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THE CHARACTERS OF HAWTHORNE AND FAULKNER:

A TYPOLOGY OF SINNERS

by
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THE CHARACTERS OF HAWTHORNE AND FAULKNER: A TYPOLOGY OF SINNERS

By Theodore Lewis Colson

Though there is no direct influence, there are intense and comparable religious sensibilities implicit in the writing of Hawthorne and Faulkner. Their concern begins with the possibilities for fiction in the guilt historically associated with their regions, and extends to the nature of individual involvement with sin. It is striking that certain of their characters are spiritually akin—that comments about Young Goodman Brown are found to be true of Joe Christmas. And many other characters, brought together, illuminate each other.

The wholeness of unfallen man, an eternal state not easily found within time, seems the implicit goal of many of the most interesting characters—who are religious, not orthodoxly, but in their all-out attempts to achieve this ideal. But most of them evade repentance and pursue spurious ideals. The order of scrutinizing these characters seems naturally to begin with those who first make acquaintance with sin: with Caddy in the pear tree, and thence it seems right to consider groups of characters ordered according to their increasing consciousness of sin. Consequently our exploration is roughly analogous to Dante's descent in the Inferno.

Benjy Compson and Clifford Pyncheon retain a childlike innocence in adulthood, and have a limbo existence outside of time. Only Dilsey can encounter the temporal world unflinchingly because her conception of

eternal values can include the transcient. (Phoebe Pyncheon and Lena Grove have convincingly good natures, but Hawthorne's and Faulkner's few other 'innocent' grownups are not very credible.)

The simplest sin is inordinate appetite: rapacity. One kind is the mere perverted bestiality of Popeye. A second kind, respectability, functions in two ways. Most simply it is sheep's clothing for the wolf who wants to be bestial, yet respected for his morality; it can, however, be used not only as a cloak for rapacity, but as its instrument. The third kind, more sophisticated and vampire-like, tries to reach the inmost core of a victim; it is quasi-religious in its demand for what is utter.

The morally rigid are those characters who victimize themselves and others out of obsession with moralistic absolutes; their efforts are misplaced attempts to achieve integrity by isolation or by stratagems: Young Goodman Brown's solipsistic righteousness, Hollingsworth's philanthropic design, Sutpen's dynastic ambition, Aylmer's and Charlotte Rittenmeyer's attempts to achieve perfect human love, and Joe Christmas' attacks on impurity in women and the vileness in racism are examples.

There are characters, like Owen Warland and Miles Coverdale, who strive in various ways to become 'beautiful souls.' While struggling for ideal life they confuse aesthetic aspirations with ethical responsibility, and infect reality with fiction. They want to make life into art, and the result is death-in-life.

The most tormented characters are the remorseful, who recognize the need for repentance, not as regret, of which they have plenty, but as the sense of feeling forgiven, accepted, by God and the world, and hence able to forgive themselves and to forget obsession with sin. There are two related kinds of remorse. In one, a person like Dimmesdale

knows what his sin is but does not want to give it up despite the pain it causes, and indeed, masochistically clings to that pain. In the other, a person like Joe Christmas feels a tremendous pain of guilt incommensurate with any conscious guilt. Both kinds are tormented with anxiety, and lead to moral wildernesses where all sense of values is endangered.

Though necessarily discussed in relative isolation, all these sins thematically permeate the novels, and indeed the greater characters range throughout much of the whole inferno—the complexity of the novels and of the characters in this respect being an indication of their magnitude.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Hawthorne and Faulkner

The object of this study is explication of the work of Hawthorne and of Faulkner. The similarity of their deepest interests suggests that consideration of the writing of each might throw light on that of the other. Those interests are frequently religious, and in the use of religious themes can be found a common ground for comparison. Despite the distances from New England, where matters are more likely to go according to Scriptures and statute books, to the South, where they often break into violence; despite a century's distance in time, and despite a difference in styles that reflects those distances, Hawthorne and Faulkner have much in common. And most striking perhaps is that "both are adepts if not masters of a kind of black and blackened Christianity."[1]

Hawthorne and Faulkner often use a theme persistent in American fiction: the strongly felt but only dimly understood—indeed, so often blackened—need for Christianity. This is not to be a study of Hawthorne's influence on Faulkner (there was little or none), but a comparison of them as major exemplars of American writers whose sensibility Christianity has helped shape, and for whom the problems of Christianity are often important subjects.[2] Where it is convenient I shall draw parallels between them, but often placing discussions of their works side by side will make apparent their relevance to each other.

Both are regional writers. Both work by symbol and allegory and

make the actualities of their particular regions comprehend universal significances. The very landscapes to which they are devoted become morally charged. Their concern begins with the histories of their own families, and they are interested in the possibilities of myth in the guilt which is historically associated with their regions: slavery and racial intolerance in the South, Puritanical intolerance in New England. That interest extends to the nature of the individual's involvement in historical guilt, and the paradox of the antiquity of sin in a new world. They are concerned with Original Sin and Unpardonable Sin; that is, with the apparent inevitability of sin, and the terrible difficulty of redemption or of any counteracting of sin's consequences.

Both were proponents of Jeffersonian democracy, and freedom and brotherly love are of utmost value in their fictional worlds—the more prized for their rarity there. They frequently portray the damnation that attends undisciplined passion. But they regard intellect with suspicion, and often condemn it for functioning at the expense of the life of feeling. The truths which they are most interested in are those which touch the heart.

The guilt that concerns Hawthorne and Faulkner is at one with the need for Christian love. Love is one of their most persistent themes, though it is rarely labeled Christian, and though its most striking characteristic is exactly its appalling absence. Thus much of their 'Christian' material is Christian Pharisaism manifested by its exaltation of respectability and moral rigidity and the denial of charity. They write of the moral life as it is worked out against, often in conflict with, a background of Christianity which is omnipresent, though sometimes only dimly perceptible. In this sense they use Christian tradition, as it actually is working in secular life, for a storehouse of subject

matter. And they find also a storehouse of imagery and symbols which they secularize for the purposes of fiction.

My purpose is not to analyse the personal religious opinions of either writer. That has been amply done.[3] Nor is it to search their religious backgrounds for aid in interpreting the fiction. Indeed we are not primarily concerned with the religious opinions or sensibilities of the men, Hawthorne and Faulkner, but with those of the "implied authors" (to use Wayne Booth's indispensable concept) who make themselves known only in their art.[4] If I do quote them when they are speaking as 'private citizens' it will be to enlighten us about the "implied author."[5] I think the world-view realized in the total body of his fiction might reflect with some accuracy the private world-view of each author; but then, "to some novelists it has seemed, indeed, that they were discovering or creating themselves as they wrote."[6] However, our concern is not with the Christianity of Hawthorne or Faulkner, but with the "blackened Christianity" in their fictional worlds.

"Hawthorne's religion was deep, unanalyzed, inarticulate."[7] He wrote that Melville would never rest until he got hold of a definite belief,[8] and he respected this courage and honesty in not trying either to believe or disbelieve despite the discomfort of such a position. But unlike Melville, Hawthorne was quite comfortable without a <u>definite</u> intellectual belief. It was a point in his integrity to avoid the pride and folly of asserting final answers. Father Leonard Fick demonstrates, with quotations drawn from the whole body of his work, that Hawthorne agreed with all the important points of the Apostle's creed. Since it is drawn from Hawthorne's responses to particular occasions, this method might give us a view of his total attitude that is rather awry; nevertheless Father Fick's position is probably, in the main, correct. He asserts that

Hawthorne could not be called a Unitarian, though he was not a trinitarian either, because he believed in a Redeemer.[9] But the quality of that belief could hardly be defined. Hawthorne expressed his belief in heaven and immortality several times, largely because it would be too horrible if this were not so.[10] And as for judgement and hell, he has written: "At the last day—I presume, that is, in all future days, when we shall see ourselves as we are—man's only inexorable judge will be himself, and the punishment of his sins will be the perception of them."[11] But what is this compared to the hell endured by Arthur Dimmesdale?

Faulkner's religious attitudes have been thoroughly examined. His statements range from assertions that he is a humanist,[12] to: "Within my own rights I feel that I'm a good Christian."[13] I think the most significant criticism of Faulkner's religious attitudes—in the work, not in the man—is that of John W. Hunt, whose cogent thesis is that he maintains a tension between Stoic and Christian views. Faulkner sees that much of the difficulty of the Southern tradition—and of all humanity—has come from wrongly assessing the nature of man, as Hunt says: "seeing only defect [the Stoic view] where there actually was sin" [the Christian view].[14] But to Faulkner orthodox Christianity does not seem adequate to our time. Guilt he sees, but, like Hawthorne, little redemptive grace. In Requiem for a Nun Nancy can believe, but Temple Drake Stephens can only ask, "Believe what?" (Act III, sc. i). Faulkner's final hope often seems to be only in man's "endurance." Yet he turns again and again in various allusions and parallels to Christ's Passion for what meaning it can shed on man's suffering and endurance.

Hawthorne and Faulkner write about damnation because the problem of why there is sin is perhaps the most intriguing problem we know, and it is especially ironic in a 'Christian' American culture. And since

that Christianity is so "blackened," they are not at a loss for the "picturesque and gloomy wrongs" that are the basic stuff of their romances.

Despite the unabashedly theological terms I will occasionally use, this study is not about Hawthorne's and Faulkner's characters as illustration of Christian doctrine. They are not suitable for such a purpose. But as I see them, the patterns of development of the central figures make these ways of confronting conscience seem to supply the obvious mode of organization. The main concern is to discover meaning through the action and setting, and especially through the richness of characterization.

I do hold with Henry James that "questions of art are questions (in the widest sense) of execution" and that "questions of morality are quite another affair" ("The Art of Fiction"). "Integrity," "corruption," "grace" are theological and moral terms, not literary, like, for instance, Forster's useful categories of round and flat characters. But criticism of characterization must have to do with just how characters are round or flat. When novelists like Hawthorne and Faulkner are so concerned with man's sinful nature—and when they write of and from societies whose cosmologies have been so markedly Calvinistic—states of integrity, corruption, and grace are likely to be vital forces in characterization. These are successive states of mankind in Christian philosophy of history, and they may also be the successive states of the individual. And so they are convenient for ordering our consideration of Hawthorne's and Faulkner's use of these themes. But man does not ever wholly exist in any of these states exclusively. Though one may predominate, innocence and corruption are both always part of man's nature and may be so concurrently with grace. Flat characters cannot be dismissed as innocent

or corrupt, or complex characters as being just a mixture, but it will be convenient to see some simpler characters in one state and to trace more complex characters from one state to another. For when a work is profoundly ethical what matters is just how, under what circumstances, people are innocent or corrupt, or both.

B. Method and Terminology

I do not wish to force Hawthorne and Faulkner into any theological or mythological framework; indeed, I may bend over backwards not to. Certainly one does bring his own preconceptions, his own theology, or lack of it, to interpretation. Nevertheless, though my own interests have brought me to regard certain religious aspects of Hawthorne's and Faulkner's work as important, my interpretation is an attempt to help make clearer what is presented in the novels, and someone with a different theology, or none, ought to see the same things I do when we are both reading aright. When I refer to the religious aspects of their work I think chiefly of religion in a broad sense, as "the quest for values of ideal life . . . involving the ideal, the practice for attaining those values, and the theology or world-view relating the quest to the environing universe."[15]

The discussion of these characters is based on the assumptions that two Judeo-Christian theological concepts are unavoidably present in the world-views of Hawthorne's and Faulkner's work, and that, though these concepts are far in the background, the religious sensibility which makes them pertinent to the fiction is very much to the fore. Those concepts are that man as he exists is deprived of wholeness and integrity,

and that he does seek wholeness, sometimes wrongheadedly. That is, Hawthorne and Faulkner are concerned with what Biblical theology calls "fallenness" and the need for repentance.

I do not attempt to explore the whole range of the work of these writers. The humor, an important part of Faulkner's work, has been left out. Some discussions of pertinent stories such as "The Maypole of Merrymount" and As I Lay Dying must be dropped, rather sadly, because they would only reiterate points discussed elsewhere. And the specific moral and religious commentary offered in Hawthorne's Sketches and Notebooks and in Faulkner's works like Requiem for a Nun and A Fable will be deliberately neglected—for they are neither so interesting nor so much to the point as the greater works.

When I began reading Hawthorne and Faulkner together I became aware that an intense religious sensibility was part of each writer's creativity. And I was struck that certain of their characters were naturally akin—that comments about Young Goodman Brown were also true of Joe Christmas and helped me understand Joe Christmas. The groupings of characters in each of these chapters has seemed to me inevitable, arising out of the similarities of their own natures.

The ordering of the chapters also seemed more or less inevitable. Hawthorne and Faulkner write about sin, and the appropriate beginning would be with characters first making acquaintance with sin: with Caddy in the pear tree; and thence it seemed right to discuss these groups of characters, descending as into Dante's inferno, in order according to their increasing degrees of consciousness of sin.

Behind Dante's inferno there is a precise system of Thomistic theology, and to know this helps in reading Dante. The religious thought behind Hawthorne's and Faulkner's infernos is hardly precise.

And there is no arrangement of orderly concentric circles, but rather, a moral wilderness—in which I have tried to find some trails, trails which, though faint, are there; for Hawthorne and Faulkner were not astray. The order in which I have discussed the delusions and sins of their characters is not meant to be imposed as an alien order on the worlds of their fiction, but is drawn from those worlds. The point is that if Hawthorne and Faulkner characters did go to a Dantean hell Hollingsworth and Sutpen would meet, and I think they would likely be in the same circle with Aylmer and Charlotte Rittenmeyer. The sins that most intrigue Hawthorne and Faulkner, and the ways they treat them, coincide.

My terminology generally arises from the demands of the fiction I am discussing, rather than from the urgings of any theological system or from critical language, and can never be quite as precise as I should like. By "repentance" I shall always refer not primarily to regret for wrong done, but to "a turning to God;"[16] but I do not want to insist on a theological denotation: "turning to God" can be taken as delighting in God's Law (or nature's, though these are not necessarily to be equated)—that is, to find peace in accepting the world and oneself; and to do this everyone must make some kind of accounting for the problem of evil. Repentance in Hawthorne's and Faulkner's world, and the wholeness to which it can lead, are almost invariably presented as a need. Rather than confronting the problem of evil and accountability their characters are prone to seek out, consciously, or more likely subconsciously, some accommodation to it. Of all their characters only Dilsey, I think, can encounter the temporal world unflinchingly, because her conception of eternal values can include the transient. She "endures" because she is whole. Neither artist shows much conviction that repentance is possible; Hawthorne, especially, is fatalistic, but that does not alter a jot the

poignancy of the need felt for repentance and for the wholeness it could make possible. The wholeness, integrity, of unfallen man, an eternal state not easily found within time, seems the implicit goal for many of their most interesting characters: Dilsey seeks it rightly; Benjy and Clifford are given pitiful likenesses of it; other characters seek it, or substitutes for it, with varying degrees of consciousness.

The discussion of my terms will follow the order of increasing subtlety and awareness of sin. By "innocence" I do not, of course, refer to a state identical with the mythical wholeness of Adam before the Fall, but to the innocence of children, which consists mainly of inexperience but nevertheless is charming since it has not the deliberate malice that must to some extent accompany the sin of knowledgeable adults. And by their "fall" I do not mean that men lose Edenic wholeness (they don't have it), but that they have some recognition, analogous to Adam's and Eve's after the Fall, of their accountability for sin. Benjy Compson and Clifford Pyncheon retain something of this innocence in adulthood, but their existence is in a stasis, a limbo, and however much this is saved from death-in-life, depends on the genuineness of their innocence. Many of Hawthorne's and Faulkner's more complex characters who risk or incur death-in-life, though they do so out of varying motives, often seem to be seeking a stasis like Benjy's as preferable to a confrontation with the problem of evil.

Faulkner was fond of the word "rapacity," but I do not use it with quite the meanings he does;[17] I mean inordinate appetite. Hawthorne and Faulkner were not so interested in healthy appetites as in appetites for sin, and the most striking of these are religious, in the broad sense of religion as a reaching for ultimates: their great sinners are rapacious for ultimates, for the ideal. In the chapter titled "Rapacity," however,

I will discuss three relatively simpler varieties. The first is merely the concentrated and perverted bestiality of Popeye. The second is "Respectability," and by this I refer not to its real usefulness as a social pressure, but to three ways, which intermingle, in which respectability works evil. It does function as sheep's clothing for the wolflike who are perhaps as bestial as Popeye but enjoy the reputation (and opportunities) of appearing moral. It can, moreover, be used not just as a disguise but as an instrument of persecution. And, finally, respectability can, for the less imaginatively iniquitous, become a substitute for conscience and an idol of the ideal, to which the self and others are sacrificed.

The third variety of rapacity is directed at other human beings, and I can think of no better term for it than vampirism. It is the condition in which a character wants to wring something utter out of another person, or out of their relationship, and whether that relationship is of love or hatred, or very likely a confused mixture, the result is equally destructive. This vampirism is characteristic of a great many of Hawthorne's and Faulkner's more complex sinners.

"Moral rigidity" concerns action based on the letter of law rather than its spirit, though law and morality may ostensibly seem far from the minds of some of these characters. Hawthorne's "Man of Adamant," Hollingsworth's "inflexibility of purpose," Ab Snopes' "stiffness," and the "rigidity" described in both McEachern and Joe Christmas as they struggle over the catechism, all are ready illustration of this moralism. It is perhaps less obvious in Sutpen's "amorality," and even less so in the 'love' —ideals of "The Birthmark" or The Wild Palms—where the moralism is tinged with aestheticism. But in all these cases inflexible moralistic law is the idol of private religions.

"Aesthetic morality" is a hubris in which it is thought that that which is whole and perfect can be achieved in life by arranging and framing personal experience aesthetically, so as to shut out the discord of the multitudinous ethical demands of the lives of others. Owen Warland is trying to get from art the values of life, or to substitute his art for life. Isaac McCaslin is trying to get from life the values of art, or to make his life into an art work. Quentin Compson and Coverdale are more complex; I think they waveringly try to make the mistakes of both Warland and Ike McCaslin. But all this "aesthetic" endeavor evades involvement in life and leads toward denial of life, and despair. This kind of sin seems to me more subtle, more self-deceiving than any of the others discussed, and perhaps should be at the bottom of my inferno, but I have chosen that place for the remorseful because their awareness and torment is greater.

"Remorse" is literally a biting back, like that excellent Middle English term, the "agenbit of inwit," and though its meaning has been sometimes loosened to include repentance, it still carries the stigma of that conscience which gnaws: it denotes "a painful sting of conscience, without necessarily connoting humility or hope of forgiveness; <u>remorse</u> emphasizes mental anguish and often intense suffering for consequences which cannot be escaped, not necessarily accompanied by any resolve to reform."[18] I use the term to describe that state of those who recognize, or perhaps only feel subconsciously, a strong need for repentance, but who have little or no hope of achieving repentance.

In <u>The Marble Faun</u> Donatello's 'fall' is apparently a particular crime. His later remorse is not so much for the death of that foul creature as for the discovery of evil and mortality within himself: the significance of which (though Hawthorne does not spell it out in

Donatello's case) is not that he fell, but that insofar as he was human he had always been fallen. (Essentially the same discovery is made by Quentin Compson and by Isaac McCaslin.) Miriam tries to fit this into a rational worldview: there must be some good reason for sin. By his fall Donatello the innocent youth becomes a man. More pathetic is a child's fall and ordeal of consciousness, for a child's innocence is more helpless.

Caddy Compson does not decide to sin as Eve did. She was just always doomed and knew it. The doom is not a pronouncement made in any beginning; it is a damnation slowly working its way out in Caddy's life. Perhaps only in someone born mature—as Eve was—could sin be decided upon, be chronologically original. Quentin, however, resists knowledge of doom: "There's a curse on us. It's not our fault"; then adds the vital question: "Is it our fault?" Hester Prynne is, for us, born mature and fallen. Hawthorne sets our sympathy so firmly with her that we first see her mostly as a victim. The sympathy she inspires (which has sometimes mistakenly seen her suffering as real expiation) is not amiss, for Hester 'recalls' and always has much integrity, and she desperately needs some grace. Yet the great richness of The Scarlet Letter is not a description of Hester after her titular fall, but is the very presentation of Hester's falling ever deeper as she struggles in a moral wilderness. And is not this the real struggle of the "American Adam": to find the new world not Paradise or Canaan but the moral wilderness for his ordeal?

Hawthorne and Faulkner seek not to justify the ways of God to man, but to do justice to the ways of men in their confrontation with time, with conscience, with knowledge of good and evil. To be fully a man is to struggle with conscience; and an ordinary man for his comfort's sake must avert a bad conscience as much as possible. Our "American

Adams" cannot be innocent as Adam was before the fall. "Most have sought rather to regain their paradise by following some ideal pattern, or by adapting some conscious strategy of innocence."[19] Such "conscious" strategies are means of confronting guilt, in others and in the self, and can be complexly other than innocent. In this study I intend to explore the strategies by which Hawthorne's and Faulkner's characters strive to find their integrity. In those strategies they realize their fallenness —and the realization is usually in the sense that they make it more real, bring it to dark fruition, rather than realization in the sense of self-recognition which might lead to repentance.

CHAPTER II

INNOCENCE AND THE FALL

A. Benjy and Clifford

While "In Adam's fall we sinned all," it were a harsh Calvinist indeed who would accuse childhood's charming innocence of being a "conscious strategy."[1] And there is an innocence in some adults which retains that charm—though it seems culpable since it so often must be joined with ignorance—when one is "old enough to know better." Innocence is an illusive concept, and in any person a fleeting characteristic, for it is altered by every moral experience. In this chapter we must consider those characters of Hawthorne and Faulkner who seem to be innocent 'unconsciously' rather than by strategy. But most of them are threatened with an "ordeal of consciousness."[2]

The innocence of childhood reminds us of that of Adam. It is a type of man's essential goodness. Unhappiest childhoods are often looked back to with nostalgia, for every man "regards the innocency of his childhood as symbol and reminder of his true nature."[3] In The House of Seven Gables Clifford Pyncheon is both a grown man and a child. He lapses into the childishness of senility partly because there is no place else for him to go; he returns to the Pyncheon garden, but it is "the Eden of a thunder-smitten Adam, who has fled for refuge thither out of the same dreary and perilous wilderness into which the original Adam was expelled" (Ch. 10).[4] In what remains of his physical grace we see the traces of the essential man—lost, thunder-smitten, in his decrepitude

and querulousness, though Clifford, who is both a child and an adult, is not to be regarded as just an allegory for the concept that man exists in states of essential integrity and of corruption simultaneously. Paradoxically Clifford looks back to, while he lives out, his childhood. But it is a sad 'childhood,' for its innocence is marred with knowledge. He lives in "a kind of Indian summer, with a mist in its balmiest sunshine, and decay and death in its gaudiest delight. The more Clifford seemed to taste the happiness of a child, the sadder was the difference to be recognised" (Ch. 10). But though he is sometimes tenuously aware that he is happy, usually he has "only this visionary and impalpable Now."

Faulkner values childhood innocence with poignant longing and admiration. The fall from innocence is almost inevitable; it is there within the innocence. But Faulkner sees it with regret; he would protect childhood from evil until it has strength enough to withstand it.

Hawthorne's and Faulkner's attitudes about childhood innocence are not, I think, very far apart, except (and this is a big exception) that Hawthorne clearly thought that in some women it could be preserved into adulthood. But when his women seem excessively innocent they are distasteful because they are not true.

In the South, white female purity was one of the faiths upholding society and Southern morality, and the disillusionment represented in Faulkner's fiction amounts to misogyny. It is important that the desire for purity is, in Faulkner's characters such as Horace Benbow, Quentin Compson, Ike McCaslin, even Joe Christmas, almost always a symptom of disease—one which is complemented with misogyny. The violence of the corruption in the Yoknapatawpha world is directly related to the strength of Faulkner's interest in the desire for purity. (Perhaps the image he uses most frequently to represent this desire, with many different

contexts and connotations, is Keats' Grecian Urn.)[5] And Faulkner's interest in the idea of purity is revealed in his treatment of children and their innocence.

Hawthorne and Faulkner are not concerned with the theological concept of man's loss of his essential nature. The losses of great importance in their fiction are those of innocence, of love, and of values, and these losses figure most significantly in the 'fall' of certain characters. Often there is a sense of loss so strong that it does not seem so much to concern something objective as to be an emotion on its own, a part of man's condition. So Thomas Wolfe in Look Homeward Angel sounds his refrain, "Lost! Lost!" But things go better when they cling to objects (as they do in Wolfe's story "Lost Boy"). Much more poignant is the refrain in The Sound and the Fury: "Caddy." It is wild with all regret, for Caddy is the embodiment of childhood innocence intensified by all that is not innocent around and within her. And it is the more poignant because we see her through the two brothers to whom she is all in all. "To me she was the beautiful one, she was my heart's darling. That's what I wrote the book about," Faulkner has said.[6]

Perhaps in Hawthorne's work Clifford Pyncheon best shows this feeling: "He gazed vaguely and mournfully about him, as if he missed something precious, and missed it the more drearily for not knowing precisely what it is. 'I want my happiness,' at last he murmured, hoarsely and indistinctly'" (Ch. 10). The overpowering fact about Clifford is that a sensitive and beautiful youth has been decaying for thirty years within four stone walls. Hawthorne could not use the rhetoric of "Lost! Lost!" or of "Caddy," but Clifford—and his sister—embody that sense of lostness.

Benjy Compson is also an adult who is a child; he, beyond any other character in fiction, lives in a "visionary and palpable Now." His innocence is not marred with intellectual knowledge: his knowledge is that of a "life of complete sensation." He remembers not Caddy, but the loss of Caddy, and that loss exists almost simultaneously with those flashes of total recall, of "visionary and palpable Now," in which Caddy is there, holding and comforting him. Benjy is spared the suffering of 'knowing.' But he suffers utter immediacy of the sense of loss.

Faulkner says that once he had the idea for using an idiot in his story he became interested in how the idiot could get the help to shield him in his 'innocence.'[7] He borrowed Benjy—blue eyes, splinted flower, and bellow—from one of his early short stories, titled "The Kingdom of God."[8] (In it a petty bootlegger is arrested, but his greatest concern is for his idiot brother.) Perhaps the moral Faulkner intended is: forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven—not in idiocy but in real innocence. But Benjy has no brother who will willingly be his keeper.

Both Benjy and Clifford are innocent victims. Neither is of any good to the world except as he is human, to be loved. But those who love them are powerless to protect them. It is not strange that Faulkner has given Benjy features which have caused him to be called a Christ figure;[9] the significance is that "inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Faulkner is making a point that need not be regarded as peculiarly religious; that is that essential mankind, the best of humanity, is crucified when the least of us is subjected to inhumanity. Through Benjy we experience the fall of the Compson family with intense immediacy. (It is a 'type' of the Fall.) Benjy is representative: his wailing "might have been all

time and injustice and sorrow become vocal for an instant," and his is "the grave hopeless sound of all voiceless misery under the sun."

These feeble figures can hardly be said to body forth our lost essential humanity, though Clifford shows touches of its gracefulness. Nevertheless they do in their innocence have something essential: there is the totality of Clifford's committment to the beautiful, and Benjy in his committment to love of Caddy knows more of what really matters than Sutpen ever will. Their relationship to what is essential is in how fully they know its loss. The roles of crucified Christ, of thunder-smitten Adam are much too heavy to lay on these frail creatures—but that is the hideous point. Hawthorne protests for Clifford: "He had no right to be a martyr." Hawthorne shows us Clifford blowing soap bubbles and delighting in them, and then moves in the heavy Judge Pyncheon. The Judge may sometimes seem only a stage villain or stage property, but here the contrast succeeds dramatically. "Strength is incomprehensible by weakness, and therefore the more terrible" (Ch. 11). Though Hawthorne's moralizing often distracts from or vitiates his art, at his best he places simple statements or sententiae not as authorial comment but as keystones in his art's structure. This is such a statement; its implications reverberate through the whole novel; indeed through all Hawthorne's work. The Judge is physically powerful and Clifford is frail, but it is moral and intellectual strength that matters; and here evil has power; innocence is helpless.

Let us shift to a different scene: Benjy and Luster in the kitchen. It is hardly excusable for Luster to torment Benjy, but it is understandable; Luster is mischievous, not malevolent, and he must spend a child's invaluable time tending a hulking idiot. If he is mean, he is also Benjy's second-best friend and most constant companion. He and

Dilsey take Caddy's place as much as that is possible. Since Benjy doesn't understand his plight it is hardly as bad as Clifford's. But Benjy's helplessness throughout the novel is the constant figure for the plight of the other Compsons' helplessness before terrible strengths in Jason tormenting Luster with the show tickets or tormenting Caddy with a glimpse of her child, or in Quentin helpless before the terrible strength of his whole environment.

B. Ilbrahim, Sarty, and Robin

Clifford and Benjy retain innocence in physical maturity; but most innocence encountering evil is, if it survives, transformed. Though there are others, like Priscilla or the Snow Image, Hawthorne's most compelling figure of weakness is Ilbrahim in "The Gentle Boy." The child's loss of his parents is compounded with bewilderment and terror in encountering apparently gratuitous evil. Ilbrahim dies of his loss. His foster father only puts off, and becomes fatally involved in, his death. Ilbrahim loses his parents through their fanaticism, which, as Hawthorne sees it, is wrong however admirable their courage. Ilbrahim's mother comes to him just at the moment of his death, but much, much too late. What evil there is in her fanaticism has helped to kill him quite as much as the malice in the Puritan society and the malice in the "foul hearted little villain" that struck him. "Perhaps, among the many life-weary wretches then upon the earth, there was not one who combined innocence and misery like this poor, broken-hearted infant." Innocence and misery are the two great facts about Ilbrahim. The dualities of innocence and misery are more pure in Ilbrahim, though they are the condition of all men. He is presented as almost wholly innocent, his integrity untouched by the Fall. His misery is that of the purest

possible innocence confronting pure and inexplicable evil. The same situation occurs in Billy Budd, but Billy at least is sustained by his unutterable outrage at Claggart, and by his knowledge of his own integrity. Ilbrahim has nothing but anguish.

The theme of innocence confronting and questioning but not understanding evil arises in The Scarlet Letter when Pearl asks her mother about the Black Man, and about the letter: if one will not come to her of its own accord when she is a woman grown. Pearl is somewhat patterned after Hawthorne's daughter Una, who almost frightened him with "a spirit so strangely mingled with good and evil."[10]

In "That Evening Sun" the Compson children are immediately involved with evil as Nancy tries to use them in order to keep her murderer out of her cabin. They do not understand what her terror is, but only wonder at her strangeness. Jason, except as his comfort and entertainment are directly involved, pays no attention to Nancy. Caddy is concerned and confused, full of questions: "What's going to happen?" Quentin, who later tells the story, senses something of what is happening, and has sympathy for Nancy, but is helpless. He accepts the horror not comprehending that it is horror. His consciousness is reaching out, but has not yet become an ordeal. He reveals his knowledge in his question: "Who will do our washing now, Father?" (Quentin with his concern for cleanliness, and Jason and Caddy are very much the same people they are in The Sound and the Fury.)

Faulkner's greatest treatment of the theme of childish innocence unknowingly involved in evil is in The Sound and the Fury.[11] Faulkner says that he began to expand his first idea for the novel "to see how much I could have got out of the idea of the blind, self-centeredness of innocence, typified by children, if one of those children had been truly

innocent, that is, an idiot."[12] The blind self-centeredness of innocence is a paradox. Adam and Eve became self-centered only after their innocence was lost; but since then the 'original sin' of the Compson children has been a basic human dilemma. Faulkner is much concerned with the poignancy of children encountering sin and death, and in the problem of "infant damnation" (in this life) for itself, and because it is so vital to the problem of adult damnation. (Certainly Freud's assertion of childhood sexuality made much of this possible.)

The central image of The Sound and the Fury is the one which first gave Faulkner the story: the muddy drawers of a little girl in a pear tree which her father had forbidden her.[13] (A snake has just crawled from under the house. And Dilsey calls Caddy "Satan.") In a sense they are in a garden of Eden, which is but the more poignant for its decadence. Here we, like Kenyon in Donatello's gardens, might well feel somewhat "the sensations of an adventurer who should find his way to the site of ancient Eden, and behold its loveliness through the transparency of that gloom which has been brooding over those haunts of innocence ever since the fall. Adam saw it in a brighter sunshine, but never knew the shade of pensive beauty which Eden won from his expulsion" (Ch. 30).

But Caddy's 'fall' does not occur with her getting dirty in the branch or climbing the tree, or with her affair with Dalton Ames (though that is the crucial event of the novel), or even with the sum of all her experiences, since her personality is so intimately linked with that of her parents and her brothers. Caddy's indifference to dirt and Quentin's dislike for it are moral issues, there being family law against getting dirty in the 'branch,' but they have little to do with salvation or damnation—that is, until the complex inverted love and lack of love in the family operate on those characteristics. The children's

emotions lack direction: "If I only had a mother," is the plaint of both Caddy and Quentin. And Quentin's selfishness and obsession with cleanliness interact explosively with Caddy's indifference to dirt and her great capacity to love; the dirt, love, and indifference become confused. Caddy's whole life is her fall.

In Faulkner's story "Barn Burning" the man named Harris is moved by the impulse Faulkner expressed in Requiem for a Nun: "that little children, as long as they are little children, shall be intact, unanguished, untorn, unterrified" (Act II, sc. 3). Harris, whose barn has been burnt by Ab Snopes, asks the Justice to question Snopes' ten year old son, Sarty. Sarty looks at his father. "He aims for me to lie, he thought, again with that frantic grief and despair. And I will have to do hit." The Justice asks Harris: "Do you want me to question this boy?" "No!" Harris said violently, explosively. "Damnation! Send him out of here!" The Justice and Harris are unwilling to force the boy to participate in his father's evil, and would protect his innocence. But it is too late. Though Sarty thinks "I will have to do hit," his father sees that deeper than in his conscious thought the boy has chosen against him. Sarty can no longer be "intact."

The clash between father and son is one of integrities. The father's integrity consists in a "wolflike independence" and a "ferocious conviction in the rightness of his own actions": "the element of fire spoke to some deep mainspring of his father's being, as the element of steel or powder spoke to other men, as the one weapon for the preservation of integrity, else breath were not worth the breathing." Later that night his father strikes him—even though Sarty had already been hurt fighting a larger boy who had called his father a barn burner: "You were fixing to tell them. . . . You're getting to be a man. You got to learn. You

got to learn to stick to your own blood or you aint going to have any blood to stick to you. . . ." Twenty years later, he was to tell himself, "If I had said they wanted only truth, justice, he would have hit me again." The child's integrity consists in an essential good will and honesty. He values truth and justice, though he is too young to know the terms. Where a Snopes child—or any child—gets these qualities is, I understand, perhaps even more mysterious to psychologists than the sources of ill will. On a naturalistic level it must be explained as simply willfulness, neither good nor evil, his against his father's. And painful as it is, he must preserve his own integrity, "else breath were not worth the breathing." To "stick to your own blood" is a deep rule of preservation, almost an instinct, especially in Faulkner's South. And Sarty tries to. Those who choose not to, like Ike McCaslin, or who are fated not to, like Joe Christmas, are doomed to isolation.

In the beginning of the story Sarty watches his father and "his father's enemy." Then he thinks in despair: "our enemy . . . ourn! mine and hisn both! He's my father!" At the story's end he warns another victim of barn burning, though too late, and runs away: "stumbling, tripping over something and scrabbling up again without ceasing to run, looking on among the invisible trees, panting, sobbing, 'Father! Father!'"

His father exemplifies moral rigidity. Faulkner projects this rigidity with repetitions of the adjective "stiff" and with the metaphor of tin: Sarty "was already half asleep over his iron plate when his father called him, and once more he followed the stiff back, the stiff and ruthless limp, up the slope and on to the starlit road where, turning, he could see his father against the stars but without face or depth—a shape black, flat and bloodless as though cut from tin in the iron folds of the frockcoat, . . . the voice harsh like tin, and without

heat like tin."[14] How can he "stick to his own blood," much as he longs to, when his father is "a shape black, flat, and bloodless," and "without face or depth?" He falls asleep in his flight. In the morning, "he was a little stiff." This stiffness is an echoing of the motif of his father's, his inheritance of the natural condition (the stiffness is associated chiefly with the father's lame foot); ". . . but walking would cure that too as it would the cold, and soon there would be the sun. He went on down the hill, towards the dark woods within which the liquid silver voices of the birds called unceasing." The tone, though less sublime, recalls the end of Paradise Lost. That is Sarty's situation.

Sarty Snopes turns away from his father's evil; in "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" Robin is turned away from the simple piety of his family and is forced to accept a dark and ambiguous world; yet the theme of both stories is the recognition of evil kinship. Robin dreams that his father's door is shut to him. Sarty cries "Father!" even as he runs from him. For he knows, though he could not express it, that while he is betraying his father, his father's rigidity, "bloodlessness," has ever been a betrayal of the son. Robin's kinsman fails his promised help, and Robin betrays him with laughter. For both boys loss of home and family and knowledge of evil go hand in hand.

Even Pearl and the children in "That Evening Sun" have some faint inkling that something is wrong. But Robin Molineux's very shrewdness and self-confidence prevent such intimations. The unwitting Robin is the victim of a joke of fate—or providence. "'Now is it not strange,' thought Robin, with his usual shrewdness,—'is it not strange that the confession of an empty pocket should outweigh the name of my kinsman, Major Molineux?'"

In the literal shadow of the church steeple Robin is told that here he will see Major Molineux. Then his strange informant reveals his double face: Robin is being shown the 'night side' of human nature. "Strange things we travellers see!" he ejaculates. But he does not see—yet. Robin hears "a murmur which swept continually along the street, yet was scarcely audible, except to an unaccustomed ear like his. . . . Robin marvelled at this snore of a sleeping town, and marvelled more whenever its continuity was broken by now and then a distant shout." The murmur figures the heart—the unconscious—or the breath (spirit, soul) of mankind in aggregate. And the heart and soul of man is dark. The distant shouts that rise from it might well figure the particular violences that stand out from the darkness of man's nature; as we will later find, these shouts no doubt pertain particularly to Robin's kinsman, and hence to Robin. But this knowledge is as yet like an unrecognised intimation. The murmur does not arouse, but has a soporific effect, and to wake himself Robin climbs and peers in the church window. A faint and awful radiance of moonlight hovers around the pulpit, and a "solitary" ray rests on the open Bible.

> "Had nature, in that deep hour, become a worshipper in the house which man had builded? Or was that heavenly light the visible sanctity of the place,—visible because no earthly and impure feet were within the walls? The scene made Robin's heart shiver with a sensation of loneliness stranger than he had ever felt in the remotest depths of his native woods; so he turned away and sat down again before the door. There were graves around the church. . . ."

There is no impurity in that holy place, but it makes Robin's heart shiver with loneliness. He must turn away to the dark, impure, but living murmur; away from lonely sanctity, toward mortality. Yet it is the church the dead are gathered around. "Oh that any breathing thing were here with me!" says Robin. I think it is implied that the <u>utter</u> sanctity within the deserted church is the proper realm for humans only when they

have passed beyond life. Robin has come from the loneliness of his native woods (we may be reminded of Donatello as faun), and his goal is not sanctity too great for life, but life among men.

Robin turns his thought away from his "evening of ambiguity," as Hawthorne calls it, and falls into a dream of his family at worship. There the sanctity is homely, and the light that falls on the scripture is not unearthly. But when they go indoors the latch falls and he is "excluded from his home." Robin is shut out from both earthly and unearthly sanctity, and must return to ambiguity. What remains is the procession, and when the double-faced fellow's eye is upon him Robin has "an indefinite but uncomfortable idea that he was himself to bear a part in the pageantry." He does; he is its climax; it is he that causes his kinsman "the bitterest pang of all" in their recognition, and in Robin's laughter. In his "pity and terror" Robin shows his real kinship with the man Hawthorne likens to a "dead potentate, mighty no more, but majestic still in his agony." But in his laughter he reveals and recognizes his kinship with the watchman, the scarlet lady, the innkeeper, the pompous gentleman, and all the mob Hawthorne likens to mocking fiends.

An abashed Robin is left; his confidence in his shrewdness gone: "I begin to grow weary of town life, sir. Will you show me the way to the ferry?" But there is no going back for Robin. There is only to go on—in his new knowledge.

One of the primary ambiguities of "My Kinsman" is that though we know of no blame for the Major besides his being a tory yet Robin witnesses his "foul disgrace," and the disgrace is real, that is, it seems moral, not just political. His greatness is reduced by the mob to "tar and feather dignity." Every implication is that he has been a good and honorable man whose great sin is merely in being of the wrong party.

There is no question of whether he deserves such ignominy, and that is the point, or part of it. Deserved or no, it is accepted: callously by the mob; with terror, pity—and laughter—by Robin, but just accepted by the kindly gentleman. The Major will scarcely desire to see Robin's face again: because Robin has seen his disgrace, but more because Robin's laughter was loudest of all. The kinsman's expected help is not forthcoming, or rather, it is, ambiguously, in this bequeathing of terror and pity. Fate has betrayed Robin, and so has Robin betrayed his kinsman.

Whereas the Compson children encounter evil without fully recognizing what it is, Sarty Snopes recognises evil in someone as close as his own father and feels the isolation sin can cause, but Robin recognises not only separation from his kin, but a new and terrible sense of fellowship with a goblin crew. He recognises not only sin but the accountability for sin within himself.

C. Donatello and Miriam

The Marble Faun is disappointing because its execution falls short of a grandeur in its conception. The central theme is the education of innocence against the background of "the ancient depravity of Rome," a "dead and half rotten city" (Ch. 45). But the city is most human in its ancientness, and amid dirt, squalor, discomfort, there are splendours of art which make the rest of the world, especially New England, seem barren indeed. Moreover, perhaps the greatest irony of all, the patron and subject of so much of this art is the church, and this city is the very center of Christendom, but corrupted by both heathendom and an admirable but mechanical efficiency, "with the pretense of holiness and the reality of nastiness" (Ch. 36).

The innocents are the natural man, Donatello, and the "daughter of the Puritans," Hilda. Donatello's innocence is part of his faunlikeness: though his animal spirits are grosser than more human qualities, but uncorrupted with sin. Hilda, it seems, is free of all grossness because she is a woman, and childlike, untainted by any contact with evil (and apparently born without any propensity for it), and because she is protected by her training: a child, but a child of Puritans. Kenyon speculates that Nature needed and still needs a creature like the faun, and Miriam thinks how satisfactory his life would be, living "as mankind did in its innocent childhood; before sin, sorrow or morality itself had ever been thought of! . . . For I suppose the Faun had no conscience, no remorse . . . no troublesome recollections of any sort; no dark future either" (Ch. 2). Hilda notes that Donatello has a look of "eternal youth," and Miriam says that not to know one's age, like Donatello, is equivalent to "being immortal on earth." The faun with no past and no future lives in the golden age, out of clock time, in a realm of eternity. Yet Donatello falls, and into mortality. When at the nymph's fountain he calls the animals, his former friends, all that appears is a "venomous reptile," and Donatello sobs "Death, death!"

When the four friends go to see Guido's picture of the archangel and the devil, Miriam protests that the angel should show the effects of a terrible struggle and "press his foot hard down upon the old serpent, as if his very soul depended on it." If, as Kenyon requests, she should paint man's struggle against sin according to her own idea, she is afraid the victory would fall on the wrong side: "Just fancy a smoke-blackened, fiery-eyed demon, bestriding that nice young angel, clutching his white throat with one of his hinder claws; and giving a triumphant whisk of his scaly tail, with a poisonous dart at the end of it! That is what

they risk, poor souls, who do battle with Michael's enemy" (Ch. 20). Of course, Donatello—nice young man, and faun if not angel—has killed that tormenting demon, the model whom they must now associate with Guido's demon. (Hilda has discovered a drawing which she is convinced is the original sketch for Guido's painting. The face of the demon, quite unlike that in the finished work, is a remarkable likeness of the model.) But at this moment Donatello is looking awe-stricken at the dead monk lying in the center of the nave. In another moment they discover it is the awful face of the model. And "a little stream of blood had begun to ooze from the dead monk's nostrils; it crept slowly towards the thicket of his beard, where, in the course of a moment or two, it hid itself." Here is the scaly tail and poisonous dart. If Hawthorne had united and controlled all his themes throughout the book as he does in this scene, The Marble Faun would have been the power he conceived but did not succeed in executing. The innocent in outrage kills the tormentor of his beloved—and that tormentor is revealed through the art of the Eternal City to be or to represent the devil himself. And the tormentor-devil—now the figure of Death—but in the church itself and in the garb of the church, suddenly confronts Donatello. Miriam's doubt seems confirmed; victory has fallen on the wrong side. Here indeed is education of an innocent.

The immediate result of his crime is that Donatello is "kindled" into a man, and "the simple and joyous creature" is gone forever (Ch. 19). Something is lost, something gained, and Donatello is an unhappy new man. Yet without this step we are to understand Donatello could have had no moral growth. We later find Kenyon speculating that "in the black depths the faun had found a soul, and was struggling with it towards the light of heaven" (Ch. 29). Miriam goes further: "I delight to brood on the

verge of the great mystery. . . . The story of the fall of man! Is it not repeated in our romance of Monte Beni? And may we follow the analogy yet further? Was that very sin,—into which Adam precipitated himself and all his race,—was it the destined means by which, over a long pathway of toil and sorrow, we are to obtain a higher, brighter, and profounder happiness, than our lost birthright gave? Will not this idea account for the permitted existence of sin, as no other theory can?" (Ch. 47). Donatello gains a profounder wisdom, surely. But does he obtain "a higher, brighter, and profounder happiness"? Kenyon and Hilda both reject the theory of a fortunate fall, and perhaps it is worth noting that Donatello, despite his new awareness, doesn't consider it.[15] But Hawthorne does not bring it up only to reject it; clearly the idea is even more appealing to him than that of the faun. He leaves the matter ambiguous. And that is as it should be, especially in the context of this novel.

Hawthorne, with all his delight in the idea of a faun, surely does not hold the unconsidered life to be not worth living, but he thinks the considered life worthier. Yet there is a danger in much consideration. This is a danger which Hilda knows and avoids, but which Donatello must risk. Donatello's crime perhaps does not seem to us vile enough to justify all his subsequent horror and brooding; the act was quite in keeping with his faun-like nature. Just as he later drops a worm over his battlements, he has destroyed a vile creature. (But in conversation Donatello reveals his horror of human death by falling, and however much of the worm or serpent-like was in the model, he was human.) Donatello acts unpremeditatedly, in a moment's passion, and that passion rises mostly from his exuberant love, and from "animal rage," not from human, hence moral, malevolence. In fact Hawthorne has come close to the momentous

problem Milton had in making credible the motivation of the Fall of creatures without sin. Actually Donatello is hardly closer to his one crime than Hilda. It seems more a deed of rash charity for Miriam's sake than the rising to the surface of a dark and malignant inner nature. Sin is in the willfull attitude behind an action, not so much in the action itself.[16]

But Donatello, looking back, realizes that there is evil in his own nature—and, just as horrible, that there is evil in Miriam's nature. Like Milton's Eve, she bade him do it. Once he knows he is capable of murder Donatello broods about why he is, and summons up the motives which did not contribute directly to the act, but to which, deep in his soul, he consented. He does not so much reconstruct his motive as construct it from the beginning. It is quite the opposite of premeditated. Donatello does not fall by killing the model, or by taking thought. Rather, by his crime and by later meditation he discovers that he has always been fallen—insofar as he has always been human.

Donatello does not speculate on the faun as Kenyon does. Donatello's danger is that he will, like Goodman Brown, conceive of man as utterly lost, and deny altogether the reality of innocence—that he will fall into that chasm which Miriam says "every person takes a peep into in moments of deepest insight" (Ch. 18). Donatello broods on his crime. Ironically he cannot so easily avail himself of the comfort of his church as can Hilda, whose church it is not. When Kenyon accidentally turns a bust of Donatello into a figure of Cain, with "a distorted and violent look combining animal fierceness with intelligent hatred" Donatello asks him to leave it as it is (Ch. 30). The sculptor will not, warning him against keeping his soul "perpetually in the unwholesome region of remorse." It is wholesome and necessary advice, for Donatello's adversary, like the

great Adversary, was driven by remorse mingled with his malice; that was why he wore the garb of a monk. And Donatello himself in remorse considers becoming a monk, and does put on the gruesome aspect of a masked penitent.

Donatello falls low indeed. In the depths of bitterness he imagines his hell: "There might be a more miserable torture than to be solitary forever. . . . Think of having a single companion in eternity, and instead of finding any consolation, or at all events variety of torture, to see your own weary, weary sin repeated in that inseparable soul."[17] There is no hope for Donatello (like Milton's Adam) until he forgives Miriam.

Knowledge which depends solely on clear-cut moral rules and excludes the truths of the heart must lead to despair in trying to solve the problems of conscience. Donatello must become conscious of sin, but if that is all, he will not find a soul "in the black depths" (Ch. 29), but just stay there. The integrity of innocence, of the faun-state, must be replaced by the integrity of knowledge. But what is utterly crucial is the quality of that knowledge. His heart must be educated as well as his consciousness.

The remorse Donatello feels is "strange" to Miriam (Ch. 47). She thinks that he goes beyond the mean in feeling "that when a wrong has been done, the doer is bound to submit himself to whatsoever tribunal takes cognizance of such things, and abide its judgement." "I have assured him," she says, ironically, "that there is no such thing as earthly justice, and especially none here, under the head of Christendom." She thinks that for Donatello earthly retributive justice is pointless. And except as a deterrent it may well be. But such thought is bold, perhaps rash, especially when applied to one's own situation. The danger is in entering a moral wilderness as did Hester Prynne. Miriam is, we feel, right. But Donatello is not capable of such flight yet:

"I have no head for argument, but only a sense, an impulse, and instinct, I believe, which sometimes leads me right." (May we think of Strether, and others in this tradition?) So, if Donatello goes beyond what for Miriam is the mean, he does not go by the way of too much consciousness as does Ethan Brand, but by "a kind of direct simplicity" which Miriam says she has vainly tried to combat. She wisely if sadly accepts what he must do. We do not see that Donatello finds any sense of Christian forgiveness. Does confession give him no ease as it does Hilda? But it would not be aesthetically appropriate to have two relgious confessions. Kenyon is, in effect, Donatello's confessor. (It is to Kenyon's credit—albeit necessary for the plot's sake—that he understands and is not, excessively, horrified.)

Finally Kenyon sees characteristics of the antique Faun return. "A playfulness came out of his heart, and glimmered like firelight in his actions, alternating, or even closely intermingled, with profound sympathy and serious thought." And when he must speak of his decision about justice Donatello can add, "There are still two days more. Let us be happy!" On the Campagna Miriam had said, "Ah Donatello! let us live a little longer the life of these last few days. . . . so childlike, so without either past or future!" His reply was, "I dare to be so happy . . . only because I have felt the time to be so brief" (Ch. 47). The faun, transformed, and Miriam are happy again, not in the Golden Age, but rather in a "wayside paradise." Their happiness must be found within the 'diurnal round,' in the realm of Time rather than of Timelessness. Hawthorne concludes this passage on a gloomy note: "Tomorrow,—a remorseful man and woman, linked by a marriage-bond of crime—they would set forth towards an inevitable doom." The only mitigation is in the story's concluding remark that Hilda had a hopeful soul. That hope

might well be related to Miriam's consideration, long before, about "this greatest mortal consolation, which we derive from the transitoriness of all things . . . that 'This, too, will pass away'" (Ch. 16).

Though Hawthorne hardly lets us realize it, Miriam has also been an innocent. She—like Beatrice Cenci, but with even greater innocence—had been unwillingly part of a terrible event in her family.[18] The comparison Hawthorne makes of Beatrice to Hilda might better belong to Miriam: "It was the intimate consciousness of her father's sin that threw its shadow over her, and frightened her into a remote and inaccessible region, where no sympathy could come" (Ch. 23). "There was such a fatality," Miriam says; "the shadow fell upon me, innocent, but I went astray in it, and wandered . . . into crime" (Ch. 47). Her crime is the glance which bade Donatello murder—and the boldness of all her thought. She does not have Hilda's trust in God—and says she would give her life to have it (Ch. 18).

Yet her speculation is never really impious. We have no evidence that she goes as far into moral wilderness as does Hester Prynne. And we have no way of judging the quality of her repentance, as we have with Hester. It seems genuine. I am afraid her worst crime for Hawthorne, though it is part of the generosity of her nature which he admires, is her disregard of "decorous womanhood." Hers is the crime of poor Nanda in The Awkward Age. She knows too much, sees too clearly and is too innocent, too naive, perhaps too energetic, to conceal it.

Miriam is more than a catalyst in Donatello's development, spurring him to the crime that makes him fall; the crime itself is only a symptom of his fall. Whether or not Hawthorne interpreted the Original Sin as the love of man and woman, as Roy Male suggests, that love is certainly pertinent to developing moral consciousness.[19] After lads

like Robin Molineux are cut off from home they must eventually make their own home, and for that is needed a woman, or some substitute. A substitute must be a remarkably good one to suffice. (But often, unfortunately, so must the woman. And when the woman is good the man may be warped, as in "The Birthmark.")

[illegible] Hilda, [illegible] and Others

Benjy Compson and Clifford Pyncheon retain childhood innocence through physical maturity because their minds are retarded. Can one retain that kind of innocence and yet become a spiritual grown-up? Both Hawthorne and Faulkner apparently though that a few can; but those few must needs have limitation in the depth of their moral insight, in their consciousness. And we must always remember that both novelists believed in a knowledge that is indeed a consciousness, but of the heart, not necessarily capable of intellectual exposition.

Unfortunately, in less astute moments, Hawthorne and Faulkner present for our approbation a few major characters with moralistically good consciences, whom we must examine—with some impatience. Hawthorne seemed to believe that man can achieve satisfactory life in two ways: in an everyday existence which avoids moral conflicts (the life of the "once born"), or in risking knowledge of evil, and perhaps, through surviving that risk, achieving profound moral insight (the "twice-born").[20] Moral growth would come only with the latter. Certainly Donatello's "transformation" (the title of the English edition of The Marble Faun) is related to the twice-born.[21] Hilda is meant to be transformed, too; she is to be the innocent who survives encountering evil with her innocence intact. True, all human beings are touched by "original sin." Hawthorne's theory of imputation in The Marble Faun is that "while there

is a single guilty person in the universe, each innocent one must feel his innocence tortured by that guilt" (Ch. 23). Hilda is tortured so, by "that peculiar despair . . . which only the innocent can experience. . . . that dismal certainty of the existence of evil" (Ch. 36). She feels a terrible burden in her knowledge, and is isolated by it. She finds relief in the confessional in St. Peter's, and the effect is "as if she were just now created," and she brings to Kenyon's mind the "image of a child" (Ch. 40). This then is her rebirth. With Hilda, Hawthorne wants to have his cake and eat it too. But an innocent cannot survive a real encounter with evil intact. Something must break, usually the innocence, and when not that, it is the person—as with Ilbrahim, or Milly Theale. (Maggie in The Golden Bowl is not the great exception; her innocence is transformed into a felicitous deceit, an arsenal protecting her immense knowledge.)

Hilda's horror is that of a judge—"a terribly severe judge." Hawthorne thought Michelangelo's conception of Christ as judge too terrifying—"when it is so essential to our religion to believe him infinitely kinder and better towards us than we deserve."[22] Hawthorne rejected the Calvinistic argument for the severity that must come out of God's utter purity, but that argument seems inevitable in Hilda's utter purity. Hilda looks at matters "through the clear crystal medium of her own integrity" (Ch. 42), and she feels in "partaking the human nature of those who could perpetrate such deeds . . . her own spotlessness impugned" (Ch. 36). Impugned—not touched.

Later Hilda begins to wonder if friendship "ought to be severed on account of any unworthiness. . . . Must a selfish care for the spotlessness of our own garments keep us from pressing the guilty ones close to our hearts?" (Ch. 42). And her thoughts bring "a painful doubt

whether a wrong had not been committed on Hilda's part." But, as Faulkner's Hightower reflects that for people to pity Joe Christmas would be to admit self-doubt and the need for pity to themselves, Hawthorne cannot doubt Hilda's purity, and must suppose her "misled by her feelings." (Hilda—who had said "Trust a girl's simple heart sooner than any casuist of your Church, however learned he may be!") Hilda's care (and Hawthorne's) for the spotlessness of her own garments is Pharisaical.

Hawthorne attempts to make Rome and its art more than background, to make it part of the very moral texture of his novel. He had succeeded in using the wilderness so, in The Scarlet Letter and in "Young Goodman Brown," and the house and garden in The House of the Seven Gables, but there the 'background' could be successfully depicted as the landscape of the mind of his characters. The attempt with Rome is bold, but Hawthorne himself had not sufficiently taken it all in. At points he succeeds, as in the catacombs:

> While their collected torches illuminated this one small, consecrated spot, the great darkness spread all round it, like that immenser mystery which envelops our little life, and into which friends vanish from us, one by one (Ch. 3).

Or at the Tarpeian Rock:

> Brightly as the moonlight fell a-down the height, it scarcely showed what portion of it was man's work, and what was nature's, but left it all in very much the same kind of ambiguity and half-knowledge in which antiquarians generally leave the identity of Roman remains (Ch. 18).

The work of man in these scenes has its symbolic place in nature and in the moral landscape of the characters. And I think his use of Guido's archangel and devil is successful. But generally he cannot make us perceive the art of Rome, partly because he did not always himself, and so he cannot thoroughly work it into his art. In Chapter 37, "The

Emptiness of Picture Galleries," Hawthorne transplants the variations of his own sensibility to the mind of the distraught Hilda. She has lost the simplicity of her imaginative vision, but while her despondency has dulled her perceptions in one respect, it has deepened them in another: "she saw beauty less vividly, but felt truth, or the lack of it, more profoundly." And Hawthorne has her think back to a fresco in Sienna: "Sodoma, in this matchless picture, has done more toward reconciling the incongruity of Divine Omnipotence and outraged, suffering Humanity, combined in one person, than the theologians ever did."[23] Here is the great problem of evil, and the Christian solution. But unlike the scene in the catacombs, or at the Tarpian Rock, this picture does not symbolically interpenetrate the fiber of the novel. Hawthorne does show the ambiguity and darkness in human life. He does not show the incongruity of Divine Omnipotence and outraged humanity reconciled—though he does set forth the problem, and offers, not fully accepting it, the concept of a fall fortunate in the knowledge and moral depth it makes possible. But that is not the same <u>felix culpa</u> which is happy because it is the occasion of Christ's incarnation and redemption (a distinction which ought always to be kept in mind when pondering the Fall). Hawthorne shows us Hilda affected by Sodoma's picture, but he never convincingly presents Hilda as <u>seeing</u> outraged, suffering Humanity. Hilda allies herself more with divine Omnipotence; she is outraged and suffers because (being human) her purity is impugned.

The difficulty seems to me that Hilda's innocence is that of a child, and remains that, and so carries with it the cruelty of a child. Her relief at the confessional is not that of a new birth, but of the old childlikeness restored. Hilda tries to avoid seeing that man's nature is ambiguous, and she almost succeeds. Indeed the general

impression is that she does; but Hawthorne redeems her with a few touches here and there. Hilda would probably not be so objectionable if we were not always seeing her from a lover's warped point of view, and Hawthorne is her lover, as well as Kenyon, and perhaps more convincingly. We really must respect Faulkner's love—and point of view—of Caddy more. Hawthorne speculates that a faun might "be educated through the medium of his emotions, so that the coarser animal portion of his nature might eventually be thrown in the background. . . . " (Ch. 1). Hilda is childlike, and often simple and gay—but she is never faunlike—as Pearl and Phoebe are (and as Una, and even Sophia Hawthorne were). Hilda's feelings are much extolled, but they are most active with moral ideas and pictures (and then is it not the moral ideas in pictures?) Hilda is not, like Donatello, really educated through her emotions. Her child-woman's innocence is challenged, but not budged. I think her imagination is not sufficiently educated.

Hawthorne's qualification is almost negligible: Hilda is the ideal woman, both innocent and pure of sin and morally wise, too. Faulkner would be prevented by the spirit of his age from creating such a person, were he tempted—which he certainly was not. Yet Faulkner's psyche, that of a true Southerner, is haunted by a beautiful ideal of womanhood. Hawthorne wrote when the cult of the purity of women and children was at its height; Faulkner when it had been thoroughly debunked (though it lingers as the cornerstone of the "Southern mystique").[24] That ideal is suggested in Caddy Compson. Caddy, as an impulsive little girl, desperate adolescent, and lost woman, is beautifully realized; but Caddy's innocence is lost with her childhood.

Faulkner's 'ideal' woman is Eula Snopes. She is his counterpart of Hawthorne's Hilda. As long as they are both represented as innocent

of any near-tragic attitudes they are believable, even though unappetizing, girls. Hilda begins in purity, with vicarious knowledge of passion—through her acquaintance with Roman art, and, more uncomfortably, with Miriam—and acquires a vicarious knowledge of sin, and continues in her purity. As long as Eula is a Varner, a girlish backwoods titaness of sensuality, she is credible, and amusing. But Faulkner deifies Eula as an incarnation of Venus;[25] "only the preachers would hate her because they would be afraid of her since the god she represented without even trying to, for the men to pant after and even the women to be proud that at least one of their sex was its ambassador, was a stronger one than the pale and desperate Galilean who was all they had to challenge with." (The Mansion, p. 212. This is another of Faulkner's touches of Swinburnian allusion.[26] It is rather ridiculous, but there is justice in it. No "pale Galilean" can stand up to Venus. But the pale Galilean is not Christ; rather one of Anti-Christ's many disguises. What makes Eula, and much of the later Snopes books, unbelieveable is the attempt to invest Venus with some of the ethical and metaphysical grandeur of Christ—or the Virgin Mary. It were folly to deny Venus' power, a folly recognised at least since Homer as luring men to tragedy, and while Faulkner is on occasion a misogynist, he hates women only for corrupt sexuality; blasphemy against Venus. Faulkner gives Venus her due. Sane Christianity does too.[27]

Eula begins in innocent sensuousness, and though she marries impotence and meanness, we are to suppose her to live on a spiritual plane high above Flem Snopes. Her affair with Despain is presented as a kind of domestic chastity. She is remarkably generous, as Hilda certainly is not, but that is her ideality, whereas Hilda's is purity. The nineteenth century ideal was beautiful and pure; the twentieth

century ideal, in reaction, is beautiful and generous. But for saints "neither the virgin nor the great-hearted whore will do. Neither exemplifies that love which makes body and soul, self and other self, God and man, real and creative unities."[28] Both Hilda and Eula are bloodless saints wrought from their authors' creativity at its less astute.

Hawthorne and Faulkner do have heroines of good conscience, of the "once born" kind, but they have consciences which are not moralistic. Phoebe Pyncheon of The House of Seven Gables is even more shy of moral knowledge than Hilda, but she is not so relentlessly 'pure.' Phoebe knows she is shy of moral knowledge, whereas Hilda deceives herself to the contrary. Phoebe is earnest and humble, where Hilda is zealous and proud.

Lena Grove of Light in August is not, like Eula, an avatar of Venus, but more likely a devotee of Juno. She is completely good-natured. (And theologically a good-natured man or woman is a paradox wrought only by grace.) She is generous and loyal. Her temporary rejection of Byron Bunch in the last chapter is (despite the over-eagerness of some Byronic critical supporters) not ungenerous: "'Aint nobody never said for you to quit,' she says." (She has, after all, some moral responsibility for this token search for her child's father, and she does want to avoid settling down too soon; furthermore she has an inherent modesty of the right sort, and, after all, though Faulkner does not emphasize it, it is only three weeks since her child was born.)

Hawthorne offers no ideal males. Faulkner does, in the triumvirate of Gavin Stevens, V. K. Ratliffe, and Chic Mallison. Gavin Stevens, of course is presented with considerable irony about his real ineffectuality. But it is always tempered with attempts at kindly

humor. He is saved from the stark horror such ineffectuality can result in, as it does for Horace Benbow in Sanctuary. Children and old women, Chick Mallison and Miss Habersham, must save him in Intruder in the Dust. Chic Mallison is a successful ideal as long as he is immature. The same is essentially true of Ratliffe. He remains something of a folk-hero, the typical, shrewd but honest peddler, until Stevens gives him anti-Snopesism as a goal in life, making him into a Don Quixote successfully battling what we are told are real giants. Much fun and credibility is thus lost. One trouble with A Fable, Faulkner's most ethically ambitious book, is that its heroes, especially the corporal, are 'Quixotes' with even less magnitude, and no real humor at all.

Mink Snopes is representative of another class of heroes canonized by Faulkner. The most interesting character in the later books of the Snopes trilogy, Mink is transformed from a mean, waspish killer into a mild little man with Faith in "Old Moster"—though he is still a killer. The beauty of this strange transformation is that it is wholly consistent. Mink is originally mean because of his desperation about the injustice in the world as it is revealed in injustices to himself. Like his relative, Ab the barn-burner, Mink is driven to meanness. But Ab's meanness rises from a tyrannous pride infused with "angelic imagination"; his meanness becomes his first resort; Mink's is his last. The injustice is that he is invariably driven to it by his incredible bad luck. Ironically both Mink and his victim, Houston, are driven by inexorable logic that rules out charity. Houston must exact the last dollar Mink legally owes him, because that is his conception of justice. And Mink refuses the dollar from Will Varner, earns it, and kills Houston for the same reason. A too rigid sense of 'justice' prevents the exercise of ethical imagination. The same sense of 'justice' determines Mink to kill Flem. Once he knows

what he has to do Mink is at some peace with the world; and once his 'justice' is accomplished, his peace is fulfilled. The Snopes trilogy and Faulkner's account of Yoknapatawpha County (The Reivers is a postscript) ends with Mink being gathered to the Great All, in another passage in Faulkner's anagogic style.[29] The logic, such as it is, of Mink's 'canonization' is similar to that of Joe Christmas, with the smallish justification that Mink is one kind of representative figure. But his magnitude here seems forced, as Joe Christmas' is not. Faulkner believes in "sublimating the actual into the apocryphal,"[30] but here a grubby and insignificant figure is suddenly illuminated as a demigod by theatrical lighting. Mink as a person of good conscience is more likeable, but not much more believable than Eula.

The innocence with which these more responsible adults are invested is credible only in Phoebe and Lena, and less so in Mink, because they are not represented as gaining deep moral insight, though they can rely on their good-natured hearts.

E. Dilsey

Convincing saints are rare in life, and perhaps rarer in fiction. because of the difficulty of showing the right attitude toward sin: it must be both uncompromising and humble at the same time. Hilda is Hawthorne's attempt to show us a saint, but her knowledge of evil is proud and condescending, and puts up but a show of innocence. In all Hawthorne's and Faulkner's fiction there is but one major figure who has a good conscience and with it the moral insight which comes of the right kind of knowledge of evil, and that is Dilsey in The Sound and the Fury. Dilsey defends the truly innocent; but she sees through, and scorns, yet endures, adult pretensions of innocence.

It has been said that the redemptive force in The Sound and the Fury is not final, since after the church service we are thrust back into the Compson situation.[31] But, just as the three stories of Light in August are not brought to one ending, but, to three endings which mutually shed light on each other, so do the four days of The Sound and the Fury. Together they created that "Passion Week of the heart"—"that instant of timeless beatitude"—as an aesthetic experience.[32] Of course no one triumphs in The Sound and the Fury. Perhaps the most that can be said is that it ends as Dilsey's day—and no one can take that from us. Time is the unifying theme in the novel, and everyone but Dilsey is completely subject to time, though in very different ways.[33] Jason thinks the temporal is corrupt and tries to accommodate himself to it. Quentin thinks so too, and despairs, thinking his hour upon the stage signifies nothing, or worse than nothing. But Dilsey's sense of the eternal helps make possible a moral perspective of temporality and of sin that does not confuse them.

The Compsons have damned themselves with egotism. But not all redemptive force is left at the church. The tears of Dilsey's experience continue, to the consternation of Frony, whose enthusiasm scarcely continues beyond the churchyard. Dilsey does finally dry her tears, but her faith is not turned off; it is converted into strength, endurance, to cope with Mrs. Compson. There is a literal and naturalistic level on which Dilsey's church experience might be seen as a psychic upheaval of a simple old Negro lady, but that is not what Faulkner is concerned with. More important is an archetypal level: on Easter Sunday Dilsey experiences the "ricklicshun of the lamb." However, what is central in this passage is an anagogic vision; Dilsey demonstrates that her enduring love and fortitude are based on a sense not only of history but of

cosmology, a sense which is far more adequate for life, more true, indeed more pragmatic, than Mr. Compson's skeptical theories, or Jason's materialism, to say nothing of Quentin's despair over history and time.

The last time we see Dilsey, as she prepares Benjy for his ride, she reveals again her sense of time—and eternity:

> "You reckon you kin find T. P.?" Dilsey said.
> "He say yistiddy he gwine out to St. John's today. Say he be back at fo."
> Dilsey rocked back and forth, stroking Ben's head.
> "Dis long time, O Jesus," she said, "Dis long time."

Dilsey refers both to the Compson family and to Apocalyptic Christianity, and certainly she does not confuse the two. The Compson order is time-bound, but to Dilsey it has meaning because it is comprehended by Christ's Alpha and Omega—precisely as to her Benjy is not a slobbering idiot who means nothing, but a human being to love. But to Jason Benjy is only sound and fury signifying nothing. That the novel ends on this note is appropriate to its whole concept: it is the dark story of the Compsons. But because of Dilsey it need be meaningless only to the Compsons.

Just as in his novels original sin does not come by a Fall—though Faulkner knows the value of the myth and can use it—and Caddy's fall is her whole life, as is Joe Christmas', so Dilsey's 'redemption' is not confined to churchtime, but is timeless. But she is capable of this because she also knows what the real time is by the battered Compson clock. Her redemption is in her faith, and in her work serving the family, and in her love, and that redemption is possible in her whole life because she does not separate these things. Redemption comes through love and action.

Dilsey is an anomaly in the worlds of Hawthorne and Faulkner, and in a typology of sinners, but she is thematically pertinent; for

she is a credible example of the kind of wholeness that can be achieved in life; and wholeness, integrity, are the goals of Hawthorne's and Faulkner's great sinners. But like Hester, they "seek amiss," by schemes, strategems, and evasions.

A few characters seem legitimately to hang on to innocence in maturity, and a few more are indulged with innocence by their authors, but my discussion of these latter has been a necessary digression. Most of Hawthorne's and Faulkner's characters are fallen, and they struggle in various ways, if not to regain the wholeness of paradise, then to gratify, or at least to quiet, the sense of need for integrity. We will consider them in an order, roughly analogous to Dante's Inferno, descending according to their complexity and growing subtlety of evil.

CHAPTER III

RAPACITY

Hungry men will steal, rob, and kill in order to eat, and this is evil; but a more central problem of sin is that men will kill, rob, and steal to have more than enough.[1] Most appetites are healthy; but inordinate appetite, rapacity, is the part of our sickness unto death which interests both Hawthorne and Faulkner. By rapacity I refer to three kinds of inordinate appetites. That of mere bestiality concentrated and perverted is important in a novel like Sanctuary. But Hawthorne and Faulkner are more interested in two kinds of rapacity which are beyond mere beastliness. One develops out of a passion for Respectability. The other, far more important, and the subject of most of our study, develops out of a passion for the ideal: what ought to lead to a religious quest is turned on the self or others, as object of either love or hate, and destroys them, in trying to make them ideal, or in vengeance because they will not be ideal. For want of a better term we might call it vampirism.

I refer to respectability not as condition of moralistic social standing, but as the motive for acquiring it, when that motive is expanded to a passion. Of itself respectability, the social pressure stronger than mere civil law, which makes us mind our manners is a good thing (pragmatically, not ethically). In enforcing us to maintain the appearance of goodness it prevents us from doing much evil, whatever our motives. Respectability is evil when it is used as sheep's clothing for the ravenous wolf, to cloak rapacity, and the greediness of ordinary

appetites (and their ordinary perversions) are rationalized or concealed by casuistry.[2] Indeed, moralistic conscience stimulates and flavors, 'civilizes,' inordinate appetites as it conceals them. But respectability becomes more insidious as it becomes an end in itself: Judge Pyncheon hoards respectability partly for itself, but mostly because it begets property; Flem Snopes, on the other hand, turns to respectability when property begins to surfeit him. However, respectability is most evil when it is used not only as the sadist's cloak but as his weapon. Mrs. Compson's joy is to exult in her respectability and at the same time to use that respectability as an engine of torture for her children.

My discussion of the sinners of Hawthorne's and Faulkner's worlds will correspond to Dante's in its descending order; but the classification of sins is quite different: they descend according to subtlety and complexity. The primitively rapacious occupy the vestibule, and those passionate for respectability occupy an ignominious first circle. But even the worst of these begin to taste the dubious delights of the vampirish passions of the lower circles.

Sinners of real consequence have desires superior to respectability; they long for ideals, for absolutes, and what should be a religious quest is perverted into an attempt to wring something utter out of the physical. The result is vampirism.

At the conclusion of The Scarlet Letter Hawthorne writes concerning Chillingworth (but it applies also to Hester and Dimmesdale, and many of his other protagonists), "It is a curious subject of observation and inquiry whether hatred and love be not the same thing at bottom. Each, in its utmost development, supposes a high degree of intimacy and heart knowledge; each renders one individual dependent for the food of his affections and spiritual life upon another." And infernal love that makes

another its food—or its "sacred fount"—is indeed close to hatred. D. H. Lawrence writing of Poe, master authority of vampirism, says: "The lust of hate is the inordinate desire to consume and unspeakably possess the soul of the hated one, just as the lust of love is the desire to possess, or be possessed by, the beloved, utterly. But in either case the result is the dissolution of both souls, each losing itself in transgressing its own bounds."[3] At its worst the desire for absolutes becomes a nympholepsy which goes "beyond the pleasure principle" and results in a passion for death—not only in a wish to kill or in a despairing wish to die, but in necrophilia: not necessarily the obvious necrophilia of "A Rose for Emily" (that fit companion of "Ligeia"), but as the obsession with ghosts which dominates Reuben Bourne, Quentin Compson, and Miles Coverdale.

It is when appetites grow cancerously, demonically, that villains of stature, "lost violent souls," emerge from the multitude. They may, with deliberation, use the casuistry and respectability by which most of us deceive ourselves, yet think themselves not deceived. Ethan Brand, Rappaccini, Roger Chillingworth are such men.

A. Horace, Popeye, and Temple

The simplest, most primitive rapacity is unabashedly animalistic, and insofar as it is animalistic it is amoral. Faulkner explores this problem by creating a character like Popeye who has few appetites, and hence our interest is concentrated on the real problem of rapacity: what can be its motives? Or if it is motive unto itself, whence is its dark power?

There are three central confrontations in Sanctuary: first that of Horace Benbow and Popeye, next that of Temple Drake and Popeye, and

finally that of Horace and Temple. Popeye represents incarnate evil and that which is unnatural—revealed in his color, bloodless as though seen by an electric light, and in his "vicious depthless quality of stamped tin"—and, of course, in the manner of his rape of Temple. He has vitality only by virtue of his automatic pistol, and is garbed in black like an allegorical figure of Death.

Horace Benbow, the central consciousness of the novel, is ambivalent about nature. He knows and loves the trees and birds Popeye fears. Yet the bird song of the first scene is "a sound meaningless and profound;" its meaning and [illegible] are one: its irrelevance to the two men. And to Horace's dyspeptic mind nature is fecund with female corruption. He cannot cope with its rich ambiguity. Though he flees his corrupt wife, Belle, he carries a picture of her daughter (of a former marriage), whom he loves; and he irrationally hopes Little Belle is not corrupt, yet is convinced that she is. Little Belle might be a decent, ordinary adolescent, but we can see her only through Horace's nausea.

Horace is conscious of his personal mediocrity, and he blames it largely on his having surrendered himself to Belle. Free from her, he rather confidently undertakes to do battle against very evil. He has on his side Law; and though weak, he knows he is the only one in the community with the courage to fight injustice. He clings to the Law, which he thinks is pure, above Popeye's unnatural corruption, and above the female's natural corruption. But these are combined in Temple, who is Horace's Nemesis.

When Horace finds that a committee of Baptist ladies has forced Ruby LaMarr and her sick child to leave the hotel, the proprietor's comment is 'That aint my affair,' and Horace says ironically, "Christians.

Christians" (Ch. 20). To his sister, Narcissa, who is concerned for his respectability, and to whom mercy and justice simply have no meaning, he speaks of the "odorous and omnipotent sanctity" of a town's self-righteousness. The Baptist minister even makes the unwedded Ruby the subject of a sermon, and Horace comments: "I gathered that his idea was that Goodwin and the woman should both be burned as a sole example to that child; the child was to be reared and taught the English language for the sole end of being taught that it was begot in sin by two people who suffered by fire for having begot it" (Ch. 17).

There is talk of Christianity without Christian behavior. Christian hope is based on forgiveness of sin, but there is neither forgiveness nor sanctuary in the novel. There is nothing but judgment, and that judgment is not just: the judgment of respectability—which is here a simple matter of survival of the most vicious. On the other hand, there is over and above the judgment of respectability the implicit judgment of the novel itself, which, godlike, surveys the whole and damns the lot, Horace included, though there is much sympathy for him. Here is the world of a 'Calvinistic' God with no grace at all. (I refer to the popular stereotype of Calvinism; such a representation of Calvin's thought, in which grace is supreme, is a terrible perversion of it.) Sanctuary is a novel about a land without the faintest shadow of Christ; but Christianity is relevant in its criticism. For one thing, 'blackened Christianity' is part of the subject matter—in scattered references where the church (especially that of Baptists) is one of the forces of a cruel respectability. Its widespread influence is shown in Clarence Snopes' Baptist alliance. And when we first meet Miss Reba, Madame of the brothel where Temple is taken, she has just returned from church (Ch. 18).

There are two worlds in Sanctuary: one is the underworld where

rapacity operates outside of respectability—at the Old Frenchman place and in the Memphis brothel; the other is Jefferson, the world of respectable people. The two join forces climactically in the lynching of Goodwin. Respectability represents itself as defending the natural against the unnatural: its 'natural' justice presumes that burning makes up for rape. But respectability here is merely society's means of accommodating rapacity.

Popeye's physical lack of manhood typifies his spiritual lack, and he has no conscience, no "ordeal of consciousness." In the unnatural world of the Old Frenchman place conscience has no place, and primitive rapacity rules. Temple on the other hand comes from the world of the respectable. "Things like that don't happen. Do they? . . . You're just like other people," she says to Ruby LaMarr. But Ruby's answer is: "Like what people?" There is no more conscience in Jefferson than in the underworld, and though respectability is a social necessity, as a substitute for conscience it is debilitating and vicious.

The central concern of the novel is not, however, blackened Christianity, but the problem of evil. Explicitly it simply bodies forth a wasteland of evil; implicitly it suggests, or rather forces on us, the question of why it is evil. The sordid subject matter is part of a convention of naturalism, and in the last chapter we see Popeye as a child, and he is apparently given a naturalistic explanation: he is the result of syphilis.[4] The problem of evil is taken one step further back: it is naturalistically determined, and Popeye is brought within nature. Yet though we see why he is physically defective, we cannot see why he likes to cut up live birds.

The naturalistic explanation is not sufficient, and Popeye remains inexplicably evil. There is no innocence in his childhood—as there is in

that of Benjy, Caddy and Quentin, of Ike McCaslin, and of Joe Christmas. Hawthorne deliberately compares characters to Adam and Eve; Faulkner is less specific (though in The Sound and the Fury he does suggest the snake and the forbidden tree in the scene of Damuddy's funeral). The myth of Eden and the fall, though it is mentioned by the girl in the dormitory (Ch. 28), has no relevance within the world of Sanctuary. That world is created damned. But that myth has some relevance for the reader's understanding—precisely in that there is no innocence in any youth in the novel,—and certainly not in Popeye's depraved infancy, nor in that wretched baby of Ruby LaMarr's, which might become another Popeye should it live.

The myth's relevance can be illuminated by Horace Bushnell's consideration of the Adamic predicament (as it is presented in R. W. B. Lewis' The American Adam). Bushnell reasons that the first Adam must have been limited by the "necessary defect of knowledge." He could not know the insights that must be gotten "historically . . . under conditions of time." Lewis suggests that Emerson would have said that worthwhile knowledge exists out of time, but Bushnell's answer is, "The eternal law of justice makes no one just, that of truth, no one true." Those principles require "a drill, in the field of experience." And if men are created innocent like Adam in a world already fouled through generations, men's plight must be that "self-centered now, every man in his sin, and having no ligature of race and family affection to bind them together, the selfishness of their fall would be unqualified, softened by no mitigations." For Bushnell this picture is relieved by the fall's being fortunate in that it brings educating knowledge—which compensates for the loss of innocence.[5]

The thing that makes the continual happiness of a world like

Typee's unacceptable for Melville is the "danger of permanently arrested development."[6] R. W. B. Lewis quotes Ishmael on this matter: "that mortal man who hath more of joy than sorrow in him, that mortal man cannot be true—not true or undeveloped."[7] This is Bushnell's argument for the necessity and value of the fall. But what if the fall brings no knowledge? or if it raises the question "After such knowledge what forgiveness?" Ironically, the horror in the Biblical Adam's fall lay in his retarded development (quite the reverse of his motive for knowledge)—and its culminative arrest in death. Retardation of the intellect is bad enough. But it is retardation of the heart that damns.

The most significant thing about this myth of the American Adam with relation to Christianity is that it is precisely unchristian: "In Adam all die." The Christian hope is in the one and only new Adam, Christ; it is that "just as we have borne the image of the man of dust we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven." But the "American Adam" conceives of himself as an untarnished creature of infinite possibilities starting out in a new Eden, or at any rate a new Canaan. In this very conception he commits the first sin of pride, for he is going to establish the kingdom of heaven as an earthly kingdom. Or he may be as far from Christian thinking as Jay Gatsby, who is going to establish a kingdom of money. Yet all are one in Adam, and the kingdom turns out to be Mammon's—and Death's. In Adam all die, and this typical hero is doomed.

In Popeye there is a resemblance to the Adamic figure as Bushnell saw him, limited by the "necessary defect of knowledge"—but with the added "necessary defect" of imagination, and with no opportunity, or aptitude, or inclination for education: Popeye, man and boy, is the "Old Adam," without hope—"Ye shall surely die." Yet if Popeye is

created already doomed to arrested development—like the innocent Benjy—how can he be judged? With the apparently 'original' defective imagination his defective carcass bodies forth, how can he be "old enough to know better?" How to judge an evil child is perhaps the real problem of infant damnation.[8]

Popeye might be regarded as a "Thundersmitten Adam," more thundersmitten than Clifford Pyncheon—if indeed we can really regard him as human. Yet the 'American Adam' is a figure of good will and innocence, and Popeye seems its condemning antithesis: the great gangster, not the great innocent. But this is the underground side of that 'innocent,' Jay Gatsby. The innocence of Adam is by a "defect of knowledge,"[9] and is not good or evil, but amoral. Are not Popeye and Clifford both amoral?

If Clifford is, like Benjy, innocent and victimized, he is also capable of an amoral rationalizing. In his weird flight and conversation on the train he says, "For these murderers, as you phrase it, who are often excusable in the motives of their deed, and deserve to be ranked among public benefactors, if we consider only its result,—for unfortunate individuals like these, I really cannot applaud the enlistment of an immaterial and miraculous power in the universal world-hunt at their heels!" (Ch. 17). Clifford's argument concerning the injustice to criminals by the invention of telegraph is based on the "natural rights" of murderers: " . . . Now, sir, if the fugitive alight in some distant town, and find all the people babbling about that self-same dead man, whom he has fled so far to avoid the sight and thought of, will you not allow that his natural rights have been infringed? He has been deprived of his city of refuge, and, in my humble opinion, has suffered infinite wrong!"

This last sentence might be an epigraph for Sanctuary, a novel

about cities of refuge that provide no refuge. It begins with Horace fleeing to Jefferson from Kinston; in the end he has returned defeated to Kinston. Popeye, indifferent to murder, is ironically, executed in Birmingham for a murder he didn't commit. Temple is taken to Paris for a city of refuge, but she is "sullen and discontented and sad," gazing into a "sky lying prone and vanquished in the embrace of the season of rain and death."

Popeye raises the old problem of freedom of the will and accountability for sin. Before civil law a man must be held responsible for his overt, conscious and willed behavior. Before God it is the subjective will that counts. Does God condemn 'unconscious' thought? And a reader must take on a godlike office of judgement with regard to the characters of fiction. This is part of the great moral dilemma in The Scarlet Letter—and in most of Hawthorne's fiction. Arthur Dimmesdale does not sin deliberately, Hawthorne says, until late in the novel; yet he is clearly a great sinner long before that—not only in violating reverence for the human heart, but in battening on remorse. God judges man by his heart, by what he really is—not so much by the overt will as by the covert willfulness. And if that willfulness is so covert that it is hidden more or less from one's own consciousness, yet that is the will of the very self.[10]

The problem of evil Sanctuary implicitly presents is not that man is immoral—in this novel he certainly is, by conventional standards—but that he may be amoral, and that then there are no standards but convention. There can be no justice for amorality, and without justice life is meaningless—for sensitive men like Horace Benbow at any rate. Freud's only hope, a Stoic one, was in knowledge through psychotherapy. According to Jonathan Edwards sin is nothing but nature without grace,

and that describes the world of Sanctuary: nature without cities of refuge. Poor Clifford is perhaps confusing the Old Testament's mercy with its justice in arguing that a city of refuge is a murderer's "natural right." His is unhinged, but perhaps his insight for justice is true.

The impasse that confronts Horace Benbow is that Popeye and Temple escape the civil law; and if they and the evils they generate are not within the scope of ideal Law, if the world is amoral, then the very structure of the world is chaotic and evil is meaningless. And Sanctuary does assert that the world is evil, and that Law can do nothing.

Natural or unnatural, Popeye is a monster. We cannot judge him as a human being; we can only regard him as subhuman, hence amoral, and do our best to acquiesce with his final indifference to himself. What can we think of such creatures? But Temple is not subhuman—is she? The only prayer she can muster, "My father's a judge," ironically brings to bear the need for our judgment of her family's injustice: if they become more subhuman than Popeye, how can we plead disease or freakishness for them? Temple responds to Popeye.

The main action of the novel is Temple's corruption, which only begins with her rape, and culminates in her perjury. And here lies the relevance of the myth of the "American Adam" to the novel. The implication is that Temple, seventeen and eighteen years old, is representative of the youth of her time, and of what the students on the train, or Little Belle, are capable if they, like Temple, only met with a catalyst like Popeye. Innocence trusts. But Temple's innocence trusts not in love, or even in justice, but in respectability: "People dont do that sort of thing." The fact that "My father's a judge," brings her no thought of justice, but only of respectability, and its power.

Perhaps Popeye is damned from infancy by disease. But Temple

is no Elsie Venner. She is silly, thoughtless, selfish, ignorant—'innocent'; and she is victimized; yet she is not so innocent but that she is largely responsible for what happens at the Old Frenchman place. And she is entirely responsible for the final catastrophe, where what counts is her respectability—or her family's—and Popeye is irrelevant. Respectability is her family's weapon, comparable to Popeye's automatic.

At the outset Temple is 'innocent'; she is aware of sexuality as a device for manipulating boys and getting entertainment. But knowledge of sexuality is not identical with evil—though it has long been a serviceable symbol for it. Temple is not really aware of the force of sexuality—as Ruby LaMarr tells her, and as she is to find out for herself. The horror is that though she certainly is immersed in evil, she never comes to a knowledge of it in the sense which Bushnell and Hawthorne contemplated as saving: saving, that is, of ethical value and of meaning for life.

> The vision of innocence stimulated a positive and original sense of tragedy. . . . Without the vision, we are left, not with a mature tragic spirit, but merely with a sterile awareness of evil uninvigorated by a sense of loss [my italics]. For the notion of original sin draws its compelling strength from the prior notion of original innocence. (R. W. B. Lewis)[11]

Temple's knowledge is such a "sterile awareness of evil." Nothing she does, including her testimony accusing Goodwin of the unnatural rape, is sheer mindlessness. She takes some pride in her corruption, as Horace Benbow realizes. (In Requiem Temple admits that "Temple Drake liked evil.") Indifference is not the same as mindlessness; Temple knows what the result of her testimony will be, and she not only assents to but instigates the atrocity in Goodwin's lynching.

Horace Benbow's attempt for justice is doomed because his values conflict, and the stronger value is one that he has in common with Temple.

Horace's ideal is the Law, but his inmost delight is not (like the Psalmist's) in the Law of the Lord, but is a tormented fascination with Little Belle. The World, as represented by his sister Narcissa, and the Devil, as represented by Popeye, he can resist. The Flesh disgusts him, but he cannot resist it; so finally he succumbs to all three. Horace's faith is weak, but he has had a faith:

> "God is foolish at times, but at least He's a gentleman. Dont you know that?"
>
> "I always thought of Him as a man," the woman said.

With reason Ruby LaMarr doesn't think much of men. Even so, her conception is stronger than Horace's, if not so intellectual. For Horace, as a gentleman, underestimates corruption—and succumbs to it.

At the end Popeye indifferently faces a death blank of meaning, and Temple faces a life just as blank. Only Horace is tormented by consciousness. On the way home from the trial he begins to cry: "There was a little snow of locust blooms on the mounting drive. 'It does last,' Horace said. 'Spring does. You'd almost think there was some purpose to it'" (Ch. 29). He is tormented by the thought that ours is a world where beauty and truth (purpose, and justice) are not one, but at odds. That night Goodwin is burned. "Horace couldn't hear them. He couldn't hear the man who had got burned screaming. He couldn't hear the fire, though it still swirled upward unabated, as though it were living upon itself, and soundless: a voice of fury like in a dream, roaring silently out of a peaceful void."

The great defeat in the novel is not only in the injustice represented in the lynching of Goodwin. That is the "objective correlative" of the defeat of Horace's spirit. It is somewhat to the point that Horace's defense is almost half-hearted, for which the judge virtually censures him; moreover, he does not even bring up his own knowledge of Popeye's involve-

ment and Temple's private confession. If despite the lynching Horace could retain his faith in the Law, his defeat would be heroic, though tragic. Horace's defeat is complete, and the horror of the world of Sanctuary is far the greater for it. But that horror is possible because he can see the "peaceful void" out of which Goodwin's fire roars, and know that it is horrible. This is as far as his knowledge of good and evil takes him. But at least it is not just a dismal blankness. The mild and defeated Horace has this affinity with rapacious "lost violent souls": in that fire he sees and is lost in the same abyss whose horror Conrad's Kurtz pronounced. But the bestial rapacity of Popeye and the respectable rapacity of Temple and in dreary indifference.

Ibrahim, Sarty Snopes, Clifford, Benjy, all have a sense of great loss with only a dim sense of evil. Temple has a knowledge of evil, but it is inadequate because she, unlike Horace, has no sense of the loss concomitant with it. Horace Benbow's knowledge of evil is not, like Temple's, "a sterile awareness of evil uninvigorated by a sense of loss." If there is any assuaging insight implicit in the book it is in Horace's tragic sense of loss.

B. Judge Pyncheon, Mrs. Compson, and Jason

The bodies of Hawthorne's villains are (like Faulkner's Popeye and Flem Snopes) often warped in correspondence with the warping of their souls. He characteristically lays the blame for evil on both sin and defect. The description of a baby he saw in an English workhouse might serve as a description of the infant Popeye:

> ". . . a baby, which was beyond all comparison, the most horrible object I ever saw in my life. It really seems to lie upon the floor of my heart, and pollute my moral being with the recollection of it. The Governor said to me, apart, that it was the child of a diseased mother. True enough it must have been. This wretched infant had been begotten by Sin upon Disease—diseased Sin was its father, and sinful

> Disease its mother—and the offspring of their hideous embrace looked like a suckling Pestilence, which, if it could live to grow up, would make the world more accursed than ever heretofore. . . . I can by no means tell how horrible this baby was; neither ought I. And yet its pain and misery seem to have given it a sort of intelligence; and its eyes stared at me out of their sunken sockets knowingly, and appealingly. . . . Did God make this child? Has it a soul capable of immortality?—of immortal bliss? I am afraid not. At all events, it is quite beyond my conception and understanding.[13]

How different is this from his thought in a near-transcendental vein: "Sweet must have been the spring-time of Eden, when no earlier year had strewn its decay upon the virgin turf. . . . Oh thou murmurer. . . . There is no decay. Each human soul is the first created inhabitant of its own Eden."[14] Against this hopeful affirmation of man's 'original' goodness may be set Hawthorne's knowledge of man's corruptibility: "There is evil in every human heart, which may remain latent, perhaps, through the whole of his life; but circumstances may rouse it into activity."[15] Hawthorne always maintained this ambivalence. But why some people are good, some bad, is mysterious beyond the influence of circumstance. And Hawthorne frequently attests his belief in a Providence beyond our understanding—the obverse of which is the "dark necessity" Chillingworth appeals to. (But it seems clear to me that Chillingworth is willfully hardening his heart—and is henceforth almost irretrievably damned.)

I think that a good case could be made that in Hawthorn's belief there was a tension between Stoicism and Christianity.[16] The chief difference is in whether evil in the world is the result of defect or of sin. Christianity has much in common with Stoicism. St. Thomas regards evil as deficiency or privation; for him evil enters man's life when by neglect or misfortune man fails to actualize his potentialities.[17] The crucial question lies in whether man's deficiency is by wilful neglect or by fated misfortune—and in whether it is remediable. Stoicism

holds that evil can be prevented, in part, through knowledge. Christianity holds that it can be only remedied through grace. Yet there is an emphasis on saving knowledge in Christianity; I think it is usually admitted that grace must at least be acknowledged in order to be effective.

If some men are criminal and ignorant through defect and not through their own wills, how are we to judge them? And how are we to judge the world in which they are created? Hawthorne and Faulkner do not write theodicies; they write of the dilemma. Part of the dilemma is that, willy-nilly, men do judge. And some human judges, including official ones like Temple's father, like Judge Pyncheon in The House of the Seven Gables, seem to have no conception of the value of justice.

Hawthorne's Judge Pyncheon, like Popeye, is warped in mind and body, but in the opposite extreme. His body is gross, not emaciated, and his mind and appetites are shielded by fat layers of hypocrisy, quite unlike Popeye's meager gratification in simple murder. Judge Pyncheon threatens to have Clifford put in an asylum if he does not satisfy the Judge, and concludes: "And, once sure of the course pointed out by conscience, you know me too well, Cousin Hepsibah, to entertain a doubt that I shall pursue it" (My italics) "'O, Jaffrey,—Cousin Jaffrey!' cried Hepsibah, mournfully, not passionately, 'it is you that are diseased in mind, not Clifford!'" (Ch. 15).

Judge Pyncheon has inherited a disease which his villainy might suggest has analogies with original sin. But if it is knowledge of evil, it is a knowledge so intimate, so close under his own nose, that the judge cannot recognise it. He is a replica of his ancestor, that Colonel Pyncheon who was not to be turned aside by his victim's ghost or by "flimsy sentimentalities": "Had he been told of a bad air, it might

have moved him somewhat; but he was ready to encounter an evil spirit on its own ground. Endowed with common-sense, as massive and hard as blocks of granite, fastened together by stern rigidity of purpose, as with iron clamps, he followed out his original design, probably without so much as imagining an objection to it." The Colonel and the Judge simply lack the imagination essential for real conscience. Conscience to them is merely one of the accoutrements of respectability. Other accoutrements are the Judge's zeal as president of a Bible Society, etc., including his benefits to agriculture "through the agency of the famous Pnycheon bull; and the cleanliness of his moral deportment, for a great many years past"—this juxtaposition pointing up the inner quality and reliability of his 'cleanliness.'

Judge Pyncheon is "a man of eminent respectability. The church acknowledged it; the state acknowledged it." Such authority is hard to gainsay. Phoebe is perplexed "whether judges, clergymen, and other characters of that eminent stamp and respectability, could really, in any single instance, be otherwise than just and upright men." Some, says Hawthorne, have the boldness of mind for a stern enjoyment in discovering evil in high places, "but Phoebe, <u>in order to keep the universe in its old place</u>, was fain to smother, in some degree, her own intuitions as to Judge Pyncheon's character." (Italics mine.) To keep the universe in place is the same problem Horace Benbow has in confronting Temple and her family.

Appearance is wholly on the Judge's side. Hepsibah considers going to the window to "send forth a shriek, but she knows that "in this dull delirium of a world,—that whosoever, and with however kindly a purpose, should come to help, they would be sure to help the strongest side!" The Judge, "a member of Congress and the church, and intimately

associated with whatever else bestows a good name,—so imposing . . . that Hepsibah herself could hardly help shrinking from her own conclusions as to his hollow integrity." If his appearance is so impressive to Hepsibah, no wonder it is so to himself: "There was enough of splendid rubbish in his life to cover up and paralyze a more active and subtile conscience than the Judge was ever troubled with." Not only does it cover up; if he should think of "some one wrong act . . . would you characterize the Judge by that one necessary deed," and let it outweigh the mass of things not evil? "This scale and balance system is a favorite one with people of Judge Pyncheon's brotherhood."

Hawthorne lavishes heavy whimsy on the Judge's corpse, because, massive though he may appear alive, morally he has no life, and so, to Hawthorne, he is deficient in real being. His corpulence which "bodies forth" his lack of spirituality is ironic: he is most himself when dead, "so heavy and lumpish that we can liken him to nothing better than a defunct nightmare." Earlier Hawthorne likens him to a great palace, but warns of "the deadly hole under the pavement, and the decaying corpse within."

The Judge is indispensable to the story of The House of the Seven Gables. His characterization is rather lifeless (as if the fallacy of imitative form were at work),[18] but though Hawthorne's commentary on the Judge does not bring him alive—as it does Hester, what is important is the Judge's effects on other characters. He only 'lives' negatively, in his impinging on the lives of others; that effect is vital indeed: that is, it gives birth to all Hepsibah's and Clifford's distress, the flight of the two owls, and hence to as much life as they are to know.

The villains of The Sound and the Fury are Mrs. Compson and Jason.

Both are apparently motivated by respectability, though what drives each of them goes somewhat beyond mere respectability. Mrs. Compson tries to see herself as a "delicately nurtured Southern lady," ill and victimized. The darkened room in which she lies with a "headache" is a stage setting; the Bible Dilsey must pick up for her is only a stage property. She keeps herself far from reality, and it is precisely in this that she does irreparable harm. "If I only had a mother" is the plea of both Caddy and Quentin. While Mr. Compson is half-heartedly trying to dissuade Quentin from the idea of suicide, Quentin is thinking, "Done in Mother's mind though. Finished. Finished. Then we were all poisoned." Mrs. Compson has banished her children from existence, and herself from existence for them.

Mr. Compson tells Quentin, "Your mother is thinking of morality [i.e. respectability] whether it be sin or not has not occurred to her." Respectability couldn't worry Quentin less; but for a very different reason he is as committed as his mother to the romantic ideal: he wants to make believe that Caddy and he have committed a truly significant sin.[19] Each of the family tries to find meaningfulness, some reality, by frantically inventing his own version of reality. If Mrs. Compson could let the reality of sin—a real knowledge of evil—break in upon her, she might see the horror she is committing, and save herself and her family. But she is trapped in her romantic role where there is no sin, but only 'morality,' respectability. When the adolescent Caddy kisses a boy Mrs. Compson seizes the opportunity to improvise in her dramatic role: to don mourning and go about weeping that her little daughter is dead. She prefers being a tragic queen to being a mother. With Quentin's unwitting connivance—since he has the same romantic notion of delicately nurtured Southern ladies—she drives Caddy further into damnation, thus giving

herself new 'dramatic' opportunites. So when Miss Quentin is born, she can say, "If she could grow up never to know that she had a mother, I would thank God." If Caddy had been a 'good' girl Mrs. Compson would have had to find some other dramatic situations; ordinary respectability is not strong enough for her; she must revel in the heightened respectability of wearing mourning for a fallen daughter.

Unlike Quentin, Jason totally rejects his mother's romanticism. Whereas she prided herself on her delicate conscience, Jason can say "I'm glad I haven't got the sort of conscience I've got to nurse like a sick puppy all the time." Like his mother in his conviction that he is victimized, he thereby feels a matter-of-fact justification for whatever he does. Jason feels no compunctions, no indecorum, for beating Miss Quentin's knuckles on the desk until she lets go of her letter and money. This is simply the efficient way to get what he wants—what he sees as coming to him; after all had not her mother been responsible for his losing that promised bank job? He does not see himself as cruel, but merely as logical.[20] But, though he wears a tough mask of indifference that fools even himself, Jason is not indifferent. He promises, for a hundred dollars, to let Caddy see her child for a minute, and fulfills the agreement—by holding up the child a moment as he is driven by in a hack. "'Hit 'em again," I says, Let's get on home.' When we turned the corner she was still running." This is not simply a logical bargain; it is insanely cruel.[21] And Jason has more reasons than that job he lost. Just before this scene he had been with Caddy at their father's grave: "We stood there, looking at the grave, and then I got to thinking about when we were little and one thing and another and I got to feeling funny again, kind of mad or something. . . ." Here Jason is threatened with a touch of sentiment, his closest brush with love. He cannot identify

it, and he doesn't like it. To relieve this emotion he turns his inventive sadism on Caddy. She has been superior to his meanness as a child: "Let him tell," Caddy had said. "I don't give a cuss." Jason has his revenge. But Caddy, though broken, remains superior. Similarly there are complications in his motives in persecuting Miss Quentin. He is tormented by her relationships with boys—which might well be normal and innocent enough without his interference.

Jason desires respectability because it is profitable. And he is tied to the family by the steady income he steals from Miss Quentin. But when for respectability's sake the smartest thing to do would be to ignore, and thereby probably to conceal her adventure with the man with the red tie, Jason begins his mad chase: "And there I was, without my hat, looking like I was crazy too. . . . All the time I could see them watching me like a hawk, waiting for a chance to say Well I'm not surprised I expected it all the time the whole family's crazy." And Jason, chasing Quentin, goes into a revery about his family and his mistress, which concludes: "I've got every respect for a good honest whore because with Mother's health and the position I try to uphold to have her with no more respect for what I try to do for her than to make her name and my name and my Mother's name a byword in the town."

He is crazy too. His mind, like Quentin's, switches without warning (or punctuation) from Lorraine to his mother to Miss Quentin, the three women in his life. It is not too unfair or too Freudian to suggest that what interest he has in sexuality and his concern for respectability are here wrapped up confusedly together. His respectabiliy is, like his mother's, illusory. He fools no one; including the sheriff, who says, "You drove that girl into running off, Jason."

But if there is some subterranian motivation, beyond the loss of

that job, in his cruelty to Caddy and her daughter, his treatment of Luster approaches 'disinterested' sadism. He teases Luster with the show tickets before dropping them in the stove, and Dilsey understands him: "A big growed man like you," she says. "Git on outen my kitchen." Jason's development is arrested; his cruelty is that of a child, but with an adult ingenuity for twisting the knife. A little later Dilsey tries to get him to come to the dining room "'Come on,' . . . fo you think up some mo devilment. You just tryin yoself tonight." Neither sane, logical, nor disinterested, Jason continually is "trying himself."

C. Flem Snopes, Chillingworth, and Others

Flem Snopes' controlled meanness is the ideal which Jason's passions will never permit him to approximate. And Flem's sadistic power can surpass Judge Pyncheon's because of Flem's simple superiority to respectability. Both wield power, but the Judge is too gross, too weighted down by his multiplicity of honors to have Flem's singleminded force. Popeye gets what pleasure he does in little spasms of sadism. Jason's sadism is partly deliberate, partly frenetic. Flem's sadism is of a higher order than Popeye's of Jason's only in that it is more intellectual. He enjoys contriving for power, wielding his brains rather than an automatic. But Flem's imagination, lacking any ethical content, is also of a mechanical if not automatic variety. (In this he and Thomas Sutpen are alike.)

Flem is regarded by Gavin Stevens (a lawyer markedly like Horace Benbow), and by many critics, as the arch villain of Yoknapatawpha County. His magnitude is that of a folk tale monster; it comes in no small measure from his distance (we really see little of him) and his ubiquity; he is always there, always behind the scenes—until he emerges, spits,

collects the money, and departs. (After The Hamlet, though we still see little of him, he seems to suffer from over-exposure—as, in my opinion, do most of the characters of the Snopes trilogy.)

Perhaps Flem's most representative moments are in his savoring his ruin of the Armstids. After Henry has broken his leg, Mrs. Armstid goes to get her last five dollars, which the horse trader had said Flem would return. She cannot believe he will, but is desperate.

> "He said I could get the money from you."
> "I reckon he forgot it," Snopes said. "he took all the money away with him when he left." He watched her a moment longer, then he trimmed again at the stick. The clerk rubbed his back gently against the door, watching her. After a time Mrs. Armstid raised her head and looked up the road where it went on, mild with spring dust, past Mrs. Littlejohn's, beginning to rise, on past the not-yet-blossomed (that would be in June) locust grove across the way, on past the schoolhouse, the weathered roof of which, rising beyond an orchard of peach and pear trees, resembled a hive swarmed about by a cloud of pink-and-white bees, ascending, mounting toward the crest of the hill where the church stood among its sparse gleam of marble headstones in the sombre cedar grove where during the long afternoons of summer the constant mourning doves called back and forth. She moved; once more the rubber soles hissed on the gnawed boards.
> "I reckon it's about time to get dinner started," she said.

Mrs. Armstid looks up the road, and Faulkner evokes the pastoral beauty of the scene, not only of the moment but of the future pregnant in the moment; but for Mrs. Armstid the future is grim, and the beauty (though she is not, like Horace Benbow or Quentin Compson, tortured by it) is just ironic. And the church is there—but among headstones in a sombre cedar grove. Flem's gift of "a little sweetning for the chaps" is a final twist of malice and deliberate hypocrisy.

The Hamlet concludes as Flem, on his way to Jefferson, pauses among the other spectators to watch Henry Armstid, completely degraded, crippled, and insane, digging furiously for the nonexistent treasure which Flem had fooled him into buying the Old Frenchman place for. "Why savor the final destruction of Henry Armstid?" asks a critic, and answers

that Flem has "a monstrous, sadistic vanity."[22] Another writes, "What makes Flem so peculiarly pernicious is this seemingly congenital insensitivity, the basis of his literal inhumanity."[23] Vanity; insensitivity: sadism must combine an appetite for, a rapt involvement with, its victim's suffering, and at the same time an immense indifference, immune to sympathy.

Only Flem can bear the responsibility for Flem's soullessness, which makes him supremely hellish—and, in the little fable at the center of The Hamlet, worthy of Hell's throne. The indifference at his core is Flem's great weapon, but indifference so deadly is altogether too like death itself. In his death, at the hands of Mink Snopes, Flem, "faintly chewing again," is just as indifferent as Popeye at his death. Finally both Popeye and Flem are defective, impotent creatures whose lack of imagination simply culminates in overwhelming indifference, and they acquiesce to becoming, like Judge Pyncheon, defunct nightmares.

Forces similar to those of Sanctuary are at work in "Dry September." It is a story about one of the basic themes of Southern anxiety and violence: a Negro is lynched because he is accused of rape by a frustrated white woman. Hawkshaw, the barber, like Horace Benbow in his ineffectual good will, tries to defend the Negro: "I know Will Mayes. He's a good nigger. And I know Miss Minnie Cooper, too." The dryness of September is a metaphorical parallel of Miss Minnie Cooper's dry spinsterhood, and it is the atmosphere which creates tension and breeds violence in the lynchers: "Through the bloody September twilight, aftermath of sixty-two rainless days, it had gone like a fire in dry grass—the rumor, the story, whatever it was." Whatever it is, the whole town participates in it. No one seems really to believe that

Miss Minnie Cooper has been raped. But only Hawkshaw doesn't want to believe it.

There is a brief history of her frustrated life. "Against that background Minnie's bright dresses, her idle and empty days, had a quality of furious unreality." The culminating unreality of her accusation may be an attempt to reach something real. Her madness finally breaks out in uncontrollable laughter—at the town which knowingly supports her lie. The whole town indeed has the same sickness; she and McLendon, who leads the lynchers, are the agents by which it expresses its madness. As a matter of ordinary motivation the long drought has irritated and driven the town to violence. But thematically it functions as if it grew out of the town's spiritual drought.

As in Sanctuary, there is only one conscience not dried out, but fully aware of the evil. And ironically he, except for the victim, suffers most. Hawkshaw jumps from the car of the lynchers, and "the impetus hurled him crashing through dust-sheathed weeds, into the ditch. Dust puffed about him, and in a thin vicious crackling of sapless stems he lay choking and retching. . . ."

Miss Minnie Cooper is utterly indifferent to Will Mayes as a person; he is nothing but a Negro. Her whole concern is with her dryness. She is a vampire; improperly buried in her living death, she thirsts for life's juices, and right at hand is a Negro—any will do—as a defenseless victim.

The rapacity of McLendon is intense self-interest; undisciplined, unlearned, 'innocent' in its ignorance. It is ethically indifferent, even though it may appeal to its own moralism: "Did it really happen?" the barber pleads. McLendon's answer is, "Happen? What the hell difference does it make?" His rapacity is the result of poverty of

conscience, poverty of ethical imagination. The only moral standard McLendon has is a concept of respectability which works by simple classification in which moral matters are decided not by thoughtful ethical choice but by predetermined stereotypes: good and bad is a matter of black and white. Lynching is not widely respectable, but for McLendon and his kind it is.

McLendon, Jason and Mrs. Compson, and Judge Pyncheon in their rapacity are used by respectability as much as they are users of it. But Minnie Cooper's collapse into hysteric laughter comes with some new consciousness: respectability is the town's substitute for conscience, but she has seen through that. Temporarily she voids conscience altogether—a desperate move which no one can live with long. Her rapacity, more willful, is superior to forces like respectability, which it can use for its own ends, rather than be driven by it. Rather than being driven by its appetites, it has the appearance at least of having chosen a particular kind of appetite. Temple Drake and Minnie Cooper use respectability, and, through it, they use creatures of simpler rapacity like Popeye and McLendon. They too are morally retarded, but they are not, like Judge Pyncheon or Mrs. Compson, so much taken in by their own hypocrisy, though they do not admit their joy in evil, either.

Hawthorne's Chillingworth might be regarded as the archetype of sophisticated rapacity. He is aware, and sensitive—terribly so—and he becomes so obsessed with his particular victim, his "sacred fount," that the loss of his victim leaves him an empty husk. Popeye might be seen as the archetype of the slavishly rapacious. He is always indifferent except for ephemeral spasms of emotion—not to be dignified as "passion"—which result in the killing of Tommy or the rape of Temple. He ends appropriately engulfed in indifference. Chillingworth is great

enough for a significant passion, but when he is cut off from his sacred fount, he too is the victim of something like indifference, or worse.

Ethan Brand, unlike men trapped into evil, begins with his eyes open, in willful pursuit of it; or rather, he seeks intellectual knowledge of evil, and is for its sake willing to take on more intimate knowledge.

The common theological interpretation of the unpardonable sin is tautological: it is that final proud despair which refuses to believe that there is any pardoning power.[24] (Indeed I wonder if all those who are unpardoned must not have committed themselves to this despair?) But theologian Brand certainly seeks something more esoteric than this; he wants no doubt to define and illuminate that difficult pronouncement of Christ concerning blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Moreover it might well be expected that such a sin must be the most heinous and terrifying of evils. Brand in his search, as Roy Male aptly says, is "repeating Satan's desire for ultimate penetration."[25] Even on his last night Brand doubts his accomplishment, but is reassured by recalling Esther, whom he had "absorbed" in a psychological experiment. He has committed what, for Hawthorne at any rate, was the most heinous of sins: the violation of another's soul, "ultimate penetration."[26]

Yet his search had not concluded with Esther; it concludes with "bleak and terrible loneliness;" his heart has "ceased to partake of the universal throb." And he sees that his search has gone on beyond that "star-lit eminence" he once attained, and has come to resemble nothing so much as a cur chasing its tail. Though at this recognition he breaks into laughter which terrifies his company at the lime kiln, though Brand appears tremendous, his life is finally judged trivial. He is like

Conrad's lost, violent Kurtz, who finally sees the horror of the heart of darkness, and in his irrevocable committing of himself to nihility shows his relation to those trivial hollow men about him. The great difference of Brand and Kurtz is—they see.

All men have "ids," are libidinous. (All men—and women too. The puritanic Young Goodman Brown and Joe Christmas and Quentin Compson are blinded by compulsively staring at this truth.) But rapacity is appetite turned mad and cancerous. It is the dis-ease of nympholepsy, desire for the unattainable. In human relations it seeks not communion but "ultimate penetration;" it is sadistic and killing because it can never be satisfied. "Ultimate penetration" goes clear through, to nothingness. It ends in (what Freud has made famous) death-wish. All that is left for Brand is death. Like Hawthorne's Man of Adamant, Richard Digby, his heart is stone. Digby is finally walled up in his cave by the ordinary mortals he despises. Brand's proud, rigid heart is crumbled into lime by the cloddish Bartram.

Though it remains a matter of insufficient ethical imagination and moral standards, as rapacity becomes more sophisticated it shows not retardation in conscience, but rather the blasting and perversion of conscience, often by the malignant growth of some one principle, like a dark weed choking out the others. In proud isolation, rigidity to moralistic principle is substituted for a wholesome conscience, and becomes law unto itself. Brand's and Rappaccini's moralism is based on worship of science.

Brand's psychological experiments are subsumed under his quest in theology, queen of sciences (as the Middle Ages called it). Rappaccini's interest in human values is subordinated to his interest in pure science. However what he seeks is the 'purest' of poisons, what to

life is most impure. "Nothing could exceed the intentness with which this scientific gardener examined every shrub which grew in his path: it seemed as if he was looking into their inmost nature, making observations in regard to their creative essence. . . . Nevertheless, in spite of this deep intelligence on his part, there was no approach to intimacy between himself and these vegetable existences." Intellectual penetration without emotional intimacy: we are not surprised that Hawthorne seems to find this as almost as distasteful with regard to vegetables as persons, nor that in Hawthorne's world someone who will so mistreat vegetables will mistreat his own daughter.

Rappaccini is the Adamic gardener of this corrupted "Eden of the present world," but, further, he is a usurper of God's role. Beatrice tells Giovannia that her father has "created" his strange shrub, and Giovanni recognizes the blasphemy in Rappaccini's work. Like Shakespeare's Perdita, Beatrice is "shocked and offended" by the "commixture, and as it were, adultery, of various vegetable species, . . . production no longer of God's making, but the monstrous offspring of man's depraved fancy, glowing with only an evil mockery of beauty."[27] (There is a nice problem for aesthetics implicit here.) But she is herself such a deadly bloom: spiritually still of God's making, but physically a monstrous offspring of depraved fancy.

Hawthorne says of Giovanni as he might have of Young Goodman Brown and Faith: "Not that he gave her up; he did but distrust." No wonder that he is desperate as he discovers that he too is developing a poisonous nature. He kills a spider with his breath—breath "imbued with a venomous feeling out of his heart: he knew not whether he were wicked or only desperate." He is both; and out of both wickedness and desperation he curses Beatrice. And out of despair, with a touch of

vengeance, she drinks the 'antidote' he offers, and dies.[28]

Though I think we may be permitted a little more sympathy for Giovanni than Hawthorne himself shows, Giovanni is the chief villain in a story of innocence and rapacity. (Let us note the similarity of "Rappaccini" and "rapacity," for however much it's worth.) Beatrice is quite right: "Oh was there not, from the first, more poison in thy nature than in mine?" As she has said, though her body is nourished with poison, her spirit is God's creature; she has Miriam's body but Hilda's soul. Yet, though innocent, she helps cause Giovanni's evil: "She had . . . instilled a fierce and subtle poison into his system. It was not love, although her rich beauty was a madness to him; nor horror, even while he fancied her spirit to be imbued with the same baneful essence that seemed to pervade her physical frame; but a wild offspring of both love and horror. . . . Blessed are all simple emotions, be they dark or bright; it is the lurid intermixture of the two that produces the illuminating blaze of the infernal regions." And which produces the chiaroscuro effects Hawthorne likes so well.

Roger Chillingworth's emotions too are of a lurid intermixture. His reaction in discovering Dimmesdale's stigma is "a wild look of wonder, joy, and horror!"—all that distinguishes his ecstacy from Satan's, on winning a soul, is the wonder in his look. Chillingworth reveals rapacity and hate in extreme development far better than Brand. Chillingworth is the most convincing of Hawthorne's scientists drawn into experimentation with evil, partly because he has such convincing motivation. Rappaccini is respected by even the jealous Baglioni (who is willing to sacrifice his rival's daughter for his own experiment): Rappaccini, he says, "was not restrained by natural affection from offering up his child in

this horrible manner as the victim of his insane zeal for science; for, let us do him justice, he is as true a man of science as ever distilled his own heart in an alembic." Hawthorne would find his fears of pure science realized in our own age, perhaps beyond his most horrified imaginings. But at least Rappaccini's motivation is simple. (His eulogy on power is to proselytize; he never has sought mere power himself.) Baglioni combines scientific curiosity and malice. But Baglioni seems disinterested compared with Chillingworth.

Hawthorne describes what has happened to Chillingworth simply: he "was a striking evidence of man's faculty of transforming himself into a devil, if he will only, for a reasonable space of time, undertake a devil's office. 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." Here I think Hawthorne has invented a situation which can achieve the epitome of sadism. No physical torture, though more intense, could be so prolonged. Chillingworth can never be sated; his curiosity and malevolence, and perhaps most of all, as Hawthorne makes clear, his own unhappiness, spur each other on.

Hester, recognizing what has become of Chillingworth, and her own part in it, looks at him so strangely that he asks her what she sees. "Something that would make me weep, if there were any tears bitter enough for it," she answers. (Never has Hester come so close to real repentance; but she says, "Let it pass," and turns her thought to Dimmesdale.) As Chillingworth goes on gloatingly to describe his torment of the minister, he suddenly sees what Hester has seen: he has "a look of horror, as if he had beheld some frightful shape, which he could not

recognize, usurping the place of his own image in a glass."

Hester and he pity each other. She tells him that she had thought that no good could come for any of the three "here wandering together in this gloomy maze of evil, and stumbling, at every step, over the guilt wherewith we have strewn our path," but that if he could forgive, there might be good for him. But he replies "It is not granted to me to pardon. . . . My old faith, long forgotten, comes back to me, and explains all that we do, and all we suffer. . . . It has all been a dark necessity." And Chillingworth briefly absolves all three from sin and responsibility, blaming it on fate—and 'faith.' Here is another twist on unpardonable, or rather, unpardoning, sin. This "old faith" is the faith of the Black Man he emulates, the faith Young Goodman Brown takes in the forest, neglecting the Faith whose second great commandment is human love. (This is the excuse of characters diverse as Captain Ahab and Mr. Compson. Indeed the latent Calvinism in Mr. Compson's world-weary skepticism is largely responsible for Quentin's search for a more meaningful "dark necessity.")

Hawthorne remarks, "It is a curious subject of observation and inquiry whether hatred and love be not the same thing at bottom. Each, in its utmost development, supposes a high degree of intimacy and heart knowledge; each renders one individual dependent for the food of his affections and spiritual life upon another. . . ." Chillingworth's hate is indeed developed to its utmost, and when Dimmesdale withdraws, Chillingworth collapses: "All his 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 an uprooted weed that lies wilting in the sun." His "ultimate penetration" to nihility would have inevitably come to this, even had

Dimmesdale died while in his power, without spiritual escape.

Minnie Cooper, Brand, Giovanni, Chillingworth, all prey on their victims with confused motives; frustrated sexuality is usually involved more or less, and a 'disinterested' curiosity. Theirs are not ordinary hypertrophied perversions of sexuality and curiosity; they are cleverly nurtured—sophisticated. Yet the sins of these characters are not so complex, nor is their suffering so great, as Hawthorne's and Faulkner's sinners of deeper moral awareness.

CHAPTER IV

MORAL RIGIDITY

A. Young Goodman Brown

American moralism consists in "the belief that every individual is himself responsible for deciding the rightness or wrongness of every issue (large or small) in terms of a higher moral law," and this "forces us to make (or enables us to indulge in) moralistic defences of the most immoral actions."[1] Though closely related, and perhaps often indistinguishable since both are so selfish, there is a radical difference between the self-deceiving hypocrisy of a Judge Pyncheon or a Mrs. Compson (who uses respectability as a cloak for gratification of relatively gross appetites) and the driving moralism which mortifies oneself and others for the sake of a higher law. The moralist would, like the psalmist, delight in the Law of the Lord, but his great temptation is to delight not in the Law or in whatsoever things are true, honest, just, and pure, but rather to delight in, or to be obsessed by, whatsoever things are not: to delight, really, in contemplating sin.

Though at the last Ethan Brand deliberately embraces evil, and Young Goodman Brown, ostensibly, eschews it, we can see that they are spiritually related through Richard Digby of "The Man of Adamant." Brand's rapacity is realized in intellectual perversion of conscience. He knows it is sin he seeks. Digby's and Young Goodman Brown's consciences are so rigidified that they do not even know they sin.

Richard Digby carries transvalued Calvinism to its last extreme, decides he is the only member of the elect, and goes off with his Bible to a cave where he can be free of the rest of mankind's impurities. The spirit of Mary Goffe pleads with him to relent; he rejects her, and dies, and is appropriately turned to stone by the drippings of his cave.

Brand and the Man of Adamant in their pride are contemptous of man, but, though Young Goodman Brown like them embraces a doom of isolation, his rejection of mankind grows out of original concern. Brown and Digby are obsessed with sin, each thinking every man but himself is vile, but Digby rejoices in that others are evil, whereas Young Goodman Brown is horrified by that evil, and "his dying hour was gloom"—but that dying hour encompasses his whole life subsequent to his fall.

"The Man of Adamant" is subtitled "An Apologue." Digby's searching out of a cave where he can turn to stone is, indeed, gross allegory. The allegory of "Young Goodman Brown" is consumate, and its implications reverberate with ironies. Goodman Brown has Faith—faith in his religion and in the goodness and love of mankind, all embodied in his wife. He is tempted to indulge in a little demonic orgy, and his faith protests, perhaps not fearing damage to Young Goodman Brown directly, but to itself. Simultaneously the woman, Faith, begs him to stay for her protection, not his, and not from physical harm, but from "such dreams and such thoughts that she's afeard of herself." Here is fair warning. But Young Goodman Brown has the delusion that a woman of flesh and blood can be "a blessed angel on earth." Faith, despite her name, (and unlike the Man of Adamant's ghostly Mary Goffe) has the same fleshly temptations as the man.[2] She is threatened by a similar evil dream: she is at the black mass.[3]

"Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch-meeting? Be it so if you will, but, alas! it was a dream of evil omen." Even if he only dreams, the knowledge he receives about his wife—and faith—is doubtless true. She is there; that is, as she has warned him, she has the same kind of demonic 'dreams.' What if his religious faith, despite his attempt to leave it behind, had not come also to the fateful gathering? It is a glimpse of faith that makes him cry out, "Faith! Faith! Look up to heaven, and resist the wicked one." And he wakes from his evil dream. Or does he? For Young Goodman Brown doubts his faith; which is the damning opposite of that faith which says, "Lord I believe; help thou my unbelief." (The difference is a narrow, but well-nigh bottomless chasm.) For a short while Young Goodman Brown did give himself up to demonic exuberance; when he first realized that Faith was in the same wilderness, he went laughing and roaring through the woods, knowing "himself the chief horror of the scene." His 'awakening' takes from him this self-knowledge, but he remains the chief horror. Doubting his faith is not to relinquish, to lose it, and thus to gain an exuberant, if hellish freedom (like that Arthur Dimmesdale feels after he first deliberately gives himself up to sin). On the contrary, he remains a Puritan of the Puritans, wedded indissolubly to a faith he mistrusts.[4] His mistrust in God and man is wholly at one with his mistrust of the person closest to him, Faith. Hence this allegory has an aptness and power that few can achieve; at every point each part of the figure reinforces the others.

Whatever lust drove Young Goodman Brown into the forest, he returns with a worse: a lust for absolute purity. He is wedded to her, but "often, waking suddenly at midnight, he shrank from the bosom of

Faith." Is not Young Goodman Brown's turning from Faith as evil a violation as Brand's experimentation with Esther: making violate by spiritual abandonment rather than by despoliation? We may think of Thomas Sutpen: it is not his 'violation' of Milly that shocks Wash Jones; it is the abandoning. The same is true of Miss Rosa: she sees the marriage the "demon" offers as a violation, and accepts eagerly enough. But his proposition, to see if she can bear him a boy first, outrages her—not so much by its intrinsic immorality, but because he ought to have known that its disrespectability must separate them.

"Welcome," had said the Evil One, "to the communion of your race." Young Goodman Brown has indeed rejected that invitation. But he has accepted what Satan proposed as its prerequisite: the perverse belief, the "old faith," shared with Roger Chillingworth, that "Evil is the nature of mankind." Indeed, his Puritan faith teaches this, but the most adamant Calvinism does not present it as the whole story. Yet this is what Young Goodman Brown adds to his relationship with Faith: consequently he has no communion with his race; he turns from his wife, from his family at prayer, from the community at worship.

Spiritually the worst violation is that which makes its victims vulnerable to indifference.[5] On the face of it Young Goodman Brown's rejection of Faith is based on revulsion from her corruptibility, rather than indifference to her, but his revulsion rather is from the whole race, and he becomes indifferent to his family except as they are the race's nearest exemplars. The same compulsion and abstracted indifference works in Brand's use of Esther as an experimental object, or in Joe Christmas' and Joanna Burden's mutual fascination with the myth of miscegination and with corrupt sexuality, for they see each other not as persons but as examples of abstract categories: Negro;

Woman. Sutpen cannot reject Charles Bon as a son, but he can reject him as a Negro. Men cannot be indifferent to persons; they can to things. Categorization depersonalizes and simplifies. And indifference works an economy in emotions—an economy that tries to save the self, and starves and kills the soul.

B. Hollingsworth and Sutpen

Hollingsworth of The Blithedale Romance is not so much obsessed with the sin of others as with his own superiority. To him, as to Richard Digby, the thought that men are sinners is not altogether unpleasing, he and Digby are closely related, spiritually, to the infamous Doc Hines of Light in August, whose religion and delight is the demonic gospel that men are wicked. Hollingsworth is convinced that his rectitude is so great that he can—and must—disregard the feebler, less virtuous wills of others. He is no hypocrite—consciously. (But indeed even Judge Pyncheon does not think of himself as a hypocrite.) Coverdale is affected with "deep reverence" for Hollingsworth by his habit of prayer, and says that Hollingsworth is "marked out by a light of transfiguration, shed upon him in the divine interview." (Subsequent knowledge of Hollingsworth might permit us to wonder who is supposed to be interviewing whom in these sessions.) Hollingsworth is possessed of much self-knowledge. He says, "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." Here again is the appeal to dark necessity, though Hollingsworth does not yet realize how dark it is.

Hollingsworth accuses Fourier of unpardonable sin, since it seems to him a "monstrous iniquity" to found a social system on

selfishness. (Like Hawthorne he makes no careful distinction between the most heinous sin and that which is unpardonable.) But Coverdale soon realizes that Hollingsworth in his philanthropic theory has conjured up a "spectral monster" of his own. Indeed Hollingsworth and his monster are one, and Coverdale concludes that he is "not altogether human;" he has "no heart, no sympathy, no reason, no conscience." Such men, he says, "have an idol to which they consecrate themselves high priest, and deem it holy work to offer sacrifices of whatever is most precious; and never once seem to suspect—so cunning has the Devil been with them—that this false deity, in whose iron features immitigable to all the rest of mankind, they see only benignity and love, is but a spectrum of the priest himself, projected upon the surrounding darkness." Hollingsworth is a "man of iron."[6] Like those men of iron Hester Prynne fears and later scorns, he is first cousin to the Man of Adamant. And Coverdale sees a relation between Hollingsworth's rigidity and that kind of death-in-life of the Man of Adamant: he says that Zenobia's giving him her love "is like casting a flower into a sepulchre.

Hollingsworth is as inflexible in pursuit of his design as Thomas Sutpen of Absalom, Absalom! is in his. Sutpen's design is manifestly selfish, whereas Hollingsworth's is, apparently, altruistic; but this is only a surface difference. Each is blindly selfish and guided by an ideal. The designs seem to be the personal creation of each. But Sutpen's design and ideal are "idols of the South," and his unquestioning belief in them is the source of his "innocence" and monomaniac strength.[7] Hollingsworth's design, while unorthodox and fantastic, is only one of a multitude of not unfashionable utopian schemes, especially rampant in New England at that time.

Both have personalities of compelling strength, and command

respect and loyalty. Sutpen strikes admiration for his indifference and ability to inspire fear; Hollingsworth is remarkable in his tenderness and ability to inspire love, despite his vein of iron. If Coverdale's intellect were less keen and his heart less wary, his love and respect, with his longing for personal ties, could lead him to a relationship with Hollingsworth similar in kind (though never so abject) to that of Wash Jones with Sutpen. Hollingsworth can turn off his love abruptly if it interferes with his schemes, and he is as indifferent to others' emotions as Sutpen is in shocking Miss Rosa or in rejecting Milly. He uses Zenobia's passion in order to get her money; when she loses the money he simply rejects her and takes the girl who got it. It is true that when he saves Priscilla we do not know whether he knew of the change of Zenobia's fortune or not; and there is no question but that his motives for saving her involve genuine love and pity, and perhaps even some repentance. But she would not have needed saving at all had he not delivered her into the hands of Westervelt.[8] Whatever induced him to turn on his pity for Priscilla, it remains that he takes the girl with the money, and remorse seems to come only after Zenobia's death. Zenobia finally sees Hollingsworth's self-deception and calls him a monster, "a cold, heartless, self-beginning and self-ending piece of mechanism" And her death undeceives him. Unlike Chillingworth, at this revelation of guilt he abandons the justification of "dark necessity."

Thomas Sutpen's "design" is a material end, but spiritually it supplies the means by which he can be assured that his integrity is safe. "Sutpen's trouble was innocence. All of a sudden he discovered, not what he wanted to do but what he just had to do, had to do it whether he wanted to or not, because if he did not do it he knew that he could never live with himself for the rest of his life. . . ." Sutpen's

superiority to the picayune respectability of local society is admirable, as far as it goes. He asks respect of no man but himself—but that respect is ultimately based on the same norms by which local society judges: wealth and race.[9] Wealth can overcome lack of an illustrious family; indeed, especially in this frontier society, wealth creates the great family; but nothing can overcome Negro blood—if it is known or suspected. No one knows or suspects Sutpen's first wife, or his first son, but Sutpen; and it is his acceptance of this norm for morality that ruins his design.

Originally "he didn't even know there was a country all divided and fixed and neat with a people living on it all divided and fixed and neat because of what color their skins happened to be and what they happened to own. . . . He had hardly heard of such a world until he fell into it" (p. 222).[10] Sutpen's fantastic innocence accepts without question, "falls into," a monolithic moral rule that excludes any choice through exercise of ethical imagination.

Moreover, he accepts, without thought, that integrity, wholeness, can be utterly private. Sutpen could choose to "do nothing, let matters take the course which I know they will take and see my design complete itself quite normally and naturally and successfully to the public eye, yet to my own in such fashion as to be a mockery and a betrayal of that little boy who approached that door fifty years ago and was turned away, for whose vindication the whole plan was conceived and carried forward to the moment of this choice, this second choice devolving out of that first one" (p. 274). And had that first choice been to do nothing his design would have been fulfilled "normally and naturally," and nevertheless 'dishonestly'—for that little boy whose 'innocence' Sutpen struggles to maintain. The trouble is that this honesty with

himself forces him to violate (to make vulnerable to indifference) the integrity of his cast-off son, Charles Bon: "he stood there at his own door, just as he had imagined, planned, designed, and sure enough and after fifty years the forlorn nameless and homeless lost child came to knock at it. . . ." Charles Bon must establish his own integrity. Integrity means wholeness of the self, and requires honesty with the self, but even more it demands that the self have an identity. And that identity cannot be in isolation; it must be related to the world and society. Sutpen thinks he will achieve such identity in the fulfillment of his design: to establish a dynasty, and hence to establish a son. Charles Bon's design is complementary: to find a father. Twice Sutpen casts off this son for morality's sake.

Joseph Gold, a sensitive critic, writes of "Sutpen's total unawareness of moral considerations," and says "Sutpen is not immoral, he is amoral."[11] He certainly appears amoral, except in the single motivation behind his two greatest choices—which is revealed to us only in the climax of the novel, and is revealed among those characters who ponder the mystery of Sutpen only to Quentin and Shreve. If Sutpen were only amoral he would be on a level with creatures like Popeye and McLendon. Yet when he could see his design fulfilled, as he says, by doing nothing, twice he destroys it. True amorality does not have so nice a conscience.

Sutpen chooses to become amoral, to reject conscience, but his choice is conscientious, based on his moralistic conception of what is right—right for him. By comparison, Popeye's amorality is a 'given;' he is subhuman. Temple Drake chooses amorality, and her motive is simply appetite, rapacity; for she likes Popeye's world: she falls in love with Popeye's minion. She prefers the subhuman because the only

humanity she knows—and she cannot imagine beyond it—offers only respectability: the same world as Popeye's but boringly restricted and veneered. Sutpen's chosen inhumanity is, however, not subhuman but superhuman: demonic (or "angelic," to use Allen Tate's term)[12] rather than simply monstrous. Sutpen's evil arises from a conscience perverted—rudimentary though that conscience is; whereas Temple never allows a conscience to develop—though Horace Benbow explicitly gives her that opportunity.

Sutpen says, in a key passage: "You see, I had a design in my mind. Whether it was a good or a bad design is beside the point; the question is, where did I make the mistake in it, what did I do or misdo in it, whom or what injure by it to the extent which this would indicate. I had a design. To accomplish it I should require money, a house, a plantation, slaves, a family—incidentally of course, a wife" (p. 263). The mistake Sutpen cannot see is, of course, his callousness to other human beings—not necessarily a lack of love; he certainly loves Henry, and there are no indications that he did not love his first wife. He is careful to seem respectful of her despite his misuse of her. What is monstrous about Sutpen is his ability simply to discount any ties, disregarding his own feelings and those of others, if they interfere with the "design."

He is able to do this not because he is amoral or, to his mind, even immoral, but on the contrary he is forced to do it because of his morality. True, Sutpen thinks in terms of 'mistakes,' not sin: "And he not calling it retribution, no sins of the father come home to roost: not even calling it bad luck, but just a mistake" (p. 267). Like Judge Pyncheon he has a "scale and balance system" of morality, and thinks its ingredients are like those of a "pie or cake and once

you had measured them and balanced them and mixed them and put them into the oven it was all finished . . ." (p. 263). With this in mind it is too easy to scant Sutpen's moralism. "His conscience had bothered him somewhat at first but . . . he had argued calmly and logically with his conscience until it was settled" (p. 262). Logic wins over conscience here because logic has Sutpen's idea of what is moral and lawful on its side. Moreover, he says, "I made to the fullest what atonement lay in my power for whatever injury I might have done in choosing, paying even more for the privelege of choosing as I chose than I might have been expected to, or even (by Law) required." Sutpen does not emphasize civil law; no doubt he rather regards himself as above it. Yet his appeal is finally to moral law as he sees it, and civil law as it simply is: that white and Negro shall not, cannot legally, marry. And even now, in most of the South, if a modern Sutpen should make the same choice he would be thoroughly supported by civil law.

Because Sutpen does not tell Quentin's grandfather of the Negro blood, General Compson reacts to this inhumanity with human feelings: for though Sutpen says what he did was right, it is clearly wrong. Consequently Sutpen is seen by three generations of Compsons as enigmatic and monstrous, while if they knew it were a simple matter of black and white—of 'blood'—then all would be clear. By the time Quentin learns the whole story the monstrosity is so entrenched in his mind that black and white cannot budge it, and he realizes that black and white are essentially meaningless; that what counts is humanity, and that the great 'Law' of the South is a flouting of and an abomination to what is truly right.

C. Aylmer and Georgiana, Charlotte and Harry

Hollingsworth would assert his will and design at the expense of others—ostensibly for the good of society. Sutpen also asserts his design at others expense, but with no pretension of benefitting anyone but himself. In both men ethical imagination is retarded, but conscience is not atrophied, or unborn, as it appears to be in Popeye. In Hollingsworth a developed conscience is perverted, while Sutpen's conscience is developed at perhaps the lowest possible level; nevertheless he has, or had, a conscience. In both men ethical imagination is supplanted by what Allan Tate calls the "angelic imagination," in which "neither intellect nor will is bound to the human scale, their projection becomes god-like, and man becomes an angel."[13]

R. W. B. Lewis has drawn our attention to Hawthorne's concern with "angelic imagination": "Now if anyone was certain that men were not in any respect like angels, it was Nathaniel Hawthorne: though he was restless and heretical enough to wish sometimes that they were and to tell, as in the tale of Owen Warland or of Aylmer in "The Birthmark," the sad story of someone who thought so."[14] In the "angelic" aspiration, writes Tate, the three classical faculties are hypertrophied. In hypertrophy of feeling "a nightmare of paranoia, schizophrenia, necrophilism, and vampirism supervenes, in which the natural affections are perverted by the will to destroy."[15] Such perversion of feeling is apparent enough among Faulkner's characters, and certainly, though less obviously, present in Hawthorne's fiction. "The second hypertrophy is the thrust of the will beyond the human scale of action," and the third is "the intellect moving in both isolation from both love and the moral will, whereby it declares itself independent of the human situation in the quest of essential knowledge."[16]

Clearly in characters like Brand, Hollingsworth, Sutpen, the imagination is "angelic" (or, rather, fallen and demonic), insofar as will is hypertrophied and conscience (ethical imagination) is atrophied. The difference between Poe on the one hand, and Faulkner and Hawthorne on the other, is that Poe, poor devil, succumbed to the temptation of angelic imagination, whereas Hawthorne and Faulkner fought it off; yet indeed there is a close relationship of all Americans with Poe, as Mr. Tate puts it so well in "Our Cousin, Mr. Poe."[17] And with Hawthorne and Faulkner the relation is very near.[18]

Mr. Tate writes of Poe's "Ligeia": "The hero professes an impossibly high love of the heroine that circumvents the body and moves in upon her spiritual essence. All this sounds high and noble, until we begin to look at it more narrowly, when we perceive that the ordinary carnal relationship between man and woman, however sinful, would be preferable to the mutual destruction of soul to which Poe's characters are committed."[19] This criticism could apply almost exactly to Hawthorne's "The Birthmark" (except that we know that Georgiana's soul "took its heavenward flight"—somewhat prematurely, thanks to Aylmer). And, with some curious inversions, it is quite apropos to Harry and Charlotte in Faulkner's Wild Palms, and is in some ways pertinent to Joe Christmas and Joanna Burden.

In "The Birthmark" we have a story of a man with a great love for science, but who is not, like Rappaccini, willing to sacrifice a loved one for science, and who is far removed from Chillingworth's diabolism, except in that, as Hawthorne says, extreme love and hate both make a person utterly dependent on their object. Aylmer, Hawthorne says, "had devoted himself . . . too unreservedly to scientific studies ever to be weaned from them by any second passion. His love for

his young wife might prove the stronger of the two; but it could only be by intertwining itself with his love of science." But Aylmer in fact not only subordinates his love of science in his passion for the ideal, but he violates it; the scientist works with the marvelous within nature. Aylmer finally wants to transcend nature, and comes to hate it. Aylmer shares Richard Digby's extremism; he does not, however, try to find perfection in himself, but he would like to ascribe perfection to pure womanhood—just like Young Goodman Brown, who before his disillusion thought Faith "a blessed angel on earth." Aylmer comes to suspect Georgiana's imperfection not by any dream of a witches' sabbath, but by that tiny birthmark: "It was the fatal flaw of humanity which Nature, in one shape or another, stamps ineffaceably on all her productions, either to imply that they are temporary and finite, or that their perfection must be wrought by toil and pain." It is the "symbol of his wife's liability to sin, sorrow, decay, and death." Aylmer's conscience is not undeveloped, but repressed. He dreams of operating on the birthmark and of cutting as deep as Georgiana's heart and wakes with a "guilty feeling." "Truth," says Hawthorne, "often finds its way to the mind close muffled in robes of sleep, and then speaks with uncompromising directness of matters in regard to which we practice an unconscious self-decption during our waking moments."

Moreover, Aylmer's conscience becomes perverted, by "the tyrannizing influence acquired by one idea." Like Rappaccini, Aylmer develops an ambition to usurp God's unique power: he says he has had "thought which might almost have enlightened me to create. . . ." He forgets that nature "permits us, indeed to mar, but seldom to mend, and, like a jealous patentee, on no account to make." His hubris is so great that when Georgiana in her love says she worships him, he says, "Ah,

wait for this one success, . . . then worship me if you will." Georgiana shares the responsibility for her fate. She knows intuitively that Aylmer will fail, and destroy her. She loves him—perhaps to excess. But that were not enough; she also shares his noble, and insane, idealism: "Her heart exulted while it trembled at this honorable love—so pure and lofty that it would accept nothing less than perfection nor miserably make itself contented with an earthier nature than he had dreamed of. She felt how much more precious was such a sentiment than that meaner kind which would have borne with the imperfection for her sake, and have been guilty of treason to holy love by degrading its perfect idea to the level of the actual." Georgiana is at once both blind and seeing; she senses her difficulty accurately: "Life is but a sad possession to those who have attained precisely the degree of moral advancement at which I stand." If she were **more blind** she could be happy; if she were stronger she could bear to resist Aylmer's madness.

A comparison of "The Birthmark" and The Wild Palms shows some of the obvious differences of Hawthorne and Faulkner, but also points up very similar concerns. Faulkner stresses the suffering; Hawthorne stresses the value of the ideal. For both the idealism is worthy, but tragically, sinfully mistaken. Harry's faithfulness to "the old meat" is apparently miles apart from Aylmer's devotion to the utter physical purity of his beloved; and yet the attitudes, beneath their very different modes of language, are similar. All is staked on bodily beauty, and all but ideality is lost. Aylmer is really seeking to "spiritualize" Georgiana's body just as Owen Warland, the Artist of the Beautiful, seeks to spiritualize machinery. Aylmer's success (for he succeeds in 'spiritualizing' by killing), however pure his motives, is horrible because of the material he has chosen for his art.[20] Harry and

Charlotte's love hardly "circumvents the body and moves in upon . . . spiritual essence;"[21] indeed it dwells on the body with monomaniac exclusiveness. But this exclusiveness is like the "angelic" hypertrophy of feeling, will, and intellect that destroys Georgiana and Aylmer, for while "ordinary carnal relationship between man and woman, however sinful, would be preferable to . . . mutual destruction of soul," this relationship is anything but ordinary; it is super-carnal. The relationship of Joe Christmas and Joanna Burden, with their unnatural abhorrence for, but compulsion to the flesh is just the obverse of Harry and Charlotte's relationship. Yet, with Aylmer and Georgiana, all three couples are destroyed by idealistic perversions. Joe and Joanna's rejection of the flesh is close to that of Aylmer's.

Charlotte worships bodily love as if there were no "birthmarks" for them. Yet she and Harry know the body's "liability to sin, sorrow, decay, and death" which the birthmark symbolizes to Aylmer, and such a symbol comes upon them—a "birthmark" too—in Charlotte's pregnancy. Charlotte forces Harry to become an unwilling Aylmer, and like Aylmer's, his operation results in death.

In The Scarlet Letter when Hester cries to Dimmesdale, "Let God punish! Thou shalt forgive!" what she says is quite within the bounds of Christian doctrine, but what she means seems clearly that she cares more about Dimmesdale than God, and even that for her Dimmesdale usurps God's place. Hester's character in its complexity encompasses the characters of many simpler though not necessarily less striking women. She might question God, but, like Georgiana, she will not be "guilty of treason to holy love." And she shows something of the spirit of Charlotte Rittenmeyer who is an iron puritan in worshipping her love for Harry Wilbourne:

> It's got to be all honeymoon, always. Forever and ever, until one of us dies. It can't be anything else. Either heaven, or hell: no comfortable safe peaceful purgatory between for you and me to wait in until good behavior or forbearance or shame or repentance overtakes us.

It becomes hell: the same kind of hell that Hester is really proposing in the escape with Dimmesdale. For Harry is weak as Dimmesdale is weak, but without Dimmesdale's strength of purpose or conscience.

Eschewing the evils of respectability, as Hester does, Charlotte and Harry enter a moral wilderness, wandering without any clue but Charlotte's monomaniac religion. Hester's conscience in its sickest hour seems healthy beside Charlotte's. Pearl is the real bond joining Hester and Dimmesdale. Charlotte would have nothing between herself and Harry. She does not want a developing love, but a stasis of love. In pleading for an abortion she says, "It's not us now . . . I want it to be us again, quick, quick, quick. We have so little time. In twenty years I can't any more and in fifty years we'll both be dead." She has made sexuality their God, and confronted it with a titanic hubris: they will rule and thwart it. But, as Edwin Arlington Robinson says appropriately in "Eros Turannos," they

> That with a god have striven
> Not hearing much of what we say
> Take what the god has given.

Charlotte would have them escape from time and space, to where there is nothing but the two of them. But time destroys them. Harry's existence is always neither timeless heaven or hell, but a limbo of timebound anxiety, first bound by diminishing money and food, then by her developing pregnancy.

The Wild Palms is a disagreeable novel that fails to convince at several points. But in its spareness it has the power of a parable, just as some of Hawthorne's sketches, like "The Man of Adamant," do.

Charlotte would be adamant in love, and make Harry so. Finally they are cast out of time—but not into eternal love. For perhaps fifty years the fragment Charlotte and Harry have created will persist at Parchman Prison. "Between grief and nothing I will take grief," is Harry's conclusion.

"Nothing" is not a possibility for Hester and Dimmesdale to consider. Grief they have, but they cry for repentance, not so much to ease the grief, but to ease the guilt. In The Wild Palms neither Charlotte nor Harry even tries to repent; that he cannot repent is his comfort. Hester and Dimmesdale are more whole, more human, especially because they can see that their first responsibilities are not to each other; hers is to Pearl; his to his calling. Charlotte and Harry have little sense of guilt. They just have horror of death—not for their personal death, but for the death of love. They are completely onesided. To them the flesh is all. Their courageous and terribly hopeless insistence on the body at least has a strength that has too often been spiritualized out of Christianity. But they have no hope for resurrection. Hester and Dimmesdale, though they do not dishonor the flesh so much as Charlotte and Harry finally do, in fearing and mortifying the flesh are not so onesided.

Indeed Aylmer and Charlotte and Harry are stupid, and sinful. Their persistent obsession for the ideal is a death-seeking perversity, but in that persistence they show integrity and tragic dignity. At least, like Conrad's Marlow, they are committed to the nightmares of their choice.

D. Joe Christmas

Young Goodman Brown is a key character in Hawthorne's world,

and Joe Christmas is in Faulkner's, and for very like reasons. Whatever that 'Unpardonable Sin' that occasionally intrigued Hawthorne, the rejection of the reality of human goodness is at the heart of his concern, and the same is true of Faulkner. Man is indeed evil, but perhaps the direst temptation to which he is liable is to let obsession with that evil blot out the rest of the world. Joe Christmas is far less intellectual, less theological, than Young Goodman Brown. But essentially their misfortune and their sin is the same distrust of mankind—a distrust so deep that it becomes metaphysical. Despising man, for very bitterness—since in their hearts they would prefer to love—they despise God and the world.

We first see Joe Christmas, as Byron Bunch does, from the outside; he is isolated and full of apparently gratuitous animosity. Then, after we have heard that he has killed Joanna Burden, and that he is being sought not so much for being a murderer as for having Negro blood, we see him from within, the night before the murder, the culminating night of his rejection of mankind and of his drive toward death. The central interest of the novel is what to feel about a man who becomes "like a phantom, a spirit, strayed out of its own world and lost." Our feeling is guided by seeing how he got this way, and by seeing the characters whose lives are contrasted with his (Hightower, Byron Bunch, Lena Grove and her child) and the characters with whom his life interacts. Juxtaposed immediately with the "phantom," "spirit," we see in the next chapter, the child Joe Christmas:

> Memory believes before knowing remembers. Believes longer than recollects, longer than knowing even wonders. Knows remembers believes a corridor in a big long garbled cold echoing building of dark red brick soot-blackened by more chimneys than its own, set in a grassless cinderstrewnpacked compound surrounded by smoking factory purlieus and enclosed by a ten foot steel-and-wire fence like a penitentiary or a zoo, where in random erratic surges, with

> sparrowlike, childtrebling orphans in identical and uniform blue denim in and out of remembering but in knowing constant as the bleak walls, the bleak windows where in rain soot from the yearly adjacenting chimneys streaked like black tears.[22] (p. 104)[22]

Isaac McCaslin in "The Bear" loses his father when he is young, but he has two intelligent and concerned foster fathers; he does not permit women to have an important role in his life (perhaps there is something of Faulkner's misogyny in this), but, with this important exception, his world is abundantly natural. The unnatural forces omnipresent in Joe Christmas's world are present in Ike's only as the threat of nameless men gnawing punily at the wilderness. But Joe Christmas, whose life is all of one symbolic piece, never sees the natural but from afar, and never comprehends it. What 'belief' he has is in an unnatural world, not only symbolized by, but until he is five, wholly consisting in this orphanage.

When he was three there was a girl named Alice: "He had liked her, enough to let her mother him a little; perhaps because of it." But she simply vanishes from him. Faulkner introduces so briefly this earliest personal encounter in Joe Christmas' life to establish that his isolating hatred of women and of nature is not determined, at least not physiologically, and partly to account for his passive acceptance of his kidnapping by Doc Hines. The person he had come nearest to loving had simply disappeared, and he innocently accepts this as 'natural.' Joe Christmas' earliest trouble is, like Sutpen's, 'innocence.' Like Sutpen he "falls into" an acceptance of false values that leads him into a life marked by horrible rejections.

After Alice, if there is any natural force in his orphanage life it is the dietician's sexuality, and that is corrupted. She is part of the bleak institution; her role should be to nourish the orphans, but

she is "nothing to him yet, save a mechanical adjunct to eating . . ." Joe Christmas' rejection of food, of help, of love are all related. Almost his first words in the novel are to Byron Bunch: "I aint hungry. Keep your muck" (p. 30); and he has not eaten in several days. This is in direct contrast to Lena Grove's natural and gracious acceptance of help and food, even when it is not graciously tendered. Karl Stern writes in Flight from Woman that "man's fate is shaped from the beginning by a personal relationship." Deprivation of love can result in a person who "is really in terror of dependence. The very possibility of being in the least dependent or protected, or even loved, amounts to nothing less than a phantasy of mutilation or destruction." Such a one "protests in his life against 'being fed,' while his stomach revolts against 'not being fed.'" And "in either case, whether of the man or of the woman, . . . there is a flight from the feminine."[23] Joe Christmas' and Joanna Burden's psychological and spiritual backgrounds have the same deprivation.

On his last frenzied flight the hungry Christmas becomes obsessed with food; and when he loses his appetite he is obsessed with the mere necessity to eat. Finally, as he approaches nearer and nearer to death, he feels a strange peace, and ponders why; and concludes: "I dont have to bother about having to eat anymore. . . . That's what it is" (p. 295). On the novel's last page, by contrast, Lena's Joey is characterized as "the baby that hadn't never stopped eating, that had been eating breakfast now for about ten miles."

But the child Joe Christmas had only the dietician—a "mechanical adjunct to eating . . . of pleasing association and pleasing in herself to look at—young, a little fullbodied, smooth, pink-and-white, making his mind think of the diningroom, making his mouth think of something sweet and sticky to eat, also pinkcolored and surreptitious." And so he

is attracted to her room, and steals toothpaste, and hides while she makes love with an interne. The toothpaste makes him sick, and he is discovered; the dietician's "thin, furious voice" hissing, "You little rat! Spying on me! You little nigger bastard!" This 'accident' has figurative value. The guilt, the nausea, the "bitchery," the black blood are all associated.

Obsessed with her own guilt, the dietician never takes in that Joe is innocent of any knowledge or malice about her sins. He is anxious about his own sin, but instead of punishment for stealing she gives him money, adding to, instead of taking from his anxiety and nausea. As in Pearl's speculation about the scarlet letter, or in Caddy's glimpse of Damuddy's funeral, in the first scene of Joe's childhood, we see innocence uncomprehendingly encountering something alien to innocence. Joe is unlike these other children in not being curious (he is too sick); but, more important, Joe is different in that he feels guilt: guilt which consists not so much in conviction of having been evil as in that he is "tortured with punishment deferred."

When the dietician is sure that Joe will be sent away, she feels safe, inspired by Doc Hines' assurance that Joe has Negro blood. Her only concept of sin is tied to respectability, and her guilt and anxiety are relieved. It is respectable, virtuous, to subjugate what is Negro. She even feels a sexual satisfaction. But Joe has gained the terrible burden of black blood.

Five people are all important in Joe Christmas' life: Doc Hines, the dietician, McEachern his foster father, Bobby Allen his first love, and Joanna Burden. When Joe is born, Hines obsessed with "bitchery" and racism, has him marked as a special sacrifice for his personal, obscene religion. For five years he watches over the child's life,

and insures that it is blighted. Negroidness is Joe's greatest source of anxiety, and from Hines and the dietician he receives the vague certainty that this is his secret nemesis, inescapable because it is within himself. Whether he has Negro 'blood' or not is immaterial. It is an evil symbol by which he, and the whole South, are grasped. The symbolic value of "black blood" is in Christian terms the original sin we all possess.

Joe ostensibly rejects McEachern, the man the dietician contacted to adopt him. Joe Christmas is above all concerned with his integrity. That is why he refuses to be coerced to learn the catechism, and for the same integrity he refuses to accept any compassion—represented in his repeated refusals of Mrs. McEachern's food, which thematically (and in his subconsciousness, I take it) recalls the dietician. Like Sarty Snopes, Joe is willing to risk a beating for his integrity's sake. But Joe not only risks but needs the beating to ease the guilt feeling, which is not the result of wrongdoing so much as it is tied with the anxiety of not knowing who he is; he feels he ought to belong to someone, and in taking the beatings he is making himself McEachern's son. (So Charles Bon accepts death to affirm his sonship.) To take beatings is passive, womanlike, and Joe must eventually rebel, but for a while his only way to affirm freedom is to stiffen himself against the blows, and thus, ironically, he accepts the spirit of McEachern's religion.

He tries to rebel, but he always ends by doing the vileness that is expected of him—just as when McEachern expects him to become involved in fornication. In his first encounter with sexuality, with a group of

boys and a Negro girl, he is nauseated by the smell of "womanshenegro"; "there was something in him trying to get out, like when he had used to think of toothpaste." His only defense is boyish violence, and it will remain so all his life. Nowhere is Joe's desire for purity stated; purity is not the word or concept he would have used. He has only a sense of disgust and the need for flight from corruption. But like Young Goodman Brown he sees his world constituted of corruption.

When the same boy that arranged for the Negro girl tells Joe about menstruation, it is as if a fiendish predestination were working in his life. This 'fits' into the conceptions of "womanfilth" along with toothpaste, pink garments, and nausea. When he kills and examines a sheep, and is satisfied that the other boy's physiological lore is correct, he 'accepts' it because the universe must be accepted—but "it was as if he said, illogically and desperately calm <u>All right. It is so, then. But not to me. Not in my life and my love.</u>" Like Aylmer, his love must be unflawed by nature.

Ike McCaslin is never outraged by nature, but by man's ravishment of it. The character Joe Christmas is in part Faulkner's exploration of how man comes to ravish nature. Ike's baptism of blood is a ritual of the hunt, an initiation into a natural order. Joe avoids a hunting party of boys to kill unnaturally and in isolation, for knowledge—a theme Hawthorne makes much of. For Joe the sheep is "the price paid for immunity" (p. 167), a sacrifice for immunity from the natural order—which is a theme of the novel: Hightower and Byron Bunch also think they have bought immunity. But no one can. Faulkner often seems torn between rejecting and affirming some kind of covenant theology. Both Ike McCaslin and Joe Christmas seek peace by buying immunity; Ike consciously; Joe not very consciously. Part of the tragedy in their

lives is that this peace of itself is not a proper goal, for the soul can be saved only by losing the self.

The hardly articulate Joe Christmas says, "Not in my life and love," exposing his hope and ideal. His love turns out to be Bobbie Allen. The name is ironically antiromantic, but serious;[24] Joe does not die for love of this Barbara Allen, but something in him dies for want of love. By a perverse fate his first assignation with "his love" is interrupted by what is to him a monstrosity of "periodic filth." All he can do is run away and stumble into the woods: "In the notseeing and the hardknowing as though in a cave he seemed to see a diminishing row of suavely shaped urns in moonlight, blanched. And not one was perfect. Each one was cracked, and from each crack there issued something liquid, deathcolored, and foul. He touched a tree, leaning his propped arms against it, seeing the ranked and moonlit urns. He vomited."[25] May we not remember the little boy offered a dollar by the dietician—so he can buy and eat some toothpaste every day—who in his nausea sees "ranked tubes of toothpaste?" His life thereafter follows a diminishing row of foul women—foul because he sees them so. And he never loves; never after Bobbie Allen, who confirmed his vision of disgust.

Joe Christmas tries to love her. "Jesus this is it," he says. But it is not; not his heart's desire. He always accepts too much—even while trying not to. He accepts Bobbie Allen's version of love; the result is confirmation that sexuality is dirty, and he is strengthened in his hatred of nature.

Young Goodman Brown's life is a consequence of an event—a choice—that colors all subsequent events, whereas Christmas' whole life is one fateful decision rather than the consequence of a decision.[26] Both characters desire some kind of purity but see only disgust. Young

Goodman Brown mistrusts everyone as of the devil, mainly because his wife Faith might be. Joe looked to Bobbie Allen for some kind of salvation and found that she, like that vicious dietician, was possessed by "bitchery." He regards women as unclean; but he mistrusts himself more, for being of the devil, since he has that black blood. He finally comes to a technically 'pure' woman who also refuses to love, and they destroy each other. In the balancing story in the novel, Byron Bunch and Lena Grove's lives have the beauty Faulkner finds in Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn"; Christmas and Joanna Burden lack it utterly, and that, partly, is their tragedy. Byron and Lena also have the beauty which Faulkner understands ought to be in Christianity, and Christmas and Joanna Burden, both victims of warped Calvinist training, lack that. After Bobbie Allen leaves him Joe Christmas fights disgust by answering "womanfilth" with his black blood. When he meets a woman whom this knowledge does not disgust he is defeated, and is sick for two years. After unsuccessfully trying to be a Negro with a Negro woman, all that remains is flight, and at last his nemesis in Joanna Burden.

As a child Joe Christmas is, like Ilbrahim and the Compson children, uncomprehendingly victimized. As an adolescent he continues to be victimized. Though the guileless Robin Molineux is charmed by a red petticoat, he is just shrewd enough to avoid trouble. But Joe Christmas is 'taken in' by Bobbie Allen, as he is by so many others. He never seems to be able adequately to distinguish between what is innocent and what is oorrupt.

If there were any good in the Fall of man it would be, as Miriam says in The Marble Faun, in the possibility of a spiritual growth which is impossible to innocence. But the ironic tragedy of fallenness is the possibility of arrested development. Joe Christmas, whose development

often seems arrested short of the ability to think, but who feels according to an imprisoned logic, at one point stands "not thinking yet It's terrible to be young. It's terrible. Terrible" (Ch.19). By contrast Hightower from his age and living death, regards Byron Bunch as he goes off to attend to the birth of Lena's child: 'God bless him. God help him'; thinking To be young. To be young. There is nothing else like it: there is nothing else in the world'" (p. 278). Byron is at times consumed by frantic anxiety and perplexity just as is Joe Christmas; but Byron, in committing himself in love for Lena, has opened out a world of possibility for growth. His final choice is deliberately paralleled to Joe Christmas'. Byron says, "I done come too far now . . . I be dog if I'm going to quit now." And the truck driver narrator comments, "now he knew he wouldn't ever have to desperate himself again." So Byron takes to the open road with Lena. Joe Christmas' decision is: "Why not? It would mean ease, security for the rest of your life. You would never have to move again. And you might as well be married to her as this thinking, 'No. If I give in now, I will deny all the thirty years I have lived to make me what I chose to be'" (p. 232). The road Joe Christmas goes by is not open, but a closed circle. For him it is terrible to be young because there is no exit from the desperation or from his choice of what he is to be.

The 'innocence' of Joe Christmas is from the very beginning only the fallen ignorance, inexperience, conditioned and symbolized by that bleak orphanage. He can never be any faunlike creature like Donatello. Of course Joe Christmas' torments about race and sexuality rise from ignorance and taboos unknown to Donatello. Donatello is a natural young man, joyously in love, and in a much more civilized world than Joe Christmas.' Yet the comparison might be worthwhile. Roy Male writes

of The Marble Faun, whose subject is the "riddle of the soul's growth": "How does man develop his full potential? . . . The central figures in this process are already familiar to us: the young man who frolics in timeless spatial freedom and innocence; the woman inexorably linked with time and guilt but also with a redemptive ideal; and the union between them, and with its attendant shocks and recognitions."[27] Joe hardly frolics, and Joanna is hardly redemptive. Yet Joe is innocent in ignorance, and he does seek a woman linked with a redemptive ideal: that is, as a boy, he intends to establish his identity by making contact with someone he can love (a persistent theme of Hawthorne.) That is why he broaches the possibility of his Negro blood with Bobbie Allen.[28] Bobbie Allen demolishes his "spatial innocence and freedom"—whatever he had—and sends him on that circular road of fifteen years. And the next significant woman in his life does indeed finally offer, along with guilt, a "redemptive ideal,"—as she tries to force him to pray. To pray, to ask help, is what Joe Christmas cannot do: it denies all he has chosen to be.

Both Donatello and Christmas realize their fallenness through a woman, and both despair. But Donatello's realization is a "transformation," spiritual growth; he learns the world has more to it than sunshine and flowers. Joe Christmas is born in the depths; his realization is the culmination of old despair. What Joe Christmas fears most is corruption. Robert Jacobs writes that women, who try to save him, "invade his hellish privacy."[29] But only Joanna Burden threatens it seriously, and the reason is that the two are drawn to each other fatally by what they have so uniquely in common: strong physical passion and a strong Calvinistic sense of guilt.

On the night before the murder he wanders aimlessly from the

white to Negro part of town. "What you want, white folks? You looking for somebody?" he is asked. He is looking for himself. But "On all sides, even within him, the bodiless fecundmellow voices of Negro women murmured. It was as though he and all other manshaped life about him had been returned to the lightless hot wet primogenitive Female. He began to run" (p. 100). Joe Christmas subconsciously associates the war of 'black blood' and white within himself with the war of male and female, of rigid and aggressive with passive, yielding principles. Joe Christmas, like Sutpen "never learned how to ask anybody for help." He has indeed learned to reject any offer, especially of food, and he comes to conceive of love only as an opportunity for rape. He must conquer, almost annihilate that female principle in order to feel that his integrity is safe. If ever he yields to the female he feels he will be destroyed, engulfed, in it. If all Joanna's sexuality had been repressed, and is let loose like "the abject fury of the New England glacier exposed suddenly to the fire of the New England biblical hell," Joe's sexuality has always been a form of attack. Indeed his whole life is divided into either attack or tormented retreat.

Cleanth Brooks writes that "a basic theme in Light in August is man's strained attempt to hold himself up in rigid aloofness above the relaxed female world."[30] But Christmas begins to see himself "like a man being sucked down into a bottomless morass." He regards any surrender as corruption. Joanna Burden herself is only relaxed in her sexual corruption. Otherwise she has "a spiritual privacy so long intact that its own instinct had immolated it, its physical phase the strength and fortitude of a man." Both have all their lives defended their "hellish privacy." Each is isolated. But neither can even have a self. He is torn apart by white blood and black, she by her peculiar religion and

sensuality. The inability to love, the privacy, condemn each to a hell of death-in-life, and in their violence they are really seeking release from that life. "Neither surrendered; worse: they would not let one another alone." They are compelled by rigid wills, as if fated to destroy each other. Death-in-life and wills to death are principal themes of Light in August. Joanna Burden is indeed like Poe's Ligea, claiming Joe Christmas from out of her deathlike existence.

One part of Joe Christmas' 'choice' is about race. He is not disrespectable because he is incapable of respectability; that is the significance of his whiteness. He chooses to pass for neither white nor black.[31] Deliberately, for the principle's sake, though without self-understanding, he takes on the burden of denying the categorization of racism. It never occurs to Christmas to try to find out once and for all if he has Negro 'blood';[32] but he really doesn't want to know. His integrity consists partly in seeing, or rather, feeling that such classifications are evil—that "St. Paul's obiter dictum that 'God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth' is literally true."[33] But, rejected, Joe Christmas rejects everyone, Negro and white. Southerners, perhaps more than most of us, usually accept their inherited roles. But Christmas seems to have no role at all and seeks to create one. The only real relationship he has is that with Joanna Burden; and that might better be called an 'anti-relationship.' Like Sutpen, with the integrity to avoid the trap of mere respectability he falls into the trap of moral rigidity. His fierce drive for integrity, for an identity, is a challenge to and an indictment of society; consequently he is its scapegoat in his life and death. He is thrust out of the great chain of being.[34]

Sutpen and Hollingsworth, in their designs seek to be "artists

of the beautiful"—of their self-projected ideals;[35] Aylmer too is such an 'artist,' shaping love to his will, and so is Charlotte Rittenmeyer. Joe Christmas and Joanna Burden, with the same puritanic mentalities, do not "angelically" imagine ideals; they are born to the despairing hell these others achieve. Their lives are wrought by the power of their fixed wills into "dying hours of gloom." Yet they are certainly not void of remorse, and it is Joe Christmas' torture of "punishment deferred" that gives him his peculiar stature.

CHAPTER V

LIFE AS ART

There are beautiful moral actions and people whose character is beautiful, and hence there has always been some confusion of beauty and morality, though their values are certainly not the same. Some aspects of character are beautiful because, being whole and perfectly ordered (or nearly enough so), they can be perceived aesthetically. But no one living is in his entirety whole and perfect; we are at best only relatively good.[1] Nevertheless, worthy people who can scorn vanity for appearance or accomplishments can be taken unawares by the desire to be "beautiful souls." There is a long history of identifications of morality and beauty.[2] As a warped religiosity tries to sterilize life into ideal purity, rather than to seek the ideal in and through life, so a misplaced sense of the aesthetic tries to force life into an artistic pattern.

This is precisely what Hawthorne's "The Birthmark" is about. In trying to make Georgiana absolutely perfect and beautiful, Aylmer is trying to change her beauty from that of life into that of art. He does not go about it as a modern plastic surgeon would, to remove the imperfection locally, and graft on new skin. Even if he could, that would be alien to Aylmer's deepest motives. Surgery would be too mechanical and interfering a device for his high purposes—but those high purposes are interfering in an absolute sense, for Aylmer would remove imperfection from Georgiana's very soul, and hence the tiny outward imperfection would fade, having no nourishment. As in the "Artist of the Beautiful,"

Hawthorne grants the impossible; Aylmer with his chemical removes imperfection from Georgiana's very nature, but it removes her life too; imperfection and life are inextricably united in the essential soul of man.

Though I discuss several characters in this chapter as "artists of the beautiful" I use the term "artists" metaphorically, and I hope not to strain it. Owen Warland is the only one of them who has a consciously aesthetic ideal. Isaac McCaslin, a character of a much more complex world than Aylmer's, tries to purify himself of his own birthmark, and in a sense, to make an art work of his life. His achievement ambiguously resembles those of both Warland and Aylmer, but in both respects he must relinquish life. Quentin Compson and Coverdale do not try to shape living beings as art works (though perhaps Quentin's motives towards Caddy are analogous to those of Aylmer), but in their rage for aesthetic and religious order—religious in the very general sense of a quest for the ideal—they are trying to shape their understanding, to shape the disorder of life into an ordered story, or history. But, as their lives are enveloped by their quests and by the chaos of their material, they are destroyed.

A. Owen Warland

Hawthorne's "Artist of the Beautiful" is, in part, a parable about the conflict of life and art, but its moral is fully applicable to none but its hero. The greatest artists cannot remain content with their work; Owen Warland is saved from discontent partly because he is not a great artist, but the problem of embodying ideal beauty in physical form is one he shares with all artists. Warland's dilemma is set forth by Yeats:

> The intellect of man is forced to choose
> Perfection of the life or the work,
> And if it take the second must refuse,
> A heavenly mansion, raging in the dark.[3]

That Warland could find fulfillment in "perfection of the work" and escape "raging in the dark" is a mark of his singularity—and of the limitations of his imagination.

Warland would like to reconcile his desire for life with Annie and his desire for his art, but that is impossible. Failing in life he turns to art.[4] But Warland through his isolation achieves neither of the alternatives which are the usual consequences of isolation in Hawthorne's world—which are insight into the human condition, or damnation.[5] Discussion of this story properly leads R. W. B. Lewis to refer "to what Allen Tate has called the 'angelic imagination': the imagination prompted by the assumption that humans, like angels, can have direct perception of timeless essences." And Lewis adds, "Now if anyone was certain that men were not in any respect like angels, it was Nathaniel Hawthorne."[6] However, the Artist of the Beautiful is a special case; Owen Warland does possess an "angelic imagination," but he is not damned like most of its other possessors, (except insofar as his loss of Annie is a form of damnation) because his imagination, though 'angelic,' is limited to machines and butterflies.

Warland wants to escape from time, and his occupation as watchmaker is ironic. He hates time almost as much as Quentin does in The Sound and the Fury. Quentin breaks the hands from his watch; Warland has spoiled the accuracy of some of the best watches in Peter Hovenden's shop. Quentin asks the watchmaker if any of his conflicting watches are right, while refusing to be told what time it is. None are: "Father said clocks slay time. He said time is dead as long as it is being

clicked off by little wheels; only when the clock stops does time come to life." The watches in Warland's window are turned away from the street, "as if churlishly disinclined to inform the wayfarers what o'clock it was." Warland knows like Quentin that clock time is not "right." The watchmaker in The Sound and the Fury is a balding, lifeless man, with "a metal tube screwed into his face." Absorption into clock time and the mechanical is death-in-life, and it is this which Quentin and Warland fear.

Three times Warland's work is destroyed, and he subsides into lethargy: once into plodding service to clocks, once into dissipation, once into slothful cynicism; but each time he is aroused by his vision. Warland's pursuit "takes on the character of an escape into eternity, or a quest, like that of Proust's Marcel, for salvation by way of art."[7] And Warland succeeds: he achieves The Beautiful: "his spirit possessed itself in the enjoyment of the reality."

R. W. B. Lewis writes of Hawthorne's concern about the relation of life and art: that he denied the Puritan rejection of art as "at best a mere trope for the really impressive work of the rescue of the human soul," and he actually denied the romantic avowal that the rescue of the soul was "a concealed metaphor for the greatest human accomplishment, —that is, for art. It was a matter, for Hawthorne, of an analogy almost amounting to an equivalence—and, on the whole, an equivalence of difficulty and frustration."[8] Here is affirmation of Austin Warren's assertion that in the artist the "rage for order" in life and in art are united.[9] But Owen Warland eventually escapes the frustration of human complicity in both rage and order by accomplishing the ordinarily impossible: ultimate order. He never seriously makes an attempt to achieve a satisfactory life outside his art; the only conception he has

of such a life would be marriage with Annie, and the only way he thinks of winning her is through his art: she is the visible shape of "spiritual power that he worshipped, and on whose altar he hoped to lay a not unworthy offering."

Hawthorne's choice of medium for Warland seems strange, it is so subject to the irony Warland in his cynical phase brings against himself, speaking of mechanical wonders, including a "duck that waddled, and quacked, and ate." The conception which Warland realizes is not apparently very significant. That that is not his concern is his justification and limitation. For him his butterfly is an icon of beauty itself, because it is perfectly rendered. He is a mechanic, and his work is a celebration not of the beauty of nature a butterfly might represent, but of the beauty of perfect machinery. A tiny perfect machine is as perfect to him as Chartres; perfection is what counts. Greater depth of meaning has, mercifully, not been revealed to him. If we grant perfection as art to his butterfly, still it lacks something Moby Dick has, even though Moby Dick may not be 'perfect.'

Hawthorne's choice of a metaphor for the ideal is fraught with difficulties. It cannot fully persuade us of its importance. Yet Hawthorne does meet the problem of "spiritualizing matter" head on: Owen Warland, like Faulkner's Ike McCaslin, recognises great machines like locomatives as the enemy, for machinery is potentially threatening, implacable, and sterile. Yet spiritualize that enemy, and matter is really conquered. And of course the machine has neater, 'purer' guts than organic creatures; it is not subject to the mortal flesh's corruption—which Hawthorne's and Faulkner's characters are more than likely to fear.

It finally comes to Annie's question about the butterfly: "Is it alive?" Warland's answer is evasive. If he has indeed "spiritualized"

its machinery, he has created life. Indeed, the machine's miraculous sensitivity—perhaps unwittingly prophetic of the sensitivity of some machinery of our age—is more amazing than its flight. But it transcends any machinery of the twentieth century and affirms its "spirituality" by its sensitivity to moral and spiritual qualities rather than to physical ones.

On the other hand the child "destroys" rather than "kills" it; what remains are a few "glittering fragments." Warland's creation has no guts to stink and decay, however Lilliputian. As Danforth says, it "does beat all nature." "Life" and "death" have no meaning for it; it is not of time but of eternity. For Owen Warland "had caught a far other butterfly than this"; the butterfly of the spiritually beautiful of which his creation had been the symbol, the ladder to Ideal Beauty—like that in Plato's Symposium.

Warland does seek the eternal via art, and does achieve a kind of "salvation;" in a sense he makes a religion of his art. But, very different from most privately constructed religions, Warland's makes no claims that it can bring 'salvation' to anyone else, nor that he is in any sense a saint. His experience is 'religious' only by analogy. Warland does not submit to the folly of making a religion of art, because he does not confuse life and art and try to make an art work out of his life. His 'life' is a failure, sacrificed to the success of his work and the "other butterfly" which it enables him to capture.

B. Isaac McCaslin

With much justice it is charged that Ike McCaslin "appropriates for life the strategy of art," that he "tries to live as if life were a 'poem.'"[10] Insofar as he does, Ike McCaslin is trying to be an Artist

of the Beautiful, and how he succeeds as a person has much to do with this attempt. That his art is that of the hunt is a basic irony of his story. On the face of it this 'art' paradoxically is to kill rather than to create. Ironically it is true that hunters are usually the men who best understand, love, and try to preserve the wilderness. Ike knows this, and he does not love to kill except as that is part of the hunt.

Ike's art has no goal in something to make, as does Warland's. Warland's is unusual in that he is trying to transcend all previous art, and he can finally attain his end, though he discovers that the butterfly is not the end, but a symbol of it. Though it is destroyed, he knows he has achieved the Beautiful. But the goal of Ike's hunt is spiritual from the very beginning. At first his object is merely to see: he kills his first deer and is made worthy to see the great buck—whether a ghost or of flesh no one really knows; what counts is the vision of the timeless spirit of the wilderness.

The most important vision is his first seeing of the Bear, for which Ike must completely lose himself in the wilderness: "It was the watch and the compass. He was still tainted." He leaves them, and the Bear appears—through what has been called Faulkner's "numen engendering style."[11] This event when Ike is ten years old is really the high point of his life; there are other crucial events: his refraining from shooting the bear, the killing of the bear, the revelation of his family's history in the commissary ledgers and his repudiation of his land, and the break with his wife that results from that repudiation. Nevertheless, when he is ten Ike has had a vision of "the beautiful." He takes up the watch and returns into the world of time; life cannot stop there. But ever after he is trying to return to that timeless moment of transfiguration,

and in a sense his life did stop there. Ike does not share Warland's and Quentin's fear of watches, for his thought is not as abstract as theirs; he ignores time. He plods through each year to come alive again with the November hunt. But time will not stop; the wilderness, the symbol of Edenic timelessness, is diminished each year.

A great difference of the "The Artist of the Beautiful" and "The Bear" is the authors' choice of symbols to represent matter spiritualized: the mechanical butterfly and the great bear. Each has advantages. Both bear and butterfly must be destroyed in order to release their full symbolic value. (Incidentally, who destroys them is of thematic importance. Danforth's child and Boon Hoggenbeck share the brute strength and lack of sensitivity that make them capable of the destruction, and the childish innocence that makes them worthy enough to reach the symbol physically, if not spiritually.) Warland's symbol of the beautiful has so little to link it with the existential world that its destruction doesn't matter. It is almost all essence; almost <u>the</u> Beautiful. Consequently Warland can have a "direct apprehension of timeless essence."[12] Faulkner's symbol of the Bear has not this advantage, but it has others, which are immense.

The bear's destruction does not simply 'release' its spiritual potential, as does that of the butterfly. Rather, from the very beginning his mortality is the problem Ike must surmount. Furthermore, the bear's complexity as a symbol both reflects and helps create Ike's anxiety and confusion, just as the relative simplicity of the butterfly—the Beautiful achieved—makes possible Warland's fulfillment. Most explicitly the bear represents the wilderness. If that meant only an Edenic realm of beauty and innocence—the eternal realm which Ike can see by becoming "untainted"—the death of the bear could be for Ike

much what the destruction of the butterfly is for Warland. But the wilderness itself is not incorruptible.

The wilderness represents the old American dream of a New World, a new Eden, a new Canaan. But there is no Golden Age except in the imagination. In Hawthorne's world men attempt to create a Golden Age in Merrymounts or Blithedales, or see traces of it in youth, as in Donatello. In Faulkner's world the Golden Age is even further removed. There is no Paradise before the Fall. The closest we come to it is perhaps in Sutpen's youth, or in the play of the Compson children—but they play in the shadow of Damuddy's funeral, and the fall is within them.

In Go Down Mosas the Indians, the "Old People," represent a golden age. Sam Fathers, the last of them, McCaslin says, "was a wild man. When he was born, all his blood on both sides, except the little white part, knew things that have been tamed out of our blood so long that we have not only forgotten them, we have to live together in herds to protect ourselves from our own sources." "The People," as we meet them in other of Faulkner's stories, are no noble savages. The Chickasaws are lazy, shrewd, and indifferent to human suffering. But they have a ritual sense of values different from the white man's calculated and commercially motivated cruelty. The Old People are betrayed, not by the white men, or by the Negroes, who are symbolically joined with the People; but by a mutual fatality in all three races. But though the Old People had not dwelled in Paradise they had at least not ravaged the very landscape.

The burden of Go Down Mosas is "Let my People go." McCaslin, trying to explain Sam Fathers to Ike, tells him that Sam was a wild man, who at times could smell his cage. "'Then let him go!' the boy cried. 'Let him go!'" But McCaslin says, "His cage aint McCaslins." He had

been betrayed by the curse on the whole land. When Sam Fathers finally moves to the woods for good, he says to McCaslin "I want to go. Let me go." When Isaac later renounces his land he is, in effect, returning to the woods as had Sam Fathers—trying to become one of the Old People.

In The Marble Faun when Donatello acquired knowledge of evil he lost touch with the wild creatures—except for a poisonous reptile. Ike wants to avoid such a fate, to remain a natural man, one of the Old People. When he is eighteen he returns to take a last look at the big woods before the loggers destroy it. He visits the grave of Sam and Lion and Old Ben's paw, and leaves a small tribute, a sacrifice—and feels the eternalness of the sacred things he had known. But even as he has this experience—juxtaposed with it (juxtaposition is ever Faulkner's method, and especially in this story)—the great snake appears, "old, the once-bright markings of its youth dulled now to a monotone concordant too with the wilderness it crawled and lurked: the old one, the ancient and accursed about the earth, fatal and solitary and he could smell it now: the thin sick smell of rotting cucumbers and something else which had no name, evocative of all knowledge and an old weariness and of pariah-hood and of death."

Unlike Robin Molineux, the young Isaac McCaslin does not soon realize the ambiguity of human life; he only discovers that there is evil, and he thinks, like Hilda, he can escape it. Yet Ike salutes the snake as he would the deer and the bear. "The old one, the ancient and accursed about the earth" roams America's primal wilderness; he was not imported from the wicked old world. Nature may be "red in tooth and claw," but the wilderness is not cursed; it cannot be a moral wilderness: things are conducted "according to the ancient and immitigable rules which voided all regrets and brooked no quarter," rules which could not

be broken—until the tainted invasion from the old world. The "Old People" were not purer than the arrivals from the old world: just simpler; they were 'natural' more easily. They abided by the "ancient immitigable rules" (because they were immitigable). Ike's moral wilderness is chronicled in the commissary ledgers, for it is a matter of human and moral history.

In the ruin of his land Ike sees God himself as "Dispossessed of Eden. Dispossessed of Canaan," by those who "devoured their ravished substance ravished in turn again and then snarled in . . . the old world's worthless twilight over the old world's gnawed bones, blasphemous in his name." And the new land was "already tainted even before any white man owned it by what Grandfather and his kind, his fathers, had brought into the new land." What they brought, of course, was slavery.

As the exploitation of the wilderness and the exploitation of the Indians and Negroes are juxtaposed and coalesced in Ike's mind in his childhood, because all these themes are united in the person of Sam Fathers, so too are they associated with the killing of the bear: the grand hunt in which whites and Negroes may find a kind of brotherhood, all hunters, which disappears when the goal is achieved and the hunt is over. The best hunters know that the kill is not the purpose, that the hunt is a ritual in which they can find an essential, Edenic, life that is lost in everyday struggle. But after the kill they must return to the old rapacity of the plantations, the world of masters and slaves. The destruction of the bear does not, like that of Warland's butterfly, release a vision of the eternal; it forces a dilemma upon Ike. What torments Ike McCaslin is the ambiguous nature of man, and of the world: good and evil; carnivorous, rapacious, yet loving too.

Owen Warland evades any sense of social or moral responsibility:

except during a period of backsliding he has no sense of service to his fellows and is quite indifferent to ruining their finest timepieces. But Ike will participate in society, though only according to the best rule he can discover:

> because if the Nazarene had found carpentering good for the life and ends He had asumed and elected to serve, it would be all right too for Isaac McCaslin even though Isaac McCaslin's ends, although simple enough in their apparent motivation, were and would be always incomprehensible to him, and his life, invincible enough in its needs, if he could have helped himself, not being the Nazarene, he would not have chosen it.

Isaac McCaslin tries to solve the problem of guilt by a "strategy of innocence." Ike's imagination is not abstract; he will emulate Christ as directly as he can: he cannot preach, so he buys carpenter's tools. He chooses the role of a mute prophet, not very consciously, but driven by the demands of his integrity. Like Hosea he will let his private life figure forth his meanings. But whereas the great prophets came out of the wilderness to the towns, Ike never really leaves the woods. The most significant of his ritual gestures is his rejection of his inheritance, with all that follows on that rejection. Ike gives up his birthright, not intending to lose with it the possibility for sons. His loss is great. He does not deliberately give it up for a mess of pottage; he gives it up because the birthright is tainted, and he would not bequeath a birthright with a curse. But there is no other kind.

Donatello through his crime discovers "Original Sin." Ike discovers the ambiguity in human nature before he has committed any crime, and takes steps to see that he will not. Like Donatello he tries to avoid complexities of thought, and acts simply, according to his heart. Whether Donatello's acceptance of incarceration is unwise, as Miriam thinks, is moot. He must like Strether try to do the "right thing." But Ike in trying to do the right thing clearly does the wrong, and finds

that he has not escaped 'crime' after all.

Hawthorne's Blithedale, says Roy Male, was created as "the type of all those efforts in the Western World to ignore Solomon's wisdom about the seasons, to purify by escape from time into space, to achieve rebirth by putting on a mask."[13] Now Ike McCaslin's action is exactly the opposite of those who would create ideal farms and communities; he repudiates them all. Nevertheless Male's characterization of Blithedale precisely describes Ike's error, for Ike wants to contract all time and space into one November hunt.

The Blithedalers' remove to a place more primitive, and hence more 'pure' than the town, but though they do some real work they are playing in a pastoral masque. Ike McCaslin does them one better by retreating to the most primitive and hence, he thinks, most pure. His cousin, McCaslin Edmonds, understands him better than Ike does himself, and reads Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" to explain his reluctance to kill the bear. The bear—the wilderness—is his love and he wants that love to be permanent, inviolable: "Forever wilt thou love and she be fair." Unconsummated love is a cold pastoral indeed, but death is colder, and the proper consummation of the hunt is the kill: hence Ike's dilemma. It is in trying to solve this dilemma that he "appropriates for life the strategy of art,"[14] but he does not, like Owen Warland, retreat from life to art. Ike approaches life through an aesthetic and religious attitude which fixes, sterilizes, and kills life—though his intentions are honorable.

Owen Warland's goal involves a complete turning away from the world of time. He would like to have both life and art, but a choice between them is forced upon him. He does not scorn sexuality; Annie is "the visible shape" of "the spiritual power that he worshipped," for

whom the butterfly is a "bridal gift." But he honors pure beauty more, and that must become his bride. So Ike:

> He would marry someday and they two would own for their brief while that brief unsubstanced glory which inherently of itself cannot last and hence why glory: and they would, might, carry even the remembrance of it into the time when flesh no longer talks to flesh because memory at least does last: but still the woods would be his mistress and his wife. (p. 323)

Both Ike and Warland want ordinary sexual fulfillment, but not enough to commit themselves to it while the Ideal is beckoning. And, thus frustrated, they take solace in the ideal. They both, like Aylmer, want incorruptible brides, and both find them—cold pastoral comforts.

To Isaac the land is cursed by rapacity to possess it (his wife's strongest emotion), which is symbolized for him above all in Carothers McCaslin's incestuous rape of his daughter and slave. In his quarrel with his wife Ike is moral, and foolish. His wife is right for the wrong reason, which is, to put it most harshly, avarice. But her passion for the land should be complementary rather than unalterably opposed to Ike's love for it. It is natural and right to cultivate the land, and yet there is a part of nature that ought to be inviolable: how reconcile both elements of nature? Men's relationship with the land ought to be in part like that of fruitful marriage which possesses, yet keeps reverence for the soul's individuality. Reverence and sexual drive need not be totally incompatible, but it looks to Ike as if they are, and with reason. The wilderness he loves is being destroyed by exploitation, but because his grandfather and men like him, through rapacity both economic and sexual, did bring a curse upon his land, Ike repudiates cultivation and sexuality—though not entirely, not in principle. In fact by removing it from the range of familiarity's contempt he can deify sexuality just as he has deified the land.[15]

The woods are Ike's bride, but his wedding with nature, like that with his wife, remains spiritually unconsummated, infertile. McCaslin's and Roth Edmonds' relationships are more profane; the result is the illegitimate child of "Delta Autumn." Ike makes the mistake of thinking that 'secular' love will desecrate sacred and ideal love—a mistake, even though his experience largely bears him out. He can talk of sexual love as a deity, yet is open to the rebuke: "Old man . . . have you lived so long and forgotten so much that you don't remember anything you ever knew or felt or even heard about love?" He hasn't the courage to test whether the sacred might survive real contact with the profane.

Isaac's lack of self-knowledge leads him to his betrayal of the girl in "Delta Autumn": "You're a nigger!" But her answer is "Yes. I said you were Uncle Isaac;" she claims a blood relationship—and her child unites once again the Negro and white branches of the family. He lapses from betrayal and becomes gentle: "the gnarled, bloodless, bone-light, bone-dry old man's fingers touching for a second the smooth young flesh where the strong old blood ran after its long lost journey back to home. 'Tennie's Jim,' he said. 'Tennie's Jim.'" But then he resumes his harshness.

Hawthorne's attitude, and ours, toward Owen Warland must be ambivalent. Annie admires her child far more than the artistic butterfly, "and with good reason," Hawthorne writes. Faulkner's ambivalence toward Ike McCaslin is more extreme, in keeping with the greater depths of Ike's character. On the one hand Ike has abandoned life, so that Roth Edmonds can say, "Where have you been all the time you were dead?" The worst rebuke Ike receives is from the woman in "Delta Autumn," and the conclusion of that story, Ike's awareness that

Roth has killed a doe, confirms his tragic knowledge that the rape of the land will go on and on. But on the other hand Ike has a perception of a timeless hunt which is of the same nature as Warland's perception of the beautiful. Ike is more aware of the cost than Warland, and the cost has been far greater. Warland's only imaginative attraction to 'life' never went beyond the possibility of marriage with Annie. But a fruitful marriage is only a part of what Ike gives up. Even more important is his responsibility to do something to help his tenant-family and to protect some of the wilderness. In fact he probably could not have done much, and he has known this and given up. He is not heroic. But he cannot give up his knowledge of good and evil; he is always reminded, and the last reminders are the woman's rebuke and Roth's doe.

But he can still call up an apotheosis of the wilderness coalesced in one timeless vision, a vision which he had won as a boy and has never relinquished. This vision is something like Hightower's fantastic cavalry—except that this is not romanticised chicken thievery. It is authentic. The pride and humility and wisdom he achieved as a boy cannot be taken from him: "the strong irritable loud-reeking bear, the gallant high-headed stags looking longer than comets and pale as smoke, the music-ed and untiring dogs and the splattered horses and the men who rode them; himself too. Oh yes, he would think; me too. I've been too busy all my life trying not to waste any living to have any time left to die."

To understand Ike properly we must appreciate both "where have you been all the time you were dead?" and "I've been too busy all my life trying not to waste any living to have any time left to die." Both are true. Ike has a tragic view of life, and at the same time a vision of timeless beauty. Unlike Dilsey Ike cannot unify his conception of

life and of the eternal, and the tragic sense of loss in time is stronger than any gain in the eternal. He is like an artist of the beautiful who understands full well that his work is a loss. As for himself, he has grasped the beautiful: "I reckon I'm satisfied wherever I've been." But for the rest, he despairs. The best of his world is being destroyed, and its loss will irremediably impoverish man: "These woods. . . . The very people who destroyed them will accomplish their revenge."

C. Quentin Compson

Hawthorne and Faulkner are concerned with truths which "touch the heart." Owen Warland's and Isaac McCaslin's hearts are touched, but the reality they are more committed to is that of the Beautiful. Aylmer destroys the life of the reality his heart is committed to, while he is trying to unite these two kinds of reality. Such unity ordinarily is not impossible—if one doesn't demand absolutes. The dilemma of choosing either life or art is not inevitable for the artist, and artist's lives can be quite satisfying, as, on the whole, both Hawthorne's and Faulkner's were. However, they wrote of extreme cases, of men who attempt the limits of the possible in both life and art. Aylmer—in an effort not unlike Hollingsworth's or Sutpen's—tries to force life itself into the mold of his aesthetic conception.

Quentin Compson and Miles Coverdale know of the reality which touches the heart, and they love, but there is an infection in their love. We see them not as artists but as onlookers of life who try to enter and shape life. But they are fated to become chambers echoing with ghosts. The people they 'love' are made ghosts by the infection in their attempts to love, and that infection is largely a part of their rage for ordered perception. Not, of course, that Quentin is responsible

that the Sutpens become ghosts. But he is responsible for a conception of their history, and the South's which leaves him in his final desperation, gasping, in "the iron New England air," "I don't hate it! I don't hate it!" Quentin is the Sutpens' victim. In the same way Coverdale is victim of the Blithedalers—with Coverdale's increased torment that it is conceivably possible that he might have had some healing influence, had the quality of his love been different.

Quentin is an artist insofar as he is a storyteller, and there are qualities and problems which he shares with the Artist of the Beautiful. It is true that "what confronts him is, among other things, a literary task, virtually a problem of authorship, involving questions of literary technique and of the author's attitude toward his material."[16] The story torments him as he creates it, and his life imitates his 'art' emotionally. Quentin is not tormented merely by history, but by its re-creation in Miss Rosa Coldfield's tormented view, and in the sick imagination of Mr. Compson, and most of all in his own despairing imagination.

Thomas Sutpen is richly qualified as a tragic hero in the classical manner, with one great exception: he never has any tragic recognition; he never realizes what the flaw in his scheme is; that it is at the heart of his self and all he has valued—and failed to value. And without recognition, tragedy is pathetic rather than magnificent; yet Sutpen and the novel do have tragic magnitude, and this is precisely because the novel is constructed as a struggling toward tragic recognition. Miss Rosa and Mr. Compson fail, not so much because they lack the final clue that Quentin learns,[17] but because their imaginations are not up to it (hers is too violently involved, Mr. Compson's too detached). Wash Jones does realize that the tragedy of Sutpen is the tragedy of the South,[18] but his recognition is based on a small, though

significant and culminating part of Sutpen's story. His is an intuitive moral reaction, the result of an immediate personal wrong, which, though it is not the crucial crime of Sutpen's life, is equal to any, and is a fitting close. But though there is no direct injury, Quentin Compson is Sutpen's latest—and most conscious—victim.

Quentin's father, who is as responsible as anyone for his despair, and has helped to people his imagination with ghosts, appreciates the magnitude of the characters of Sutpen's story. He refers to them as "of a dead time; people too as we are, and victims too as we are, but victims of a different circumstance, simpler and therefore, integer for integer, larger, more heroic . . . not dwarfed and involved but distinct, uncomplex who had the gift of loving once or dying once instead of being diffused and scattered creatures drawn blindly limb from limb from a grab bag and assembled, author and victim too of a thousand homicides and a thousand copulations and divorcements" (My italics). What Quentin discovers is that the circumstances of which they are victims are not, after all, so different. Sutpen indeed has the magnitude of the simplicity of his "innocence," but his son Henry is, like Quentin, driven, confused and despairing into a living death. Sutpen has the magnitude, Quentin the recognition. The story is as much Quentin's as Sutpen's; and in this sense more Quentin's: that only he has the imagination to take it all in.[19] Shreve sees the story and even helps to reconstruct it, but he must remain outside it.

Quentin is possessed by the story not just because it involves people he knows personally or even just because of his personal interest in the theme of incest—for the incest in both Absalom, Absalom! and The Sound and the Fury, however important, is a symptom, not the disease itself. That disease could be described in many ways, but what is

important to Quentin is its final phase (incest was only a similar, earlier phase) of a passion for death.

Quentin seeks a timeless purity. He, like Ike, is in love with stasis, seeking to arrest time and thus force decay out of the Compson world.[20] And so in The Sound and the Fury he constantly fights clock time, instead of like Dilsey accepting, comprehending it. He aspires to the impossible condition of lost Eden, of which only Benjy, for whom time is always a palpable Now, has a shadowy experience. The impossibility leads to a "death wish." In our final view of Quentin he is still scrubbing, brushing away in preparation for his rendezvous with final stillness. But all we know that he achieves is death.

Henry is the crucial, though not the central, character of Absalom, Absalom!, for it is he that decides to kill Charles Bon. Quentin, though not so obviously, is a crucial character of The Sound and the Fury, not only in that his obsession drives Caddy to become worse than she might have been (this is likely, though we can't be certain), but in that it is he who senses most keenly the decay and disease of the family; and his despair and suicide clinch the doom of the family, bind it to the body of death.

The climax of the Sutpen family story is Henry's murder of Bon, and the rest is denouement, but the climax of the novel, Absalom, Absalom!, is Quentin's confrontation with Henry. Why is Quentin so horrified? The circumstances are eerie and momentous enough; they would shake anyone, for a time. But Quentin is shaken to the core. For Quentin, "a barracks filled with stubborn back-looking ghosts," this is more that just the chief ghost, the ghost with whom he has to some extent identified himself; this is his Doppelgänger, a meeting with himself like Brydon's in James' "Jolly Corner." It is a meeting with a

figure from history; Quentin has always wanted to destroy time, to go back with a vengeance. Henry had committed himself to death-in-life, and Quentin sees in him his self as the figure of death: "The wasted hands crossed on the breast as if he were already a corpse, waking or sleeping it was the same and would be the same forever as long as he lived. . . ." Thus Henry and Quentin are joined in the same sentence. Quentin sees Henry not as a warning away from death, but as a culminating symbol in his own desperate psyche, and the result is "Nevermore of peace. Nevermore of peace. Nevermore Nevermore Nevermore." "After such knowledge what forgiveness?" Quentin now perceives, as Wash Jones did in a simpler way, that what destroys Sutpen destroys the South. What makes it so horrifying to Quentin is his own involvement: his own guilt feeling. Henry's choice to become a ghost is crucial in the destruction of Sutpen. Quentin himself has been making the same decision all his life.

Quentin has nowhere personally abetted racial injustice. He is concerned with incest, and incest in Absalom, Absalom! is thematically linked with miscegination. Miscegination is not an evil; it is a symbol and a myth, just as racial purity is a myth ("myth" in the simple sense, of falsehood). It is the symbol of, and an excuse for, the continuance of the South's gnawing at its own heart in racial injustice. "So it's the miscegination, not the incest," Bon had said.[21] What torments Henry and Quentin alike is a passion for their sisters' purity, and it is part of their sickness unto death that they see incest not as violating that purity but as preserving, even enhancing it, though they cannot admit this to themselves. And this is part of their overwhelming narcissism. The narcissism that Gavin Stevens praises in his sermon in Intruder in the Dust as the South's great virtue, its homogeneity, is,

in Faulkner's more deeply imaginative work, recognized as the South's sterilizing disease. "'The South,' Shreve said. 'The South. Jesus.'" Quentin's narcissism is forced to face itself and its consequences in his confrontation with Henry, and he can see nothing but death.

D. Miles Coverdale

Absalom, Absalom! has several narrators, and Quentin Compson is their controlling intelligence, through whom the others are reflected. It is both Sutpen's story and Quentin's: Quentin's not because he acts in it significantly, but because he is so thoroughly acted upon by it—yet only he understands the whole. The Blithedale Romance is narrated much more simply; Coverdale was there to see the events of his story, as Quentin was not. Yet they share the same kinds of problems in reconstructing their history-romances. For what they are after is not the 'facts,' but the meanings: the meanings for human history in the failure of unique systems, but, more pertinently, the meanings for each 'historian' personally, even while he is overwhelmed by his story.

Neither Quentin nor Coverdale has much life of his own. Their lives are possessed by ghosts; their story-making is an attempt to exorcise those ghosts by understanding. The ghosts remain. Coverdale, older and more sane, can survive though sadly; but the burden of Quentin's adventure is unbearable.

One of the problems of a narrator like Coverdale is whether he should show any self-consciousness about his role as an artist—on the one hand seeming to be chiefly an observer, at most a "chorus," yet with the problem of how to represent his own role in the action objectively, and on the other hand being the manipulator, creator of the whole work. Evidence has been cited that Coverdale is (like Quentin)

making up his story as he attempts to recall and reconstruct it.[22] This, I think, goes too far. Coverdale indeed has thought of himself as an artist, but only as a minor poet, and Hawthorne perhaps thought even less of minor poets than do most men.[23] One of Coverdale's reasons for going to Blithedale is to get material for minor Transcendental poetry; he gets more than he asks for.

F. C. Crews declares, "Hawthorne is attempting what few writers have dared: a surface plot, an imaginative reconstruction of that plot by a narrator, and a symbolic commentary on both."[24] And Mr. Crews rightly thinks Hawthorne's attempt one of the best of its kind. But The Blithedale Romance is not "a novel about Coverdale's efforts to write a romance,"[25] nor must we see his "ultimate justification" as lying "in his fashioning a work of art out of what he has seen."[26] It is true that "the question with Coverdale is not how he is to handle literary materials but how, as a human being, he is to recognize his responsibilities";[27] nevertheless I think we must see a deepening awareness of his own culpability in Coverdale, and we must see it as part of the course of his recounting his story. For the meaning of his story Coverdale has to wait, like his readers, to see what the final form will be. To this extent, and to this extent only, we ought to grant him awareness of a process of artistic creation. Whether he then does fully recognize his responsibilities is another matter.

Certainly there is a distance from the narrative technique of Coverdale to that of Strether in James' Ambassadors,[28] but F. O. Matthiessen observes that James' experiments with central consciousness in a novel begins with Coverdale's recognition of his role as chorus, midway through the action.[29] However, we must not forget that though Coverdale reveals this recognition at its proper place, he knows all the

'facts' of his story from the beginning, and one of these facts is this recognition of his "vocation" as chorus. He is, like Quentin, always witholding revelations until the proper point in shaping his work, and that shaping is as important as the facts, or more so—for Coverdale does make new discoveries in his writing. At Blithedale he had condemned himself for his cold prying nature. However, he writes: "But a man cannot always decide for himself whether his own heart is too cold or warm. It now impresses me that, if I erred at all in regard to Hollingsworth, Zenobia, and Priscilla, it was through too much sympathy, rather than too little" (Ch. 18). It is for the reader to judge if Coverdale's revaluation is true, and, if it is, to judge the quality of that sympathy.

Coverdale is a precursor of the narrator of The Sacred Fount in two important ways. Thematically, Coverdale makes the lives of others his "sacred fount," and technically, Hawthorne risks the same kind of confusion about an unreliable narrator.[30] Wayne Booth writes that "For practical criticism the most important kind . . . of distance is that between the fallible or unreliable narrator and the implied author who carries the reader with him in judging the narrator."[31] Huck Finn is "unreliable," but Twain does not mystify us about Huck's character. The problem with understanding an "inconscient" narrator like Coverdale is that he is doubly unreliable—the "implied author" becomes unreliable, and leaves us unsure what to think. This is a matter of a muddled kind of ambiguity rather than the "ambiguity" of richness in the complexity of Hester or Dimmesdale.

The novel has three interwoven subjects: the Blithedale experiment, the Hollingsworth-Zenobia-Priscilla triangle, and Coverdale's discoveries, which though they concern his Blithedale friends are mainly self-discoveries

—or self-deceptions. To understand Coverdale we must understand him as Hollingsworth's friend, as Zenobia's 'lover,' and as Priscilla's 'lover.'

Coverdale's skepticism is related to his coldhearted observation, and though it helps to damn him, it is paradoxically one of the strengths of his character. For though he looks at all suspiciously, his vision is truer than anyone else's, and Coverdale knows it. That vision reaches its dramatic climax in his rejection of Hollingsworth. He goes to Blithedale because he feels the great lack in his life of something—or someone—to which he can be fully committed. And he finds in Hollingsworth the seeds of Blithedale's destruction—symbolically, for community and man have the same impracticality at their roots, and actually, since Hollingsworth plans to sacrifice Blithedale for his own scheme; but in Hollingsworth's person and scheme are united a love and a cause to which Coverdale could give himself—if only he did not see so well. And in spite of that sight he tells us that one more plea from Hollingsworth would have won him. The loss of Hollingsworth's friendship is a severe blow, and the turning point of Coverdale's story.

Coverdale is reliable except in what is most crucial, that is, in determining just exactly what his relationships are with the women. Coverdale's admiration of Priscilla is always qualified. Either he admits to transforming her in his imagination, or he admires her as Zenobia has transformed her with tasteful costuming. On the other hand, his admiration for Zenobia is open for all, including Zenobia, to see. "Behold! here is a woman!" He is impressed by her "bloom, health, and vigor, which she possessed in such overflow that a man might well have fallen in love with her for their sake only" (Ch. 3).

Everyone at Blithedale except Silas Foster is veiled in one way or another, but Coverdale is as interested in Zenobia, the woman whom he

thinks not quite veiled enough (on their first meeting he is irresistably made to imagine her "in Eve's earliest garment" (Ch. 3), as he is in the Veiled Lady, Priscilla. Since her openness makes him want to see more, he speculates freely: and "Zenobia was conscious of my observation, though not, I presume, of the point to which it led me" (which is, bluntly, that she is not a virgin). She asks: "What are you seeking to discover in me?" and he answers, "The mystery of your life."

> She bent her head towards me, and let me look into her eyes, as if challenging me to drop a plummet-line down into the depths of her consciousness.
>
> "I see nothing now," said I, closing my own eyes. . . .
>
> A bachelor always feels himself defrauded, when he knows or suspects that any woman of his acquaintance has given herself away. Otherwise the matter could have been no concern of mine. It was purely speculative, for I should not, under any circumstances, have fallen in love with Zenobia. The riddle made me so nervous, however, in my sensitive condition of mind and body, that I most ungratefully began to wish that she would <u>let me</u> alone. (My italics. Ch. 6)

Is Coverdale telling the truth when he says that he would not under any circumstances fall in love with Zenobia?[32] For the most part, yes. It is in closing his eyes, in retreating from a conflict he has begun that Coverdale appears at his worst. A failure of nerve makes him disclaim a matter as of any concern of his, just as it might develop into one, but willy-nilly it does become his; Zenobia's eyes are ever after behind a veil, for him, but he will not escape them.

Attracted as he is, he is repelled by a quality "not exactly maiden-like"—the quality that damns all of Hawthorne's dark women. But perhaps there would have been one circumstance under which Coverdale would have succumbed: Zenobia thought so, and I think so too. In their last encounter she says, "It is an endless pity . . . that I had not bethought myself of winning your heart, Mr. Coverdale, instead of Hollingsworth's. I think I should have succeeded." But she did not. And Coverdale always arrives a little too late: always puts off encounters.

Though he would pry into the mystery of other lives, especially Zenobia's, he had to close his eyes the one time she offered him a view. Of course, she was mocking him; she foresaw his retreat. Later, as he tries harder to see, and as she misinterprets his sympathy, thinking he is all cold curiosity, she will let down her window curtain. And the climax, the very heart of the novel, is Coverdale's belated attempt to see Zenobia: "behind the veil," the veil of the river of death.

Just as Quentin is shaken to the core by his meeting with death in the person of Henry Sutpen, Coverdale is shaken by looking at Zenobia "behind the veil." For these are confrontations with self-knowledge, though only dimly recognized.

> I bent over the side of the boat. So obscure, however, so awfully mysterious, was that dark stream, that—and the thought made me shiver like a leaf—I might as well have tried to look into the enigma of the eternal world, to discover what had become of Zenobia's soul, as into the river's depths, to find her body. And there, perhaps, she lay, with her face upward, while the shadow of the boat, and my own pale face peering downward, passed slowly betwixt her and the sky! (Ch. 22)

Coverdale, who finally says, "But what, after all, have I to tell? Nothing, nothing, nothing!" powerfully anticipates Marcher's confrontation of The Beast in the Jungle—"face down, on the tomb" of a woman he might have loved.

Coverdale by his gift of understanding, and by the unfortunate isolation which leaves him with nothing but his knowledge to hug to his bosom, is gravely threatened by the sin of Goodman Brown—which is despair that the reality of evil is the only reality. Hyatt Waggoner attributes the failing of Hawthorne's powers in his later years to causes both psychological and theological: he says that the sense of guilt and estrangement that "takes the life out of everything," which had provided the substance of so much of Hawthorne's work ceased to be projected in

the stories, and worked in his life; and his faith in immortality, which "had always rested primarily on his sense of the reality of evil," ceased "to be a conviction and became instead the belief that conviction was necessary."[33] This reality of evil, and the necessity of combatting it are dominant themes, perhaps the dominant problems, in the thought which informed Hawthorne's work. Waggoner quotes a passage from Our Old Home about the foundlings of England:

> Without an infinite faith, there seemed as much prospect of a blessed futurity for those hideous bugs and many-footed worms [that one finds under rotting plants] as for these brethren of our humanity and coheirs of all our heavenly inheritance. Ah, what a mystery! Slowly, slowly, as after groping at the bottom of a deep, noisome, stagnant pool, my hope struggles upward to the surface, bearing the half-drowned body of a child along with it, and heaving it aloft for its life, and my own life, and all our lives. Unless these slime-clogged nostrils can be made capable of inhaling celestial air, I know not how the purest and most intellectual of us can reasonably expect ever to taste a breath of it. The whole question of eternity is staked there. If a single one of those helpless little ones be lost, the world is lost!

The drowning scene, which affected Hawthorne so strongly, here becomes a symbol for the "mystery" of wasted, anguished lives. It is such a symbol in The Blithedale Romance, but there irony is added, for Zenobia, and Hollingsworth, and Coverdale too, bear responsibility for the horror.

For Coverdale Zenobia had been "not exactly maiden-like" and "not quite simple in her death"; yet his judgment is not against her alone, but against all men, and "the affectation that had been visible enough in all our lives." Only the rough and most nearly simple, Adamic farmer can fully forgive: "'Poor child!' said Foster,—and his dry old heart, I verily believe, vouchsafed a tear,—'I'm sorry for her!'" In reporting this, Coverdale, I think not unwittingly, gives tribute to the child in Zenobia. The ambiguity of innocence and responsibility looms behind this scene and contributes to its force,

and Coverdale feels responsibility to judge it: like Hawthorne, "bearing a half-drowned body of a child . . . and heaving it aloft for its life, and [his] own life, and all our lives," Coverdale is forced to try to discover meaning for the lives of the Blithedalers and himself.

Zenobia was right when she called him Judge Coverdale: he had said "Let it all come! As for me, I would look on, as it seemed my part to do, understandingly, if my intellect could fathom the meaning and moral, and at all events, reverently and sadly" (Ch. 18). Coverdale can assent to the catastrophe because he has judged Zenobia. Not without reason has Westervelt—loathed by Coverdale because he represents the evils Coverdale has most reason to fear in himself—called Coverdale the Jacques of this Arden. In the search for Zenobia's body, Coverdale's concern is directed to observing the effect on Hollingsworth and is involved with his own trying to "look into the enigma of the eternal world" which Zenobia had partly embodied and frightened him with, but mostly he is concerned with Zenobia's eternal fate: "Ah that rigidity! It is impossible to bear the terror of it." Would Zenobia retain her inflexible attitude of combined prayer and immitigable defiance at the day of judgment? "Away with the hideous thought," says Coverdale, and comforts himself that her last moment "was a long, in its capacity of God's infinite forgiveness, as the lifetime of the world" (Ch. 27). But despite this hope Coverdale clutches at, as far as he and the Blithedalers are concerned, Zenobia is tragically and irrevocably gone (like Ike McCaslin's wife and inheritance), and with her went much of the spirit of life.

Coverdale is at times a doubly unreliable narrator but Hawthorne's "symbolic commentary" provides guidance in interpreting him.[34] Attention has been called to the fire imagery of The Blithedale Romance and its accompanying imagery of snow and cold, the burden being that it is cold

and weary hearts that must be warmed by artificial heat.[35] This figural pattern, which culminates in images of decaying wood and vegetation, concerns Coverdale closely enough that I think among other things it suggests not only that his is the most cold and weary heart, but there is that within him which is very like rotten wood. In the beginning Coverdale frames his story with such imagery, remembering the first fire at Blithedale:

> I rake away the ashes from the embers in my memory, and blow them up with a sigh, for lack of more inspiring breath. Vividly, for an instant, but, anon, with the dimmest gleam, and with just as little fervency for my heart as for my finger-ends! The stanch oaken logs were long ago burnt out. Their genial glow must be represented, if at all, by the merest phosphoric glimmer, like that which exudes, rather than shines, from damp fragments of decayed trees, deluding the benighted wanderer through a forest. Around such chill mockery of a fire some few of us might sit on the withered leaves spreading out each a palm towards the imaginary warmth, and talk over our exploded scheme for beginning the life of Paradise anew. (Ch. 2)

After his break with Hollingsworth Coverdale excapes Blithedale, but he feels compelled to return. But not even the cows particularly welcome him, and he resentfully throws fragments of a rotten stump at them. He further rejects the community by fleeing the masqueraders, and he stumbles over a heap of rotten firewood: "I imagined the long-dead woodman, and his long-dead wife and children, coming out of their chill graves, and essaying to make a fire with this heap of mossy fuel!"[36] The final instance of this motif occurs in the search for Zenobia's body. The dark stream confirms her warning: "When next you hear of Zenobia her face will be behind the black veil." Here is the conjunction of the fire and rotten wood imagery with the novel's veil motif:

> Hollingsworth, with a gigantic effort, upheaved a sunken log. When once free of the bottom, it rose partly out of the water,—all weedy and slimy, a devilish-looking object, which the moon had not shone upon for half a hundred years,—then plunged again, and sullenly returned to its old resting-place, for the remnant of the century.
>
> "That looked ugly!" quoth Silas. "I half thought it was the

> Evil One, on the same errand as ourselves,—searching for Zenobia."
> "He shall never get her," said I, giving the boat a strong impulse.
> "That's not for you to say, my boy," retorted the yeoman.

Indeed it is Coverdale's dilemma, judge though he may be, that it is indeed not for him to say whether Zenobia is grasped by "God's infinite forgiveness" or by the Evil One. But the prevalence of coldness, weariness, and death in his book reveals the damnation of despair which he sometimes subconsciously, and usually all too consciously must continually fight off.

Coverdale begins "making my prey of people's individualities," as he says, "in the wantonness of youth, strength, and comfortable conditions" (Ch. 10)—out of idle amusement; and Hollingsworth's criticism, that he lacks a purpose, which Coverdale almost too willingly concedes, is pertinent, for Coverdale's amusement leads not merely to idle mischief; it results in making something of a vampire of him. His life at Blithedale seems to have been the only real life he has had, and he has drawn that life from his friends: "The more I consider myself as I then was, the more do I recognize how deeply my connection with those three had affected all my being" (Ch. 23).

But what begins in apparent "wantonness," with all its evil of exposing privacy to his personal indifference, becomes gradually not a diversion in Coverdale's life, but a necessity. When he pries into Zenobia's life, saying, "She should be compelled to give me a glimpse of something true; some nature, some passion, no matter whether right or wrong, provided it were real," I think Coverdale does not yet notice the touch of desperation for reality in his voice. Coverdale is a vampire, but not so horrible as pathetic.

A speech like Zenobia's, "Are you a man? No; but a monster! A cold, heartless, self-beginning and self-ending piece of mechanism!"

might have been addressed to any of the three important male characters, for this describes the death-in-life Coverdale most fears. It is her denouncement of Hollingsworth; but Coverdale, who accuses Westervelt of the same monstrosity, must report such a speech with acute consciousness of its implications for himself.

Perhaps the most important question about Coverdale is whether his powerful awareness and fear of becoming such a monster keeps him from being one. I think it is here that Hawthorne gets his book into a James-foreshadowing difficulty. The answer must remain a little ambiguous: Coverdale as he tells his story has become a nearly lifeless man and is trying indolently to make himself as comfortable as he can in his tomb. He is too careful of comfort to submit to remorse; his acadia is more on the side of sloth than of sadness. On the other hand Coverdale is so careful to confess, to try to show us how aware he is of his shortcomings, that we must develop some sympathy for him.

Daniel Hoffman writes of Merry Mount and Blithedale, "Their error is to assume that the escape from time made possible by art is an option allowed in life as well. . . . The Blithedale Romance tells us that although man cannot so free himself in action, he can in art discover a fuller understanding of life than life itself provides. It is Coverdale, the ironic and detached narrator, who alone of the communitarians learns, through the discipline of his recollections, the true relations of them all to one another, to nature, to time."[37] Those who would make life into art incur the dangers of "angelic," or demonic imagination, which tries to break and misshape the lives of others or of the self in order to force them into ideal shapes. At least Coverdale abhors any attempts to control others; that is why he especially hates a hypnotist like Westervelt. But his sin is to treat people as if they were characters

of a novel.

The "angelic" imagination which meddles in the lives of others, (even when it thinks it can be indifferent to them, as Sutpen and Brand certainly appear to be) is, vampire-like, dependent upon its victims for sustenance. Coverdale's variety of this imagination, a demonic curiosity which seeks not to control, but merely to know, does not go so far as Brand's, for Coverdale is more scrupulous, and more careful. The narrator of The Sacred Fount has a demonic inquisitiveness, and this misguided imagination, in attributing "sacred fount" relationships to others, unwittingly makes them its own "fount." What is insidious is the threat of infecting reality with the personal fictions it has wrought. Coverdale is more sane, and more cautious; moreover, for all his self-examination and self-condemnation, as he later discovers, his prying does not come entirely out of disinterested curiosity; the disinterest is a protective disguise, and his prying is driven by love (though a love sometimes not far from hatred),[38] and his three friends become sacred founts upon whom he is dependent.

Coverdale's affection for his friends had in the beginning been nearly honest, but it is infected, as is everything else about Blithedale, with fiction. The book is a romance with a vengeance; there is a solid, earthy background in Silas Foster and the farm, but the pastoral masque becomes a funeral and turns the pasture into a graveyard.

Coverdale is not an artist of the beautiful, like Ike, in trying to fashion his life; he relinquishes life much more readily than Ike. Nor does he exercise the poetic license of Shreve and Quentin in fashioning his story. His purpose as he conceives it is not to make, though he accepts Dr. Griswold's "fair elevation among our minor minstrelsy, on the strength of my pretty little volume, published ten years ago" (Ch. 29);

rather his purpose is to try to understand, to appreciate—always to see. He has a sensitivity comparable to Owen Warland's. But not only does Hollingsworth have, like his fellow blacksmith Danforth, the masculinity which wins the girl, but Hollingsworth also has the commitment to the Ideal. Coverdale is left with only sensitivity, and he must do with it what he can.

Owen Warland has not only the commitment to a cause, the lack of which Coverdale feels so keenly, but he also commandeers an imaginative spiritual share of Annie: "She was the visible shape in which the spiritual power that he worshipped . . . was made manifest to him. Of course he deceived himself; there were no such attributes in Annie Hovenden as his imagination endowed her with; she, in the aspect which she wore to his inward vision, was . . . a creature of his own." But Annie is, to begin with, a whole woman. Though Coverdale deliberately attempts to imagine Priscilla into such a spiritual power as Annie is for Warland, he is thwarted by his self-awareness in the matter, and by the poor stuff Priscilla offers his imagination to work with.

Zenobia is so sexually physical, and Priscilla is so insubstantial that neither can provide an ideal for Coverdale. Nevertheless, he tries to fashion Priscilla into one. Coverdale says of his strongest attempt to influence Priscilla, "Absurd as it might be, I tried to reason with her, and persuade her not to be so joyous, thinking that, if she would draw less lavishly upon her fund of happiness it would last her longer" (Ch. 9). But Coverdale's wisdom is too old, and his naïveté in presenting it too young; Priscilla, not surprisingly, runs off to sit at Hollingsworth's feet. And to Coverdale "it was a sight worth gazing at, and a beautiful sight, too, as the fair girl sat at the feet of that dark powerful figure. . . . It is before me now, with the evening

twilight a little deepened by the dusk of memory." Though Coverdale later acts and speaks bitterly enough out of jealousy, this aesthetic memory of Priscilla and Hollingsworth belies his latest assertion of love for Priscilla.

Coverdale prefers an aesthetic memory. He will never commit himself to a real personal relationship because he draws back from the imperfections he all too readily sees. Coverdale, like Ike, could never be other than a bachelor, for he would never risk taking anyone for worse as well as for better. On the other hand, though he not only suspects but knows this truth about himself, he also believes just as heartily as Hawthorne that "Indeed we are but shadows—we are not endowed with real life . . . till the heart is touched." His prying attempt to find reality in others had a grim success—in the reality of the drowning scene; but Coverdale can hardly be satisfied by that.

And so he alleges that his heart is touched. Coverdale cannot prepare us very well for his declaration of love for Priscilla, since his attitude toward her has been a mixture of curiosity, sympathy, and the feeling that here was a girl left over for him, perhaps available without much effort. I think that the real motive for Coverdale's presenting us with his continuing devotion to an image of Priscilla as his one true love, though unrequited, is that this is his excuse for his withdrawal from life; he presents it to fool us and, more importantly, himself. Regretably, Hawthorne seems a little fooled too.

The telling of his story might be regarded as an attempt to free himself through understanding, but he is not freed. His understanding is tragic, insofar as he does understand his loss—and I think we cannot be sure how much that is.[39] His magnitude is diminished by his protective measures: his clinging to a silly and ungenuine ideal of love for

Priscilla, and his attitude of world-weariness—which is genuine enough.

It is one thing to perceive life aesthetically as much as possible, to try to see, insofar as we are able, all the beauty that is there; it is quite another to sneak aesthetic judgements in among evaluations that ought to be moral. Life as art, "aesthetic morality" is, after all, an extension of moral rigidity. Young Goodman Brown damns the whole world outside himself, and despairs because that world is not as moral as he is. Isaac McCaslin and Coverdale desert the world and cling to imaginary virginal 'brides' for substantially the same reasons; the world isn't as pretty as they'd like it, so they'll have none of it. And Owen Warland substitutes for a bride the memory of his transiently realized mechanical butterfly.

CHAPTER VI

REMORSE

> He found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. . . .
>
> But ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. . . .
>
> But ye are come unto Mount Sion . . . and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.

Thus the author of Hebrews writes of Esau and the Law. Joe Christmas, a man who sees himself as like Esau branded, in a "torture of punishment deferred" flees on a circular road in an unwitting attempt to find a place of repentance. He is isolated, but many others suffer the same lonely search.

The Old Testament does provide means for redemption of sin: a means of paying it off through an elaborate system, one by no means to be denigrated, especially by a Christianity, fallen into a scales and balance moralism less precise and sometimes more forbidding, which can occasion anxiety for "unpardonable sins." And the Old Testament provides for cities of Sanctuary; there are none in the worlds of Hawthorne and Faulkner. But the Law in the hands of priests became a mount that "burned with fire," a "blackness and a darkness." Christ intended to bring the Old Law's fulfillment; in the New Testament the spirit of repentance is supposed to suffice, and the law of conscience is supposed to throw away its scales and balances, Christ having once and for all "offered a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and

and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world"—in commiseration for our scaled and balanced mentalities. But the priesthood of all believers has managed to corrupt its conceptions of the new covenant just as the old covenant was encrusted with unfaith.

"Repentance has two basic meanings: a turning to God . . . and regretting a wrong done."[1] By "turning to God" I think we must not necessarily understand a conventional ritual procedure of any religion; the rituals, and the professions and creeds associated with them, are means of grace, aids to repentance: valuable indeed, but not the end. Turning to God means delighting in God's Law, accepting the universe. Carlyle said of Margaret Fuller's accepting the universe, "Egad, she'd better"; and we'd all better. But it is not an easy thing to do—properly. For it means not only appreciating times when the lark's on the wing and the snail's on the thorn, but it also means accounting for the problem of evil, both in the world and in ourselves—not necessarily an intellectual accounting, though such an attempt is necessary for some of us, but an accounting of the heart, of the mind throughout all its levels. Contrition, the sorrow of true repentance, is not regret for getting caught, but for the wrongness in the first place. It is a sorrow for personal sin, and such sorrow must be linked with that for all sin. It is a coming to grips with the problem of evil.

"Remorse" is derived from Latin, meaning a biting back; it denotes "a painful sting of conscience, without necessarily connoting humility or hope of forgiveness; <u>remorse</u> emphasizes mental anguish and often intense suffering for consequences which cannot be escaped, not necessarily accompanied by any reslove to reform."[2] Remorse then is an emotion which recognizes (though perhaps only subconsciously) the need for repentance, but which may have no intention or hope of achieving

it.

We shall be concerned with two related kinds of regret: one (to put it most simply, though the characters we are interested in are certainly not simple) is regret for getting caught. (An obsolete but handy theological term for this is "attrition.") The other kind, again most simply, is regret for not getting caught—the "torture of punishment deferred." Both kinds are complicated because they are not likely to be isolated, but mixed together; and a third complication is that sensitive souls, both those who get caught and those who do not, are likely to ponder the nature of their guilt, sometimes justifying, sometimes condemning themselves. They may even not be able to say what the crime was—and suffer for that.

Hester Prynne suffers because she is caught, and Dimmesdale because he is not; but it is a little more complex than that. For Hester is not punished for her thought, and Dimmesdale, of course, is caught and dreadfully, in his own mind. The sense of guilt is anxious in those who suffer for not getting caught, since they do not know exactly what to fear: if punishment will come, or when, or just what form it might take. Both kinds of regret, attrition, and the torture of punishment deferred, are complicated by the sufferer's ethical consciousness and sense of justice: they feel that punishment ought to fit the crime, and the problem is just what is the crime? If it was done in passion or with some good intentions, or if it was in large measure forced by circumstance or by an unjust society, how much guilt should be felt and atoned? Hester's and Dimmesdale's official crime was an act of adultery, but their real spiritual danger is a moral wilderness. And what are the 'crimes' that makes Joe Christmas or Reuben Bourne suffer?

Remorse does not at all necessarily concern sin. Emerson, in

"Society and Solitude," writes of a solitary "humorist," "He had a remorse running to despair of his social gaucheries, and walked miles and miles to get the twitchings out of his face, the starts and shrugs out of his arms and shoulders. God may forgive sins, he said, but awkwardness has no forgiveness in heaven or earth." Remorse may arise from actual guilt for sin, or from what is ethically trivial, and this humorist's disease, which rates his own gaucheries as worse than sins, is a confused sense of values. His problem is not in heaven or earth, but in himself, and he needs repentance, to forgive himself, and if he understood what his 'guilt' was, he could forgive.

D. H. Lawrence in part misjudges Hawthorne and his work (he knew Hawthorne was subtle, but maybe Hawthorne was more subtle than Lawrence knew anyone could be), but Lawrence's insights, when they are valid, are keen. He writes of The Scarlet Letter:

> The Father forgives; the Son forgives; but the Holy Ghost does not forgive. So take that.
> The Holy Ghost doesn't forgive because the Holy Ghost is within you. The Holy Ghost is you: your very You. So if, in your conceit of your ego, you make a break in your own you, in your own integrity, how can you be forgiven? You might as well make a rip in your own bowels.[3]

The religion that grips so much of Faulkner's world "forbids them even to forgive themselves" (as Hightower says in Light in August)—and because of breaks in their own integrity.

A. Joanna, Joe, and Hightower

Joanna Burden before she meets Joe Christmas suffers from being "caught"; that is she is punished by the community, but she does not really understand what her 'crime' is. The best she can do is ascribe it to the curse her father has told her of. She tries to escape this dilemma by acting out and thus defining that crime with Christmas, but

this only makes things worse: she doesn't understand the crime any better, and now she must suffer in that she is not caught for this added sin. Her prayer for repentance is superficial, since she wants the punishment and annihilation of death rather than the peace of repentance and forgiveness.

If Joanna's knowledge of evil is sterile in the order of nature, it is not "uninvigorated by a sense of loss"—her sense of loss is immense—and it has a fecundity in the order of corruption and death. Joanna is isolated from the community by the same obsession with 'black blood' that isolates Joe Christmas. The obsession is her inheritance from her grandfather, just as Joe's is from his—and Hightower's from his. Joe, however, does not know his history, and is tormented by his ignorance of it, while Joanna is tormented by knowledge of hers.

Joanna knows that racism is evil—for her 'catechism' has indeed been memorized (indeed, on a less conscious level, Joe's has too)—but at the same time, along with her grandfather's puritanic ethics she has absorbed the perverted values of the myth of black blood and sexual impurity. When she takes Joe Christmas as a 'lover' (they both desperately need love but have no capacity to give or receive it), she violates both the code of white female purity and her role of helping the Negroes through official and impersonal charity—and this 'purity' and 'charity' are the two basic tenets of Joanna's religion. The world of Light in August is deeply and terrifyingly religious, and the symbol of its predominant religion is that black cross Joanna talks about.

The "hellish privacy" of each is so complete as to be inviolable; Joanna does pose a real threat to Christmas' privacy, and that occasions his final desperation, but he does not violate Joanna Burden:

> Even after a year it was as though he entered by stealth to despoil her virginity each time anew. It was as though each turn of dark saw him faced again with the necessity to despoil again that which he had already despoiled—or never had and never would.
>
> Sometimes he thought of it in that way, remembering the hard, untearful and unselfpitying and almost manlike yielding of that surrender. A spiritual privacy so long intact that its own instinct for preservation had immolated it. . . (Ch. 11, p. 205).[4]

Joanna Burden remains unravished. (The "still unravished bride of quietness" of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" is an unobtrusive but important motif of the novel.)[5] She is violated, but not by Joe Christmas, for her spiritual privacy stays intact except as it is "immolated" by itself. Christmas does not corrupt her; he is only a tool she opportunely uses for her own self-corruption, self-ravishment.

Their sexual relation does not bring release of tension to either of them as it should, but, rather, increases it. It increases her obsession with the polarities of saint and sinner, and his with those of black and white. Their sin together is for both of them the most loathsome of sins, but the only way life can be fulfilled. She is sacrificing herself to that black cross. Her capitulation to sexuality is actually a penance for her years of nonfeeling. Like Arthur Dimmesdale, and like Hester Prynne in the earlier years of Hester's sin, she is masochistically expiating and yet being tormented by the sense of sin.

D. H. Lawrence simply dismisses most of Hester Prynne's personality to create his own Hester, but his Hester is quite like Joanna Burden.[6] She is born to her "moral wilderness." She simply accepts a cursed universe in a way much unlike the New England Puritan's acceptance of a fallen world. For they had firm faith in their covenant, as did Hester and Dimmesdale, whose torment was in having violated and in having been torn from the Christian covenant. But the apocalyptic gospel of Joanna Burden concerns not Christ crucified, but white babies crucified on black

crosses.

Lawrence says that for Hester the greatest thrill is to bring down a Sacred Saint with a flop into the mud, and then to wipe off the mud with her hair, another Magdalen. That isn't Hester, but there is much of Joanna Burden in it. To her Joe Christmas is not a saint, but he is a representative of the great Black Shadow. She does drag Christmas down, and then tries to be his patron. She does exult in "Adulteress" and in the words of obscenity, as Lawrence suggests his Hester does. Joanna Burden is under the Black Shadow so clearly that in Yoknapatawpha County she is as marked as Hester was by her scarlet letter. But Hester does not, as Lawrence accuses her, exult in the meanings of the letter: Adulteress; Able. Hester is remorseful about the adultery, if not repentant, and she does not court the image of "Able"; she merely tries to expiate, and earn her living. This is all somewhat true of Joanna Burden, except that she exults in both her roles as sinner and as philanthropist—and keeps them separate: by day "Able," by night "Adulteress." Hester never tries to make her symbol mean one or the other. She finally accepts both, and that is no mean achievement.

Joanna Burden is not in a moral wilderness so much as a moral slough of despond. Hester comes to see the "iron men" for what they are, while Joanna never goes beyond her father's teaching. But when she regrets her corruption she cannot repent. Like Hester, she would escape with her lover, and like Hester she is thwarted by her lover's compulsion to expiate his guilt, the great difference being that Joe Christmas doesn't understand his compulsion. Hester had once trembled for her own soul, but then she disregards it, and, though misguided, does what she can to save Dimmesdale's soul from the black man. Joanna, however, is finally willing to destroy Christmas in a way that is perversely for her

own soul's sake. For she is compulsively bound to him, and if he will not help to save both their souls by joining her prayer she sees no hope for either. If he refuses, she plans to be avenged.

"Be true!" says Hawthorne. "Show freely to the world, if not your worst, yet some trait whereby the worst may be inferred!" Dimmesdale is always credited with hiding his sin, and Hester is not. But Hester hides her unrepentance and her love for Dimmesdale—and her interior moral wilderness. The last day on the scaffold not only Dimmesdale's awful secrets are revealed; those of that whole odd, tormented family are. And they are released from horror. Joanna Burden is damned because she cannot be true; she has nothing worth being true to or about. But her stigma, which marks her off from the community as clearly as Hester's letter, does not like that letter, declare her sin. What it declares is unacceptable to the community,yet it is regarded as eccentric, not outrageous, for it has no sexual interest. But the final revelation of Joanna Burden to the community is of her moral slough of despond.

Joanna's corruption is like "the abject fury of the New England glacier exposed suddenly to the fire of the New England biblical hell. . . . the abnegation in it: the imperious and fierce urgency that concealed an actual despair at frustrate and irrevocable years, which she appeared to attempt <u>to compensate</u> each night as if she believed that it would be the last night on earth, <u>by damning herself forever to the hell of her forefathers</u>, by living not alone in sin but in filth" (p. 226, italics mine). "What was terrible was that she did not want to be saved. I'm not ready to pray yet'" (p. 231). After she discovers that she has no hope for a child or marriage, she begins to pray, but her prayer is not for grace or forgiveness; and when she exhorts Joe Christmas to prayer,

he hears simply: "'Your soul. Expiation of . . .' and he waiting, cold, still, until she had finished: '. . . hell . . . forever and ever and ever . . .'" (p. 244. Faulkner's ellipses.)

Her situation in willfully clinging to a Negro and "damning herself forever and ever to the hell of her forefathers" is ironically parallel to Huck Finn's decision about Jim. But Huck's "All right I'll go to hell," is comic because we know that this choice is the only way away from hell. Joanna commits herself to hell in earnest. She, like Quentin Compson, seeks a meaningful sin.

Anxiety tortures because it is fear without a known source, and its victim cannot know how to find relief. The guilt Joanna Burden has felt all her life is not for anything she has done, but for the curse her father told her she could not escape. With Joe Christmas she tries to create a guilt that can be meaningful for herself. I think she succeeds; but the meaning she finds is a hell worse than she had imagined, a deeper despair and sickness unto death. Her final prayer is not of repentance, but of remorse; her intention of murder and suicide are part of that prayer, and appropriate to it.

Joe Christmas is "tortured with punishment deferred" because he had sensed that if something was not done about his first remembered wrongdoing then something in the world was out of joint. He has no overt guilt-feelings. And he never shows signs of fear; but he is always anxious. Outwardly he has an intense calm, which covers an intense inner fury. He seeks, without much awareness, to turn his objectless anxiety into a meaningful fear; to find that "punishment deferred" and be released from his incessant sense of outrage. Though we ought never to forget that Joe Christmas is a nasty man and a

criminal, that he does not feel guilt for his crimes against society is hardly surprising; his attitude toward society is part of the sickness it has bequeathed him. If he has a sense of guilt, and he has something akin to one, it is more profound than can be touched by picayune crimes like highjacking and bootlegging.

But his relation with Joanna Burden is different. Deep calleth unto deep. "They would not [and cannot] leave one another alone." They are drawn together in a deserted and hellish 'Eden' where they try to expiate the inhuman isolation which they have been driven to in their 'innocence' by society, by their parents, by all parents. And the isolation which is their torment is what is least forgiveable—by society or by themselves. They are mates as by diabolical election, for no two other people in the worlds they know have the same kind of terrible ambivalent concern for whiteness and blackness. Each can provide for the other a unique satisfaction on one else can offer. To her he is the black cross. To him she is dietician, Bobby Allen, Mrs. McEachern, the "white bitch" upon whom he takes revenge for his suffering.

They become each other's "sacred founts." This is why, when Joanna announces that she is going to have a baby, he does not run—as they both expect him to, and as his partner, "Joe Brown," had run from Lena Grove.[7] Why Christmas must remain with her is not explained except as a compulsion, but it is central to his story. It is an effort to develop a known fear out of inexplicable anxiety in order to gain control.[8]

Christmas is anxious about Joanna's "corruption" and her prayer for the same reasons; he intuits that they are united in a threat to his integrity. Every vital character in the novel (which excludes the dietician and Bobby Allen) aspires to purity. (Lena Grove is an

exception, for she is so essentially good-natured that she doesn't have to be anxious about purity. This is not to imply that she is 'bovine' or without conscience; her sense of right and wrong is not legalistic; she is concerned with what is fitting.) "Even Doc Hines and Percy Grimm murder in order to 'clean' life of the stain that the Negroes have put on it."[9] Until his descent with Joanna, Joe Christmas is perpetually disgusted by "womanfilth" and occasionally overcome by it, but he never feels any conscious need to 'clean up' his own life. But we sense that his outrage for the world is intimately joined with an outrage for himself, manifested by his deliberate assumption of the burden of "black blood." Certainly after Joanna he does feel some need to 'clean up' his life, and his dilemma is that in order to do this he has to achieve that punishment so long deferred. But punishment for what? He seeks to define his sin, and takes on the role of the 'bad' Negro, but this stereotype hardly achieves the identity he seeks. The attempt to find integrity in meaningful sin is doomed, for sin's only meaning, finally, is death and loss of integrity.

Joe Christmas is not, like Joanna, tormented by a conscious sense of remorse, nor does he consciously seek a "place of repentance," as she does, superficially, in her prayer. Yet just such a search is the real significance of that road of thirty years which leads him back to Yoknapatawpha County. He does not seek contrition since his conscience is too retarded for that. But he does, incoherently, seek a turning to God, an acceptance of the universe, a relief from outrage. The first of Joe Christmas' thoughts which are revealed to us in the novel are late in his career, the night before the murder: "Something is going to happen to me. I am going to do something." And then:

Christmas lit the cigarette and snapped the match toward the open

> door, watching the flame vanish in midair. Then he was listening for the light, trivial sound which the dead match would make when it struck the floor; and then it seemed to him that he heard it. Then it seemed to him, sitting on the cot in the dark room, that he was hearing a myriad sounds of no greater volume—voices, murmurs, whispers: of trees, darkness, earth; people: his own voice; other voices evocative of names and times and places—which he had been conscious of all his life without knowing it, which were his life, thinking God perhaps and me not knowing that too. He could see it like a printed sentence, fullborn and already dead. God loves me too like the faded and weathered letters on last year's billboard. God loves me too." (p. 91)

This is as close as Joe Christmas will ever consciously come to the place of repentance which is a turning to God. But he immediately puts these thoughts away, to ponder about himself and Joanna: "It's because she started praying over me"; and, "Perhaps that is where the outrage lies. Perhaps I believe that I have been tricked, fooled."

The outrage, however, is in his whole society and in his whole personal history. He has been tricked and fooled; but not so much by Joanna as by himself. Joe Christmas cannot stop feeding on his sense of outrage, except in death, but it is possible that, at the very last, he does in some measure escape his self-deception. Later on the night before the murder he sees four people quietly playing cards on a lighted veranda, and he thinks, "Thats all I wanted. . . . That dont seem like a whole lot to ask." And again during his last flight (not much later chronologically, but much later in the novel):

> It is just dawn, daylight: that gray and lonely suspension filled with the peaceful and tentative waking of birds. The air, inbreathed, is like spring water. He breathes deep and slow, feeling with each breath himself diffuse in the neutral grayness, becoming one with the loneliness and quiet that has never known fury or despair. 'That was all I wanted,' he thinks, in a quiet and slow amazement. 'That was all, for thirty years. That didnt seem like a whole lot to ask in thirty years.' (p. 289)

Joe Christmas' lifelong torment is sustained by unceasingly pondering "where the outrage lies." The outrage and the problem of where it lies are real enough, but in his fanatic absorption with them Christmas

exacerbates them; he continually opens his wounds and outrages himself.[10] When he becomes "one with the loneliness and quiet that has never known fury or despair," for the first time he forgets himself long enough to stop feeding on the outrage.[11] All he wanted was peace: peace with men, and with nature—and he is amazed at the realization: what he "had been conscious of all his life without knowing it." But it is too late: "like the faded and weathered letters on last year's billboard God loves me too." He has committed himself to death and the diabolical; just as he went to Joanna, intuiting that she would try to kill him and did not move to prevent her, he will go to Mottstown to be taken.

He is not at the end confused. He had rejected "God loves me too" because he had "come too far." Miriam in The Marble Faun says to her wretched persecutor, "You mistake your own will for an iron necessity." That is just what Christmas does:

> 'And yet I have been farther in these seven days than in all the thirty years,' he thinks: 'But I have never broken out of the ring of what I have already done and cannot ever undo,' he thinks quietly, sitting on the seat, with planted on the dashboard before him the shoes, the black shoes smelling of Negro: that mark on his ankles the gauge definite and ineradicable of the black tide creeping up his legs, moving from his feet upward as death moves. (p. 296)

Nevertheless the distance he has covered has led him to that gray and lonely dawn.

He does turn toward death, but not with the fury and desperation in Joanna's last prayer, nor with the more damnable indifference of Popeye or Flem Snopes, but with some measure of acceptance. Yet he does not become completely passive. His aggression and acceptance alternate until his apocalyptic end:[12]

> He just lay there, with his eyes open and empty of everything save consciousness, and with something, a shadow, about his mouth. For a long moment he looked up at them with peaceful and unfathomable and unbearable eyes. Then his face, body, all, seemed to collapse, to fall in upon itself, and from out the slashed garments about

> his hips and loins the pent black blood seemed to rush like a released breath. It seemed to rush out of his pale body like a rush of sparks from a rising rocket; upon that black blast the man seemed to rise soaring into their memories forever and ever. They are not to lose it, in whatever peaceful vallies, beside whatever placid and reassuring streams of old age, in the mirroring faces of whatever children they will contemplate old disasters and newer hopes. It will be there, musing, quiet, steadfast, not fading and not particularly threatful, but of itself alone serene, of itself alone triumphant. (p. 407)

Joe Christmas is "peaceful," "serene," "triumphant"—and conscious, while he had always been ambivalently avoiding, yet struggling for consciousness. He earns the right for Faulkner to grant him this last paragraph only if, somehow, the outrage is resolved—resolved, not dissipated; and for Joe Christmas, not for the rest of the world. He is the very embodiment of outrage, yet he is peaceful, for he has passed on the burden of the outrage to "them," and his eyes are peaceful—and unbearable. He triumphs, in that for the first time the outrage is seen. He has had no relation to society; now he has one, and "they are not to lose it."

There is irony in Joe Christmas' occasional juxtapositions with Christ's story, but irony is not their final purpose. Nor is Joe a blasphemous parody of Christ, nor a reinterpretation of him as a suffering sacrifice which is supposed to tell us anything about the way Christ really was. The juxtaposition works like a metaphor, an oxymoron; the two terms create tension, but are resolved. The pattern is not that Christ died two thousand years ago, nor even that in living vilely we still crucify Christ, but that in living in outrage and in suffering vilely we are still the body of Christ. (Only churches excommunicate: If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there.) In Joe Christmas we deny not Christ's and our crucifixion, but we deny to be raised with Christ, by loving—as Byron Bunch does.

Hightower, when we first see him, is a man who lives at peace because he thinks he has been caught for his sin and has paid the price, bought immunity—that was the meaning of the smile he tried to hide when he was finally expelled from his church. And he can do without involving himself in life because he has the solace of his private and insane little religion. But, fortunately, Byron Bunch intrudes, bringing life into Hightower's living-death, with the result that it occurs to Hightower that he had never faced up to what had really been his crime. He had apparently assumed it was just that private visionary religion, and that, having paid, he can now enjoy it in peace. But he is forced to understand that he had (unlike Joe Christmas) committed specific crimes which could be faced.

Hightower is the one character in the novel (and indeed there are few in Faulkner's world), who comes to an accurate assessment of his sin, and thence to a repentance that is truly contrite. He first admits to himself that he had failed his parishioners: "I came here where faces full of bafflement and hunger and eagerness waited for me, waiting to believe; I did not see them." And concomitant with that sin is the sin against his wife: "I revealed to her not only the depth of my hunger but the fact that never and never would she have any part in the assuaging of it; perhaps at that moment I became her seducer and her murderer, author and instrument of her shame and death." (p. 427).

Hightower, aside from his peculiar insanity, has a clearer moral vision than most of his townsmen. He has some similarities to Hawthorne's Parson Hooper who withdraws behind a black veil. Parson Hooper was vouchsafed to keep his pulpit, and became revered in it—for unlike Hightower he stuck to orthodoxy, and despite "dismal suspicions" maintained his respectability. I think Hooper's preoccupation is more damning than

Hightower's, however, and Hightower, though he loses his pulpit, and most of his life, finally at least makes an attempt to throw off his black veil.

Hightower says that his townsmen's religion "forbids them even to forgive themselves." Faulkner's conception of unpardonable sin is not like Hawthorne's: to violate the sanctity of a human heart; it is like that of Marlowe's Faustus: to assert one's own will over God's so much as to deny God's power to forgive.[13] In Faulkner's world, where hearts are kept locked, they are not violated by exposure but by neglect. If Hightower violates reverence for his wife's soul it is by locking her from his.

Hightower finally does see the nature of his guilt. His repentance has come partly through merely observing damnation of Christmas and Joanna Burden, and observing Byron and Lena. He sees that Byron is right and that he himself had been wrong, that it is better to involve oneself in life. Byron and Joe Christmas both force Hightower into involvement. His attempt to save Christmas is a futile gesture, and rash enough (Christmas is a rather ugly murderer), but it is a meaningful gesture for Hightower himself, showing the extent to which he is finally willing to commit himself. And his commitment to Byron and Lena can be fruitful because they have not damned themselves with "hellish privacy."

Hightower had always excused himself, arguing, "It is any man's privilege to destroy himself, so long as he does not injure anyone else, so long as he lives to and of himself—" But when he is forced by Byron and Lena out of his living death into life he is forced to reconsider the terms by which he thought he had bought immunity from life. And he discovers they are a fraud. He tries to resist confronting knowledge of his sin, but cannot:

> Without his having thought it at all, a sentence seems to stand fullsprung across his skull, behind his eyes: I dont want to think this I must not think this. I dare not think this. . . . Out of the instant the sandclutched wheel of thinking turns on with the slow implacability of a medieval torture instrument, beneath the wrenched and broken sockets of his spirit, his life.

Hawthorne writes that the Day of Doom is "all future days, when we see ourselves as we are—when man's only inexorable judge will be himself, and the punishment of his sins will be the perception of them."[14] With the admission to himself of his responsibility of evil, Hightower is freed of his burdened feeling, and the wheel of torture becomes a wheel like Ezekiel's, which was "the appearance of the glory of the lord":

> The wheel, released, seems to rush on with a long sighing sound. He sits motionless in its aftermath, in his cooling sweat, while the sweat pours and pours. The wheel whirls on. It is going fast and smooth now, because it is freed now of burden, of vehicle, axle, all. In the lambent suspension of August into which night is about fully to come, it seems to engender and surround itself with a faint glow like a halo. The halo is full of faces. The faces are not shaped with suffering, not shaped with anything: not horror, pain, not even reproach. They are peaceful, as though they have escaped into an apotheosis; his own is among them. (p. 430)

One face is confused, "as though in the now peaceful throes of a more recent, a more inextricable, compositeness." And he realizes that Christmas' face is also Percy Grimm's. This is not a final dark vision, since it is "peaceful"; it is an image of communion, a figure for "Father forgive them."

Then Hightower feels as if he were losing contact with earth, dying. And the last words Faulkner shows him thinking echo the theme of the orphan, Joe Christmas, and the plea of Christmas as a man: "With all air, all heaven, filled with the lost and unheeded crying of all the living who ever lived, wailing like lost children among the cold and terrible stars. . . . I wanted so little. I asked so little. It would seem. . . ." But his thought can go no further; he is filled with a tragic sense of loss—loss of the life he could have had (perhaps he and

Joe Christmas have erred in not asking more), and the loss of the children, the parishioners, he could have helped. Some readers have thought Hightower actually dies at this point, though Faulkner has said he did not: "He still tried to be a man of God and he could not destroy himself. But he had destroyed himself. . . . He had to endure, to live, but that was one thing that was pure and fine that he had—was the memory of his grandfather, who had been brave."[15] At the very last he lapses into the old vision of the flying horsemen because that was the one thing pure that he had: a sad, impoverished, private religion. Whether he is actually dead yet seems to make little difference. Nevertheless, he has repented; he has, finally, achieved a moral triumph, and though like Arthur Dimmesdale's repentance it is too late to salvage any of his life's terrible losses, he has, by repenting, at least for the first time affirmed the value of commitment to life, which is the way toward wholeness, integrity.

B. Roderick Elliston and Reuben Bourne

Joe Christmas, like Roderick Elliston of Hawthorne's "Egotism; or, the Bosom Serpent," can have no relief from his obsession with outrage until he can forget himself. The value of Hawthorne's little allegory is not in its fiction, but in its description of an obsession. Hawthorne and Faulkner are more concerned with obsessions than with their relief: Christmas finds relief only in death, Elliston only in a miracle wrought by his angelic wife.

Roderick Elliston suffers, like Joe Christmas, and like many of Faulkner's and Hawthorne's great sufferers, from egotism and its isolation: "All persons chronically diseased are egotists, whether the disease be of the mind or body; whether it be sin, sorrow, or merely

the more tolerable calamity of some endless pain, or mischief among the cords of mortal life. Such individuals are made acutely conscious of a self, by the torture in which it dwells." Hawthorne, in part facetiously, suggests causes of Elliston's condition: sorrow, or physical disease, perhaps dyspepsia, or intolerable remorse for some guilty deed. His guilty deed is, in fact, the rejection of his wife through an unworthy jealousy. Her brother properly diagnoses his disease as egotism; jealousy is just its symptom.

If Ellison's disease were simply regret for what he has made of his life, the obvious solution would be to seek his wife's forgiveness, and kiss and make up—which is precisely what Hawthorne arranges to end his sketch. But his regret is not simple, and he does not want to repent, for he derives a perverse pleasure from his remorse. Elliston, like Ethan Brand, looks down on common men: "He appeared to imagine that the snake was a divinity,—not celestial it is true, but darkly infernal,—and that he thence derived an eminence and a sanctity, horrid, indeed, yet more desireable than whatever ambition aims at. Thus he drew his misery around him like a regal mantle, and looked down triumphantly upon those whose vitals nourished no deadly monster." Yet, unlike Brand, he can sometimes yearn for fellowship, and while he has a diseased pride in his Serpent, he longs to be rid of it. He knows that his only release from the snake will be to forget himself: "It is my diseased self-contemplation that has engendered and nourished him." Elliston does not seek a place of repentance but rather a place to forget himself—but that is perhaps the most important part of repentance. The whole point of seeking repentance is to 'forget' the anxiety of guilt, to be able to forgive and accept oneself.

Reuben Bourne is like Roderick Elliston in that he harbors a 'serpent' in his bosom, but unlike Ellison he hides and is ashamed of his torment; indeed the concealment is a formost cause of his disease. What Reuben Bourne is actually guilty of is only the broken vow to bury his betrothed's father, a vow which circumstances made almost impossible to fulfill, and the deceit, not itself very serious, of letting her believe he had buried her father.

The seriousness of Bourne's concern Hawthorne attributes to a frontier superstition, perhaps borrowed from the Indian, "whose war was with the dead as well as the living;" and this is indeed the story of war with the dead. Leaving Roger Malvin, Reuben had felt the horror of the man's doom: "Death would come like the slow approach of a corpse stealing gradually towards him through the forest, and showing its ghastly and motionless features from behind a nearer and yet a nearer tree." This splendid gothic sentence provides a motif of the story. For years Reuben Bourne has fancies that his father-in-law yet sits alive and awaiting his pledged assistance. But though he recognizes these thoughts as mental deceptions, in his clearest moods he is conscious "that an unburied corpse was calling to him out of the wilderness." To Reuben Bourne Roger Malvin has become one of the walking dead, whose ghost must be laid. And when, at the story's close, Dorcas goes to look for her son, ignorant that the shot she heard had been his death, she expects to see his countenance in every shadowy place, and does see ghostly illusions of it, especially at the base of that great rock which forms Malvin's gravestone. But what she sees finally proves to be in fact the fatal symbolic oak.

When Reuben sees that tree he recalls fastening to it his bloodstained handkerchief as he vowed to return. Its topmost branch

is blasted, paralleling the "blight" in Reuben's life. "Whose guilt had blasted it?" asks Hawthorne, and the question represents Reuben's sick point of view, certainly, but it is not given as specifically his. By such means Hawthorne brings us to accept the 'guilt' as Reuben Bourne does. But fastening his own bandage to that tree had been a heroic rather than guilty act. And Reuben was not responsible for his failure to return in time to save Roger Malvin: he was incoherent and almost dead himself. The only 'actual' guilt to begin with is trivial, the white lie that he had buried the man. And the neurotic guilt feeling rises out of the deceit: "Concealment had imparted to a justifiable act much of the secret effect of guilt, and Reuben, while reason told him that he had done right, experienced in no small degree the mental horrors which punish the perpetrator of undiscovered crime."

He felt that for leaving Malvin he deserved no censure, Hawthorne tells us, but he bitterly regrets the moral cowardice that trapped him in this situation. And then pride, fear of losing his wife's affection, and "dread of universal scorn" (i.e. loss of respectability) keep him trapped. Moral cowardice and pride, and his "one secret thought" "like a serpent gnawing into his heart" transform him. His "secret thoughts and insulated emotions had gradually made him a selfish man," until he can love nothing deeply but himself and his image in his son. Like Roderick Elliston he nourishes a serpent, but more secretly—as secretly as Dimmesdale keeps his stigma; like Hooper he keeps his secret hidden behind a gloomy countenance, if not a black veil.

Reuben Bourne's life is made up of remorse, so he hardly needs repentance in the sense of regret; he needs repentance for relief. "Genuine repentance is not the feeling of sorrow about wrong actions, but it is the act of the whole person in which he separates himself

from elements of his being, discarding them into the past as something that no longer has any power over the present."[16] The Old Testament provided cities of refuge, but the settlements have no refuge for Reuben Bourne, and he goes into the wilderness to find his own place of repentance. It is his own with a vengeance; the tale is indeed more psychological than religious—in any orthodox sense.[17] But the realms of pathological psychology and pathological religion overlap. Reuben Bourne's guilt feeling and his release come out of his own demonically exclusive religion.

Remorse, as in Hester Prynne's case, may seek expiation through various ordeals but avoid pertinent repentance because that would necessitate confrontation with the actual guilt which is partly repressed and actually cherished. Such a case might be made in trying to understand Reuben Bourne, for the power of the tale compells attempts to understand it.[18] But precisely what makes the story so disturbing is that there is no crime commensurate with the guilt feelings;[19] no crime—unless Reuben Bourne's attitude is itself a sin, and "the essential sin, Hawthorne would seem to say, lies in whatever shuts up the spirit in a dungeon where it is alone, beyond the reach of common sympathies. . . . All that isolates, damns."[20]

Reuben Bourne expiates his 'crime' not by fulfilling the old vow, but by "redeeming" it. The compensation made is ritual. The expiation is for the whole man blighted with guilt, guilt neurotic but real; guilt not for a crime, that old white lie, but for the principle and Father of lies, for the concealment which helps Reuben Bourne make of himself his own Frankenstein monster of guilt which feeds and waxes on its own corpse. The same thing happens to Arthur Dimmesdale, though he has a rough idea of what is happening to himself.

It seems certain that the killing of Reuben's son is subconsciously

intended.[21] Reuben Bourne has added a real horror to an imagined guilt. It can hardly be predicted that he and Dorcas will be unusually happy people after this, but Hawthorne makes it clear that the curse of his life is lifted, and what remains will be only sorrow for the death of the son.

Reuben Bourne does bitterly seek and find a place of repentance, and only in so violent and grievous a loss can he be assured of complete expiation. For expiation is not a matter of mathematical balance but of spiritual, ritual compensation—a "fruit meet for repentance." But "Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? . . . What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly? . . ." Clearly Reuben Bourne's expiation is not to the Lord of Old or New Testament, but to a different lord: to the "primitive superego," if you will, or to "the old one, the ancient and accursed about the earth," or the "Black Man."[22]

D. Hester and Dimmesdale

Hester Prynne is, for us, born mature, fallen, and not just fallen in the sense that all Adam's children are (which Governor Bellingham is so concerned that Pearl should know), and though Hester is mature and Caddy but a child, in both cases, not just Caddy's, we are shown the progress of a fall. Our revelation of those falls begins with symbols: a scarlet letter, a little girl's muddy drawers. The poignancy of Caddy's fall is felt, not understood, because she is a child, and because so much grief, to Quentin, to her father, and above all to Benjy, is wrought by it. But the poignancy of Hester's fall is one of maturity, felt and analysed: the bitter fruit of taking much thought and yet achieving no peace, no understanding. If they are both in a sense victims, the

implication is that Hester ought to have known better. She remembers her mother's "look of heedful and anxious love," which still "so often laid the impediment of a gentle remonstrance in her daughter's pathway," while Caddy cries "If I only had a mother."

Hawthorne likens Hester's sin to a new birth (Ch. V), and her real growth begins with it. Hester's childhood is most briefly mentioned. In a few respects it was like Caddy's: a happy infancy in a decayed, poverty-stricken house of antique gentility. But Hester has a mother's heedful love, and, says Hawthorne, even after death her continuing gentle remonstrance. But then the misshapen figure of Chillingworth enters, and Hawthorne's use of snake imagery in connection with him thus implies the instigation of Hester's fall. And while Hester tells Pearl that the scarlet letter is the mark of the black man, it is Chillingworth who is associated with the black man, not Dimmesdale. The black man is Satan, of course, but in Hester he operates through his agent, the darkness in the human heart—and the diseased conscience.

One way of seeing Hester is as a richly sensuous and confident woman, "ready to reject the puritan morality altogether, to make a clean sweep of the past and to escape from the settlement in order to fulfull her love without shame or fear."[23] There is this side of Hester, but to see this side only is to cut away much of the real richness of her character—as well as much of the point of the novel. Hester's torment is much greater than the mere thwarting of rich sensuousness, or even of a magnanimous intellect. These things are merely increments in her torture.

After her disgrace she remains in Boston for two reasons. One is for expiation. The stronger reason is her love for Dimmesdale "although she hid the secret from herself, and grew pale whenever it struggled out of her heart, like a serpent from its hole." Her motive at this point is far

from the desire to escape "in order to fulfill her love without shame or fear." Rather, the tempter of souls, to laugh at her desperate joy repeatedly thrusts before her the idea that final judgement would unite her and Dimmesdale "for a joint futurity of endless retribution." (How like this is to Quentin's "Only you and me then amid the painting and the horror walled by the clean flame.") But Hester's love cannot be disassociated from her passion for expiation.

> To Hester Prynne it [her needlework] might have been a mode of expressing, and therefore soothing, the passion of her life. Like all other joys, she rejected it as a sin. This morbid meddling of conscience with an immaterial matter betokened, it is to be feared, no genuine and steadfast penitence, but something doubtful, something that might be deeply wrong, beneath.(Ch. V).

Hester is as thorough a Puritan as any in Boston.[24] She is forced to develop some toughmindedness about her community, but she does not deny that community's judgment upon her. If it passed sentence upon her, she ratified it, and carried it out. And she, not the community, later rejects pardon of the scarlet letter.

The course of Hester's fall is at first one of retreat as she accepts the town's condemnation—yet not fully. "She accepted, yet defied. She wore the 'A' as the sign of her sin, which she publicly acknowledged—but she wore it on her own terms."[25] Later, from her moral wilderness she is forced to counterattack against those "iron men," as she perceives the insufficiency, the injustice, especially toward women, of the society whence she has derived all her standards. And all her standards, even the worth of existing, become imperilled.

The "moral wilderness" Hester enters is the most perilous region that man can journey, short of the despair and hell whereon it borders. That moral wilderness is, however, one of the most interesting landscapes of the mind, especially for writers like Hawthorne and Faulkner. It is,

in fact, the world of all pilgrims' progress, if they do progress. (That is why Bunyan was so important to Hawthorne.) Mr. Compson is a good example of a man who has abandoned himself to moral wilderness. Mrs. Compson sustains herself with the 'civilization' of Vanity Fair; which has a sham order cosmetically laid over its spiritual disorder, which is that of the walking dead. Mr. Compson knows better than that, but he persuades Quentin, and Caddy and Jason, too, that moral wilderness is all there is. That moral wilderness is what terrifies Joe Christmas, and his life with Joanna seems his final capitulation to it: "It was as though he had fallen into a sewer." After he escapes from her and flees into the wilderness of nature, for the first time he perceives, in that gray, lonely dawn, that his moral wilderness does not permeate and infect all the world.

The primeval forest to Hester "imaged not amiss the moral wilderness in which she had so long been wandering," just as the forest typified the wilderness outside Sion to the Puritan fathers. For Hester nature had once seemed to echo the town's condemnation, but it becomes far more horrible:

> Thus, Hester Prynne, whose heart had lost its regular and healthy throb, wandered without a clew in the dark labyrinth of mind: now turned aside by an insurmountable precipice; now starting back from a deep chasm. There was wild and ghastly scenery all around her. . . . The scarlet letter had not done its office. (Ch. 13)

Its office was repentance. Both Hester and Dimmesdale need a place of repentance—at the scaffold—and for a long while do not find it. And penance for each of them is to continually burn a scarlet letter deeper. Their Puritan training has not taught them to try to look on Christ; they look on the scarlet letter. The fact of sin obliterates even thought of grace.

The result of her "moral wilderness" is that Hester changes

from an anxious Puritan to a woman of resolute stoicism: "She decided to 'maintain her own ways' before the people and her judges—though it slay her."[26] The change takes place gradually, throughout seven years, and we do not have the feeling that she is one woman and then another; quite the contrary, for the extent of the change is often overlooked. It is well prepared; she is passionate and independent from the beginning, and after those seven years her conscience still makes her shudder at her share of responsibility for making Roger Chillingworth a fiend. But by Chapter Thirteen, "Another View of Hester," she is very different from t he woman she was before her sojourn in a "moral wilderness."

Hester is right in seeing the faults of the iron men she condemns. Yet certainly she ought to repent of her adultery, but it would take more dishonesty than she is capable of not to regret marrying Chillingworth or to change her love of Dimmesdale. She pays for that; and she does not touch Dimmesdale. Her real sin is in that morbid conscience and what it does to her. She rejects Puritanism's iron men, but not its iron. Sinned against, she takes up the same kind of sin against the town.

Because our sympathies are so clearly rallied for Hester and against the town there has always been the temptation to think that Hester and the "consecreation" her letter represents are good, and that the town and its laws are all bad, and that since Hawthorne clearly says Hester sinned, her 'sin' must really have been enriching, hence good. And indeed though Hawthorne believed there are some people who do not have to risk sin in order to be worthy, he also thought that the deepest moral insight is granted only to those who confront the problem of evil.[27]

Certainly Hester develops tremendously—dreadfully. And perhaps without sin she would not have been spurred into intellectual development, but Hester's moral development is not so much enriched as retarded.

Newton Arvin wisely sees that Hester's plan to escape with Dimmesdale is not so much the bold and emancipated working of a "new morality" as it is a loss of "her clear sense of human realities," and that it is this kind of falling away of her powers that moves Chillingworth to cry out "I pity thee, for the good that has been wasted in thy nature!"[28]

The story of The Scarlet Letter is built upon the opposite poles of isolation and of love. What is wrong in the love brings about the isolation.[29] Their sin, as Dimmesdale says, is in violating reverence for each other's souls, and in unrepentance that violation continues. Just as Reuben Bourne's initial "crime" is insignificant, so is Hester's and Dimmesdale's—that is, compared with the sin they are able to make out of it. Dimmesdale's concealment and Hester's maintaining her own ways are only the beginning; the real crime is in the moral and spiritual self-destruction that can take place once the pride and the concealment are established, and unhindered given room to work. Dimmesdale locks himself in with a devil; Chillingworth is in a sense only Dimmesdale's evil daemon incarnate.

The guilt of the adultery was not in the act, in the sexuality (though that is what makes it so interesting for Boston), any more than the act of eating the fruit was by itself Adam's sin. The guilt is in the betrayal, of highest law, of others, of the self. Hester and Dimmesdale do not deliberately betray her husband, whom they might well think is dead—though it is in fact a terrible betrayal that helps turn the man Prynne into Chillingworth. Their sin is chiefly a betrayal of their consciences, and a betrayal of Dimmedale's God and of his calling.

Dimmesdale like Roderick Elliston loathes himself, and his loathing makes him egocentric: part of his self-scourging is to stare for hours into the looking glass. Elliston's serpent could be expelled only if he

could once forget himself, and it is suggested that Dimmesdale could be transformed if he once found the power to smile (Ch. XI). The only hope for him to avoid annihilation through his concealment and egocentricity is that his "heart be touched." When "The Pastor and His Parishioner" meet alone in the forest after seven years, though they must have seen each other repeatedly in the small settlement, he says, "Hester! Hester Prynne! . . . Is it thou? Art thou in life?" "Even so!" she answered. "In such life as has been mine these seven years past! And thou, Arthur Dimmesdale, dost thou yet live?" Thus they meet, "in mutual dread . . . . Each a ghost, and awe-stricken at the other ghost!" (Ch. 17).

Dimmesdale's lack of courage to repent is a sympton of a lack of "courage to be" (to use Paul Tillich's phrase). "To the untrue man, the whole universe is false,—it is impalpable,—it shrinks to nothing within his grasp. And he himself, in so far as he shows himself in a false light, becomes a shadow, or, indeed, ceases to exist" (Ch. 11). He loves truth; but "the only truth that continued to give Mr. Dimmesdale a real existence on this earth was the anguish in his inmost soul, and the undissembled expression of it in his aspect"—which is a perversion of truth and the real existence. All three central characters lose perspective about what is true. Guilt becomes the only truth that touches their hearts, and they batten on sin.

Puritan Boston had conveniently located a place of repentance to be found easily enough; indeed Mr. Dimmesdale can hardly avoid it, but he goes there, as a penitent, only alone and in the dark: "Was it but the mockery of penitence? A mockery, indeed, but in which his soul trifled with itself! . . . He had been driven hither by the impulse of that Remorse which dogged him everywhere, and whose own sister and closely linked companion was that Cowardice which invariably drew him back" (Ch. 12).

Dimmesdale's inability to repent rests partly, perhaps chiefly, on physical and moral cowardice, the understandable fear of public shame and Puritan punsihment. There is also, though it is hardly stressed, the same motive that is Hester's primary inhibition to repentance, the conviction, repressed as much as possible on his part, that what they did had a consecration of its own. There was and remains a virtue in their real love: what was true to the human heart, though it hardly provides salvation, does help make possible whatever salvation there finally is. For without Hester to lean on, physically, Dimmedale could not at last reach his place of repentance, and, ironically, without his repentance Hester would certainly be damned. But the novel is more about the isolation than the love.

Their adultery had a "consecration of its own," no doubt. There are enthusiasts who can see little but that.[30] But what Dimmesdale and Hester did not overlook was that this consecration was so much "of its own" that it did not extend to the rest of life. It was isolated and would have isolated them even if Hester's adultery had never been discovered.

But the most significant motive for Dimmesdale's unrepentance, more important than his fear or the relation with Hester, is his real devotion to his calling. Even though his appeal to it is probably in part a rationalization, his integrity depends above all on his commitment to his vocation: "Lost as my own soul is, I would still do what I may for other human souls! I dare not quit my post, though an unfaithful sentinel, whose sure reward is death and dishonor, when his dreary watch shall come to an end!" While he is not altogether altruistic, and is not untouched by professional ambition, the qualities that make Dimmesdale known as saintly are genuine enough. But that is Hester's argument:

"Your present life is not less holy, in very truth, than it seems in people's eyes." But Hester knows the answer to her following question; it is one of the questions that have taken her into her moral wilderness:

> "Is there no reality in the penitence thus sealed and witnessed by good works? And wherefore should it not bring you peace?"
> "No, Hester, no!" replied the clergyman. "There is no substance in it! It is cold and dead and can do nothing for me! Of penance I have had enough. Of penitence, there has been none!" (Ch. 17)

Despite his lack of "courage to be," Dimmesdale only in part becomes a shadow, or loses his existence. For, unlike Ethan Brand, he does not through his sin commit the greater sin of altogether losing touch with humanity. (That is Hester's danger.) Quite the contrary, it is the very source of Dimmesdale's growing power as a minister, and this is not so much in what he says (and therefore Hawthorne rightly does not present us with any of his sermons, even the Election Sermon), but in his tone: "The complaint of a human heart, sorrow-laden, perchance guilty, telling its secret, whether of guilt or sorrow, to the great heart of mankind; beseeching its sympathy or forgiveness,—at every moment,—in each accent. . . ." Since Dimmesdale's initial sin was of passion, as opposed to Brand's passionlessness, he escapes Brand's utter isolation by his sympathy for "the great heart of mankind."

Dimmesdale, regarded by his fellows as a "godly youth," sometimes seems as if he must have been more seduced than seducer. He had an "apprehensive, a startled, a half-frightened look,—as of a being who felt himself quite astray and at a loss in the pathway of human existence, and could only be at ease in some seclusion of his own. Therefor so far as his duties would permit, he trod in the shadowy by-paths, and thus kept himself simple and childlike. . . ." Yet his "had been a sin of passion, not of principle." Indeed he possesses

"all that violence of passion, which—intermixed, in more shapes than one, with his higher, purer, softer qualities—was in fact the portion of him which the Devil claimed, and through which he sought to win the rest" (Ch. 17).

But in planning to escape with Hester he has committed a sin for which he cannot use the excuse of passion: "He had yielded himself, with deliberate choice, as he had never done before, to what he knew was deadly sin" (Ch. 20). And he wonders if he has, like Mistress Hibbins, sold himself to the Black Man.[31] Hester never decides so deliberately to sin, never resigns herself to the Black Man; she is driven into her "moral wilderness" little by little. His deliberate sin puts "the minister in a maze," a maze of moral confusion that corresponds to Hester's moral wilderness. (The maze rather than the wilderness becomes the more appropriate metaphor for moral confusion, since he plans to escape to "the Old World, with its crowds and cities," which "offered them a more eligible shelter and concealment than the wilds of New England," and because his problem, like a maze however confusing, has one dreadful exit only, whereas Hester's wilderness with its precipices and chasms has wide intellectual openings, if the dangers could be survived.)

He returns home from the forest a changed man; all the old surroundings seem strange to him. He refuses Chillingworth's medicine, eats ravenously, throws his unfinished sermon in the fire, and writes a grand new sermon. It has been conjectured that so earnest a sermon-writing must indicate that sometime since his nearly blasphemous walk home "repentance has probably taken place,"[32] and that he has changed his mind about his planned apostasy. But if this were so there would be no reason for him to wonder "that Heaven should see fit to transmit the

grand and solemn music of its oracles through so foul an organ-pipe as he." However, leaving that mystery to solve itself, or go unsolved forever, he drove his task onward, with earnest haste and ecstacy." The sermon is written by the minister still "in a maze." Indeed we may wonder if he ever does escape the moral confusion of his maze.[38] There is no evidence that Dimmesdale plans his confession at all. He is invigorated by his leap into freedom, and the energy that goes into writing his sermon might be as demonic as saintly; his ecstasy is that of an artist and of a man excited by the adulation his work will bring him on the morrow.

And his ambition is gratified: "Never on New England soil, had stood the man honored by his brethren as the preacher!" "He stood . . . on the very proudest eminence of superiority, to which the gifts of intellect, rich lore, prevailing eloquence, and the reputation of whitest sanctity, could exalt a clergyman in New England's earliest days. . . . Meanwhile Hester Prynne [whose passion has contributed in various ways to that eloquence, and on whose silence depends that reputation of whitest sanctity] was standing beside the scaffold of the pillory, with the scarlet letter still burning on her breast." (Still burning: nothing she has done has assuaged it.) Dimmesdale in this moment, now "apotheosized by worshipping admirers," has in fact reached the acme, or abyss rather, of hypocrisy.

But suddenly his energy is "withdrawn"; the glow of his face is extinguished: "It seemed hardly the face of a man alive, with such a deathlike hue; it was hardly a man with life in him that tottered on his path so nervelessly, yet tottered, and did not fall!" In his sermon he reaps the grand fruit of his tormented career as a pastor, both so sincere and so hypocritical; faltering in the procession, he

reaps the fruit of his disease—which is as much moral as physical.

The minister is still in a maze: "There stood Hester, holding little Pearl by the hand! The minister here made a pause, although the music still played the stately and rejoicing march. . . . It summoned him onward. . . ." It is here that Dimmesdale makes his decision; he is faltering, and for support he has his choice between Governor Bellingham (and continued honor and dishonesty) and Hester (and ignominy, but repentance). I think that only at this point, and almost too late, does Dimmesdale see his way out of the maze: it is not "onward to the feast" but to the place of repentance.

Part of the tragedy of The Scarlet Letter is that Dimmesdale's vision here is not nearly so clear as that of the demonic vigils alone in his room—and that earlier one at the scaffold when the meteor had revealed Chillingworth with an arch-fiend's smile to claim his own, so intense to the minister "that it seemed still to remain painted on the darkness . . . as if the street and all things else were at once annihilated." Hester assumes that his last vision is indeed apocalyptic: "Thou lookest far into eternity, with those bright dying eyes! Then tell me what thou seest?" But his answer is, "I fear! I fear!" Yet Dimmesdale asserts that his ignominy is "triumphant," that by his purgatorial suffering he is not lost forever; and he praises God.

The ending of The Scarlet Letter is the right one (excepting perhaps the tagged morals and the account of Pearl's fortune). That Dimmesdale should repent when that repentance is what he has most passionately sought, and when death is about to make the physical danger and shame of little account, is most credible. But Hester's repentance is another matter. Their dilemma has partly been how they could repent of their love without denying what truth of the human heart there was

in it. There is never any doubt that from Hester's point of view she and Dimmesdale are more sinned against than sinning. But Dimmesdale's death removes the dilemma for both of them, and now she must no longer commit adultery in her heart every time she sees her celibate and distant lover, and she need not regret the love they had except insofar as it had violated their reverence for each other's souls. His dying declaration had in some sense legitimized their union and its embodiment in Pearl.

Dimmesdale's concealment had wrought its evil on Hester as well as himself, but with that removed her attitude toward the community can soften. She need not change her mind about the injustices of iron men; injustices they were. Yet through the services she can do because of her passionate heart that heart can gradually become more compassionate. But this is the very argument Dimmesdale had rejected: works will not suffice for faith. Hawthorne says Hester finally returns, penitent, and resumes the scarlet letter. She really returns, however, not for the penitence, but because there is "a more real life here." She is no longer seeking to save her life, and therefore can find it.

The remorseful are the characters most aware of, most tormented by their need for repentance. All the characters in this chapter, except Joanna Burden, are granted a last minute, "deathbed" repentance by their authors. Their cases in this sense are not so terminal as those of most of the other characters we have considered, and this is curious, because if remorse is not the blackest of these sins (and it may be), it certainly is the most perverse, and there is no logical reason why these people should come to their strange and often unlikely repentances. Others, like Donatello or Harry Wilbourne, whose sin is either remorse or a despair that resembles it, have ends that are dismal enough. But then

so are these repentances dismal, and none of them (except the more superficial Roger Elliston's) are unambiguous. But there is an artistic reason for them, and that is simply that so much struggling with awareness of sin must be resolved by tragic recognition. The inconsistency is only of the surface. Joe Christmas and Dimmesdale expire in 'peace,' and Absalom, Absalom! ends with Quentin's gasping despair; but they have in common a tragic sense: an overwhelming sense of sin, and of the loss it causes.

CONCLUSION

Though there is no direct influence, there are intense and comparable religious sensibilities implicit in the writing of Hawthorne and Faulkner. Their concern begins with the possibilities for fiction in the guilt historically associated with their regions, and extends to the nature of individual involvement with sin. It is striking that certain of their characters are spiritually akin—that comments about Young Goodman Brown are found to be true of Joe Christmas. And many other characters, brought together, illuminate each other.

The wholeness of unfallen man, an eternal state not easily found within time, seems the implicit goal of many of the most interesting characters—who are religious, not orthodoxly, but in their all-out attempts to achieve this ideal. But most of them evade repentance and pursue spurious ideals. The order of scrutinizing these characters seems naturally to begin with those who first make acquaintance with sin: with Caddy in the pear tree; and thence it seems right to consider groups of characters ordered according to their increasing consciousness of sin. Consequently our exploration has been roughly analogous to Dante's descent in the Inferno.

Benjy Compson and Clifford Pyncheon retain a childlike innocence in adulthood, and have a limbo existence outside of time. Only Dilsey can encounter the temporal world unflinchingly because her conception of eternal values can include the transcient. (Phoebe Pyncheon and Lena Grove have convincingly good natures, but Hawthorne's and Faulkner's

few other 'innocent' grownups are not very credible.)

The simplest sin is inordinate appetite: rapacity. One kind is the mere perverted bestiality of Popeye. A second kind, respectability, functions in two ways. Most simply it is sheep's clothing for the wolf who wants to be bestial, yet respected for his morality; it can, however, be used not only as a cloak for rapacity, but as its instrument. The third kind, more sophisticated and vampire-like, tries to reach the inmost core of a victim; it is quasi-religious in its demand for what is utter.

The morally rigid are those characters who victimize themselves and others out of obsession with moralistic absolutes; their efforts are misplaced attempts to achieve integrity by isolation or by stratagems: Young Goodman Brown's solipsistic righteousness, Hollingsworth's philanthropic design, Sutpen's dynastic ambition, Aylmer's and Charlotte Rittenmeyer's attempts to achieve perfect human love, and Joe Christmas' attacks on impurity in women and the vileness in racism are examples.

There are characters, like Owen Warland and Miles Coverdale, who strive in various ways to become 'beautiful souls.' While struggling for ideal life they confuse aesthetic aspirations with ethical responsibility, and infect reality with fiction. They want to make life into art, and the result is death-in-life.

The most tormented characters are the remorseful, who recognize the need for repentance, not as regret, of which they have plenty, but as the sense of feeling forgiven, accepted, by God and the world, and hence able to forgive themselves and to forget obsession with sin. There are two related kinds of remorse. In one, a person like Dimmesdale knows what his sin is but does not want to give it up despite the pain it causes, and indeed, masochistically clings to that pain.

In the other, a person like Joe Christmas feels a tremendous pain of guilt incommensurate with any conscious guilt. Both kinds are tormented with anxiety, and lead to moral wildernesses where all sense of values is endangered.

Though necessarily discussed in relative isolation, all these sins thematically permeate the novels, and indeed the greater characters range throughout much of the whole inferno—the complexity of the novels and of the characters in this respect being an indication of their magnitude.

NOTES

CHAPTER I

Because readers use a wide variety of editions of Hawthorne's and Faulkner's fiction I have made references to chapters rather than pages, except in some of Faulkner's works, where the page references are all to Modern Library editions.

1. R. P. Blackmur, ed. "Afterward," in The Celestial Railroad and Other Stories (New York: New American Library, 1963), p. 293.

2. Comparisons of Hawthorne and Faulkner began with George Marion O'Donnell's essay of 1939, "Faulkner's Mythology," in which he remarked that Faulkner resembles Hawthorne in a great many ways, and said that Hawthorne's work was the only close parallel to Faulkner's in American literature for its characteristic of having a coherent fiction which was also true as myth. In his influential Portable Faulkner Malcolm Cowley compared Hawthorne and Faulkner as solitary workers, and remarked on the similarities of their attitudes about their native regions. Richard Chase in The American Novel and Its Tradition briefly compares their work, saying that The House of Seven Gables lacks the tragic consistency of The Sound and the Fury. But, he says, "the non-Emersonian tradition of Hawthorne and Melville prepared the way for Faulkner by introducing the strain of dark and somber drama which characterizes so much of the best American fiction."

Only two essays are devoted completely to comparing Hawthorne and Faulkner: Randall Stewart's (in College English, 1956) and William Van O'Connor's (Virginia Quarterly Review, 1957). They both deal with the parallels I have mentioned above. Stewart emphasizes that both work within an orthodox Christian tradition which in both probably harks "back to a view . . . older than the Protestant movement." Their grand subject is "man's struggle toward redemption." O'Connor however, stresses the heritages of Puritan inflexibility which have made them preoccupied with "gloomy wrongs." Evelyn Roddey Taylor's Master's thesis, "A Comparative Study of Hawthorne and Faulkner" (Drake University, 1960) is unpublished. Hyatt Waggoner (in William Faulkner: From Jefferson to the World, 1959) says that their earlier works were "wrung from the heart," as if their heritages were not merely subjects but "personal wrong to be expiated." Both dedicated their art to "probing deep into the 'truths of the human heart.'" These different critics all disclaim the direct influence of Hawthorne on Faulkner. They have made only general comparisons with a few specific parallels from the fiction for illustration.

Harold J. Douglas and Robert Daniel go into more detail (in Tennessee Studies in Literature, 1957). In illustrating the Calvinism in Faulkner's work they claim the direct influence of Hester Prynne and Dimmesdale on Faulkner's creation of Addie Bundren and the Reverend Mr. Whitfield in As I Lay Dying. Richard Bridgeman's "As Hester Prynne Lay Dying," ELN, II (June, 1965), 294-296 adds little to this. Robert Haugh's use of comparison is the more sound for asserting less (in English Studies in Africa, 1961). No influence is claimed, but parallels with Hester Prynne are simply used to illuminate the character of Temple Drake. Two

dissertations include discussions of both Hawthorne and Faulkner. Maude Cardwell Ross's Moral Values of the American Woman as Presented in Three American Authors [Hawthorne, James, and Faulkner] (University of Texas: University Microfilms, 1965) discusses Hester Prynne and Eula Varner. The first chapter of Philip Eugene Williams' The Biblical View of History: Hawthorne, Twain, Faulkner, and Eliot (University of Pennsylvania: University Microfilms, 1964) has an excellent discussion of the background of American moralism.

3. The most convenient summary of criticism about Hawthorne's use of religious themes is made by Walter Blair in Eight American Authors, ed. Floyd Stovall, rev. ed. (New York: Norton Library, 1963), pp. 114-120. Many critics like William C. Brownell have thought innate Puritanism shaped his work. Melville was the earliest to celebrate Hawthorne's Calvinistic "power of blackness;" the most recent are Thomas E. Connolly and William Bysshe Stein. Some critics like Vernon Parrington and Yvor Winters have thought excessive Puritanism harmed his art. Newton Arvin related an excessive fatalism in Hawthorne to Puritanism.

Henry James began a very different strain of criticism which asserts that Hawthorne used the Puritan conscience artistically but had little or no moral or theological relationship with it. James' approach was followed by G. E. Woodberry, Carlos Kling, Q. D. Leavis, and J. G. Taylor. Usually Hawthorne has been regarded as orthodox. Randall Stewart sees him as a Calvinist, but Father Leonard Fick finds him as close to Catholicism as to Calvinism. Edward Wagenknecht discusses Hawthorne's religion judiciously.

The main stream of Hawthorne criticism has followed Herbert Schneider, who said that "Hawthorne did not need to believe in Puritanism, for he understood it. He saw the empirical truth behind the Calvinist symbols." This is the position of Austin Warren and Mark Van Doren. F. O. Matthiessen says that Hawthorne shared in the basic recognition of Christianity that love can embrace the paradoxical conception of eternity—"timeless existence within time and above it." After Matthiessen, major works have been written by Richard Fogle, Hyatt Waggoner, Roy R. Male, and James Folsom, all of whom see Hawthorne as believing that man must not presume to complete knowledge about the ambiguity of good and evil, but must accept it, while involving himself in communion with men and with the eternal.

The more important discussions of Faulkner's relationship to Christianity written before 1960 are summarized by Frederick Hoffman in Three Decades of Faulkner Criticism. Hoffman himself sees Faulkner as a humanist who uses Christian material in a completely secular manner. This is also the position of Irving Howe and Lawrance Thompson. The most extreme claims for Faulkner's orthodoxy are made by Randall Stewart, who calls him "the most profound Christian writer of our time." Most discussions of Faulkner and religion, like Irene Edmunds', begin with his reaction to a society which embraces Christian doctrine while denying its practice. Faulkner's ambiguous feeling for the South extends to his world-view. According to Stanley Elkins Faulkner's God is sometimes benevolent, sometimes malevolent. (His first chapter has good biographical material concerning Faulkner's religious background.) Many critics like Barbara Cross contend that Faulkner's sacrificial characters fail; others like Joshua McClennen find hope in them. F. W. Dillistone holds that since

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Faulkner is not simply a humanist his work is open to theological interpretation. Hyatt Waggoner says Faulkner is "orthodox" if that term is extended by neo-orthodox thought, and if this is granted, Waggoner is not, Hoffman thinks, self-contradictory. Carrol McLaughlin pursues this line, writing of Faulkner's and Paul Tillich's parallel approaches to religion as man's ultimate concern.

The titles of these works will be found in the bibliography.

4. Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 71-76.

5. "In Faulkner's case it may even be true that the attitude of one of the fictional characters may closely approximate that of the actual person who is the author—that the attitude of the actual author may itself differ from that expressed by the implied author. E.g. the attitude of, say, Quentin Compson may be very close to that of William Faulkner, private citizen, but is not that of the 'implied author' of The Sound and the Fury or Absalom, Absalom!" This is my teacher, Lyall Powers', clarifying comment.

6. Booth, p. 71.

7. Austin Warren, "Introduction," Nathaniel Hawthorne (New York: American Book Co., 1934), p. xix.

8. English Notebooks, November 20, 1856. Because of the variety of editions, references to Hawthorne's notebooks will be according to dates. Usually I have used these (I will note exceptions): The American Notebooks (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932) and The English Notebooks (New York: MLA, 1941), both edited by Randall Stewart, and Passages from the French and Italian Notebooks, The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. George P. Lathrop, 13 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1882-83).

9. Leonard J. Fick, The Light Beyond: A Study of Hawthorne's Theology (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1955), p. 24.

10. See American Notebooks, July 29 and 30, 1849, and English Notebooks, January 20, 1855.

11. Italian Notebooks, May 15, 1858.

12. Faulkner at Nagano, ed. Robert A. Jelliffe (Tokyo: Kenkyusha Ltd., 1956), p. 95.

13. Faulkner in the University: Class Conferences at the University of Virginia 1957-1958, eds. Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1959), p. 203.

14. John W. Hunt, William Faulkner: Art in Theological Tension (Syracuse University Press, 1965), p. 130.

15. American College Dictionary, ed. Clarence L. Barnhart (New York:

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Random House, 1951).

16. Joseph Haroutunian, "Repentance," A Handbook of Christian Theology, ed. Marvin Halverson (New York: Meridian, 1958), p. 321.

17. Faulkner has sympathy for simple, indeed 'innocent,' men like the frontiersmen who began the rape of our land, rapacious "not through viciousness but simply because of his over-revved glands" (Requiem, Act II, introd., and Essays, Speeches, and Public Letters, ed. James B. Meriwether [New York: Random House, 1966], p. 14); and he has sympathy for the complex tormented drives of characters like Quentin Compson, Joe Christmas, Isaac McCaslin, who are in part victims of history. They share the same problem of rapacity, and Faulkner again and again tries to put it in historical perspective. And he succeeds, bodying forth the problem in his best fiction. But in A Fable Faulkner refines the word "rapacity," trying to reconcile the problem with a more or less intellectual, theological, frontal attack: "Rapacity does not fail, else man must deny he breathes. . . . Civilization itself is its password and Christianity its masterpiece. . . . It is in and from rapacity that [man] gets, holds, his immortality—the vast, the all-being, the compassionate, which says to him only, Believe in Me; though ye doubt seventy times seven, ye need only believe again" (pp. 234-235). Here by "rapacity" Faulkner means something much like Freud's "libido," the passionate energy behind all love including sexual love and Christian charity (I Corinthians 13:8). Though there is truth in this, it does not solve the problem, but denies it, robbing rapacity of its guts and mercy of its bowels, to combine them in "the vast, the all-being." In his other, better books "rapacity" is evil.

18. Webster's Third New International Dictionary, ed. Philip B. Gove (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. and C. Merriam Co., 1961).

19. F. I. Carpenter, "The American Myth: Paradise (To Be) Regained," PMLA, LXXIV (December, 1959), 602.

CHAPTER II

1. Carpenter, PMLA, LXXIV (December, 1959), 602.

2. "The ordeal of consciousness," is from the Preface to The Wings of the Dove, and is used for the title of Dorothea Krook's excellent book on James (Cambridge University Press, 1962).

3. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man (London: Nisbet, 1941), I, 284.

4. I have used Norman Holmes Pearson's edition of The Novels and Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne (New York: Modern Library, 1937), and the Riverside edition of Hawthorne's Works, ed. George P. Lathrop (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1882-83), 13 vols.

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5. See Jean Stein, "William Faulkner: An Interview," in William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism, eds. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1960), p. 68, and William Faulkner: Early Prose and Poetry, ed. Carvel Collins (Boston: Little, Brown, 1962), pp. 117-118. In Sartoris Horace Benbow makes a "chastely serene" vase and calls it and Narcissa (!) "thou still unravished bride of quietness" (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1929) Part III, Ch. 2 and Part V, Ch. 1, pp.182, 352. In Light in August urns or classic vases are associated with Joe Christmas (Modern Library ed. p. 165), Hightower, (pp. 419, 423) and of course with Lena and Byron (see Norman Holmes Pearson, "Lena Grove," Shenandoah, III (Spring, 1952), 3-7. And there is McCaslin's significant reference to Keats' ode in "The Bear."

6. Faulkner in the University, p. 6.

7. Faulkner at Nagano, p. 103.

8. In New Orleans Sketches, ed. Carvel Collins (Rutgers University Press, 1958).

9. Ward L. Miner in "Faulkner and Christ's Crucifixion," Neophilologische Mitteilungen LVII (September, 1956), 260-269, lists Benjy's parallels to Christ, but does not suggest what meaning there is in such parallels. There are innumerable discussions of Christ-figures in Faulkner's work. Peter Swiggart in The Art of Faulkner's Novels (University of Texas Press, 1962), p. 24, suggests that Faulkner may have originally intended to place more emphasis upon Benjy's similarity to Christ and upon the Holy Week. The use of Christ-figures is a literary device used more frequently than effectively. Robert Detweiler discusses the problem in "Christ and the Christ Figure in American Fiction," ChS, XLVII (Summer, 1964), 111-124.

10. American Notebooks, July 30, 1849.

11. Faulkner treats the same theme in "That Will Be Fine." Georgie innocently helps his uncle Rodney in his financial and amorous thievery. But though Georgie is innocent it is his extraordinary acquisitiveness for quarters that keeps him involved. It is plain that his innocence will be swallowed up by that acquisitiveness eventually. In The Sound and the Fury Faulkner even uses the same action of children as go-betweens, with Uncle Maury and Mrs. Patterson—and Georgie is extremely like Jason. References to Faulkner's short stories will be to those in the Collected Stories of William Faulkner (New York: Random House, 1950) unless otherwise noted.

12. Faulkner at Nagano, pp. 103-104.

13. Jean Stein, "William Faulkner: An Interview," William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism, p. 73.

14. Again, when Ab goes to see Major de Spain, Sarty sees "the stiff black back, the stiff and implacable limp of the figure which . . . now

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. . . had more than ever that impervious quality of something cut ruthlessly from tin, depthless, as though, sidewise to the sun, it would cast no shadow." A more famous example of the tin metaphor is used to describe Popeye in Sanctuary.

15. This is not the felix culpa as the occasion of Christ's eventual coming. See below, p. 38.

16. See Fick, The Light Beyond, pp. 83-84, for a discussion of the distinction between "material" and "formal" sin in Hawthorne.

17. Cf. Sartre's No Exit.

18. But cf. Roy R. Male, Hawthorne's Tragic Vision (University of Texas Press, 1957), p. 168.

19. Ibid., Ch. 1, especially p. 8.

20. Donald A. Ringe, "Hawthorne's Psychology of the Head and Heart," PMLA, LXV (March, 1950), 132.

21. "Twice-born"—not necessarily in William James' sense.

22. Italian Notebooks, May 15, 1858.

23. Hawthorne used entries from The Italian Notebooks, October 5 and 21, 1858. Art critics, with some justification, have pooh-poohed such criticisms by Hawthorne, but in this case if they disregard what he is getting at they do the paintings less than justice.

24. See W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South (New York: Knopf, 1941), passim. Howard Zinn, in The Southern Mystique (New York: Knopf, 1964) suggests that this "mystique" is nation-wide, though more obvious in the South (pp. 217-218), and that this is true of "gyneolatry" as well as of other patterns (pp. 253-255). Many once thought, naively it has proved, that giving women the vote would purify the land of corruption.

25. One admirer writes: "Eula is semi-divine, serving not Christ, who is probably a follower of the code of self-assertion, but Christ's antithesis, complement and superior, Venus. . . . Eula is, through having such a room [Ratliff's] made her shrine, placed on a level with the Virgin." Maude Cardwell Ross, Moral Values of the American Woman as Presented in Three Major American Authors (Dissertation, University of Texas: University Microfilms, 1965), p. 123.

26. Faulkner speaks of his fondness for Swinburne in Early Prose and Poetry, ed. Carvel Collins, pp. 115-116.

27. C. S. Lewis makes Venus one of the great angels in his fantasy, Perelandra. Lewis' version does some justice to Venus, but it needs to be rounded out by others, including that of the classics—and even of Faulkner.

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28. Julian N. Hartt, The Lost Image of Man (Louisiana State University Press, 1963), p. 119.

29. See Hartt, ibid., p. 91, for a more sympathetic reaction to Faulkner's rhetoric in this instance.

30. Stein, "William Faulkner: An Interview," William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism, p. 82.

31. Robert D. Jacobs, "William Faulkner: The Passion and the Penance," South, eds. Lewis Rubin and R. Jacobs (New York, 1961), pp. 152-153. For varied comment on the church service, see Barbara M. Cross, "The Sound and the Fury: The Pattern of Sacrifice" ArQ, XVI (1960), 6. Robert Griffin, in "Ethical Point of View in The Sound and the Fury," Essays in Modern American Literature, eds. Richard E. Langford, et. al. (Deland, Florida, 1963), says Dilsey is "washed in the blood of humanistic understanding" (p. 64), and that the "ricklickshun of de Lamb" is saving, and supercedes the damning recollections of the Compson brothers (p. 62). Joshua McClennon, "William Faulkner and Christian Complacency," PMASAL, XLI (1956), 322, writes that in passages such as that about the Negro service "Faulkner seems . . . to be saying, 'Here is the life in Jesus, and if here, why not everywhere?'"

32. It is the novelist Fairchild in Mosquitoes (Epilogue, part 9) who expatiates on the aesthetic experience that is a "Passion Week of the heart" and an "instant of timeless beatitude." Mosquitoes contains much of Faulkner's early thought about art. The best discussions I know of the novel are the chapters devoted to it in Olga Vickery's The Novels of William Faulkner, rev. ed. (Louisiana State University Press, 1964), and in Edmond Volpe's A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner (New York: Noonday, 1964).

33. See Vernon T. Hornback, Jr., "The Uses of Time in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury," PELL, I (1965), 50-58. For comment on Dilsey and time, see John W. Hunt, William Faulkner: Art in Theological Tension, pp. 94 ff.; Cleanth Brooks, William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country (Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 328, 330-331; Frederick Hoffman, William Faulkner (New York: Twayne, 1961), p. 29; Peter Swiggart, The Art of Faulkner's Novels, p. 106; Margaret Church, Time and Reality: Studies in Contemporary Fiction (University of North Carolina Press, 1963), p. 234; and Hyatt Waggoner, William Faulkner: From Jefferson to the World (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1959), p. 50.

CHAPTER III

1. Langdon Gilkey, in Shantung Compound (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), an unpretentious book which strikes at the heart of many of our problems, writes: "A merely instinctive or animal reaction would have required only a momentary satisfaction. It is above all our frightened human spirits which, when we become fully aware of present and future perils, move quickly to protect themselves against all the contingencies of life."

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"Man's mind thus adds dimensions to his instinctive 'will to live' that quite change its character. Here the will to live, because now conscious and intelligent, becomes the much more dynamic will to power and will to possess an infinity of goods. Men and animals both want to survive, and in both this might be called 'instinctual.' But because he is made up of spirit as well as instinct, mind as well as organic drives, man is much more dangerous to his fellows in his efforts, and much more rapacious in his demands for goods. To call this behavior 'instinct' is to minimize the relative innocence of our animal cousins, and to exonerate the spiritual, mental, and conscious elements in our nature which are even more deeply involved." pp. 114-115.

On "rapacity" see pp. 9-10, above, and Ch. I, note 17.

2. Cf. Gilkey, p. 112: "The experience of camp life, and the lessons of history generally, established to my satisfaction that men act generally in an 'immoral' way when their interests are at stake. With equal force, however, they showed me that men remain at least moral enough to be hypocritical, to wish to seem good—even if it is beyond their capacities to attain it."

3. D. H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature (1922), Ch. VI, in The Shock of Recognition, ed. Edmund Wilson (New York: Modern Library, 1952), p. 982.

4. Faulkner's alterations of Sanctuary are at most a revision. The only important change is the addition of the final chapter, devoted to Popeye, which, Edmond Volpe says, broadens the significance of the story. A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner, pp. 140-141 n. It does, though clumsily. But cf. Irving Howe, William Faulkner, rev. ed. (New York: Vintage, 1962), p. 197.

5. The quotations are from Bushnell. Most of the other language is R. W. B. Lewis'. The American Adam (University of Chicago Press, 1955), pp. 72-73.

6. Ibid., p. 136.

7. Ibid.

8. Cf. Howe, William Faulkner, p. 197.

9. Bushnell, in Lewis' American Adam, p. 72.

10. The most sensible discussion about the problem of freedom of the will which I know of is Roger W. Sperry's "Mind, Brain, and Humanist Values," New Views of the Nature of Man, ed. John R. Platt (University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 71-92. The will is the self-determination of an individual. He is not free of his own make-up, of the forces of his own decision making. To the charge that man is the slave of his own unconscious and his passions—that he was made with them, and is not to blame for them—it can be answered that man is conscious, and consciousness is the over-all, the general, collective operation of the mind, brain, nervous system, which directs all the rest. Ideas themselves have causal potency.

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11. Lewis, The American Adam, p. 9.

12. Ibid.

13. English Notebooks, February 28, 1856.

14. "Buds and Bird Voices" (1843), in Mosses from an Old Manse.

15. American Notebooks, 1836, in The Heart of Hawthorne's Journal, ed. Newton Arvin (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1929), p. 17.

16. Cf. John W. Hunt, William Faulkner: Art in Theological Tension, p. 22.

17. D. J. O'Connor, ed., A Critical History of Western Philosophy (London: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), p. 117.

18. Yvor Winter's phrase. In Defense of Reason (Denver: Alan Swallow, 1947), p. 41.

19. Quentin is "trying to transform meaningless degeneracy into significant doom." George Marion O'Donnell, in William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism, p. 86.

20. John W. Hunt, William Faulkner: Art in Theological Tension, p. 72, says Jason is logical rather than cruel, but he is accepting Jason's self-evaluation.

21. Cf. John L. Longley, The Tragic Mask: A Study of Faulkner's Heroes (University of North Carolina Press, 1963), pp. 144-146.

22. Longley, pp. 155, 160.

23. Warren Beck, Man in Motion: Faulkner's Trilogy (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1961), p. 81.

24. What Unpardonable Sin is, and Hawthorne's conception of it, have been much discussed. Ely Stock, in "The Biblical Context of 'Ethan Brand,'" AL, XXXVII (May, 1965), 115-134, describes two principal emphases: pride and final impenitence (p. 119 n.). I think neither pride nor despair are unpardonable, but one or both are the motives for final impenitence. See Fick, The Light Beyond, pp. 139-140; Austin Warren, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. xxxvi; Joseph T. McCullen and John C. Guilds, "The Unpardonable Sin in Hawthorne: A Re-Examination," NCF, XV (September, 1960), 221-237; Henry G. Fairbanks, "Sin, Free Will, and Pessimism in Hawthorne," PMLA, LXXI (1956), 975-989; Joseph X. Brennan and Seymour L Gross, "The Origin of Hawthorne's Unpardonable Sin," BUSE, III (Summer, 1957), 123-129; James E. Miller, Jr., "Hawthorne and Melville: The Unpardonable Sin," PMLA, LXX (March, 1955), 91-114; and Alfred J. Levy, "'Ethan Brand' and the Unpardonable Sin," BUSE, V (Autumn, 1961), 185-190.

25. Male, Hawthorne's Tragic Vision, p. 11.

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26. I refer to violation of a soul as the most heinous sin to distinguish it from the theological unpardonable sin. Hawthorne's thinking was not necessarily fuzzy here, but incomplete rather. Faulkner agreed that violation of the heart was the greatest sin. Faulkner in the University, p. 79.

27. Beatrice is also like Shakespeare's Miranda, "and appeared to derive a pure delight from communion with the youth not unlike what the maiden of a lonely island might have felt conversing with a voyager from the civilized world."

28. "Rappaccini's Daughter" is a powerful story, and it is a little ungrateful to emphasize its worst flaw. Hawthorne says of Giovanni, in repenting his cruelty to Beatrice: "O, weak, and selfish, and unworthy spirit, that could dream of an earthly union and earthly happiness as possible, after such deep love had been so bitterly wronged as was Beatrice's love by Giovanni's blighting words!" Here is the same unforgiving vein of iron which Hawthorne occasionally shares with his purest heroine, Hilda.

CHAPTER IV

1. William G. McLaughlin, "Pietism and the American Character," AmQ, XVII (Summer, 1965), 173.

2. See Arthur E. Robinson, "The Vision of Goodman Brown: A Source and an Interpretation," AL, XXXV (May, 1963), 218-225.

3. Roy Male, Hawthorne's Tragic Vision, p. 77, and Daniel Hoffman, "Myth, Romance and the Childhood of Men," Hawthorne Centenary Essays, ed. R. H. Pearce (Ohio State University Press, 1964), p. 213.

4. "During his horrible experience he actually discovered the full and frightening significance of his faith." Thomas E. Connolly, "Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown': An Attack on Puritanic Calvinism," AL, XXVIII (November, 1956), 371. But Mr. Connolly judges Puritanism by Goodman Brown's perversion of it.

5. "Hawthorne's dramatic expression of sin as both state of being (propensity) and action involves always the idea of isolation. . . . Piety, knowledge, will, desire, any of these without the creative selfless existence, expressed in communion, is evil, object-centered, destructive. Sin, then, is the impersonal and hence isolating tendency in man's nature." W. Stacy Johnson, "Sin and Salvation in Hawthorne," Hibbert Journal, L (October, 1951), 42.

6. So Westervelt labels him, in Ch. 11.

7. Olga W. Vickery, The Novels of William Faulkner, p. 95.

8. She says, "He bade me come" (Ch. 20).

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9. Donald M. Kartigener, in "Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!: The Discovery of Values," AL, XXXVII (November, 1965), 291, writes that Sutpen horrifies the community because he is a naked version of its own deepest principles.

10. Absalom, Absalom! (New York: Modern Library, 1951).

11. Joseph Gold, William Faulkner: A Study in Humanism from Metaphor to Discourse (University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), pp. 33, 34. And see John W. Hunt, William Faulkner: Art in Theological Tension, p. 111.

12. See note 13 below.

13. Allen Tate, Collected Essays (Denver, Swallow, 1959), p. 443. Tate takes his term from Jacques Maritain. He cites The Dream of Descartes (New York, 1944), pp. 179-180. See also Maritain's Three Reformers (London: Sheed and Ward, 1928), p. 54 and passim.

14. R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam, p. 119.

15. Tate, Collected Essays, p. 434.

16. Ibid., p. 434-435.

17. Ibid., p. 458.

18. Perry Miller has said of Faulkner, "I remember, when once talking to him, discovering that the American author he read early and most constantly was Poe." Invitation to Learning: English and American Novels, ed. George D. Crothers (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 355.

19. Tate, Collected Essays, p. 435.

20. "Aylmer is artist, God, and unwitting devil." Richard H. Fogle, Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and the Dark, rev. ed. (University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), p. 126.

21. Tate, Collected Essays, p. 435.

22. Light in August (New York: Modern Library, 1950).

23. Karl Stern, The Flight from Woman (New York: Farrar, Straus and Girous, 1965), pp. 36, 3, 2, 6.

24. Richard R. Rovere, "Introduction," Light in August (New York: Modern Library, 1950), p. xiii.

25. This is one more example of Faulkner's use of the urn motif in Light in August. See Dorothy Tuck, "Light in August: The Inwardness of the Understanding," Approaches to the Twentieth Century Novel, ed. John Unterecker (New York: Crowell, 1965), p. 97 n.

26. Young Goodman Brown's choice is drawn out through his journey, but he does finally commit himself to a faith in evil.

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27. Roy R. Male, Hawthorne's Tragic Vision, p. 158.

28. Charles H. Nilon, "Faulkner and the Negro," University of Colorado Studies, Series in Language and Literature, no. 8 (September, 1962), p. 80.

29. Robert D. Jacobs, "Faulkner and the Tragedy of Isolation," Southern Renascence, eds. Louis D. Rubin and R. D. Jacobs (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1953), p. 177.

30. Cleanth Brooks, William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country, p. 68.

31. John L. Longley, Jr., "Joe Christmas: The Hero in the Modern World," William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism, p. 270.

32. Rabi, "Faulkner and the Exiled Generation," William Faulkner: Two Decades of Criticism, eds. Hoffman and Vickery (Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951), p. 134.

33. Ashley Montagu, Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race, 4th rev. ed. (Cleveland and New York: World, 1964), p. 287.

34. "The greatest horror his characters know is to feel that they have been dropped out of this chain of being, to think of themselves as 'self-progenitive,' or 'sourceless.'" Alfred Kazin, "Faulkner in His Fury," The Inmost Leaf (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955), p. 271. Cf. Ethan Brand, who "lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity."

35. "Artists" in a sense different from, but related to Hawthorne's "Artist of the Beautiful."

CHAPTER V

1. Cf. F. H. Bradley. One can be morally realized in fulfilling his "station and its duties." Yet "reflection on morality leads beyond it. It leads us, in short, to see the necessity of a religious point of view." "Concluding Remarks," Ethical Studies (1876).

2. A couple of my favorite examples are from Shelley: "The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful" (Defence of Poetry); and Wallace Stevens: "When the gods have come to an end, when we think of them as aesthetic projections of a time that has passed, men turn to a fundamental glory of their own and from that create a style of bearing themselves in reality." in The Modern Tradition, eds. Richard Ellman and Charles Feidelson, Jr. (New York: Oxford, 1965), p. 218. On "beautiful souls" and "aesthetic morality" see Ch. IV, "Romantic Morality: the Ideal" in Irving Babbitt's Rousseau and Romanticism (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1919).

3. William Butler Yeats, "The Choice," Collected Poems (London:

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Macmillan, 1961), p. 278. This is aptly quoted by Rudolph Von Abele. "Baby and Butterfly," KR, XV (Spring, 1953), 291.

4. Donald A. Ringe, "Hawthorne's Psychology of the Head and Heart," PMLA, LXV (March, 1950), 123.

5. Ibid.

6. R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam, p. 119.

7. Rudolph Von Abele, The Death of the Artist: A Study of Hawthorne's Disintegration (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1955), p. 284.

8. R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam, pp. 118-119.

9. Austin Warren, Rage for Order (University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. v.

10. John W. Hunt, William Faulkner: Art in Theological Tension, pp. 161, 160.

11. Glauco Cambon, "Faulkner's 'The Old People': The Numen-Engendering Style," SoR, I, n.s. (Winter, 1965), 94-107.

12. R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam, p. 119.

13. Roy Male, Hawthorne's Tragic Vision, p. 141.

14. Hunt, William Faulkner, p. 161.

15. "Delta Autumn," Go Down Moses (New York: Modern Library, 1942), p. 348.

16. Michael Millgate, The Achievement of William Faulkner (London: Constable, 1966), p. 154.

17. See John Hagan, "Fact and Fancy in Absalom, Absalom!" CE, XXIV (December, 1962), 215, 218; Millgate, Achievement of William Faulkner, p. 323, n. 28; and Brooks, William Faulkner, pp. 440-441.

18. Millgate, p. 158.

19. Millgate, p. 157. And see Sewall, Vision of Tragedy, (Yale University Press, 1959), p. 143.

20. Frederick J. Hoffman, William Faulkner (New York: Twayne), p. 55.

21. The term "misceginations," which "provides a remarkable exhibit in the natural history of nonsense" was invented by a satirist as a hoax in 1864 in an anonymous pamphlet, Miscegination: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the White Man and Negro. Ashley Montagu, Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race, 4th ed., pp. 400-401. Bon's use of the word in 1865 smacks of harmless anachronism, but then he is a knowledgeable young man.

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22. Frederick C. Crews, "A New Reading of The Blithedale Romance," AL, XXIX (June, 1957), 151; also in The Sins of the Fathers (New York: Oxford, 1966), pp. 193-197.

23. "Hawthorne, although the friend of many poets, could hardly be designated the friend of poetry; he took especial delight in denouncing all manner of poetical productions. . . ." He wrote of William Allingham's poetry: "I can't say I have read them all, for I dislike poetry." Caroline Ticknor, Hawthorne and His Publisher (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913), p. 147.

24. Crews, AL (1957), p. 169.

25. This is William Hedges' interpretation of what Crews is saying. "Hawthorne's Blithedale: The Function of the Narrator," NCF, XIV (March, 1960), p. 304.

26. Von Abele, Death of the Artist, p. 74.

27. Hedges, p. 304.

28. F. O. Matthiessen, American Renaissance (New York: Oxford, 1941), p. 297.

29. Ibid.

30. Von Abel, p. 74, and Crews, p. 159, both compare Blithedale with The Scared Fount.

31. Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction, p. 158.

32. Coverdale's ambivalence about Blithedale and perhaps more especially about Zenobia is pointed out by William Hedges, NCF, XIV (1960), 312.

33. Hyatt Waggoner, Hawthorne: A Critical Study, rev. ed (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1963), pp. 226-246, especially pp. 235 and 240. Edward Wagenknecht refutes Waggoner's discussion. Waggoner writes of Hawthorne's subconsicous mind, which we can't really know, and Wagenknecht writes of his conscious mind, on which Hawthorne kept a tight rein. Nathaniel Hawthorne: Man and Writer (New York: Oxford, 1961), p. 199.

34. Crews, AL (1957), p. 169.

35. Waggoner, Hawthorne, pp. 195-198.

36. William Hedges has explicated this passage. NCF, XIV (1960), 312-313.

37. Daniel Hoffman, "Myth, Romance, and the Childhood of Man," Hawthorne Centenary Essays, ed. R. H. Pearce, pp. 218-219.

38. Consider Hawthorne's remarks on love and hatred in the conclusion of The Scarlet Letter.

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39. Roy Male says there is no tragic vision and no redemption through tragedy in The Blithedale Romance (Hawthorne's Tragic Vision, p. 155). I heartily agree with Mr. Male's splendid explication and with his high regard for the novel. Our only difference, I think, is in our interpretation of what tragic vision is. Coverdale's final understanding is indeed not redemptive; it is hopeless. But it may be tragic insofar as he really appreciates, though too late, the value of what is lost.

CHAPTER VI

1. Joseph Haroutunian, "Repentance," A Handbook of Christian Theology, ed. Marvin Halverson, p. 321.

2. Webster's Third New International Dictionary.

3. D. H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature, Ch. VIII, in The Shock of Recognition, ed. Edmund Wilson, p. 1004. Such severity was not limited to the New England Puritan heritage. A. O. J. Cockshut quotes Ibsen's Rosmersholm as presenting the view of life waiting to haunt the spiritual children of the high Victorian agnostics: "There is no judge over us. And therefore we must see to it that we judge ourselves." The Unbelievers: English Agnostic Thought 1840-1890 (London: Collins, 1964), p. 153.

4. Light in August (New York: Modern Library, 1950).

5. For references to Faulkner's predilection for the "Ode on a Grecian Urn," see above, Ch. II, note 5.

6. D. H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature, Ch. VIII.

7. Charles Nilon, "Faulkner and the Negro," University of Colorado Studies, Series in Language and Literature, no. 8 (September, 1962), p. 85.

8. A Freudian interpretation would correspond to Freud's explanation of recurring nightmares: a repetition-compulsion beyond the pleasure-principle. Lionel Trilling, "Freud and Literature," The Liberal Imagination (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1957), p. 52.

9. Alfred Kazin, "The Stillness of Light in August," William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism, p. 259.

10. Cf. the quotation from Lawrence on p. 150 above: "You might as well make a rip in your own bowels."

11. Peter Swiggart thinks that here Joe Christmas has a "falling away of guilt," and that finally "the tormented puritan passes beyond the need for violence and achieves a calm awareness that resembles Lena's primitive faith." The Art of Faulkner's Novels, p. 43. This is rather too optimistic, but it is not wrongheaded.

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12. Gavin Stevins describes this alternation in terms of black blood and white blood. His insight is important, but "black blood" must be understood to mean, as it does to Joe Christmas, not just Negroidness, but a symbol, supported by the "myth" of race, representing all that is passionate.

13. On Unpardonable Sin see p. 73 above. Faulkner compares Christmas to Faustus in a different connection: as he escapes after dispatching McEachern, "exulting perhaps at that moment as Faustus had, of having put behind now at once and for all the Shalt Not, of being free at last of honor and law." Dimmesdale is much like this on his return from the forest.

14. Italian Notebooks, May 15, 1858.

15. Faulkner in the University, p. 75.

16. Paul Tillich, The Eternal Now (New York: Scribner, 1963), p. 128.

17. Austin Warren, The New England Conscience (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966), p. 141.

18. Frederick Crews (in the most convincing of his translations of Hawthorne's stories into Freudian allegories) argues that Reuben Bourne's real crime was the repressed desire to murder Roger Malvin as a Freudian father-image. But I think this attempt to find a "real crime" is a concealed analogue of Old Covenant scales and balances. Sins of the Fathers, pp. 86, 88.

19. Warren, New England Conscience, p. 141.

20. Newton Arvin, Hawthorne (New York: Russell and Russell, 1929), p. 59.

21. Though I think much of Crews' book is far-fetched, his reading here is clearly correct, and he has gathered convincing evidence. Sins of the Fathers, pp. 88-92.

22. See Agnes McNeill Donohue, "'From Whose Bourne No Traveller Returns': A Reading of 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" NCF, XVIII (June, 1963), 15-16, 19.

23. Philip Rahv, "The Dark Lady of Salem," Image and Idea (New York: New Directions, 1949), p. 33.

24. That Hester is a scrupulous Puritan before she develops into a rather thorough Stoic is suggested by many touches in chapters four through six. (See pp. 127, 130, 133, 134, 135, 136, 139, in Norman Holmes Pearson's Modern Library edition of Hawthorne's Works.) These characteristics do not appear after chapter six.

25. Richard B. Sewall, "The Scarlet Letter," The Vision of Tragedy (Yale University Press, 1959), p. 87.

26. Ibid., p. 88.

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27. This is the thesis of Donald A. Ringe's valuable essay, "Hawthorne's Psychology of the Head and Heart," PMLA, LXV (March, 1950), 120-132. The "fortunate fall" is a subject much discussed. Randall Stewart writes that Hawthorne believed in the educative value of sin and the Fortunate Fall. Nathaniel Hawthorne (Yale University Press, 1948), pp. 263-264. Marsden J. Clark writes, "Through Hester . . . Hawthorne explores the possible regenerative value of sin. . . . There can be little doubt that Hawthorne considered Hester's freedom, her strength, and her intellectual development as tending toward a higher morality." "The Wages of Sin in Hawthorne," Brigham Young University Studies, I (Winter, 1959), 27-28. Darrel Abel writes of Dimmesdale that innocence is not purity, but merely ignorance, and that sin is always tragic and perilous, but it is the only means by which man can realize his moral nature. "Hawthorne's Dimmesdale: Fugitive from Wrath," NCF, XI (September, 1956), 95. John W. Schroeder says that "sin brings neither growth nor salvation but only a recurrent progression of guilty phantoms." "'That Inward Sphere': Notes on Hawthorne's Heart Imagery and Symbolism," PMLA, LXV (March, 1950), 116. Henry Fairbanks writes, "For Hawthorne . . . sin is neither a condition, nor a cause of good. It is the occasion of good through the operation of Divine Providence. Hawthorne holds that good can come from evil, not that it must come from evil if it is to come at all." "Sin, Free Will, and Pessimism in Hawthorne," PMLA, LXXI (December, 1956), 981. I think Fairbanks' and Ringe's positions are most sound.

28. Arvin, Hawthorne, p. 189.

29. See Darrel Abel, "The Theme of Isolation in Hawthorne," Personalist, XXXII (Winter, Spring, 1951), 42-59, 182-190.

30. F. I. Carpenter cites "transcendentalist" critics who approve of Hester's appealling to a higher law, and himself applauds her for daring to "trust herself" and a "new morality." "The Scarlet A-Minus," CE, V (January, 1944), 176-177, 179.

31. Austin Warren says that, in effect, he has. "The Scarlet Letter: A Literary Exercise in Moral Theology," SoR, I, n.s. (January, 1965), 40.

32. J. C. Gerber, "Form and Content in The Scarlet Letter," NEQ, XVII (March, 1944), 51.

33. Edward H. Davidson is a little too hard on Dimmesdale in thinking that he remains thoroughly damned. "Dimmesdale's Fall," NEQ, XXXVI (September, 1963), 358-370.

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