriage, he

also speaks disparagingly of Zenobia's attempt at creativity as "her poor little stories and tracts"; and he goes on to comment that "it was only the lack of a fitter avenue that drove her to seek development in literature" (III, 44). The implied author's criticism of Zenobia's efforts to write comes as no surprise to his reader, for as Raymona Hull comments, "Hawthorne's resentment of the popularity of 'scribbling women' is well known." Hull continues, "His reaction . . . no doubt came partly as a result of the frustration that any serious writer feels after years of inadequate compensation for his work."<sup>21</sup> Certainly the writers who were making the most money during the mid nineteenth century were women writing for women. Hull says that Hawthorne "objected to the shoddy sentimentality, superficial optimism and bad taste of these women writers."<sup>22</sup> Hawthorne believed that the woman's true place was in the home. Hull recounts an incident in which Sophia Hawthorne was approached for a contribution by Atlantic Monthly. Hawthorne refused for her and wrote the next day to a friend that

<sup>21</sup> Raymona F. Hull, "'Scribbling' Females and Serious Males: Hawthorne's Comments from Abroad on Some American Authors," in NHJ, 1975, ed. C. E. Frazer Clark (Englewood, Colo.: Microcard Editions Books, 1975), p. 35. Hull discusses a number of women authors whom Hawthorne particularly disliked.

<sup>22</sup> Hull, p. 35.

I don't know whether I can tolerate a literary rival at bed and board, there would probably be a new chapter in the "Quarrels of Authors." However, I make myself at ease on that score, as she positively refuses to be famous, and contents herself with being the best wife and mother in the world.<sup>23</sup>

Unlike Sophia, Zenobia is not married. Thus, it is "the lack of this fitter avenue" which causes her to turn to writing. Zenobia would have been a better orator than writer or should have gone on the stage. However, these are no more a "fitter avenue" for her, or any other woman, than writing is considered to be by the implied author. The created reader agrees with the implied author that the true woman is at home producing children rather than writing books.

We constantly return to the concept that although women are bound by the limitations of society, they have not yet discovered an acceptable means of breaking these bonds. Zenobia says,

You let us write a little, it is true, on a limited range of subjects. But the pen is not for a woman. Her power is too natural and immediate. It is with the living voice, alone, that she can compel the world to recognize the light of her intellect and depth of her heart. (III, 120)

Even Zenobia agrees with Coverdale and the created reader that writing is not a fit avenue for women.

<sup>23</sup> As quoted in Hull, p. 53.

It is through Hollingsworth, however, that the strongest statement of the traditional role of women is made. The "true place and character" of a woman "is at man's side," "a sympathizer," and "an unquestioning believer" (III, 122). Hollingsworth further says that "all the separate action of woman is, and ever has been, and always shall be, false, foolish, vain, destructive of her own best and holiest qualities, void of every good effect and productive of intolerable mischiefs!" (III, 122). Hollingsworth concludes his argument by calling a woman without a man "a monster," and says that if women attempt to stand alone, they should be scourged back "within their proper bounds" (III, 123). We must be careful to remember that Hollingsworth is "too inflexible," and therefore his word should not be taken as the whole truth. However, the "true woman" knows her place and never attempts to move from it. As we have mentioned earlier, both Zenobia and Priscilla react in the same way to this statement. Priscilla's calm, passive acceptance comes as no surprise to either the initiated or the uninitiated reader, for the implied author has always stressed Priscilla's passivity. More significantly, although Coverdale says he is surprised by Zenobia's passive reaction, the created reader is not.

Zenobia and Priscilla are both enslaved by the conventions of society. Nancy Joyner, in "Bondage in Blithedale," maintains that "Hawthorne uses the terms 'bondage' and

'slave' with such care and frequency in The Blithedale Romance that he seems to make the point that individual freedom is limited by the individual's willingness to be bound."<sup>24</sup> Priscilla never questions her enslavement. In fact, she not only allows herself to be used by Westervelt as the Veiled Lady, but she also allows Zenobia and Hollingsworth to use her. Coverdale comments that, by the time Priscilla had gone to Blithedale, she "was enthralled in an intolerable bondage, from which she must either free herself or perish. She deemed herself safest near Zenobia into whose heart she hoped to nestle" (III, 190). Although Priscilla views Zenobia as her means to freedom, she is still unable to achieve this, for ironically she begins by throwing herself at Zenobia's feet. Priscilla behaves in the only manner she knows. Thus, by sitting at Zenobia's feet or by following her meekly around, she is not only repeating a set pattern, but, at the same time, she is alienating the one person who could help her. Priscilla has neither the strength nor the knowledge to break the chains of her enslavement.

Zenobia, who has both the intelligence and the strength, fails to use them. She recognizes the limitations which society places upon her and, in fact, has written

<sup>24</sup> Nancy Joyner, "Bondage in Blithedale," in NHJ, 1975, ed. C. E. Frazer Clark (Englewood, Colo.: Microcard Editions Books, 1975), p. 231.

tracts and made speeches about these issues. Nevertheless, instead of reacting to Hollingsworth's egotistical statement with anger, she reacts with tears of grief. Sadly, she finds that despite all she has said about feeling throttled by "the mistrust and disapproval of the vast bulk of society" (III, 120), she is still willing to be bound by that same society because of her love for Hollingsworth. However, this is more an outward, rather than a total, acceptance, for these are tears of grief. Because she is in a position to question what is happening to her in a way that Priscilla is not, Zenobia is unable to reconcile her feelings of jealousy toward Priscilla, her helping Westervelt to use Priscilla as the Veiled Lady, and her capitulation to Hollingsworth despite all she has believed about the worth of women in society. In voicing her guilt to Hollingsworth, she says:

I am a woman--with every fault, it may be, that a woman ever had, weak, vain, unprincipled, (like most of my sex; for our virtues, when we have any, are merely impulsive and intuitive,) passionate, too, and pursuing my foolish and unattainable ends, by indirect and cunning, through absurdly chosen means, as an hereditary bond-slave must--false, moreover, to the whole circle of good, in my reckless truth to the little good I saw before me--but still a woman. (III, 217-18)

Zenobia calls herself "weak, vain, and unprincipled" because she allowed herself to give up all she believed in; in short, she was willing to remain bound. As "an hereditary

bond-slave," she has become an example of all she has tried to change. Neither her capitulation to the traditional values of society nor her tragic death therefore come as a surprise to the created reader.

Hawthorne's created reader realizes that neither Zenobia nor Priscilla achieves her freedom. However, the created reader would grasp the implied author's intention to show that although the two women have the same basic ends and they both accept the limitations of traditional society, Priscilla is more successful. The quiet, submissive, unquestionably revent Priscilla has the broken Hollingsworth leaning on her. Coverdale describes her with "a veiled happiness in her fair and quiet countenance" (III, 242). The word "veiled" could be a pun on Priscilla's former occupation as the "veiled lady." However, Priscilla is still happy. Zenobia, on the other hand, gives up her principles. Finding herself rejected by the man for whom she is willing to make that sacrifice and full of self-loathing, she commits suicide by drowning. The created reader accepts Priscilla's quiet happiness and understands Zenobia's tragic end as the only way she could see to solve her problem.

Through our analysis of The Blithedale Romance, the picture of Hawthorne's created reader has become more clearly defined. This middle-aged male prefers living in town to the rigors of the country, although he finds himself

drawn to the peace and freedom of the countryside. His genteel background is shown through the implied author's emphasis on the uncouth behavior of his rural brethren, as well as on the longing for stylish, fashionable clothing. Dressing carefully for a dinner party in town is much more to his taste than wearing rough clothing to a simple rural meal. Our genteel male reader relishes his comfortable life, sitting in front of an excellent fire with a drink in one hand and a good cigar in the other.

Because Hawthorne's created reader is a well-educated, thinking man, he is able to question the conventions of society and see a need for change. However, this reader's maturity and, to a certain extent, his background cause him to accept that reform and change must come about slowly after careful thought. The reader's more traditional background compels him to view authority as a necessity; but it must be a flexible authority, not a rigid, inflexible power. Although the reader has come to accept that women can be both intelligent and passionate and that such women can perceive the limitations and bondage of society, he still clings to the view that the ideal woman prefers her position by the side of a man. There is the prospect, however, that society is changing.

As the widely varied critical comments demonstrate, The Blithedale Romance is full of pitfalls for the unwary or the uninitiated reader. There is no doubt that the novel

can be read and interpreted in a number of different ways. As we have seen, however, Hawthorne's created reader, because of the established sympathy between reader and implied author, has no difficulty following the simple themes of this novel.

## Chapter IV

### The Marble Faun: Hawthorne's Reader as Artist

The Marble Faun, Nathaniel Hawthorne's last completed novel, is, like The Blithedale Romance, a narrative concerning a quartet of characters on a quest. These four characters--two male, Kenyon and Donatello, and two female, Miriam and Hilda--do not set out to found a future society but, instead, to carry their quest into the Old World of Italy, past and present. Henry James wrote in 1879 that

the book was a great success, and it has probably become the most popular of Hawthorne's four novels. It is part of the intellectual equipment of the Anglo-Saxon visitor to Rome, and is read by every English-speaking traveller who arrives there, who has been there, or who expects to go.<sup>1</sup>

However, James, joined by other critics, goes on to criticize Hawthorne's use of Italy as a background.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, more recent critics maintain that Rome and its art

<sup>1</sup> Henry James, Hawthorne (London, 1879; rpt. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1956), p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> James, pp. 125-34; Harry Levin, "Statues from Italy: The Marble Faun," in Hawthorne Centenary Essays, ed. Roy Harvey Pearce (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1964), pp. 119-40.

are central to the theme. Graham Clarke in an essay in Nathaniel Hawthorne: New Critical Essays says that "the extent to which Hawthorne's romance is both concerned with and addresses itself to art should alert us to the very particular nature of Rome as the setting of the work."<sup>3</sup>

In addition to their disagreement concerning Hawthorne's use of art, critics also vary widely in their interpretations of the central theme of The Marble Faun. By concentrating mainly upon thematic or symbolic elements, many authorities tend to place a theological (the Fortunate Fall),<sup>4</sup> philosophical,<sup>5</sup> or psychological<sup>6</sup> construction upon the events of the novel. Harry Levin, on the other hand, considering the novel as a whole, calls The Marble Faun "an

<sup>3</sup> Graham Clarke, "To Transform and Transfigure: The Aesthetic Play of Hawthorne's The Marble Faun," in Nathaniel Hawthorne: New Critical Essays, ed. A. Robert Lee (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble Books, 1982), p. 138; see also Paul Brodtkorb, "Art Allegory in The Marble Faun," PMLA, 77 (1962), 254-67; Rita K. Gollin, "Painting and Character in The Marble Faun," Hawthorne's Faery Land, AL, 36 (1964-65), 271-87.

<sup>4</sup> See Hyatt H. Waggoner, Hawthorne: A Critical Study (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1955); and R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1955).

<sup>5</sup> See Richard Harter Fogle, Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and the Dark (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1952); and Harry Levin, The Power of Blackness (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967).

<sup>6</sup> See Nina Baym, "The Marble Faun: Hawthorne's Elegy for Art," NEQ, 44 (1971), 355-76; and Frederick C. Crews, The Sins of the Fathers: Hawthorne's Psychological Themes (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), 213-39.

educational, a pedagogical novel, a Bildungsroman or novel of formation."<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, it is Frederick Crews in The Sins of the Fathers who best recapitulates the numerous constructions which readers can place on this novel. Emphasizing that by choice of passages the reader can vary his interpretation from one extreme to another, Crews says:

depending on the passages he cares to stress, the reader can see The Marble Faun as a Rousseauistic tract about man's decline from a golden age or an Emersonian tract about man's ascent to the ideal; as an attack on Roman Catholicism or a prelude to conversion; as a work of homage to Western history or a declaration of independence from it; as a hymn to America or a satire on its moral fastidiousness; as an allegory of artistic truth or yet another indictment of the creative imagination; as a tribute to feminine purity or a muted plea against sexual hypocrisy. Each irresolute theme is eventually submerged in gloomy ambivalence.<sup>8</sup>

There is no doubt that all of these themes are present; but this does not mean that the novel is "confused and self-contradictory," as Baym asserts.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, the possibility of reading the novel in these many different ways paradoxically illustrates a unifying motif. In the chapter entitled "The Emptiness of Picture-Galleries," the narrator says that

<sup>7</sup> Levin, p. 90.

<sup>8</sup> Crews, p. 215.

<sup>9</sup> Baym, p. 335.

a picture, however admirable the painter's art, and wonderful his power, requires of the spectator a surrender of himself, in due proportion with the miracle which has been wrought. . . . There is always the necessity of helping out the painter's art with your own resources of sensibility and imagination. (IV, 355)

Thus, if a work of art can be properly interpreted by someone with a "gifted simplicity of vision," one can see that the implied author intends that his work of art--the novel or romance--be equated with that of a painter or sculptor. The reader and the spectator must bring the same qualities and attitudes to a work of art, whether it is a painting or a novel. The implied author thus makes the point that a novel and a painting can be interpreted in many different ways. He goes on:

Not that these qualities shall really add anything to what the master has effected; but they must be put so entirely under his controul [sic] and work along with him to such an extent, that in a different mood (when you are cold and critical, instead of sympathetic) you will be apt to fancy that the loftier merits of the picture were of your own dreaming, not of his creating. (IV, 335)

Thus, as the implied author suggests, and as Crews has demonstrated earlier, a novel or work of art can be interpreted in many different ways. But the "sympathetic," perceptive reader who has a "gifted simplicity of vision" will be able to follow the true theme which the author or artist intends.

Although there are not as many concrete details about the created reader in The Marble Faun as there are in The Blithedale Romance, there is enough information to round out and reinforce the picture of the genteel, middle-aged, male reader with traditional values that we find in the previous three novels. In The House of the Seven Gables and The Blithedale Romance, the implied author creates characters with artistic talents. Holgrave, the daguerreotypist in The House of the Seven Gables, has come to his present occupation after trying a number of different occupations. Even though the implied author makes very few comments concerning Holgrave's artistic talent, the reader is given the impression that he is little more than a skilled craftsman. Holgrave says to Phoebe Pyncheon that he makes "pictures out of sunshine" and that this sunshine "actually brings out the secret character with a truth that no painter would ever venture upon, even could he detect it" (II, 91). Although the narrator refers to Holgrave as an artist, he also emphasizes that this particular phase of his career is no more important to him than any other. On the other hand, Miles Coverdale in The Blithedale Romance is described as a minor poet. Although Coverdale's art is more creative than Holgrave's, the implied author emphasizes Coverdale's failure both through Coverdale's own admission and Zenobia's sarcastic taunting. Having introduced the reader to Holgrave, the daguerreotypist, and Coverdale, the minor poet,

the implied author guides the created reader toward a deeper examination of the artistic process through Kenyon, Miriam, and Hilda in The Marble Faun. This does not mean that the sympathetic created reader must, in fact, be an artist; but he must have an understanding and knowledge of art in order to follow the argument which the implied author presents. Through an analysis of The Marble Faun, we shall see that the implied author assumes that the created reader has such knowledge.

The narrative tone of The Marble Faun is much more distant than that of either The House of the Seven Gables or The Blithedale Romance. Miles Coverdale, in The Blithedale Romance, is not only an observer but also a participant in the action. In The Marble Faun the narrator is Olympian. The implied author thus returns to the position of observer and commentator that he assumed in The Scarlet Letter and in the majority of The House of the Seven Gables. The opening passages are revealing. The intimate tone of the narrator of The House of the Seven Gables when he says, "On my occasional visits to the town aforesaid, I seldom failed to turn down Pyncheon Street" (II, 5), is similar to Miles Coverdale's opening to The Blithedale Romance when he says, "The evening before my departure for Blithedale, I was returning to my bachelor apartments" (III, 5). In contrast, the narrator of The Marble Faun opens with a more formal statement, "Four individuals, in whose fortunes we should be glad to

interest the reader, happened to be standing in one of the saloons of the sculpture gallery, in the Capitol, at Rome" (IV, 5). Kenneth Dauber comments that "the narrator's polite tones suggest a certain decorous separation from the action. Together, reader and writer then apply themselves to overcoming the separation, as they observe a story being played out on a scene Hawthorne now begins to set."<sup>10</sup>

Dauber goes on to suggest that because the narrator then describes the objects and details of the scene, he sets the tone for the rest of the novel. Thus content becomes less important than form. This makes "the voice of the teller of The Marble Faun," says Dauber, "the voice not of a creator, but of a critic, from the very first paragraph interpreting the novel."<sup>11</sup> There is no doubt that the implied author sets himself up as an art critic. For example, in the chapter "The Emptiness of Picture-Galleries," the narrator says, "The mighty Italian Masters, as you deem them, were not human, nor addressed their works to human sympathies, but to a false intellectual taste, which they themselves were the first to create" (IV, 336). Certainly this is strong criticism from a narrator, and one must agree that in this novel the narrator does serve as art critic. The

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth Dauber, Rediscovering Hawthorne (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977), p. 196.

<sup>11</sup> Dauber, p. 197.

implied author's return to a more distant narrative tone allows him to comment upon art; and, thus, the sympathetic created reader, reacting to the narrator's remarks, also becomes an art critic.

Although the narrator's distant tone in The Marble Faun is not totally different from that of Hawthorne's other novels, there is an aspect of his tone apart from that of art critic which does set this novel apart. As many critics have pointed out, a number of the descriptive passages in The Marble Faun read like those taken from a guide book. There are, in fact, numerous examples of passages in which a seasoned traveler will hear echoes of Thomas Cook's well-known guide book. For example, when describing Donatello's walk to meet Miriam at the Villa Borghese, the narrator says,

The entrance to these grounds . . . is just outside of the Porta del Popolo. Passing beneath that not very impressive specimen of Michel Angelo's architecture, a minute's walk will transport the visitor from the small, uneasy lava-stones of the Roman pavement into broad, gravelled carriage-drives. (IV, 70)

The tone is not only informative but also familiar. In the passage which describes the walk the four characters take through central Rome, the narrator says, "On the left of the Piazza of the Campidoglio, as you face cityward, and at the head of the long and stately flight of steps, descending from the Capitoline Hill to the level of lower Rome, there

is a narrow lane or passage" (IV, 167). Notice that the narrator directly addresses the reader with the words "as you face." Another example of the narrator's guidebook language is illustrated in the passages describing Kenyon's and Donatello's journey from Monte Beni back to Rome. He says, "Passing through the gateway of this same little town, (challenged only by those watchful sentinels, the pigeons,) we find ourselves in a long, narrow street, paved from side to side with flag-stones, in the old Roman fashion" (IV, 293). As in the previous passages quoted, it is as though the narrator takes the reader by the hand or arm as "we find ourselves" moving from one place to another.

It is very easy to understand why tourists to Italy often used The Marble Faun as a guide book. Kenneth Dauber maintains that "Hawthorne paints the landscape." Commenting that Hawthorne does exactly what Roland Barthes states in Mythologies that most guide books do, Dauber continues, "Here is the picturesque masquerading as observation, a description neither of nature nor culture, but of a humanized geography on the one hand, a naturalized civilization on the other."<sup>12</sup> Added to Dauber's adverse comments and those of other critics, who imply criticism by referring to the novel's use as a guide book, is a strong statement by Jeffrey Myers, in Painting and the Novel, who says that The

<sup>12</sup> Dauber, p. 215.

Marble Faun "reads like Edgar Poe lost in an endless museum."<sup>13</sup> Despite his adverse comments, however, Kenneth Dauber does state a very strong point in favor of these Baedekeresque passages. He says that "the Cook's tour through places of interest in Rome in successive chapters in the first half of The Marble Faun and places in Tuscany in the second gives the book its most consistent structure."<sup>14</sup> Although one can agree with Dauber that the descriptive passages do provide structure for the novel, there is, perhaps, yet another reason for including these descriptive passages. Jonathan Auerbach comments that "Hawthorne is not simply a walking guidebook, however; his descriptions serve as exercises for both author and reader meant to sharpen the powers of perception."<sup>15</sup> Thus, these graphic passages provide a structure for the novel as well as a means for the reader to sharpen his perceptive powers. In addition, the familiar direct address to the reader in these passages has the same effect the narrator achieves in The House of the Seven Gables when the reader stands beside the narrator watching the dead Judge Pyncheon. Thus, the created reader,

<sup>13</sup> Jeffrey Myers, Painting and the Novel (Manchester, Eng.: Manchester Univ. Press, 1975), p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Dauber, pp. 217-18.

<sup>15</sup> Jonathan Auerbach, "Executing the Model: Painting, Sculpture, and Romance-Writing in Hawthorne's The Marble Faun," ELH, 47 (1980), p. 116.

rather than just being presented with "humanized geography" and "naturalized civilization," is actually drawn into the scenes and made a participant instead of a mere observer.

Even though the narrator of The Marble Faun is omniscient, the implied author has his reasons for not telling his narrator, or allowing his narrator to tell the reader, everything about all of the characters. In other words, the narrator presents a number of possible answers or interpretations for a particular situation without giving a strong indication as to which interpretation is the "correct one." For example, the narrator says,

There were many stories about Miriam's origin and previous life, some of which had a very probable air, while others were evidently wild and romantic fables. We cite a few, leaving the reader to designate them either under the probable, or the romantic head. (IV, 22)

Then the narrator proceeds to suggest five possibilities: she "was the daughter and heiress of a great Jewish banker"; "a German princess"; "the offspring of a Southern American planter"; "the lady of an English nobleman," who "had thrown aside the splendour of her rank"; and "the daughter of a merchant or financier, who had been ruined in a great commercial crisis" (IV, 23). Although the narrator says that he intends to leave the reader to decide which of the suggestions are more plausible, the stories seem to range in the order of the probable to the romantic. One clue

provided by the implied author might rank his explanations in that way. Along with the mystery about Miriam's background, the implied author also presents a mystery concerning the identity of the figure that accosts Miriam during her visit to the catacombs. The implied author, through the narrator, suggests that the specter could be "a Roman beggar," "a thief of the city, a robber of the Campagna, a political offender," "an assassin," or "a lunatic." All of these explanations, as the narrator points out, are within "the limits of probability" (IV, 35). A final, but probably the best mystery concerns the nature of Donatello's ears. After the narrator's description as to how closely Donatello resembles the statue of the Faun of Praxiteles, Miriam says, "Donatello, . . . do not leave us in this perplexity! Shake aside those brown curls, my friend, and let us see whether this marvellous resemblance extends to the very tips of the ears" (IV, 12). Donatello refuses to give a specific answer, and the question of whether or not Donatello's ears are furry and pointed remains a mystery forever.

Although the technique of presenting alternate interpretations for a particular incident is not a new one--after all, the implied author has used this as early as the explanations for the flaming "A" in the sky in The Scarlet Letter--the way in which he handles these possible theories could prove to be confusing for some readers. In The Scarlet Letter, the perceptive reader could work out which

interpretation the implied author intends as the "correct" one. Even though one could argue that Hawthorne's created reader would not be concerned with a "correct" solution to the mysteries in The Marble Faun, there was such an outcry following the publication of this novel that Hawthorne added a short chapter to the second printing in which he says that "he reluctantly avails himself of the opportunity afforded by a new edition to explain such incidents and passages as may have been left too much in the dark" (IV, 463). Hawthorne's use of multiple interpretations in earlier novels did not seem to disturb his less perceptive readers as much as did his mysteries in The Marble Faun. Hawthorne's added chapter in the second edition is his attempt to silence the outcry. It must be made quite clear, however, that Hawthorne's sympathetic created reader does not need this added chapter, for he understands that the author intends to leave some mysteries unexplained.

This added chapter allows the implied author to use first person narration, to further confuse his less perceptive readers, and to compliment his created reader on his ability to understand the author's intentions. Even though the first edition of The Marble Faun is told in the third person, in the "Postscript" included in the second edition the narrator appears as one of the characters. The stated intention of the implied author in this chapter is to clear up those mysteries which he has left unresolved in the first

edition. So he has the narrator appear as a character in order to ask Kenyon and Hilda to explain "several dark recesses of the story" (IV, 464). What, in fact, happens is that none of the questions are answered; and, thus, the implied author is able to underline one of the main intentions of the novel. As the narrator comments, "He [the author] designed the story and the character to bear, of course, a certain relation to human nature and human life, but still to be so artfully and airily removed from our mundane sphere, that some laws and proprieties of their own should be implicitly and insensibly acknowledged." He goes on to say that he places his characters, particularly Donatello, between "the Real and the Fantastic" in order to excite the reader's sympathies without impelling him to demand concrete answers. Hawthorne's created reader would understand this intention and would not demand a definite solution to the mysteries, even though others did.

Besides the implied author's reluctance to explain the mysteries contained in this novel, Kenneth Dauber maintains there is yet another decision made by the implied author which sets The Marble Faun apart from the three previous novels. Dauber says that "there is no pretense to authenticity in the Preface to The Marble Faun."<sup>16</sup> While it is true that the implied author does not present documentary

<sup>16</sup> Dauber, p. 198.

evidence as in The Scarlet Letter or claim to be familiar with a house and its tradition as in The House of the Seven Gables, he does, however, mention that "This Romance was sketched out during a residence of considerable length in Italy" (IV, 2). This sounds very similar to saying that he "had this community in his mind, and that . . . he has occasionally availed himself of his actual reminiscences" (III, 1), which are the implied author's opening remarks in The Blithedale Romance. In The Marble Faun, the author says that "he proposed to himself merely to write a fanciful story . . . and did not purpose attempting a portraiture of Italian manner and customs" (IV, 2-3); just as in The Blithedale Romance, he says that "his whole treatment of the affair [Brook Farm] is altogether incidental to the main purpose of the romance; nor does he put forward the slightest pretensions to illustrate a theory, or elicit a conclusion, favorable or otherwise, in respect to socialism" (III, 1). He goes on to stress that his characters "are entirely fictitious" (III, 1). Thus, the prefaces to The Blithedale Romance and The Marble Faun are similar, as the implied author stresses his use of fictional characters placed in a setting based upon his actual reminiscences. It is, indeed, difficult to see how Dauber can state that "there is no pretense to authenticity," for in addition to stating clearly that he is using memories of his Italian visit as a basis for his narrative, the implied author goes

on to admit that he had borrowed a bust of Milton from Paul Akers, a statue of Cleopatra from William Story, and would like to have taken Harriet Hosmer's statue of Zenobia. In other words, the author is establishing authority for the work of Kenyon, the sculptor in The Marble Faun. While it is true that there is no documentary evidence in the preface as appears in The Scarlet Letter, the implied author does present evidence in the form of the Monte Beni pedigree in order for his reader to understand the background of Donatello. Tomaso, Donatello's butler, tells some of the family history to Kenyon, as well as giving him the family records to read. This incident is very similar to Miles Coverdale's being told about Priscilla and Zenobia by Old Moodie in The Blithedale Romance, and Holgrave's reading his story of Alice Pyncheon to Phoebe in The House of the Seven Gables. Thus, despite Dauber's assertion, the implied author treats his narrative, his characters, and the authority for his story no differently than in two of his previous three novels.

The preface to The Marble Faun also presents another problem, that of the "Gentle, Kind, Benevolent, Indulgent, and most Beloved and Honoured Reader" (IV, 2). Although he has earlier, in "The Custom-House," commented on the kind of reader he is writing for, the implied author reminds us in the Preface to The Marble Faun that he has always written "for that one congenial friend--more comprehensive of his

purposes, more appreciative of his success, more indulgent of his short-comings, and, in all respects, closer and kinder than a brother" (IV, 1). However, the implied author goes on to question whether the Gentle Reader is extant now. He says,

In these many years, since he last heard from me, may he not have deemed his earthly task accomplished, and have withdrawn to the Paradise of Gentle Readers, wherever it may be, to the enjoyments of which his kindly charity on my behalf, must surely have entitled him? (IV, 2)

This implied author continues by saying that "this may be the truth" for the Gentle Reader is "apt to be extremely short-lived," and that "if I find him at all, it will probably be under some mossy grave-stone" (IV, 2). These references to the possible death of the Gentle Reader have led critics to assume that Hawthorne had accepted this death.<sup>17</sup> However, a careful reading of what the implied author says suggests only the possibility of death. The modal expressions, "may have deemed," "may have withdrawn," "may be," "if I find him," and "will probably be," only suggest; they do not state fact. Thus, the Gentle Reader could have died in the years between The Blithedale Romance

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Edgar A. Dryden, "The Limits of Romance: A Reading of The Marble Faun," in Individual and Community: Variations on a Theme in American Fiction, ed. Kenneth H. Baldwin and David K. Kirby (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1975), p. 43; see also Dauber.

and The Marble Faun, but the implied author does not believe that he has, for he continues to address him throughout the novel, directly addresses him at the beginning of the penultimate chapter, and, of course, continues to write the novel in spite of doubts at the beginning.

In what was in the first edition of the last chapter of the novel, the implied author reminds his Gentle Reader that he is supposed to read with sympathetic understanding. This "all-sympathizing critic" (IV, 1) is "too wise to insist upon looking closely at the wrong side of the tapestry" (IV, 455). He continues by emphasizing that this reader "will accept it at its worth, without tearing the web apart, with the idle purpose of discovering how its threads have been knit together" (IV, 455). Thus the Gentle Reader is very much alive, and the implied author expects the same sympathy from "that friend of friends, that unseen brother of the soul" (IV, 2) that he has always received.

The search for the qualities and attitudes which make up the personality of Hawthorne's created reader is extended by the references to art and literature which the implied author assumes his reader will know and understand. Although we had no intention of presuming that this figure was anything more than "a mythical character," there is an interesting sidelight contained in an exchange of letters between John Lothrop Motley and Hawthorne following the publication of The Marble Faun. Motley, an historian and

diplomat, wrote, "I like the misty way in which the story is indicated rather than revealed; the outlines are quite definite enough from the beginning to the end to those who have imagination enough to follow you in your story flights." Hawthorne replied,

You are certainly that Gentle Reader for whom all my books were exclusively written. Nobody else . . . has ever said exactly what I loved to hear. . . . You take the book precisely as I meant it. . . . You work out my imperfect efforts, and half make the book with your warm imagination; and see<sup>18</sup> what I myself saw, but could only hint at.

Obviously John Motley is not the Gentle Reader; but he is the type of reader Hawthorne has in mind as he writes. Motley is a good example of the educated male with traditional values. At the time he wrote to Hawthorne, Motley was forty-six years old. His occupations of historian and diplomat indicate the level of education which the implied author assumes his reader to have in order to follow and understand his examples. An historian would also have the interest in the past that we have seen to be so evident in the previous novels and, of course, is even more evident in The Marble Faun. Furthermore, as the letters between the two men indicate, Motley has read the novel in just the way Hawthorne intended his reader to do.

<sup>18</sup> As quoted in J. Donald Cowley, ed., Hawthorne: The Critical Heritage (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 327.

The portrait of the genteel, well-read, middle-aged male created reader enjoying the "comfortable" things of life is further developed in The Marble Faun. There is strong evidence that his reading includes the legends of mythology, classical authors, as well as popular writers of the Romantic period. The implied author also assumes that his created reader is an artist of sorts or, at least, has an extensive knowledge of art and artists, both Old Masters and modern ones. The term "artist" in reference to Hawthorne's created reader can be interpreted more widely as "creator." The created reader is invited to "surrender of himself" and help "out the painter's art" with his "own resources of sensibility and imagination." Thus, the created reader becomes an artist--whatever his medium--through his interpretation of another artist's creation.

As we have seen demonstrated in The Blithedale Romance, the created reader has a broad background in literature. In The Marble Faun, the implied author uses figures from mythology, Roman history, poetry, and novels. The narrator twice refers to the mythical figure Laocoon but never explains what this figure is. The Laocoon group, one of the most famous examples of later Greek sculpture, depicts the agony of the Greek Priest Laocoon and his two sons as they are carried away by two large sea serpents. According to the Greek legend, Laocoon is being punished for opposing the acceptance of the Trojan horse. The implied author uses

this statue to make his point that poor sculpture has the same lasting quality as good sculpture. The narrator says, "His [the sculptor's] group of--no matter what, since it has no moral or intellectual existence--will not, physically crumble any sooner than the immortal agony of the Laocoon" (IV, 136). Later in the novel, the narrator comments on Kenyon's thoughts concerning the statue. He says,

Nothing pleased him, unless it were the group of the Laocoon, which, in its immortal agony, impressed Kenyon as a type of the long, fierce struggle of Man involved in the knotted entanglements of Error and Evil, those two snakes, which (if no Divine help intervened) will be sure to strangle him and his children in the end.  
(IV, 391)

The implied author goes on to comment that "Kenyon looked upon the group as the one triumph of Sculpture, creating the repose, which is essential to it, in the very acme of turbulent effort" (IV, 391). The implied author wants his created reader to recall this statue of a popular subject and understand, first of all, that the quality of an art object has nothing to do with its actual survival; second, that sculpture has the possibility of representing the eternal struggles of Man; and third, that a single piece of excellent sculpture can incorporate extremes of emotions.

Another reference to mythological figures occurs during Kenyon's and Donatello's journey from Monte Beni to Rome.

In passing through a small village in Tuscany, Kenyon sees a group of old women tending a herd of sheep. The narrator says that "these venerable ladies kept spinning yarn, with that elsewhere forgotten contrivance, the distaff; and so wrinkled and stern-looking were they, that you might have taken them for the Parcae, spinning the threads of human destiny" (IV, 290). The Parcae, the Latin term for the Fates, were three women. One, called Clotho, the Spinner, gave the thread of life; a second, called Lachesis, the Disposer of Lots, gave each man his destiny; and the third, called Atropos, carried scissors which cut the thread, causing death. It is easy to see the point the narrator is making by comparing these old women to the three Fates, for the journey Kenyon and Donatello are making is in the nature of a quest. Donatello, having committed a murder at Miriam's instigation, has fled from Rome to his home at Monte Beni. He decides to return to Rome and to give himself up. Therefore, his meeting with the Parcae indicates that his destiny has been decided.

A third mythological reference is to Cadmus, a Greek who was told by Apollo to follow a heifer until she lay down. He was to found a city on that spot. This is how the city of Thebes was founded. As Kenyon is walking across the Campagne, he is followed by a heifer, which he "half fancied, was serving him as a guide, like the heifer that led Cadmus to the site of his destined city" (IV, 421).

This contact with the young animal lifts Kenyon's dejected spirits.

In addition to the use of mythology, the implied author also assumes that his created reader has some knowledge of Roman history. On their walks through Rome, both the narrator and the characters comment on the monuments and events of Roman history. For example, the four approach the remains of Trajan's Forum. Trajan was Roman emperor from A.D. 98-117. Over the centuries, most of the remains of the Forum had been buried. The implied author intends his reader to see the connection between the excavated remains of this ancient monument and the effects of time. Part of the Forum which had been excavated was a marble shaft. On observing it, the narrator comments that

it was a great, solid fact of the Past, making old Rome actually sensible to the touch and eye; and no study of history, nor force of thought, nor magic of song, could so vitally assure us that Rome once existed, as this sturdy specimen of what its rulers and people wrought. (IV, 150)

This statement by the narrator seems to suggest that it is not necessary to study history, even though the implied author expects his created reader to have a knowledge of history. A careful study of this passage, however, reveals that the narrator is saying that the objects and monuments of Rome declare its existence more forcefully than does the study of history books. The monuments may tell us much, but

we must have historical fact as well as the object in order to judge the past. As if to prove this point, the group of artists move across the Forum and reach the spot where Kenyon says, "Let us settle it . . . that this is precisely the spot where the chasm opened into which Curtius precipitated his good steed and himself" (IV, 161). The legend to which Kenyon refers is that of Mettus Curtius, who in A.D. 362 is supposed to have leapt on horseback into a chasm in the Forum. Soothsayers said that the chasm could be filled only by throwing the treasures of Rome into it. Miriam, who is facing a moral crisis, remarks that this "chasm was merely one of the prefaces of that pit of blackness that lies beneath us, everywhere" (IV, 161). She goes on to say that Curtius' show of heroism was foolish, "for all Rome, you see, has been swallowed up in that gulf, in spite of him." This reference to Curtius shows both the depth of Miriam's despondency and the extent of Hilda's optimism. Hilda comments,

It seems to me that there is no chasm, nor any hideous emptiness under our feet, except what the evil within us digs. If there be such a chasm, let us bridge it over with good thoughts and deeds, and we shall tread safely to the other side. (IV, 162)

It is through Hilda that the implied author makes sure that the created reader understands the reason for the reference to Curtius. Hilda points out that Curtius filled the chasm

with his heroism, and that although Rome was more evil than good, things tend to balance out. She says, "Every wrong thing makes the gulf deeper, every right one helps to fill it up" (IV, 162). The created reader, thus, is invited to recall moments in Roman history and see their moral value in working out the problems of modern man.

As well as using mythology and Roman history, the implied author also makes references to several literary works. Once again, he assumes that his reader is familiar with the various writers. In addition to the reference to the bust of Milton, which the author mentions both in the preface and as being present in Kenyon's studio, the narrator also quotes a line from one of Milton's poems. It is obvious that the implied author admires both the sculptor's work and the poetry of Milton. The narrator comments that "by long perusal and deep love of the Paradise Lost, the Comus, the Lycidas, and L'Allegro, the sculptor had succeeded, even better than he knew, in spiritualizing his marble with the poet's mighty genius" (IV, 118). The implied author has already confessed in the "Preface" that he had borrowed this bust of Milton from the studio of Paul Akers and placed it in Kenyon's studio. Both Kenyon and the narrator admire the poetry of Milton, even though Kenyon questions Milton's reactions to stained-glass windows. On their journey back to Rome, Donatello and Kenyon visit a church where Kenyon is particularly affected

by the beautiful stained-glass windows. Referring to another poem of Milton's, Kenyon says, "There was an English poet . . . who speaks of the 'dim, religious light,' transmitted through painted glass" (IV, 305). Kenyon is quoting from Il Penseroso where Milton writes, "And storied windows rightly light, / Casting a dim religious light" (ll. 159-60). Kenyon continues, "I questioned whether Milton ever saw any but the dingy pictures in the dusty windows of English cathedrals, imperfectly shown by the gray English daylight" (IV, 305). The implied author is not criticizing Milton's perceptions but simply emphasizing that he could not have seen the brilliant colors that Kenyon sees in front of him. Kenyon's use of the phrase "the gray English daylight" also suggests a comparison of the English and Italian climates.

The implied author also refers to George Gordon, Lord Byron's description of the Coliseum. As the four characters --Miriam, Hilda, Kenyon, and Donatello--are walking through the Coliseum, the narrator says that "Byron's celebrated description is better than the reality. He beheld the scene in his mind's eye, through the witchery of many intervening years, and faintly illuminated it as if with starlight instead of this broad glow of moonshine" (IV, 153). The description that the narrator is referring to is in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto IV, stanzas 138-145. Canto IV, published in 1818, describes the cities and monuments of Italy. The narrator goes on to underline his point that

"Byron's celebrated description is better than the reality" by drawing attention to a "party of English or Americans paying the inevitable visit by moonlight, and exalting themselves with raptures that were Byron's, not their own" (IV, 155). The implied author makes one more reference to Byron's poem, although an oblique one. At the beginning of summer, Kenyon prepares to leave Rome to visit Donatello in Tuscany. The narrator comments, "For, as summer approaches, the Niobe of Nations is made to bewail anew, and doubtless with sincerity, the loss of that large part of her population which she derives from other lands, and on whom depends much of whatever remnant of prosperity she still enjoys" (IV, 213). The reference to Rome as the "Niobe of Nations" may be an innocent invention on the part of the implied author, although Byron uses the exact reference in the first line of stanza seventy-nine, Canto IV of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. Whether or not this is a borrowed phrase, it is an apt comparison between the mythological Niobe wandering the earth crying for her lost children and Rome crying for her lost people as they flee to the cooler parts of Italy for the summer as well as another example of the cultural background which the implied author expects of his creative reader.

The implied author assumes not only that his created reader is familiar with English poets of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, but he also assumes a familiarity with

the Latin poet Horace. After Kenyon and Donatello leave the church where Kenyon was so impressed with the stained-glass windows, the pair are approached by some old Italian women asking for alms. Donatello hands out money and is blessed by seven of the old women. Kenyon comments, "I think your steed will not stumble with you today. Each of these old dames looks as much like Horace's *Atra Cura* as can well be conceived; but, though there are seven of them, they will make your burthen on horseback lighter, instead of heavier!" (IV, 308). This reference is from Horace's *Odes*, Book III, Ode I. Horace is mainly concerned with the conditions in Rome around 27 B.C. The term "*Atra Cura*" means "dark care," the quality which Horace maintains rides behind all ambitious and rich men. He insists that death makes all men equal. Donatello, who is an innocent "faun" at the beginning of the story, is returning to Rome to give himself up. In a brief note on the author's reference to Horace, Richard Mezo says that "Horace's '*Atra Cura*' thus plays a critical part in Donatello's development. Donatello must accept the dark care of mankind; he must pay it his tribute before he can truly become human."<sup>19</sup> The created reader must, like Mezo, recognize the Horatian reference in order to see its importance to Donatello's development.

<sup>19</sup> Richard E. Mezo, "A Note on '*Atra Cura*' in Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*," in *NHJ*, 1977, ed. C. E. Frazer Clark (Detroit: Bruccoli Clark, 1977), p. 348.

The created reader is familiar with popular literature of the nineteenth century as well as with classical authors. During their walk through Rome, Miriam, Hilda, Kenyon, and Donatello pause beside the Fountain of Trevi. Miriam says, "I have often intended to visit this fountain by moonlight . . . because it was here that the interview took place between Corinne and Lord Nevil, after their separation and temporary estrangement." The narrator goes on to describe how Miriam leans over the edge of the fountain in order to see her reflection. He says, "Corinne, it will be remembered, knew Lord Nevil by the reflection of his face in the water" (IV, 146). The narrator's use of the phrase "it will be remembered" indicates that he expects his reader to have read the novel which includes the incident. Corinne, published in 1807, was written by a Frenchwoman, Mme. de Stael. The incident which Miriam refers to does take place in the novel; and the two lovers are never reunited, which is a warning to the reader that Miriam's and Donatello's relationship will end in the same way. Mme. de Stael's novels were widely read in America in the early 1800s. In fact, in an article entitled "Mme. de Stael's Image in American Romanticism," Charles Lombard maintains that she "succeeded Rousseau and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre as America's favorite French novelist in the early 1800's." Lombard points out that Mme. de Stael's novels were read by literary figures such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Washington Irving, James

Fenimore Cooper, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Lombard goes on to suggest that during this period "Mme. de Stael was becoming the symbol of independence to strong-willed and intelligent ladies in the United States."<sup>20</sup> It is significant that the reference to Corinne is made by Miriam not only because it foreshadows the failure of her own relationship with Donatello but also because the created reader would associate the idea of a strong independent woman with the character of Miriam.

Although the created reader's broad knowledge of mythology and literature enables him to understand both the themes and characters in this novel, it is his extensive knowledge of art upon which the implied author relies most. The sympathetic created reader must not only be able to recall various works of art in order to interpret character, but he must also accept the implied author's evaluation of that particular creation. Thus, the created reader becomes an art critic with views similar to those of the narrator. The strong language which the implied author uses concerning Italian art has, in turn, aroused strong reactions from his critics. Henry James comments that "Hawthorne was a good deal bored by the importunity of

<sup>20</sup> Charles H. Lombard, "Mme. de Stael's Image in American Romanticism," CLA Journal, 19 (1975-76), 57-60.

Italian art, for which his tastes, naturally not keen, had never been cultivated."<sup>21</sup> Jeffrey Myers, in Painting and the Novel, calls Hawthorne "philistine and provincial" because he

fulminates against nudity in art, dislikes Fra Angelico, calls Titian "a very good-for-nothing old man," recommends that the frescoes of Cimabue and Giotto be "reverently" covered with whitewash, and condemns Rome for its bad food, ugly streets, poisonous air, dead atmosphere, despotic police and vicious inhabitants.<sup>22</sup>

If we accept Myers' judgment, the sympathetic created reader might also be characterized as "philistine and provincial" because the implied author assumes that his reader will accept the views on art presented to him.

As the implied author states in the preface to The Marble Faun, some actual works of art are borrowed from artists he admires, and these are placed in Kenyon's studio. Kenyon, a young American sculptor working in Rome, has several statues which actually are those belonging to well-known American sculptors of the nineteenth century. When Miriam visits Kenyon's studio, she admires "the statue of a beautiful youth, a pearl-fisher, who had got entangled in the weeds at the bottom of the sea, and lay dead among the pearl oysters." The narrator also describes another

<sup>21</sup> James, p. 127.

<sup>22</sup> Myers, p. 6.

statue, the "grand, calm head of Milton, not copied from any one bust or picture, yet more authentic than any of them, because all known representations of the poet had been profoundly studied, and solved in the artist's mind" (IV, 117-18). Both of these pieces are the work of a sculptor, Paul Akers. The implied author also praises the statue of Cleopatra, which Kenyon uncovers for Miriam. This statue --actually the work of William Wetmore Story, one of the outstanding American sculptors of the nineteenth century-- is considered by the implied author to have "rare merit in statuary." Kenyon, or William Story, has managed to capture in cold clay the "fierce, voluptuous, passionate, tender, wicked, terrible, . . . poisonous and rapturous enchantment" (IV, 127) that was Cleopatra. When Miriam praises the statue as a great work of art and asks Kenyon how he has learned to do this, he replies that "it is the concretion of a good deal of thought, emotion, and toil of brain, and hand"; but he goes on, "I know not how it came about, at last. I kindled a great fire within my mind, and threw in the material, . . . and, in the midmost heat uprose Cleopatra, as you see her" (IV, 127). The created reader, therefore, is able to agree with Miriam's judgment that Kenyon is "a magician" because he can "turn feverish men into cool, quiet marble" (IV, 119).

Along with the works of Akers and Story, the implied author also refers to the sculpture of Harriet Hosmer.

Although the author refers to Hosmer's "Zenobia" in the preface to the novel, it is not this statue that is in Kenyon's studio. Instead, he compares Kenyon's rendering of Hilda's hand with Hosmer's hands of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Miriam comments that the marble hand is "as good as Harriet Hosmer's clasped hands of Browning and his wife, symbolizing the individuality and heroic union of two high, poetic lines!" (IV, 120). Harriet Hosmer was a well-known American sculptor in Rome during the nineteenth century. John Idol, in "Nathaniel Hawthorne and Harriet Hosmer," says that her "wit, strength, bold independence of spirit, talent, and congeniality had won her a wide circle of friends among the art colony of Rome," and he goes on to call her "one of the most celebrated young sculptors in Rome."<sup>23</sup> These three--Akers, Story, and Hosmer--are the only American artists and, in fact, the only contemporary artists referred to by the implied author. Although there are so few American artists included, the created reader is able to perceive the implied author's intention. There is high praise for the works of the American artists but strong criticism against some of the European painters.

As is the case of the sculpture of Akers, Story, and Hosmer, the implied author also assumes that the created

<sup>23</sup> John L. Idol, "Nathaniel Hawthorne and Harriet Hosmer," in *NHJ*, 1976, ed. C. E. Frazer Clark (Detroit: Bruccoli Clark, 1976), pp. 121-22.

reader is familiar with continental artists whose works span five centuries. The earliest works which the implied author comments upon are the frescoes of Giotto, Cimabue, Ghirlandajo, and Pinturecchio painted on the walls of Italian churches. Assuming that the created reader has seen either the actual frescoes or reproductions of these thirteenth century works, the implied author voices his sadness at the deterioration he sees in these paintings. He says through the narrator, "They are poor, dim ghosts of what, when Giotto or Cimabue first created them, threw a splendour along the stately aisles; so far gone towards nothingness, in our day, that scarcely a hint of design or expression can glimmer through the dusk" (IV, 303). The narrator goes on to remind the reader that these frescoes had been painted in glowing colors which glorified the Catholic faith and "filled the transepts with a radiant throng of Saints and Angels." Even though the narrator does suggest that "the frescoes should be covered with whitewash," he makes this suggestion only because "the colours are so wretchedly bedimmed" that the "pathetic relics" can be appreciated only by an "earnest student and critic of Art" (IV, 303). The author is not implying that these frescoes have never had any value, but he is asking his created reader to accept his theory that there are some things from the past which should not be preserved. The created reader is, thus, being asked as an art critic to

decide which pictures should be preserved and which should be painted over.

The implied author also assumes that his sympathetic created reader will share his opinions on artistic technique and subject matter. Both Kenyon and Hilda express an appreciation for the pictures of Fra Angelico, a fifteenth century painter. The narrator comments that Hilda feels Fra Angelico

must have breathed a humble aspiration between every two touches of his brush, in order to have made the finished picture such a visible prayer as we behold it, in the guise of a prim Angel, or a saint without the human nature. Through all these dusky centuries his works may still help a struggling heart to pray. (IV, 339).

In addition, Kenyon says to Donatello that Fra Angelico's paintings "are full of religious sincerity. When one studies them faithfully, it is like holding a conversation about heavenly things with a tender and devout minded man" (IV, 310). Donatello, however, replies that he has seen Fra Angelico's pictures and "his angels look as if they had never taken a flight out of Heaven; and his Saints seem to have been born Saints and always to have lived so." The implied author is suggesting through Donatello that Fra Angelico's paintings lack realism. Donatello goes on to say that "young maidens, and all innocent persons . . . may find great delight and profit in looking at such holy

pictures" (IV, 310). Being neither young nor innocent, the perceptive, middle-aged creater reader will, thus, agree with Donatello's evaluation of Fra Angelico's work.

The implied author, through the voice of the narrator, compares the work of two groups of artists. Since Fra Angelico's paintings are criticized for their lack of realism, an acceptable group of artists are the seventeenth century Dutch and Fleming genre painters. The narrator mentions David Teniers, Gerard Douw, and Van Mieris--either Frans, Jan, or Willem. He mentions passages from their paintings, such as "an earthen pipkin or a bunch of herrings," "a brass kettle, in which you can see your face," "a furred robe, or the silken texture of a mantle, or a straw hat," "or an over-ripe peach, with a fly upon it, truer than reality itself" (IV, 336). Obviously, the implied author likes these realistic genre paintings more than he does the unrealistic paintings of Fra Angelico. The real author believes that these painters best combine nature and art: reality and illusion. Through the narrator, the implied author goes so far as to suggest that these painters are the "only painters." In contrast to the realism of the Dutch and Flemish painters, the narrator says that "the mighty Italian Masters, as you deem them, were not human, nor addressed their work to human sympathies, but to a false intellectual taste, which they themselves were the first to create" (IV, 336).

Along with this accusation that the old Masters did not attempt to appeal to "human sympathies," the narrator also charges the Italian painters with a "lack of variety in their subjects." Their subjects were either religious-- "Virgins and Infant Christs, repeated over and over again, in pretty much an identical spirit"--or nude mythological figures. The implied author is particularly concerned that indecent pictures of nude Venuses, Ledas, Graces "are from the same illustrious and impious hand that adventured to call before us the august forms of Apostles and Saints, the Blessed Mother of the Redeemer, and her Son" (IV, 337). The fifteenth century painter Raphael is an example of what the implied author means by this accusation. He questions how strong Raphael's religious feeling can be or how heavenly his Virgins, after viewing "the Fornarina of the Barberini Palace, and feeling how sensual the artist must have been to paint such a brazen trollop of his own accord, and lovingly!" (IV, 337). In addition to questioning the Italian artists' depth of feeling when they can paint both religious and secular subjects, the implied author also brings into question the artists' models. He says:

If an artist sometimes produced a picture of the Virgin, possessing warmth enough to excite devotional feelings, it was probably the object of his earthly love, to whom he thus paid the stupendous and fearful homage of setting up her portrait to be worshipped, not figuratively, as a moral, but by religious souls in their earnest aspirations towards Divinity. (IV, 337).

The implied author thus suggests that even though the artist paints best when he uses a real model, he may also pass off his mistress as a virgin. This, in turn, creates a danger that the model will be looked upon as more than a representative of divinity but divinity itself.

Thus far, the implied author assumes that the created reader agrees with him concerning the covering over of old, dim paintings; the value of art as true to nature rather than as a substitute for nature; nudity in art; and the impropriety of an artist who not only uses "the object of his earthly love" as a model for a religious picture but also paints both religious and secular pictures with the same depth of feeling. The sympathetic reader, therefore, is willing to criticize the art of the past rather than worship it. This may also be an indication that Hawthorne's created reader is most likely American rather than European.

Although he has criticized Raphael for painting "a brazen trollop" as well as the Virgin Mary, the implied author does admit that Raphael can produce "a throng of spiritual faces." He goes on to say that one must consider the artistry of the "baby-innocence" of the cherubs, angels "whose serene intelligence embraces both earthly and celestial things," and Madonnas with "holy and delicate reserve." If Raphael can produce such outstanding figures as well as "that Divine countenance in the Transfiguration"--a reference to Raphael's last painting--all objections to his work

should be withdrawn. Thus, the implied author does express a measure of admiration for Raphael's paintings. Nevertheless, he also points out that Hilda--who along with Donatello represents innocence--never questions Raphael's subjects or techniques. The narrator comments that "she had a faculty (which fortunately for themselves, pure women often have) of ignoring all moral blotches in a character that won her admiration" (IV, 338). Apart from being a comment upon the perceptive abilities of some women, this comment is an echo of Donatello's remark on Fra Angelico's paintings. They can be viewed with delight by young maidens and the innocent. There is more than a suggestion here that Hilda's youth and innocence impair her perception; and, thus, the reader must question her judgment.

Hilda also greatly admires a fresco, "Christ Bound to a Pillar," by Sodoma. The narrator says that

the great and reverent painter has not suffered the Son of God to be merely an object of pity, though depicting him in a state so profoundly pitiful. . . . Sodoma, in this matchless picture, has done more towards reconciling the incongruity of Divine Omnipotence and outraged, suffering Humanity, combined in one person, than the theologians ever did. (IV, 340)

It is obvious that the implied author considers this painting a great work of art not only because of Sodoma's ability to create a "miracle" but also because of its spiritual value. Hilda particularly wanted to see this picture in

order to revive her spirits. The tone and rhetoric which the implied author uses to describe this painting emphasize how different Sodoma is from the other painters. In describing Sodoma's painting, the narrator calls it "inexpressibly touching" and says that "one of the most striking effects produced is the sense of loneliness" (IV, 339). In contrast, the narrator says that the "fashion" of the majority of Italian masters "is past, and ought, indeed, to have died and been buried along with them" (IV, 336). The created reader is left with no doubt that Sodoma is one of the great Italian painters. It is noted that the implied author expects his reader to agree with Hilda's judgment of Sodoma's painting, yet maintains that her innocence prevents her from adequately judging Raphael.

Although the implied author mentions at least twenty-five artists in The Marble Faun, it is a painting of "Beatrice Cenci" by Guido Reni which provides the focal point of the narrative. The implied author assumes that the created reader knows not only the painting but also the story behind it. The story of the Cenci family was well-known, and as Jeffrey Myers points out, "had an enormous attraction not only for Hawthorne but also for Shelley, De Quincy, Stendhal, Dickens, Landor and Swinburne."<sup>24</sup> Some accounts vary in minor details, but the basic facts

<sup>24</sup> Myers, p. 11.

in this tale of incest and murder are similar. Beatrice was the youngest of twelve children of Francisco Cenci. Cenci remarried and treated the children of his first wife, particularly Beatrice, with great cruelty. Having endured her father's sexual violence for a number of years, Beatrice with her brother plotted to kill him. A nail was driven through Francesco Cenci's brain in September of 1598, and his body was thrown over a balcony to make the crime appear to be an accident. However, the crime was discovered. Beatrice and her brother were imprisoned, put on the rack, forced to confess, and were executed. Beatrice was beheaded; her brother was drawn and quartered. According to tradition, Guido Reni visited Beatrice in prison and painted the portrait which the narrator describes as

the very saddest picture ever painted or conceived; it involved an unfathomable depth of sorrow, the sense of which came to the observer by a sort of intuition. It was a sorrow that removed this beautiful girl out of the sphere of humanity, and set her in a far-off region, the remoteness of which--while yet her face is so close before us-- makes us shiver as at a spectre. (IV, 64)

Although this portrait has "an unfathomable depth of sorrow," it is neither a portrait of Beatrice Cenci nor painted by Guido Reni. As early as 1836, long before Hawthorne came to Italy, Reni had been repudiated as the painter of this portrait. Subsequent scholarship confirmed this repudiation. In 1879 Antonino Bertolotti proved conclusively that

Reni had not appeared in Rome until 1608, nine years after Beatrice was executed in 1599.<sup>25</sup> Despite the repudiation, however, the legend behind this portrait continued to be a strong influence in literature. Furthermore, as far as The Marble Faun is concerned, the implied author continues to connect the legend with the portrait and assumes his created reader will do so, too.<sup>26</sup>

Not only does Hawthorne's sympathetic created reader have an extensive knowledge of art, literature, mythology, and history, but he also shares the same beliefs as the implied author. First of all, as we have seen, the implied author places his reader in the position of artist and art critic. Apart from his opinions of the Old Masters, he also has strong ideas concerning the role of women in art. Secondly, though the reader is middle-aged, he is beginning to consider his own mortality and to look with nostalgia at his lost youth. Finally, the implied author extends his concept of society and institutions as agents of imprisonment.

Although Miriam and Hilda are both artists, their personalities and the kinds of art they produce are quite

<sup>25</sup> Myers, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> Hawthorne's use of Reni's "Beatrice Cenci" has been extensively dealt with elsewhere. See Spencer Hall, "Beatrice Cenci: Symbol and Vision in The Marble Faun," NCF, 25 (1970-71), 85-95; Gollin; and Myers.

different. Miriam's background is clouded in mystery. She is described as an attractive woman but with "reserve," "brooding melancholy," "petulance," and "moody passion." The narrator says that she showed "a great scope of fancy and a singular faculty of putting what looked like heart into her productions" (IV, 45). Significantly, Miriam chooses to paint a number of pictures showing women in an act of revenge against men. She depicts Jael driving a nail through the temple of Sisera, Judith beheading Holofernes, and the daughter of Herodias holding the head of John the Baptist on a charger. Furthermore, when Donatello sees a self-portrait which Miriam has painted, he comments, "The picture gazes sadly forth at me, as if some evil had befallen it in the little time since I looked last" (IV, 49). Miriam's despair is mirrored in her work. The implied author, despite his reservations concerning the "heart" in her work, considers Miriam a skillful artist. He has Hilda say that Miriam is "so accomplished and gifted." Kenyon replies, referring to Miriam's attachment for Donatello, that "a gifted woman flings away her affections so unaccountably sometimes!" (IV, 105). This gifted artist attempts to paint from her own imagination. R. W. B. Lewis, in The American Adam, comments that "Miriam turns her back altogether on the art of the past, claiming to paint wholly from the self and about the self; and her self-portrait becomes an unconscious imitation of the very

painting--the 'Beatrice' of Guido--which Hilda is currently engaged in copying."<sup>27</sup> Miriam, therefore, fails first in her attempt to use her painting as catharsis; and, secondly, she fails to paint an actual self-portrait. Instead, in her despair, her portrait and her life become an imitation of Beatrice Cenci. Although the implied author has Kenyon and Hilda say that Miriam is a "gifted artist," the created reader understands that Miriam is not a true artist in the terms of the implied author, for she allows her feelings of revenge, despair, and guilt to govern her art. The created reader thus comes to agree with the implied author that art is not a suitable means of expression for women.

Hilda is the more successful artist of the two women. It is ironic that, whereas Miriam, the creative artist, is bound, Hilda, the copyist, is free. The narrator comments that Hilda "was an example of the freedom of life which it is possible for a female artist to enjoy at Rome" (IV, 54). Hilda is alone, independent, and courageous. She is "endowed with a deep and sensitive faculty of appreciation. She has the gift of discerning and worshipping excellence in a most unusual measure" (IV, 56). Although Hilda begins by producing original paintings, as she studies in Rome she ceases original work. Thus, Hilda becomes a copyist. But,

<sup>27</sup> Lewis, p. 125.

as the narrator says, "Her copies were indeed marvelous. . . . [They] had that evanescent and ethereal life--that fitting fragrance, as it were of the originals" (IV, 58). So even though Hilda's paintings do not come solely from her imagination--perhaps because they do not--she succeeds where Miriam fails. The narrator says that "the world was richer for this feeble girl." Is there any value in painting a copy of another artist's work, or even a passage from his painting? In answering this question, the implied author compares the quality of Hilda's original paintings with the works of women novelists. The narrator says, "Would it have been worth Hilda's while to relinquish this office, for the sake of giving the world a picture or two which it would call original; pretty fancies of snow and moonlight; the counterpart, in picture, of so many feminine achievements in literature!" (IV, 61). The created reader answers this question with a resounding "no," for the sympathetic reader agrees with the implied author that the creative energies and abilities of women do not lie in the areas of art and literature. This remark by the narrator reminds the reader of Hawthorne's disgust for the silly, sentimental novels written by "the scribbling women" of his time. Hawthorne and his reader thus equate sentimental novels with sentimental, or emotional, paintings. Successful women, according to the implied author and his male created reader, are those who perfect the more draughtsman-like occupations.

There is one area of artistry where the implied author is convinced all women, and only women, succeed. This is needlework. The implied author refers to the art of the needle in all four novels. Hester Prynne, in The Scarlet Letter, earns her living by sewing; but, more importantly, she demonstrates her artistry through the elaborate embroidery of the "A." In The House of the Seven Gables, the reference to needlework is more negative than positive, for Hepzibah Pyncheon is unable to produce the type of needlework which would permit her to earn her living in that way. Priscilla, in The Blithedale Romance, is much like Hester Prynne in that she earns her living or part of it through her sewing. However, it is in The Marble Faun that the implied author makes his most definitive statement on "this peculiarity of needlework" which distinguishes women from men. The narrator comments, "Women--be they of what earthly rank they may, however gifted with intellect or genius, or endowed with awful beauty--have always some little handiwork ready to fill the tiny gap of every vacant moment" (IV, 39). He continues by mentioning the kinds of sewing women do, using the needle and thread as a symbol. The needle keeps a woman in touch with the "small, familiar, gentle interests of life." Human sympathy runs along this electric line and, thus, provides a channel of communication regardless of class. The narrator concludes, saying, "Methinks it is a token of healthy and gentle characteristics when women of

high thoughts and accomplishments love to sew; especially as they are never more at home with their own hearts than while so occupied" (IV, 40). This passage would certainly appeal to the nineteenth century reader. The vast majority of women knew how to sew and spent much time doing so. One does have to agree with several of the points the author is making. Needlework is usually a distinguishing feature between men and women. Even in contemporary society, fewer men than women sew, though the author seems to have forgotten that there have always been men--tailors--who earn their living by sewing. Needlework does allow a woman to do more than one thing at a time; a woman can sew and think or sew and talk at the same time. It is debatable, however, whether--even in the nineteenth century--most women would view needlework as the only way to express themselves or examine their feelings. Most women probably looked upon it as a necessity, not as a "byplay aside from the main business of life." Thus, the reader is definitely male.

Although the implied author has always assumed his reader is middle-aged, there is a constant atmosphere of aging in this novel. The implied author seems to be longing for his lost youth and fearing the prospect of death. Along with this, the author is also considering the changes that occur when a person matures. The implied author takes great care to describe the various monuments of Rome. Edgar Dryden says that "the ruins are not so much symbols of human

accomplishment and survival as they are ominous reminders of man's mortality."<sup>28</sup> The narrator refers to the Roman monuments almost as human beings, using such phrases as "it seems to be the effort of Time to buy up the ancient city" (IV, 149); Rome is "a dead corpse of a giant" (IV, 110) with "soil over its grave" (IV, 149); "a vast tomb" (IV, 24); "a long decaying corpse" (IV, 325); "some other sepulchral storehouse of the past" (IV, 436); "the dead atmosphere," and "the smell of ruin, and decaying generations" (IV, 74). The author also uses the monuments as "sermons in stone." As the four characters walk across the Forum in the moonlight, they come to a marble pillar that has been excavated. Miriam says, "There is comfort to be found in the pillar. . . . Lying here forever . . . it makes all human trouble appear as a momentary annoyance." Miriam continues by saying that the greatest consolation of mankind is the "right of saying, in every conjuncture, 'This, too, will pass away'" (IV, 150). This may be a consolidation in the sense that our troubles will not last forever; however, it is also a reminder that humanity is transitory, too.

This contemplation of mortality causes the implied author to look backward to his lost youth. The author does view the past with some dislike, for he has suggested in

<sup>28</sup> Dryden, p. 29.

previous novels that one should not allow the past to dominate the present, and in The Marble Faun he suggests that there is a strong case for tearing villages down and rebuilding every half century. There is a difference between the past and his childhood, however. To the implied author, "the past" means events which took place more than fifty years ago. He is not longing to return to the past in that sense, but rather to the freedom of his childhood or youth. This is best illustrated by his description of Miriam and Donatello playing like children. The narrator says:

He frisked around her, bubbling over with joy, which clothed itself in words that had little individual meaning, and in snatches of song that seemed as natural as bird-notes. Then they both laughed together, and heard their own laughter returning in the echoes, and laughed again at the response; so that the ancient and solemn grove became full of merriment for these two blithe spirits. (IV, 83)

Still high-spirited, Miriam and Donatello "ran races with each other," "pelted one another with flowers," "played together like children, or creatures of immortal youth," and were "endowed with eternal mirthfulness instead of any deeper joy" (IV, 84). There is an atmosphere in this scene which suggests that the narrator, or the implied author, would like to join the couple romping in the field. For example, while watching Miriam and Donatello, the narrator comments that their behavior is endowed with the kind of

"external mirthfulness" which existed "before mankind was burthened with sin and sorrow, and before pleasure had been darkened with those shadows that bring it into high relief, and make it Happiness" (IV, 84). Through this nostalgic scene of childhood's artlessness and freedom, the implied author prepares his created reader for a major theme of the novel--the loss of innocence.

What happens to humanity between the days spent playing games and running about and the days spent contemplating death? The answer to this question involves one of the principal themes in The Marble Faun, the loss of innocence. Both Hilda and Donatello are innocent at the opening of the novel, and both must come to accept loss. Donatello loses his innocence when he helps Miriam kill the Capuchin Monk. Hilda loses hers when she witnesses the murder. The narrator comments that one loses one's innocence with the discovery of sin in the world. He continues, "The young and pure are not apt to find out that miserable truth, until it is brought home to them by the guiltiness of some trusted friend" (IV, 244). Tomaso, Donatello's butler, sighs over Donatello's despondency. He says, "The world has grown either too evil, or else too wise and sad. . . . His very first taste of it, as you see, has changed and spoilt my poor young lord" (IV, 138). Donatello has discovered the evil in the world, and his life has changed. Commenting

that the world is designed to exclude happiness, the narrator says, "The entire system of Man's affairs, as at present established, is built up purposely to exclude the careless and happy soul." Donatello cannot return to the happy times but must learn to accept his fate. "No life now wanders like an unfettered stream," says the narrator; "there is a mill-wheel for the tiniest rivulet to turn" (IV, 239). The sympathetic created reader must have the same view of the world. He, too, senses his mortality. The Gentle Reader may not be lying under some mossy stones, but he perceives the coming of darkness and longs for the brightness of his youth.

The words "no life now wanders like an unfettered stream" not only illustrate what happens after youth discovers evil in the world, they also illustrate another attitude of the implied author--the imprisonment of man. The implied author has explored the concept of imprisonment in the previous novels. In The Scarlet Letter, Hester Prynne is in a real prison, and the implied author makes it very clear that the Puritans set aside a plot of land for a prison at the founding of the colony. Hepzibah and Clifford Pyncheon are imprisoned by the Pyncheon mansion in The House of the Seven Gables. They try to flee but are unable to feel free of the house until Judge Pyncheon dies. In The Blithedale Romance, Zenobia and Priscilla are imprisoned,

or enslaved, by society. Zenobia is bound by the limitations of being woman in nineteenth century society, and she destroys herself when she realizes that she is willing to accept these limitations and also has helped to keep Priscilla bound by the same rules. The characters in The Marble Faun are imprisoned both by guilt and by the institutions of society. Nina Baym maintains that in The Marble Faun "society is envisioned as institutionalized repression and persecution. This idea, though extreme, is implicit in all Hawthorne's representations of the struggle between romantic individualism and authoritarian society."<sup>29</sup>

In The Marble Faun, authoritarian society is represented by the past and the church. We have already discussed how the implied author sees Rome as "a vast tomb." This spectre of the past looms over Rome with "a threefold antiquity"--Etruscan, Roman, Christian. The narrator expresses a feeling of repression when he says, "It is a vague sense of ponderous remembrances; a perception of such weight and density in a bygone life, of which this spot was the center, that the present moment is pressed down or crowded out, and our individual affairs and interests are half as real here as elsewhere" (IV, 6). Miriam also feels imprisoned by her past. Her persecutor, whom we later learn is a Capuchin monk, says to her, "It is in

<sup>29</sup> Baym, p. 358.

my power, as you well know, to compel your acquiescence in my bidding. . . . We have a destiny which we must needs fulfill together. I, too, have struggled to escape it" (IV, 94). He later adds, "We are bound together, and can never part again" (IV, 96). Miriam replies that she has tried to escape, and we know that she has tried to do this through her paintings. But the narrator comments that "there seemed to be an odor of guilt" around the two figures and asks how "should spotless innocence be subjected to a thralldom like that which she endured from the spectre" (IV, 97).

This concept of "thralldom" and subjection is further explored in the relationship between Miriam and Donatello. After they have thrown the monk over the precipice, the narrator says,

Their deed--the crime which Donatello wrought, and Miriam accepted on the instant--had wreathed itself, as she said, like a serpent, in inextricable links about both their souls, and drew them into one, by its terrible contractile power. It was closer than a marriage-bond. (IV, 174)

To describe the bond between Miriam and Donatello as "closer than a marriage-bond" is thought-provoking, for marriage in the nineteenth century was a bond broken rarely, except by death. Donatello says that they are "cemented with his [the monk's] blood" into "the ever-increasing loathsomeness of a union that consists in guilt" (IV, 175-76). Again,

notice he uses the word "union" and says they are cemented together. These two are thus chained or imprisoned by guilt. The union between Miriam and the monk is broken by his death, but that between Miriam and Donatello must remain intact. Although the modern reader would most likely argue that this bond is not unbreakable, Hawthorne's nineteenth century, sympathetic created reader understands the author's perception of the bond of guilt and its consequences.

In addition to the belief that individuals can be imprisoned by guilt, the implied author also demonstrates how society imprisons. The author singles out one particular institution--the church. The implied author makes numerous references to the power of the Catholic Church over the people, and, of course, the Capuchin monk is an agent of the church. Miriam and Donatello have thus broken both social and moral law. However, the best illustration of the implied author's view of the repression of society and the church is his description of the grapevine. The narrator says:

Nothing can be more picturesque than an old grape-vine, with almost a trunk of its own, clinging fast around its supporting tree. Nor does the picture lack its moral. You might twist it to more than one grave purpose as you saw how the knotted, serpentine growth imprisoned within its strong embrace the friend, that had supported its tender infancy; and how (as seemingly flexible natures are prone to do) it converted the sturdier tree entirely to its own selfish ends, extending its innumerable arms on every bough, and permitting hardly a leaf to sprout except its own.  
(IV, 291-92)

Institutionalized society--the grape-vine--which is "seemingly flexible," eventually subdues the rugged individual--the supporting tree. The created reader, thus, is reminded and forced to face the fact that he can be imprisoned both by the past and by the institutions of society.

In The Marble Faun, the created reader is demonstrated to be widely read in history and literature, well-versed in art spanning five centuries, an artist of sorts--perhaps even a writer--a traveller, and a man who is concerned with his approaching old age. The created reader and implied author have a similar attitude toward a woman's artistic talent, believing that a woman's best artistic outlet is through a needle and thread. Both author and reader agree that Hilda is a skilled artist. This, however, is because she recognizes her limitations and willingly works within them. The implication is that women would be happier if they accepted the limitations of society. The sympathetic created reader also accepts the author's dark view of the world. The loss of innocence is as inevitable as death itself.

The darkness, the feeling of aging and of coming death, and the sense of futility which pervade this novel reflect the real author's attempt to come to terms with his own situation. Hawthorne wrote The Marble Faun while he was still living abroad. Although he had enjoyed various periods of his life in England and Italy, he had not achieved

the sense of inner peace, personal fulfillment, or prosperity that he longed for. He suffered several bouts of illness while in Rome, which only served to increase the feeling of depression which Rome itself seemed to engender. Having lived a number of years abroad, Hawthorne began to feel as many expatriates do that they are depriving their children of the opportunity to develop as Americans in their native land. Thus, he began to turn his thoughts toward returning to America, although he realized that he would be no happier than when he had first left the country. The Marble Faun was written both in Rome and in Redcar, England. Despite some biographers' claims--particularly Hubert Hoeltje's--that Hawthorne enjoyed the solitude of Redcar,<sup>30</sup> this writer finds it easier to understand how the isolation, loneliness, and sense of utter desolation might, in fact, have the opposite effect, and, thus serve to increase the feeling of depression and alienation which pervade the novel. Hawthorne did seem to sense his own approaching death. He died on May 19, 1864, four years after his return from England. Whether his Gentle Reader was actually "under some mossy gravestone" no longer matters.

<sup>30</sup> Hubert H. Hoeltje, Inward Sky: The Mind and Heart of Nathaniel Hawthorne (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 505-506.

## Conclusion

Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote his four novels with a sympathetic reader in mind. In the prefaces to his first novel, The Scarlet Letter, and his last, The Marble Faun, he specifically says that he writes for "a congenial friend," one who is "closer and kinder than a brother," and who is "sympathetic, "appreciative," and "indulgent." In the preface to The Marble Faun, he also writes that this understanding friend is a mythical person. Thus, it is clear that Hawthorne attempts to tear down the barrier of cold print between author and reader through the creation of this fictive reader. Wayne Booth's theory that the real reader must lay aside his own beliefs and assume those of the author is more than ably demonstrated by the rhetoric which Hawthorne uses in his prefaces. His stress on the words "sympathetic" and "understanding" establishes his intention to write for the few who will understand him and not the many who may not. So the real reader of Hawthorne's works must be willing to assume certain characteristics and attitudes in order to fit the conception of the created reader, thus becoming that sympathetic, understanding friend.

While it is not necessary to read all four novels in order to discover the attitudes of the implied author and

the characteristics of the created reader, a close study of all four gives us a rounded, clearly defined person. Certain attitudes, such as the implied author's views on the role of women, the value of the past, the necessity for authority, and the conflict between the individual and society, are carried through all four novels. However, a more elaborate portrait of the created reader can be drawn by adding the background details contained in each of the novels.

The first clue to the gender of Hawthorne's reader is given us in "The Custom-House." Hawthorne says that he is writing to one closer than a brother, but the implied author is rarely as straightforward as this. By carefully examining his rhetoric and tone in less obvious cases, we can support our contention that Hawthorne consistently writes for a male audience. When discussing the artistry of needlework in The Marble Faun, for example, the narrator comments that a major difference between the sexes is that "our sex" is incapable of concentrating on any activity apart from the main business of life. In this instance, he can be talking only about men to men. In The Blithedale Romance, Miles Coverdale describes the warmth and companionship of a group of men drinking and smoking in the all-male preserve of the saloon. With these clear references and many other veiled ones, we have no choice but to recognize that Hawthorne is writing for a male created reader.

A second important characteristic of this reader is his age. Michael Farrell and Stanley Rosenberg, in a published study entitled Men at Midlife, make a number of general observations on middle-aged men. Although this study is not meant to be definitive, Farrell and Rosenberg do make a number of statements which coincide with our observations of Hawthorne's created reader. They argue that men, during their middle years, see a broad future shrinking into a very particular present; see the future as limited in time and possibilities; become more strident in their demands for conformity and less forgiving toward deviance; begin to experience a challenge from wives now released from constant child care; become more rigid in their thinking; see their hopes of achieving economic prosperity evaporate and thus begin feeling trapped in a future over which they have no control; experience an increasing awareness of their own bodily deterioration and coming mortality; begin experiencing alienation and depression; often project their feelings of rejection and anxiety onto a hostile and alien universe; experience problems with establishing intimate relationships; often travel without enjoying it; and experience profound self-doubt as a result of long-standing conflicts and

unfulfilled aspirations.<sup>1</sup> Our examination of Hawthorne's four novels has shown that Farrell and Rosenberg could easily be describing the implied author and the created reader.

The atmosphere of aging or an increasing awareness of mortality is very strong in The Marble Faun, Hawthorne's last novel. Along with this sensation is the strong sense of darkness and depression which the created reader is expected to perceive and understand as present in all four novels. If middle-aged men have a feeling of being trapped, as Farrell and Rosenberg suggest, this concept is more than adequately demonstrated in all the novels through the images of prison and imprisonment. The Scarlet Letter opens with a prison; Hephzibah and Clifford Pyncheon view the Pyncheon house as a prison; Zenobia and Priscilla are imprisoned by society in their roles as women; Miriam and Donatello are trapped and held by guilt; and, finally, the implied author demonstrates in The Marble Faun how all individuals can be imprisoned by the institutions of society, as well as by the past. The middle-aged created reader is forced to face the likely failure of the individual in conflict with society.

In addition, one could say that this middle-aged male author and reader also project their feelings of anxiety

<sup>1</sup> Michael P. Farrell and Stanley D. Rosenberg, Men at Midlife (Boston: Auburn House, 1981).

against the spectre of the past. The implied author seems at times to wish his created reader to reject all of the traditions of the past, for he believes that the germs of past generations have infected those of the present. However, as Farrell and Rosenberg point out, middle age is a period of increasing conformity. Thus, created reader and author come to agree that man must use elements of the past in order to build a future. Holgrave, therefore, in The House of the Seven Gables, comes to see that he can found a family without necessarily producing the same effect on future generations as the Pyncheon family had on succeeding generations. The created reader and author also agree that man cannot be totally self-reliant. He must learn to live within a society based upon law. Furthermore, another element of conformity to society is developed in The Blithedale Romance, where created reader and implied author come to agree that society does need to be changed, but that, as with the traditions of the past, change cannot take place overnight. Reform will come, but slowly.

Farrell and Rosenberg also point out that middle-aged men experience conflicts with authority figures. It is during this period that many men lose their own fathers through death or discover that they must experience a reversal of roles with their own aging parents. This comes at a time,

also, when these men are facing challenges to their authority from their adolescent children, as well as coming to terms with the loss of their authority when grown children leave "the nest." Although the parent-child relation is not in the forefront of the novels, Hawthorne's implied author and created reader also explore the workings of authority. In The Scarlet Letter, the implied author begins by dismissing the Puritan authorities as unfit judges; but by the end of the novel, author and reader see that authority is necessary as a protection of society. Agents of authority must act as a barrier against the "tempestuous tide" of deviants who threaten the foundations of society. In The Blithedale Romance, one also sees that the created reader and implied author continue to concur on the necessity for authority, but it must be "flexible." Although both created reader and implied author have a certain amount of rigidity in their views, they are also able to see that an inflexible authority will crack and break under the force of those changes which must come in society. Thus, if authority is to survive, it must be able to change when changes are demanded.

Although both the created reader and implied author recognize that society will change in the future, there is one area in which they both feel threatened by this possibility. The role of women in society is explored by reader and author in all four novels. Hester Prynne and Zenobia--

strong, capable, intelligent, and speculative women--are threatening figures to these two middle-aged men. Phoebe Pyncheon "shocks no canon of taste" nor "jars against circumstances" while she happily washes the pots and pans in the kitchen. Priscilla never questions male authority and evidently knows her rightful place beside her man. These two are the ideals of womanhood in these novels. Miriam, who is also strong, intelligent, and a gifted artist, is not considered suitable by these two men for her chosen occupation as painter. She allows her emotions to control her work. Hilda, on the other hand, is looked upon as a skilled artist because she recognizes her lack of creativity and willingly works within this boundary. Thus, both male created reader and implied author believe that women will be happy only if they learn to live within their limited skills and the restrictions which society places upon them.

In addition to the facts that Hawthorne's created reader is male and middle-aged, we also learn that he is middle-class from his attitudes about being fashionably dressed, his conception of good table manners, and his wish for a comfortable life. He also feels much more comfortable and at ease living in a town rather than in the country. Being of the middle class during the nineteenth century also means that Hawthorne's created reader is well and classically educated. Both in The Blithedale Romance

and The Marble Faun we have seen how the implied author assumes that his reader is familiar with the writings of the ancient poets, history, European philosophers and social reformers, and English literature, as well as contemporary writers in the nineteenth century. Hawthorne also assumes that his middle-class reader has an extensive knowledge of art and has travelled enough to have seen many examples of European art.

The concentration in The Marble Faun on the concepts of good and bad art and the problems of the artist is a culmination of the implied author's concern with his own profession. Farrell and Rosenberg maintain that middle-aged men often experience self-doubt, and certainly the implied author wants his created reader to explore with him the nature of the artist. In The House of the Seven Gables, the created reader is made to see that the true artist must engage the heart as well as the head. Miles Coverdale, in The Blithedale Romance, is an unsuccessful poet because he does not have the perceptive ability to see into the heart of a situation. The implied author assumes that his created reader is an artist of sorts for he must have the ability both to observe an object of art and perceive its value and also to be able to sympathize with the problems of artistic creation. Hawthorne wants his understanding created reader to realize that there is no need to insist upon "looking too closely at the wrong side of the tapestry" but instead to

"accept it at its worth." The understanding, sympathetic created reader thus will recognize that the romance of The Marble Faun is Hawthorne's representation of true art. The implied author says that the only true painters are those that combine the real and the illusionary--Nature and Art. The Dutch and Flemish genre painters, along with a few of the Pre-Raphaelites, are the only artists who manage to combine these two qualities successfully. In the conclusion to The Marble Faun, the implied author says that he intended to include characters with qualities between the real and the fantastic. The successful reader understands and does not need explanations for the mysteries left unsolved.

The search for the created reader can raise some problems for the real reader, as well as solve some. First of all, the real reader's attempt to be objective--to lay aside his real beliefs--may not always be successful. True objectivity from the reader is an ideal goal, just as is true objectivity on the part of the real author. Thus, both real author and real reader begin their dialogue with good intentions which may not be realized. Because we are asking the real reader to assume a stance which, at best, is difficult to maintain, we must be prepared to stop the reading at various intervals in order to appraise our relationship with the values of the implied author and then make any necessary adjustments. It is a daunting task, indeed, to ask a reader

to assume a position which may be totally opposed to his own deeply rooted beliefs and maintain this posture continuously throughout a three-hundred-page novel. The real reader, therefore, must be prepared to persevere.

As Walter Ong suggests, the search for the created reader in a novel written in a time period other than our own may help the real reader understand and grasp the atmosphere of a time period otherwise out of reach. But, this move backward can also prove to be as much a hindrance as a help. The implied author expects his created reader to have not only the same knowledge of historical events but also the same cultural experiences. If the real reader wishes to be in nearly the same position as the created reader, he must be prepared to do a certain amount of research into the sources for the literary and historical allusions of the author. This kind of study tends to accentuate the gaps in one's knowledge and understanding. In some respects, the path toward the created reader is like that of an actor preparing for a role on the stage. He must get inside the character, think as he thinks, react as he reacts, and thus become that person.

If the real reader is a nineteenth century middle-aged male, this may not be a difficult feat when reading a book written by a nineteenth century middle-aged male author. However, it poses a number of problems for a twentieth century woman. Very rarely--outside of reading

novels--are we called upon to assume a role so totally opposite to what we really are. Is it really possible to say with any certainty that we know how the opposite sex really thinks? We all base our conclusions on assumptions. Thus, in the case of Hawthorne's novels, if women are to assume the role of created reader, they must move not only into another time period but also into another gender. This is, by far, the most difficult feat we ever ask a reader to perform. Indeed, it is in this very area that a feminine reader must continually reassess her thoughts and reactions. There may be times when the feminine reader may find it difficult to determine whether her thoughts and reactions are masculine or feminine. Thus, constant adjustments must be made in order to keep the masculine/feminine roles clearly in focus.

In addition, there is also the possibility that the feminine reader may feel excluded from this cosy dialogue between male implied author and male created reader. Hawthorne, particularly, has a tendency to carry on a conversation with his created reader which intentionally excludes all women. A good example is in the chapter in The Blithedale Romance in which Miles Coverdale goes into the saloon. Of course, nineteenth century women would be excluded because of the social customs of the period; but even though the customs have changed to a certain extent today, the tone of this passage continues to leave women on the

outside looking in at the warmth and camaraderie of an all-male preserve.

In spite of the problems which both men and women of the twentieth century may have with a nineteenth century created reader, the advantages of finding such a reader far outweigh the disadvantages. Although this writer has read these four novels of Hawthorne's many times, only now has she come to a true understanding of the basic values and ideas of Hawthorne's implied author. The search for the created reader deepens the appreciation for the writer's art, provides insight into the author's intentions--thereby silencing rage--and, lastly, establishes new ground on which to build a continuing quest.

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