

Farewell to the Masochistic Symbiosis with the Sadistic Superego Paternal Figure: Hawthorne in *The Scarlet Letter*

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Introduction

Henry James (1843-1916) writes in *Hawthorne* (1879): “[I]t was almost strikingly deficient, in what may be called the dramatic quality. Few men of equal eminence can have had, on the whole, a simpler life” (1). One may think, however, that Hawthorne's simple stagnant life profoundly influenced his creative works, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) included. That aside, one can identify two “striking” incidents that must have motivated Hawthorne to write *The Scarlet Letter*. In 1848, two years before publishing *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne, a supporter of the Democrats, received a severe economic blow from his banishment

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from the surveyor's position at the Salem Custom House by the malignant slander and maneuverings of Charles Wentworth Upham, the leading Whig in Massachusetts. The next year, Hawthorne was spiritually scarred by the death of his beloved mother. At this very critical moment, Hawthorne established his authorship by adding his real name to his writings.

Let me cite Henry James again: "The faults of the book are, to my sense, a want of reality and an abuse of the fanciful element of a certain superficial symbolism. The people strike me not as characters, but as representatives, very picturesquely arranged, of a single state of mind" (51). Indeed, the people might not have been written as "characters," as James criticized, but the story could be regarded instead as a kind of psycho-drama performed within the author's mind. Hawthorne tried to express his own familial problems in the free and secure place of what he called *Romance* so that he might overcome his personal crisis.¹ The scenes in *The Scarlet Letter* can be likened to a psychic reality pictured within Hawthorne's own mind for his own self-debate, self-criticism, or self-rediscovery. In clarifying Hawthorne's process of self-rediscovery, a biographical approach is all the more effective and acceptable, befitting his definition of the *romance* as a mixture of imagination and experience.

Born in 1804 to the sea-captain Nathaniel Hawthorne and his wife, the black-haired, grey-eyed former Elizabeth Clarke Manning, Nathaniel Hawthorne grew up with an elder sister, Elizabeth, who took after their mother, and a docile younger sister, Maria Louisa. When Nathaniel was four in 1808, his father died en route to Surinam, Dutch Guiana. Bereft of a supporter of the family, the Hawthornes removed to the Manning home, to Hawthorne's maternal grandparents, on Herbert Street in Salem, in 1813. Thus widowed young and returned to her parental home, Hawthorne's mother seems to have resumed her former role as a daughter and a sister. In 1816, to Hawthorne's great joy, his young mother took him and his sisters to live in a frontier town called Raymond. In a letter from Nathaniel's to his mother, he described Raymond as a "second Garden of Eden" where he could roam freely and enjoy hunting and fishing. But two years later, as the only male child, Nathaniel was brought back to Salem for the purpose of study at the behest of his uncle or father-substitute, Robert Manning. Toward his uncle he felt mixed sentiments, both gratitude for his help and resentment for his intrusion into a peaceful mother-centered family. The mother gave up resi-

dence in Raymond and returned to the Herbert Street house in Salem in 1822. From 1825, when he graduated from Bowdoin College, to 1837, when he became engaged to Sophia Peabody, he virtually secluded himself in the attic of his mother's home. His engagement to Sophia helped him normalize his recluse-like life and establish contact with the world to some extent. He must have been obsessed with his own familial problems. His personal trouble in his family, it seems, was crucially relevant to *The Scarlet Letter*, and this connection tempts the reader to approach the work from the viewpoint of family. While probing into the relevancy of his motivation for writing to his personal familial problems, Hawthorne presumably saw himself, and criticized what he saw, in *The Scarlet Letter*. In this paper I would like to postulate that Hawthorne underwent a process of self-cure that proceeded thus: he disintegrated aspects of himself and projected them onto the people around him — the members of the Hawthorne and Manning (the parental family of his widowed mother) families; then, he channeled them into the four major characters in *The Scarlet Letter*, thereby depicting them through double refraction.

Hence, in the following work I will employ Hawthorne's personal familial history, analyze the four major characters — especially Dimmesdale who, in terms of gender and (mock-)domestic positioning as a son, most resembles the writer, in connection with the other characters — and then ask how the result of this analysis relates to Hawthorne himself.

I owe the biographical facts on Hawthorne and their psychological effects on him to Gloria C. Erlich and Philip Young. Erlich comes to suggest, through an analysis of Hawthorne's life from childhood to manhood informed by Eriksonian theory, that maternal deprivation, paternal loss, and avuncular domination retarded Hawthorne's spiritual growth. Young, meanwhile, indicates that Hawthorne's relationship with his passionate elder sister Elizabeth was closer than normal, as was the secret relationship of his maternal ancestor that he kept undeclared in "The Custom House."

From a psychological viewpoint, Frederik C. Crews comments that "[if] I were to say, in one sentence what *The Scarlet Letter* is about, I would call it a study in the unconscious interdependence of people who feed off one another's incompleteness in a society which encourages them to dissemble and burn themselves away in secret" (95). When we recall that Hawthorne was a family-

obsessed writer, we could be justified in saying that the author should set the story in the domestic realm. In fact, Chillingworth says to Hester, as if consoling and condemning her at the same time, “Here on this wild outskirts of the earth, I shall pitch my tent; for elsewhere a wanderer and isolated from human interests, I find here a woman, a man, a child . . . *My home* is where thou art, and where he [Dimmesdale] is” (76) (italics mine). From this statement by a person apparently diabolical to both Dimmesdale and Hester, we can infer these things: the four characters are inextricably intertwined in the form of a quasi-family. In this confined family circle, Dimmesdale has become conscience-stricken, guilt-ridden, and consequently bereft of his manhood and autonomy, the qualities that correspond, as explained later, to the impediments to Hawthorne’s establishment of professional authorship. Hawthorne probably tried to express his own familial problems in the free and secure place of the romance as a means of overcoming his own personal crisis. Through that process, he tried to rediscover his unknown self and to adopt new roles and a new way of life. Thus, the aim of this paper is to investigate how Hawthorne criticizes himself in *The Scarlet Letter*, in other words, to explore how his motivation for writing the work is relevant to his own familial problems by way of self-recuperation.

Remarking aptly on the psychological themes and “great charm” of *The Scarlet Letter*, Henry James described the work as “glimpses of *man’s soul* and *conscience*” (italics mine) (51). Recall the psychological theory of Sigmund Freud and Erich Fromm, who maintain that one’s conscience (superego) is forged under the irresistible influences of one’s superiors such as parents, teachers, and elder church members. Recall, also, that the author was unfortunately deprived of due domestic affection and was thus obsessed with his own familial problems. We can therefore say that both the charm and enigma of Hawthorne lie in the peculiar texture in his works of tension among the repressed self, the tyrannous conscience, and the desire for domestic bliss. The texture in question here seems to be exemplified in the curious symbiotic relationship between the sadistic yet paternal figure Chillingworth and the guilt-stricken, masochistic, immature, and childish young man Dimmesdale. Because Hawthorne’s personal trouble in his family must have been crucially relevant to Dimmesdale’s, I will try, as a main focus of my paper, to analyze and interpret Dimmesdale’s morbid mentality shaped by conscience and isolation, invoking in support of my interpre-

tation the theory of Freud and Fromm.

I. An Analysis of Chillingworth

I am afraid that some so far may have been satisfied to see Chillingworth as an incarnation of Satan and reduce him into the abstract. This is an unfounded and hasty conclusion. Chillingworth is a more dynamic figure than others may have thought. Roger Prynne (Roger Chillingworth's true name), the cuckold, who has decided to revenge himself on Arthur Dimmesdale, the cuckolder, says to Hester, "*My home* is where thou art, and where he is" (76), and "My heart was a habitation large enough for many guests, but lonely and chill, and without *a household fire*. I longed to kindle one" (italics mine) (74). His sincere, prudent desire to have an ordinary but sweet home and to be let in as one of the family members is the legitimate right that every normal man or woman should be allowed to receive.

The result acquired in the following work may differ slightly according to how we define the relation between Chillingworth and Dimmesdale. This is apparently regarded as father versus son or vice-versa. The former pattern naturally comes to mind in association with the age discrepancy, and this forms the basis of my investigation in this chapter. Curious as it may seem, the latter pattern is not psychologically inconceivable, and might also meet the condition of my paper.²

I. A. Sadistic Punishment and Fatherly Love

Henry James said, "There is a great deal of symbolism" (92) in *The Scarlet Letter*, and the spiritual facts in the work actually seem to correspond with the visual images. Hyatt H. Waggoner has succeeded in interpreting the characters through the images abundantly found in the story. I also would like to find a clue in the images: what does the author intend to suggest through Chillingworth's name, his deformed constitution, and the particular colors, plants and animals connected with him?

Every character in the story brings his or her own symbolical meaning, and Chillingworth is of course no exception. His name can be divided into two parts, the former part (chilling) suggesting coldness, and the latter (worth), his value as a person. As his name clearly shows, he has a dual nature. Because of his cold

heart, he lacks the human sympathy he must have eagerly wanted and suffers feelings of isolation. Because of the predominance of head over heart, or hubris out of scientific knowledge, he has invaded the inviolable human heart and has committed what Hawthorne repeatedly describes as an unpardonable sin.³ Chillingworth is not, however, totally depraved. To the contrary, he is decent, self-controlled, law-abiding, scholarly, and *good* according to the world's definition of goodness. In that he can calmly understand himself and is willing to accept that self in both its good and evil aspects, Chillingworth is much more mature than Dimmesdale, an obsessive who tries not to be sullied by the evil in his heart and who lacks the ability to distinguish innocence from ignorance.

As for Chillingworth's constitution, the adjectives such as "deformed," "low," "twisted," and "unsightly" are well matched and form a remarkable contrast to the "tall" and "thin" Dimmesdale. Chillingworth is not so much a doctor as a weird enchanter. Picking up "herbs with such a dark flabby leaf," he creeps along like "a snake"; needless to say, snakes traditionally symbolize "seduction" and "knowledge" in western culture. The "burdock, pig-weed, apple-peru, and such unsightly vegetation" growing beside the prison, that "black flower of civilized society" (48), overlap with the image of his figure. Hester correctly suspects that the green grass might be blighted if Chillingworth sets his foot on it. Hawthorne indirectly accuses him of his orientation towards lives, including his own submission to dark Puritan necessity, his resignation, and his despair, or rather his rejection of every life and every goodness, in spite of his professional duty to save the patient's life.

As for his color imagery, it is sufficient to cite "darkness." The red glow that occasionally shines from his eyes comes from the infernal fire. The more satanic he becomes, the swarthier he grows. As a matter of fact, the property of "darkness" clings not only to Chillingworth, but to Puritan society at large. At this point I would like to interject a few comments on Puritan society. The analogy between the two, between Chillingworth and the society he lives in, is important to recognize. Just as Puritan society metes out punishment on Hester, so Chillingworth metes out punishment on Dimmesdale. Indeed, Puritan society consists of more than "darkness" and "blackness" alone. Mr. Wilson, the most saintly and most sympathetic among the Puritan ministers, deserves to be "light," and snowy innocence is said to exist in the bosoms of certain maidens;

but the celestial radiance gleaming from Mr. Wilson or from the purity of the maidens is powerless in the presence of Governor Bellingham. Mr. Wilson has a “dark” feather and “black” tunic. Indeed, the steeple crowned hats men wear suggest aspiration and piety, but the hats are “gray,” an intermixing of white and black. The sunlight has not so much positive value as merciless power, which is desirable for the inquisitive Puritans. Moreover, Hester’s scarlet letter is reflected grotesquely in the polished suit of armor in Governor Bellingham’s house, reducing her from a unique person to a mere abstract, an object of scrutiny for the Puritans. Likewise, Chillingworth has scrutinized Dimmesdale as a scientific object. Incidentally, the connection between Chillingworth and Puritan society through the mediation of color imagery is confirmed if we remember that the “weeds,” another stand-in for Chillingworth, are regarded by Pearl as the Puritan children who bully her. From these bits of evidence, one can safely say that Chillingworth has represented Puritan society, or rather has strengthened the doctrine to excess. Reverend Fick indicates as follows:

The traditional Puritans viewed God as a Deity interested in so far as they were predestined either for Heaven or for Hell. It was as though God Himself were watching every move they made . . . with the eye of an absolute Being striving to assure Himself that He had rightfully damned the majority of them. (11)

To use the words of the eighteenth-century Revival Movement leader Jonathan Edwards, it follows that the Puritans are “in the Hands of an Angry God.” Taking a partial role of God, a fatalist Chillingworth wants Dimmesdale to be predestined for Hell. Chillingworth goes so far as to propose sharing the boarding house with Dimmesdale, where it will be convenient for the former to survey the latter and see him damned.

Practically speaking, Chillingworth is a spokesman for the self-punishing conscience of the minister. Erich Fromm, the neo-Freudian sociopsychologist, has suggested that the guilty feelings of Calvinism, feelings that have strongly influenced Puritanism, were formed in the extreme authoritarian conscience. Chillingworth has kept working as the conscience of the minister, as a moral counter-power against the minister’s libidinous nature with plans to martyr him.

Chillingworth presses Dimmesdale for contrition and confession, making insinuating remarks at him on the flabby weeds in the grave: “they grew out of [a dead-sinner’s] heart, and typify, it may be, some hideous secret that was buried with him, and which he had done better to confess during his lifetime” (131). His remarks seem general but are obviously directed at Dimmesdale: self-deceptive are those who, “to their own unutterable torment . . . go about among their fellow-creatures, looking pure as new-fallen snow; while their hearts are all speckled and spotted with iniquity of which they cannot rid themselves”; “if they would serve their fellow-men, let them do it by making manifest the power and reality of conscience, in constraining them to penitential self-abasement” (132-33). Chillingworth has created an inexhaustible spring of guilty feelings in the minister’s heart — the gnawing snake — so that Dimmesdale’s will may be dependent on him. Thus, his physical deformity might be compensated for by the delusive confirmation that he can manipulate his victim at will like a tool.

Chillingworth’s partnership with the Indians, however, clearly shows that he is not a genuine Puritan. He misuses Puritanism as one of the most effective means for his purpose, a purpose supplied by the seventeenth-century American culture. He uses the doctrine of Puritanism to justify and beautify his evil motive, and by doing so transforms himself into a Satan or folkloric Black Man, the man with whom the insane Mistress Hibbins purportedly has intercourse, the man whom Pearl can instinctively discern. Just as Black Man sets his mark upon the bosom of the deprived, so Chillingworth has dug into the unfortunate but sinful minister’s heart and has “caused [the letter] to appear, through the agency of magic and poisonous drugs” (258). The equivocality of his being both God and Satan is not contradictory for Hawthorne, who holds an anthropocentric position rather than a theocentric position and who subordinates the glory of God to the free will of man and finds it difficult to distinguish Satan from puritanical God or serpent Father-God.

Although these strategies must have been effective for Chillingworth, they have cost him dearly. His desire to find the clinching proof of the minister’s carnal sin has gradually changed into obsessive thoughts whose stereotyping power has deprived him of his free will. His success in detecting the letter A in the bosom of the minister has entrapped him into thinking with wild excitement that he has at last resolved the greatest riddle of the world — the world is, for

Chillingworth, equivalent to the heart of Dimmesdale. Thus, the arrogant megalomaniac has lost contact with human reality and intensified his own feelings of isolation, and for this he cannot be pardoned by the author. Ironically, Chillingworth is more tormented than tormenting.

To discern another cause for this irony at a deeper level, we must return to our primary concern, Chillingworth's thirst for familial love. An authorial comment in the concluding chapter wisely points out: "It is a curious subject of observation and inquiry, whether hatred and love be not the same thing at bottom" (260). Chillingworth owes Dimmesdale a grudge but seems to love him paternally. He has hoped in vain to "find embodied the warmth and cheerfulness of home" (118) or a domestic angel in Hester. Rejected by the woman with the scarlet letter emitting infernal fire, he has longed for the alternative. Yet confoundingly, he cannot direct his paternal and reverential love towards the young minister without being masochistic. His love is a possessive one. He cannot live without Dimmesdale, the object of his fatherly love. The physician is part of the young parson, and vice versa. (This symbiosis will be explained in chapter IV.) The fact that Chillingworth tells Hester, as if to convince himself, that the offender who has made him into a Satan is none other than Dimmesdale, reveals his weakened and irresponsible mindset. Chillingworth needs merely to ponder how to saddle the minister with the responsibility for his satanic transformation and torture, or how to let Dimmesdale execute for him what he himself, the physician, wants to do. He must therefore keep the invalid alive for the benefit of himself, and this motive is justified by his profession as a physician.

I. B. Chillingworth and Uncle Robert

Now that we can recognize the tyrannous but family-minded father image in Chillingworth, we will develop this interpretation to the end of the paper. To confirm and make more persuasive the fictive facts combined with the biographical ones, certain indications must be given of Hawthorne's complex emotion towards his idea of a father, in this case, not his *biological* father but the father-substitute he adopted in Robert Manning. According to Erlich, Robert Manning was the most famous pomologist of the day in America and Europe (42). He imported fruit tree stocks from all over the world to test whether they were adjustable to the New England soil. Exposure to these circumstances helped

Hawthorne “stimulate and refine his interest in plant symbolism” (Erlich 44). This personal experience, as well as fear of the rapid progress of contemporary American society in science and industry, may have explained the questionable light he sheds on scientific endeavors in his works, *The Scarlet Letter* included. From these perspectives, rough similarities are thus to be found between Chillingworth and Uncle Robert, two persons familiar with curious plants.

In 1818, the uncle separated the only male child, Nathaniel, from his mother and his two sisters, for the boy’s education. Hawthorne deplored this in a letter to his mother: “Why was I not a girl that I might have been pinned all my life to my mother’s apron?” (CE 15:117) Domesticated, Nathaniel could not but obey his uncle Robert Manning. The uncle was criticized for his censoriousness, assumption of power, and overbearing speech habits, even by his own brothers and sisters (his elder sister, Nathaniel’s mother, excepted) (Erlich 45). Though his effort to untie Nathaniel from his mother helped the mother-dependent nephew to achieve masculinity, the strict uncle unintentionally fostered in Nathaniel an attitude of dependency upon himself as a father-substitute. Consequently, Nathaniel was threatened with deprivation of manhood. He underwent the same effect as Dimmesdale, whom Chillingworth intentionally deprives of autonomy and confident masculinity.

Just as the young minister lives in the same boarding house with the doctor, so the nephew shared a bed with his uncle over many years. It is natural that the child Hawthorne should have felt watched behind his back, spied upon even in his sleep, by his uncle, and should have confounded his uncle with a supervising Puritan God or prying psychoanalyst *manqué*. Consumed by a dread of exposure and a desperate need to protect himself from his uncle’s gaze, he came to view the violation of privacy as an unpardonable sin. We may find Hawthorne’s counterpart of Dimmesdale’s superego, i. e., the Puritanism that Chillingworth personifies, in Robert Manning’s pressure over Nathaniel to shape Nathaniel into a man of affairs like himself. Nathaniel had been indulged and petted since his foot injury of 1813 released him from regular school attendance. The energetic merchant uncle disciplined the inactive nephew into adopting the practical work ethic of Benjamin Franklin (1706-90), a strong force in the American consciousness. In his adolescence, Hawthorne deplored to his sister Elizabeth in 1820 that he could not “be a Poet and a Bookkeeper at the same time.” Even after his uncle’s

death in 1842, Hawthorne's persistent lack of success in literature must have aroused self-reproach, a disapproving internal commentary, "for not taking up more manly and remunerative work" (Erlich 135). His superego was thus formed not so much of Puritanism itself, which had dehumanized his noble paternal ancestors at the witch trials, as of the work-ethic implanted in him by his middle-class maternal uncle. In this sense, Henry James was right and wrong in saying that Hawthorne let "his imagination select this grim precinct of the Puritan morality for its play-ground" (46).

II. An Analysis of Pearl

The previous chapter demonstrated how the demoniac Chillingworth plays the role of a sadistic Puritan father for the minister on a deeper level. This chapter continues from the previous with a focus on the father. We must discuss the idealized, beautified father seeker, i. e., Pearl, and show her as the antithesis of the Puritan minister. In the first half of this chapter we will analyze Pearl's longing for an *earthly* father rather than a *heavenly* father and confirm her role as a father seeker in relation to the author. (Recall that Hawthorne also desires a father.) In the second half, we will draw a comparison between Pearl and Chillingworth to show Pearl in another role as antithesis to Puritanism.

II. A. Pearl: Hawthorne's Ideal Father Seeker

Pearl goes everywhere her mother goes. Pearl clings to Hester when her mother goes out to Governor Bellingham's house, to Governor Winthrop's death-bed, or to the woods for the secret reunion with her lover. This umbilical mother-child dyad is most clearly shown when Pearl says to Mr. Wilson, "I am mother's child . . . and my name is Pearl" (110). She acknowledges that she is the child of a mother only, with no last name, neither Prynne nor Dimmesdale. The tie between the two is an assured one, too strong to collapse except when the child is almost displaced from her mother's custody. In these circumstances her *earthly* father becomes the most important commander in her emotional life until she is seven years old. The two questions she tirelessly repeats, to Hester's irritation, "What does the scarlet letter mean?" and "Why does the minister keep his hand over his heart?" can be identically paraphrased as "Who is my own father?"

Yet the portrayal of Pearl, along with that of Chillingworth, can be criticized for its oversimplification. While the latter turns out to be a more dynamic and complex than some may have thought, the former cannot be exempted from this kind of reproach. In the denouement of the story, her father's kiss lifts the spell cast upon her, and from this point onwards she is destined to grow up not wild but womanly. Pearl also receives a large bequest from Chillingworth, and with that money goes to England to live a happy marital life. If my intuition is correct and if Hawthorne offers Pearl his own barely realizable hope, what induces Hawthorne to let Pearl become an idealized father seeker? We will analyze Pearl through an analogy — a clue to answering this question — between Hawthorne in his childhood and Pearl, an incarnation of the author's first born daughter Una, who awakens in her father memories of the child in himself.

The depiction of Hester with her baby nestled in her bosom is suggestive of the Virgin Mary of Catholic painters, and the author's *chaste widowed* mother must have seemed to fatherless Hawthorne "like the virgin mother, complete within herself" (Erich 29). In poor Hawthorne's case, his ties with his mother were broken by his uncle. In Pearl's, the all-powerful mother-child dyad represents "the author's never wholly satisfied longing for symbiosis with the mother" (Erich 72). The protective true father [Dimmesdale] invalidates the would-be fathers' [Puritan elders'] threat to deprive Pearl of her mother, while young Nathaniel, forcefully separated from his mother for the sake of education, must have wished in vain for the same kind of intervention from his then deceased father. The most important analogy between the two is this: just as Pearl tries to find out her father by keenly observing her mother's reactions, even the very slightest, to the men in Puritan society, so the agonized Hawthorne must have intuitively sought the most appropriate father figure among the uncles of the Mannings.

An indication that the satanic Chillingworth is in a sense a symbolic father seeker reveals how earnestly but crookedly Hawthorne wished for a father, and that the desires of the two, Chillingworth's and Pearl's, are equally those of Hawthorne. It gives us a hint as to why Pearl is idealized. Dimmesdale, of course, is a father seeker, too. It would be valid to say that the minister wants a father-substitute, i. e., Roger Chillingworth, the personification of suppressive Puritanism. This will be accounted for later.

To clarify Pearl's motivation for seeking the father, we will move off track for a moment and inspect Chillingworth's vicious behavior in contrast with Pearl's.

The ever-vigilant Chillingworth, a person with "an eager, searching, almost fierce, yet carefully guarded look" (169), monomaniacally revives the dormant question of the identity of Pearl's father. As suggested in the previous chapter, it is no psychological stretch to assume that the relation between Chillingworth and Dimmesdale can be paradoxically defined as that between cuckolded-son and cuckolder-father in spite of the age reversal. Indeed, the former is made a cuckold of by the latter. In this way of reading, Pearl can be regarded not as a daughter but as a sibling of Chillingworth and a rival for the attention and love of the parents, especially the father in this case (Lefcowitz 42).

In fact, Hawthorne was unable to enjoy domestic affection to his heart's content. One can readily imagine that the close relationship between Hawthorne's mother and her brother (the author's uncle and guardian) looked like a marriage to the author in his confused childhood: young Nathaniel found himself a cuckolded-son and his uncle a cuckolder-father. We must also take account of the subconscious effect upon the author of the chance concurrence of his sister Maria Louisa's birth and his father's death: Nathaniel must have asked himself, "where is my father and why is he leaving this newborn sibling to us?" To make matters worse, Robert Manning, whose preference seems, from a letter to his niece, to have been for undemanding submissive females, probably treated the author's younger sister with much more affection than Nathaniel and Ebe. The author in childhood must have realized his defeat in competition for the father-surrogate's love.

These personal surroundings seem to have enabled the author to empathize with the ugly hunchbacked old man, Chillingworth, and to project part of himself on that man. Like Hawthorne, Chillingworth yearned for domestic affection and was urged by destiny to seek the father and to be denied by the (symbolic) mother: Just as Chillingworth was denied by Hester, so Hawthorne was denied by his mother, who held aloof from her three children and other relatives. For many years after her husband's death, Elizabeth Hawthorne wore mourning and took meals alone in her room, forbidding everyone in the family to enter. The child grieved about her aloofness on his "Note-Book," "I love my mother but

there has been, ever since my boyhood, a sort of coldness of intercourse between us, such as is apt to come between persons of strong feelings, if they are not managed rightly" (CE 8:429).

The possible analogy between the Dimmesdale-versus-Chillingworth relation with the father [Dimmesdale the minister]-versus-son [Chillingworth the scientist] is also suggested by their professions. While Dimmesdale represents conservative Puritanism, Chillingworth represents science and its newly arising power to break down superstitious illusions (though depicted ironically as a pseudo-scientist and as a slave to Puritanism through his denaturation). Perry Miller, however, downplays the tension between Science and Puritanism by suggesting that the Puritans of seventeenth-century New England were receptive to the new science as long as it might strengthen their religious orthodoxy and attest to the glory of God.⁴ Second, Chillingworth, who could have chosen the elder and more experienced Reverend Wilson as his spiritual adviser, takes advice from Dimmesdale because Dimmesdale is the very symbolic father that Chillingworth seeks.

The author's dire need for a father becomes conspicuous by the fact that more than one character — not just Chillingworth but Pearl as well — is searching for a father. Hawthorne had both the doctor and child act out what he himself had wanted to do for a long time. Why, then, is Pearl extraordinarily idealized while Chillingworth is charged with all of the perverse tasks? Here we must consider the apportionment of the author's traits into the two characters. On the one hand, since young Nathaniel badly needed a father to learn the *man's role*, he paradoxically attributed to Pearl a *normal boy's* genuine desire to find a father by exchanging gender identity. (Nathaniel wanted to attain manhood; Pearl wants to attain womanhood, and succeeds.) On the other hand, as Erlich points out, fatherless Hawthorne probably speculated about his origin, but must have contaminated the secret of nature (procreation) with prurience, the very act of knowing. That contaminating process was facilitated all the more by Hawthorne's tendency to closet himself in his own cubicle. Alongside his keen observation, that kind of speculation must have engendered in him feelings of shame and guilt. Finding that this behavior of his in acquiring knowledge was curiously related to the censoring attitude of his uncle, Hawthorne attributed the attitude to the scientist, his *Doppelgänger*, and justifiably projected it to his hor-

ticulturist Uncle Robert Manning. The author must have been annoyed with this discovery. While Hawthorne should have been thankful to his guardian for helping his education, he disliked him for his prying behavior. Yet Hawthorne himself behaved in a similar way. In attempt to punish himself for voyeurism, Hawthorne defaced his *Doppelgänger* and thwarted its (Chillingworth's) original intention to revenge himself on the intrusive cuckold-father [the minister Dimmesdale]. Therefore, when it comes time to revenge himself on Dimmesdale, Chillingworth sees the reverend so weakened that he finds himself obliged to both support him and admonish him: "Wave back that woman! Do not blacken your fame, and perish in dishonor! I can yet save you!" (252)

If fatherless Hawthorne required fathers in his psychic life for at least a double purpose, namely, revenge on his father-surrogate and establishment of his own identity as a man after his deceased father (though in his actual life he had no choice but to model himself on his father-surrogate), then one can easily understand his need to idealize Pearl and deface Chillingworth. It follows that, at the risk of changing gender identity, the author ordered Pearl to seek a father on his own behalf by placing her in a normal relation with the father (when it comes to family, normal means ideal for the unfortunate Hawthorne). He could revive as Pearl and behave like her. We must recall the description that Pearl in Hester's hands would have suggested the infant Christ if Catholic painters had been present in the marketplace. Pearl is in fact Hawthorne's Redeemer. There is an irony, however, in the alliance of Hawthorne with Pearl: can she truly be idealized if her very idealization happens to unconsciously betray Hawthorne's own spiritual vulnerability? For the sake of logical coherence, the following discussion will premise again that Chillingworth assumes the father role for Dimmesdale, as we have seen in chapter I.

II. B. Pearl as Antithesis to Puritanism

From here we must analyze Pearl more minutely through the imagery associated with her, following the track set in the last chapter. Her name, derived from "pearl of great price" in St. Matthew, is ironic, though it is true that Hester gets her at a great price. The color pearly white is traditionally associated with purity, yet also connotes sterility. Mr. Wilson points out the irony of this connotation when, beholding a vivacious, ruddy child, he exclaims, "Pearl? Ruby,

rather! or Coral! or Red Rose, at the very least, judging from thy hue!” (110) Red to be contrasted against white is also ambiguous throughout, suggesting both sunlight and roses, and the ignominious scarlet letter. Pearl is usually seen as a flash of red and light, though she has her mother’s black hair and eyes.

Pearl is also identified with heathen nature, as of the forest: a lovely flower possessed with “wild-flower prettiness” (90); a “tropical bird of rich plumage” (111) or a “floating sea bird” (236); a red rose that has been plucked by Hester off the bush that grows by the prison door. If the wild red rose representing Pearl implies vivacity of nature, affirmation of life, and fertility morally judged as neither good nor bad, then the corresponding images of Chillingworth are death, sin, necessity, despair, suppression, and denial of life. The Black Flower (the metaphor for Chillingworth) is the product of inflexible Puritanism, a relentless superego with poisonous influences on the Puritan minister Dimmesdale. On the other hand, the wild red flower is the product of insuppressible outburst of the natural power, not the artificial one. Pearl, after all, is “to live her own life, and be a law unto herself” (135). Because “to live by natural liberty is to deny authority and doctrine of original sin” (Eisinger 324), Pearl bodily demonstrates that she needs no authority to rely on. If Chillingworth functions as the minister’s tyrannous or spurious conscience, then Pearl functions as the genuine conscience that reproaches her father for cowardice, hypocrisy, and egocentricity. Seven years old as she is, she jeers at her father in mock-confession, saying, “Thou wast not bold! thou was not true! . . . Thou wouldst not promise to take my hand, and mother’s hand, to-morrow noontide!” (157) Which conscience does the minister choose, heretical Pearl’s or puritanical Chillingworth’s? Suffice it to say that “the wild red rose” by which Hawthorne unsuccessfully tries to “relieve the darkening close of a tale of human frailty and sorrow”(48) seems insufficient to surmount “the Black Flower.”

Now, with regard to father seeking, we must still contend with Dimmesdale, the primary subject to probe. Pearl is a mere child, a lump of possibilities still unrealized; on the contrary, Dimmesdale is an adult we hold responsible for realizing his possibilities, provided that they are worth realizing at all. The question, then, naturally arises: can he truly succeed in realizing them? Or rather: isn’t what he tries to realize worth realizing? Does the adult (Dimmesdale) still have to seek his father-substitute like the fatherless child (Pearl) (albeit in a different

way)? Isn't it harmful to the young male adult to search persistently for a father, and is such a search even worthwhile? And beyond this we must ask the further question: how can we find order in the complicated relation between the fatherly love from the vindictive Chillingworth (the abuser of Puritanism) and the father seeking of Pearl (who turns out to be anti-Puritan) and Dimmesdale (the strong pillar of Puritan society)? The answer, it turns out, may be closely related to the assumption that Dimmesdale most resembles the author, in a special but real way.

III. An Analysis of Hester

Hester is a name suggestive of Esther in the Old Testament. Hester is the latter-day equivalent of Ester, a beautiful, courageous, and dignified savior of her people. In the first half of this chapter we will evaluate Hester's seven years of endurance and effort, her credential for her biblical name.

Hester and Dimmesdale kindle on their bosoms the infernal fire of the scarlet letters (one openly, the other secretly). Hester is looked down upon and estranged for the scarlet letter but overcomes the difficulties, while Dimmesdale is enervated and ultimately defeated. Their different attitudes toward reality seem to explain the different courses they take in life. An evaluation of Hester as antithesis to Dimmesdale will supply us with a criterion for criticizing him in the next chapter and eventually unmask him. In this chapter we therefore accommodate the meaning of Hester's existence for Dimmesdale from the viewpoint of family, lest we reduce her to his mere paramour.

III. A. Hester's Commitment to Reality

If one takes only the result of Hester's efforts in advance, one will be depressed by the gloomy consequence. Hester's proposal that Dimmesdale and she escape or elope from the Puritan society back into the old world is indirectly dismissed as an illusion through Pearl's rejection of her father's kiss and through her grimace and importunate demand that her mother resume wearing the scarlet letter her mother has thrown away. As expected, Hester fails to carry out her plan at will. Because she has been unrepentant until she stands with her partner in adultery and their daughter, forming "an electric chain," she returns only to resume, or rather begin, her state of penitence. Indeed, she cannot attain the ef-

fect she seeks, but what she highly values is not the result but the process of her sincere efforts to approach reality. Hawthorne appraises her by tracing her footsteps and comparing her images in three stages, starting from her first days wearing the scarlet letter, proceeding through her desperate efforts to suppress her sexuality and gain access to society, and culminating in her recovery of womanly love. How do her approaches to reality change over the seven years that pass?

Hester has embroidered the scarlet letter so fantastically and so impressively, a mere glimpse of it will stay in memory for life. On the breast of her gown, in fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidering and fantastic flourishes of gold thread, appears the scarlet letter A. As we see, she takes the trouble to make the letter prominent and flamboyant. Her motive is not to obediently submit herself to the Puritan law in a show of deep repentance. On the contrary, she sends a message of her defiance to authorities by asserting, with the gorgeous scarlet letter, her pride in what she has done. "By making the letter beautiful, Hester is denying its social meaning" (Baym 219). For the same reason, she embellishes the living hieroglyphic (Pearl) with beautiful clothes. The daughter is Hester's *id* personified, expressing all her resentment, outraged pride, anger, and even blasphemy (Baym 225).

Hester behaves, however, in accordance with the mode of the Puritans she hates. She pries into the hearts of others for their wickedness; rejoices frantically at the detection of the secret sin in their hearts. To the author, this kind of behavior is unbearable and unpardonable. Through this process, Hester tries to restore the broken chain of humanity with her sympathy for the brotherhood of sinners. This conception of brotherhood is derived from the wholly depraved orthodoxy that "all humankind are absolutely and unequivocally equal in sin" (Bluestone 195-213). Hester seems to retain her still undecided attitude toward Puritan society or Puritanism itself, from a position neither inside the village nor wholly away from it. She indoctrinates her untamed girl with Puritanism (catechizes her) and dins into her head this: she may not seek the earthly father but the heavenly one. Her color imagery and plant imagery confirm her indecisiveness and inner conflict. Her sexually alluring black hair and eyes suggest healthy oriental (on that account, heretical) sensuality, yet things connected with Puritanism are also black. She has a ruddy vivid countenance, yet the scarlet letter

emits the infernal fire. “Red” so described is ambivalent, signifying both life as Pearl typifies it and death. It is a mesh of good and bad, and so is Hester. This applies to the images of plants connected with her. She can be compared to the wild red rose as is represented by the vivacious Pearl. As Hester stands before her judges in the opening scene, the sun shines on the rose and the letter, both red, against the massed black, brown, and gray — dark colors associated with Puritanism. Hester shows strong affinity with the burrs Pearl throws for fun at the scarlet letter. The burrs are the unsightly products that suggest her previous husband Chillingworth and the bigoted Puritanism clinging stubbornly with him.

Between a willingness to endure a punishment and a “normal” rejection of misery and suffering, Hester has been lost. She has made a sincere but wasteful effort to feel guilty, trying to persuade herself that “if one behaves as though one feels guilty, patiently and continuously, one will eventually create the condition” (Baym 220). Although she has been on the verge of joining the witches, Hester has still kept at the bottom of her heart the unshakable belief in her goodness and made a stand against Mistress Hibbins, the putative witch who believes that she herself is wicked and is entranced at her own evil. Hester surrenders to her own stressful condemned life, preferring it to an almost perfect, serene life without any moral failures except that misconduct. The latter type of life is one the perfectionist Dimmesdale tries obsessively but unsuccessfully to lead. Acknowledging oneself as a dropout from society at the expense of one’s pride requires high courage, and Hester has that courage.

Before long, Hester begins to reopen her relationship with the world. As a discard, she sides with the socially weak — the poor, the invalid, and so on — and tries to gain access to society as a doer of good works. To the extent that the outcast gradually regains her membership of society, the sense-fixing scarlet letter kindling the infernal fire changes into one glimmering “with comfort in its unearthly ray,” signifying *Angel*. Now that the badge of shame changes into that of many *good deeds*, it signifies *Able* instead of *Adultery*. The change of sense in the letter A has been won as a trophy for her never-relinquished challenge; and it is to be contrasted against the stereotyping transfiguration that allows Chillingworth and, above all, Dimmesdale, to stop thinking about protean realities. Her spasmodic and reactive denial of woman’s passion encouraged her to grow up spiritually at the cost of petrifying into the “marble coldness” (164). She has

reached the hasty conclusion that her female sexuality has misled her into adultery. That stoic idea expands so exorbitantly, it causes her to misjudge that existence might be worth too little to accept for the whole of womankind, for the happiest of her sex, let alone herself. She has achieved something in her own way, but has lost what has been characteristic to her, i. e., her inherent life-affirming nature as represented by the wild red rose. To confront reality undauntedly, is there no need for her to possess that kind of energy released from her life-affirming nature? Does not the reality she must face encompass the very element she tries to hide? Is she not still terrified of actually seeing herself for what she is? The reunion with her previous lover helps Hester reclaim the womanhood or passionate sensual love she has lost during her rational speculation. After throwing away the letter and taking off the formal cap that confines her hair, “a radiant and tender smile” (202) gushes out from the very heart of her womanhood. “Her sex, her youth, and the whole richness of her beauty” come back “from what men call the irrevocable past, and clustered themselves, with her maiden hope, and a happiness before unknown” (202). Now completely free from the Puritan conception of total depravity, she classifies neither herself nor others into the good or the bad. Rather, to encourage the guilt-ridden minister, she confidently asserts this: “What we did had a consecration of its own” (195). She employs her womanly love to be confronted against itself — against the very reality for her — against that love for which sterilizing Puritan society persistently condemns her. She employs love against a Puritanism so dehumanizing as to demonize the originally home-loving Chillingworth. Likewise, Hester employs free speculation against Puritanism so devastating as to paralyze Reverend Dimmesdale. Before she stubbornly tried to believe that she was unentitled to desire happiness in a human way; self-hatred was the only reaction to her wickedness to be felt. Now it is replaced by her well-wishing love and her constructive free will to do something productive. Now that she has regained womanly love and used it against reality, she should be able to approach, or even go beyond, reality.

Yet Hester’s will to face reality falls short of our expectation. It paradoxically brings on an illusory world. She wants to escape with her lover into the world of her own making. Her escape from the very reality she has to confront makes it impossible to reestablish a satisfying link with the world. For that, she

is nonetheless qualified to be highly valued. What encourages her to confront reality is not her revengeful, bellicose will to defy authorities, still less her repression of womanly passion. It is her re-claiming of love. Hers is not the love of Chillingworth's, a love based on possession of and dominance over Dimmesdale under the pretext of fatherly affection. For her love, Hester cannot allow herself to be a mere onlooker at her partner's predicament, as she was before, or to not hope for his spiritual growth. Although she has conspired with Dimmesdale's revenger (Chillingworth) against Dimmesdale in hiding the identity of her (previous) husband, she deeply repents.

Various questions arise here. Hawthorne's last solution for Dimmesdale's burden of guilt seems to lie in the recourse to the womanly love that Hester regains and that Pearl is to acquire herself. Hester's well-wishing love is unrestrained by the Puritan dogma and can liberate Dimmesdale from his repressive conscience; for her love is more than a mere antithesis to Puritanism. In chapter I we have already shown that, strange though it may seem, Chillingworth burns with a desire to pour his fatherly love into Dimmesdale. His fatherly love is assimilated with Puritanism, forging the merciless conscience in the minister. Which type of love has the minister been receiving, and which is he finally to choose, Chillingworth's or Hester's? Is there any relation between the love he chooses, Chillingworth's or Hester's, and his father-seeking yearnings we have suggested in chapter II?

Indeed, Hester is right in thinking that her love is humanizing and recuperative for Dimmesdale; but we can question whether he receives her womanly love as such. Even if Dimmesdale receives enough nurture from her love, he will fail to surmount his own difficulties. Unless he makes an effort, success will elude him. He should heed this caution regardless of whence it comes, from Hester or from Chillingworth. How does he exert himself, if he does so at all? And if he does not, we must solve another riddle still: what keeps him from combating his own difficulties? Why is it impossible to reverse the admirable role from Hester to Dimmesdale?

By way of preparation for the questions to be answered, we must clarify in advance the sense Hester's existence takes on with Dimmesdale from the viewpoint of the family.

III. B. Hester: The Protecting Mother

The dark woman has been forbidden to the minister on account of their prior sexual experience. This limits his virtual relation with her in the romance to the several days described in chapters XIII to XIX. What kind of role does she take for him within this limited time? Dimmesdale begs for Hester's support in the woods: "Think for me, Hester! Thou art strong. Resolve for me!"; "Be thou strong for me! Advise me what to do" (196). He thinks like this: "Neither can I live any longer without her companionship; so powerful is she to sustain, — so tender to soothe!" (201). He is a mere infant before the strong-willed woman. He might want to occupy the place of Pearl and establish a *symbiosis* with Hester. As far as Dimmesdale is concerned, the reality-challenging Hester is more than a paramour: a supporting, giving, and sheltering mother. He therefore receives her love as that of mother's, while she gives it to him as that of a woman, as womanly love. We have already asked which type of love Dimmesdale chooses, Hester's womanly love or Chillingworth's fatherly love. Now we must rephrase *womanly* as *motherly* and puzzle out why he has denatured her love.

Hester, who has been sinful, paradoxically becomes sinless. The woman with the baby in her hands reminds us of the Virgin Mary with the infant Christ, and the same woman is to embrace the dying minister. What is wrong with comparing him to the crucified Jesus? Without saying, Hester recalls Pietà. That assumption is strengthened if we recall Hawthorne's own mother and his sister. His mother Elizabeth Hawthorne was reported to be strikingly beautiful, with black eyes and hair like Hester's. Elizabeth's married life was completely outside Nathaniel's experience because her husband died when Nathaniel was only four. Widowed young and returned to her parental home, she seemed to return to being a daughter. Her son must have seen her as a Virgin Mother, of sorts. Later, when separated from her by his uncle, that sacred image of sinless motherhood must have been etherealized all the more. Elizabeth Hawthorne also uncritically accepted and adored her only male child and sheltered him from the pressure of Manning's value and personality. Despite her solitary but competent and proud resolution to live life without a husband, she seems to have been, in a sense, passive, asexual, and entirely reliant on her younger brother Robert Manning.

Nathaniel's sister was the mother's namesake, but nicknamed Ebe. The

characteristics of that dark haired Ebe overlapped with those of her mother Elizabeth: bewitching; celibate, secluded; elder, imperious, lofty; brilliant, opinionated, and strong-willed. From her, the author expected intellectual stimulation; by her, he was psychologically affected. He seems to have been tangibly influenced by her in creating the negative Hester.

Just as the author has longed for care from and tended to depend on the elder women in his family, i. e., the two confusing Elizabeths, so Dimmesdale humbles himself before Hester. Hawthorne's/Dimmesdale's regression to the motherly love has delayed the maturation of many things, including a masculine confidence to undauntedly face reality and a capacity for womanly love as such.

IV. An Analysis of Dimmesdale

From the orthodox Christian point of view, a fall is a necessary step to understanding oneself. The romantic point of view also recommends a fall, as such. Dimmesdale has dared to venture down into the darkness of sin to know himself or to be redeemed. This interpretation as a self-quest tale may overestimate the minister, in that he seems ignorant of himself. If the story were read as a melodramatic love romance, he would be appraised as a tragic hero. I wonder if Hawthorne rested content with the popularity of this vulgar interpretation. If the author had cherished Dimmesdale with a narcissistic affection, he should have confessed that his attempt fell short of his original aim to make *The Scarlet Letter* a self-criticism. Here we must have a fair appreciation of the minister to understand the family-obsessed author. From here we will analyze Hawthorne's Doppelgänger.

IV. A. Dimmesdale's Uncommitment to Reality

Analyzing the three main characters surrounding the minister, we have asked manifold questions about him. Somehow or other, these questions relate each person with Dimmesdale in the form of quasi-family, and assuredly, quasi-family members should affect Dimmesdale in facing reality. Figuratively, Dimmesdale has been doomed to isolation as a consequence of sin,⁵ while in reality he has established 'symbiotic' relationships with Chillingworth and Hester, first with the former for seven years, next with the latter for several days. His dependence on his partners seems to dictate whether his attitude toward reality

changes or stays essentially intact. For the sake of the following investigation, we will divide his life into three phases: (1) 'symbiosis' with Chillingworth; (2) Hester's protection; (3) the outcome of his dependence, projection of his inner world into reality.

The minister's name describes his character straightforwardly. His first name Arthur hints at a devotion to the high ideals associated with King Arthur (Waggoner 138), and in fact the minister endeavors to be saint-like as a strong pillar of the Puritan world. His surname splits into two parts. The root of the first part, "dim," suggests both weakness and darkness; the guilt-stricken minister is exhausted mentally and physically. The second part, "dale," suggests a valley, or the heart (Waggoner 139). Hawthorne takes up the minister's psychological problems.

Because Dimmesdale has spent almost seven years in the boarding house with Chillingworth, his weakened body should be ascribed to the doctor in charge of his medication. Dimmesdale's idiosyncrasy can first be seen in the light of the color imagery linked to him. The colors describing Dimmesdale are ambivalent, like those linked to Hester. He has a "white" lofty impending brow and has won "the holy whiteness of good fame" as a saint-like clergyman. The "light" that surrounds him on occasion is drawn from the pious Mr. Wilson and Christian Revelation. Dimmesdale is the saintly guide and inspiration of the godly to the small New England community. Theologically, the learned minister has full knowledge of good and evil experiences. The person ignorant of worldly things deserves a reputation as an angelic other-worldliness possessor. Yet Dimmesdale is dressed in "black," a symbolic color for the ministerial figure, but one that suggests the rigidity of the Puritan conception of predestination. His own fate is virtually controlled by his enemy (Chillingworth). While he thinks his fate is predestined by God, he himself sets it in motion. (This complicated mechanism will be shown later.) Dimmesdale is endowed with large "dark" eyes expressive of "a world of pain in their troubled and melancholy depth" (113). The more his torment increases, the "paler" he becomes. As his sin multiplies, the frequency of his walking in the "shadow" rises commensurately. Ultimately he seems to lose contact with human reality and become isolated even from God. Therefore, granting that the "light" and "whiteness" attributed to Dimmesdale is partly celestial light, more of it is the false light that dazzles the congregation and keeps

them deceived by hypocrisy.

We have to continue observing his physical and behavioral traits. The clearing of forests in America required of every colonist a sturdy constitution for survival. The minister, however, looks careworn and emaciated, his voice tremulous, his face pale, and his body thin. Despite Chillingworth's medication, his condition goes from bad to worse. One of the conceivable reasons is his self-distrusting, guilt-ridden compulsion to perform unwholesome rituals such as a fast, a vigil, and a masochistic self-scourging.

Behaviorally, Dimmesdale acts apprehensively and without composure. His most conspicuous gesture is the placement of hands on chest whenever some critical event occurs: when he fails in his trial to admonish Hester to confess the partner in adultery; when he succeeds in vindicating her under the threat of depriving her of her child; when beside himself he vehemently argues with Chillingworth on the flabby weeds in the grave; when his daughter stares at his chest in the woods after he reconfirms his love with Hester. Whenever his over-sensitive conscience is agitated, his hands automatically extend over his heart. The compulsive gesture becomes a constant psychological or pathological phenomenon. His intense sensitivity is ascribed to this morbidity. As this paper will go on to show, his ostensible hypersensitivity is a squeamish desire to extirpate his wickedness or his lustful nature from his soul.

Dimmesdale's symptom appears psychosomatic, and Chillingworth (the psychoanalyst *manqué*) can diagnose it. What has withered the minister? Why is he enigmatic — holy and wicked at the same time? Does his carnal sin — according to Gerber, it might be a “violation of only that which the sinner thinks he violates” (105) — affect his body and then his spirit? We must investigate his mental state to unravel these questions.

Dimmesdale is positioned as a strong pillar of the Puritan world: “[I]t would be always essential to his peace to feel the pressure of a faith about him, supporting, while it confined him within its iron framework” (123). This is tantamount to saying that his lifelong task is to think of ways to fend off skepticism about the Puritan doctrine and to guard himself with unshakable faith. In reality, he is troubled with nothing other than his wavering attitude toward Puritanism. “I fell, I fall, I die daily that I may raise and live even to fall and rise again” (Davidson 82): the voluntary plunge into the darkness of sin is a Christian way

of understanding oneself. This traditional Christian way of thinking seems related to the Puritan quest for self-awareness through pain and darkness of the soul. By defining a descent into darkness as a necessary prologue to self-discovery, this approach to self-understanding overlaps with the nineteenth-century romantic assertion, though the latter differs slightly from the former in its denial of any formal authority or rationale of creeds.

Sustained by his belief in that romantic conception, the otherwise courageous minister responds to Hester's plea for the child and speaks boldly in defense of her against the patriarchal figures: "[Pearl] was meant for a blessing; for the one blessing of [Hester's] life! It was meant, doubtless, as the mother herself hath told us, for a retribution, too, a torture, to be felt at many an unthought of moment; a pang, a sting, an ever recurring agony in the midst of troubled joy" (114).

How about Dimmesdale himself? Though he lacks the cheek to claim he is to be redeemed, he seems enabled to think like this: he may be able to advance at least some distance toward self-discovery. In addition to the conception mentioned above, Dimmesdale has tried to cling to the belief, in a paranoiac way, that "corrupted flesh can be completely separated from spirit; man lives a double life, condemned to daily galling of his flesh and exalted [in other words, enabled to understand himself] . . ." (Davidson 83). Indeed his flesh has been corrupted by adultery and needs to be scourged, though his spirit has been pure. It thus follows that the torment derived from his self-flagellation has meaning and purpose if he relies on this belief. He can endow with meaning his own behavior, a behavior that otherwise may have been inexplicable even to himself. He seems to confuse the quest for self-awareness through pain and darkness of the soul with that through torment of the flesh. The problem is his obsession with that thinking and the transitory solution he rationalizes on account of it.

According to Jonathan Edwards (1703-58), the last person who in colonial America tried in vain to revive Puritanism in decline, "man is saved or damned . . . by his knowing in all humility that what he is in fleshly being he reflects in his soul, and the state of his spirit is manifest every instant in the outward demeanor of his daily experience" (Davidson 84). This can be summarized thus: body conforms to the motions of the soul, and spirit faithfully agrees with the behavior of the flesh. Hawthorne's romantic imagination can fuse his story with

that of Edwards in spite of about a century's distance: *The Scarlet Letter* is set in the middle of the seventeenth century while Edwards lived in the eighteenth century. The psychoanalyst *manqué*, Chillingworth, cunningly misuses this view of Edwards to function as puritanical conscience for the psychosomatic minister. The doctor indirectly persuades him into confession, or coaxes the secret out of him, with words like this:

... a sickness, a sore place, if we may so call it, in your spirit, hath immediately its appropriate manifestation in your bodily frame. Would you, therefore, that your physician heal the bodily evil? How may this be, unless you first lay open to him the wound or trouble in your soul?" (136)

Addicted to a rather romantic view, Dimmesdale reacts to Chillingworth as he would to a Puritan of the Edwards type. The minister compulsively tries to offset or negate the Edwardsian conception with physical self-punishment that might verify his own belief: corruption is not in his spirit, but in his flesh; therefore, he needs to scourge himself, to perform a fast, and so on. On the one hand the minister behaves masochistically, while on the other the physician prescribes for him a salve in the form of almost sadistic punishment. In this way, Dimmesdale is foiled by Chillingworth's guileful strategy of saving himself trouble.

Dimmesdale's compulsive need to keep himself always purified continually renews his need for self-punishment. That punishment seems to give him a perverse masochistic solace, and for that, he needs to chasten himself again. He laughs "bitterly at himself" while plying a bloody scourge on his own shoulders, and smites "so much the more pitilessly, because of that bitter laugh" (144). Caught in a vicious circle, he grows reluctant to give up his symptom; he preserves his status quo and cherishes the very self he loathes. Yet in the reality as it is presented, he is far from preserving his present spiritual life: his "pure" life — so he obsessively wants to believe — is corrupted irrevocably. Immersed in that process taken by rote, he fights shy of this unfeigned self, immunizes himself against his inner nature, and remains hypersensitive and benumbed at the same time. His sickness may help divert his attention from his reality or his morbid ruminations to his body. The true self Dimmesdale is disinclined to realize is the self who has had enough penance, but no penitence. This makes it

natural that his daughter should accuse him of hypocrisy and cowardice. Dimmesdale becomes more and more careworn and emaciated through this process, which makes it easier for Chillingworth to continue medicating him. While enabled to realize his original aim of revenging himself on the cuckold, Chillingworth finds an outlet into which he might pour his fatherly love — a kind of domestic love that the isolated scientist has been unable to give or receive. Chillingworth knows that Dimmesdale, in his mental and physical weakness, is reduced to a mere powerless child dependent on the father/doctor. The childish minister, whose identity must be equivalent to Puritanism, needs the Puritan father to whom he can be identical. In reality, Dimmesdale needs the father-like Chillingworth, Puritanism personified, for a double purpose: outwardly, to keep himself away from any worldly seductions, as from Hester, and inwardly, to obtain sadistic solace from Chillingworth or masochistic solace from himself. By succumbing to his illness, Dimmesdale acts out a strategy to obtain the father/doctor's care.

In his search for a father, he confusedly takes the evil father figure of Chillingworth for the good Father in heaven, the Father for whom he thinks he immolates himself and before whom he is contrite. Yet his groping for the father substitute is unconscious, as his reflective remarks show:

“I might have known it [the identity of Chillingworth]! . . . I did know it! Was not the secret told me in the natural recoil of my heart, at the first sight of him, and as often as I have seen him since? Why did I not understand?”
(194)

Thus, mutual need for the other — Dimmesdale for Chillingworth and vice versa — helps establish an abnormal *symbiotic* relationship between Dimmesdale and Chillingworth. To perpetuate this *symbiosis*, the minister must waive his spontaneous will in exchange for fatherly care, remain childish, and please his dictatorial, punitive father's desire for subordination. Dimmesdale must therefore devote himself to following the sacerdotal rules, strictly speaking, in order to keep himself childishly naive and avoid *the reality or hard-experience* requisite for manhood, in striking contrast to Pearl, the idealized child who is to be placed in a promising position for obtaining womanhood in the sequel of her search for a

father.

The infantile minister is terrified of, and noncompliant with, his growth into a man, a process that necessarily carries with it acquisition of manhood and masculinity. He misbelieves that manhood is completely equal to sexuality as a man, disregarding the fact that manhood can and should be sharply distinguished from the lustful, bestial nature he regards as sinful. *Sin* in his sense, which he attempts to extirpate from himself, thus turns out to be *sexuality*.

After going into the woods and meeting Hester, who coaxes him to slacken his grip on his conscience and momentarily plunges him into moral anarchy, the minister realizes that his religiosity is incapable of coping with the nightmarish realities of sin in his own flesh and in the world. Yet with an invigorating release of psychic adrenaline, Dimmesdale is empowered into confronting his real self, or the presence of the diabolic side of his nature. He changes from his previous self, who has been impotent to do anything, either good or bad.

He seemed to . . . eye this former self with scornful, pitying but half-envious curiosity. . . . Another man had returned out of the forest; a wiser one; with a knowledge of hidden mysteries which the simplicity of the former never could have reached. A bitter kind of knowledge that ! (223)

However, his realization and acceptance of his reality as it stands is insufficient in two points. First, he cannot resolve his plight by agreeing with Hester's proposal that he escape Chillingworth by eloping with her. Though able to flee from the authoritative Chillingworth, he will remain powerless to escape the internalized authority wherever he goes. He can escape from his personal enemy, but not his inner invisible one. He will remain caged in his own heart, watched over by an anonymous accuser. He has not yet understood how his imperious conscience is forged. Heretical Pearl prognosticates this. Secondly, Dimmesdale essentially remains childish, in that he needs to be taken care of by an alternative to the supervising father figure, namely the strong mother figure. Again, he tries to cling to the parent-like authoritative personage by humbling himself before Hester in a filial way and borrowing her strength.

For fear that Hester's female sexuality — indistinguishable from womanhood for Dimmesdale — should interfere with the relation between them, he de-

prives her of almost everything to do with woman, all but her motherhood, to make her his mother substitute. Thus, her humanizing womanly love that hopes for the lover's spiritual growth cannot hold good with him. Dimmesdale knows this, but for Hester, he cannot shirk his responsibilities by shifting his blame to her, just as the child would to the mother. If alone, he would remain lukewarm about undertaking the responsibilities for his free will. Murmuring his entreaty, he petitions her for assurance of her continual help that he "shall not go alone" (198).

Dimmesdale is tested in a "total change of dynasty and moral code" (217), but fighting shy of the test, he resorts again to the temporary solution of recourse to his faith by transporting his free will from parent-like personages to Puritanism. The sole organizing principle of his life and personality is his faith, and ultimately he drives himself into the dead end of that faith. For fear of disjuncture of what he truly is from what he appears to be to the parishioners, he adjusts himself to the image of him they hold. They are thereby left incredulous of his wickedness even after harkening to his confession, and Dimmesdale earns credits beyond his deserts. Hester senses a distant air in Dimmesdale on a march to church on Election Day — "he seemed so remote from her own sphere, and utterly beyond her reach" (239) — though not long before he has been open to her in the woods. Two circumstances change his attitude toward her. First, he no longer needs her love and no longer possesses a humanizing love that would lift her to a new state as his genuine lover from her previous state as his paramour, as an outlet for his diabolical passion (or of his partner to flirt with), and even as his mother-substitute. Ultimately he reduces her once more to his seductive paramour, a figure he thinks he must avoid. Second, Dimmesdale's very prideful but limited consciousness makes him arrogant. After returning from the woods to the town, he realizes his defective self (part of his self) but misbelieves that he understands everything besides himself.

Dimmesdale's dying words also express the arrogance and egocentricity he has acquired. The words are cautionary rather than heartily soothing: "It may be, that, when *we* forgot *our* God, — when *we* violated *our* reverence each for the other's soul, — it was thenceforth vain to hope that *we* could meet hereafter, in an everlasting and pure reunion" (my italics 256). The italicized *we*'s and *our*'s show that he unfairly downgrades her to his own level. Who then, but a

sterling sinner, would live lovelessly like Dimmesdale? Dimmesdale values his religious faith above Hester's humanizing love, above his own daughter, above the parishioners under his charge, above everything. Childishly servile to his faith, he remains infantile even after estranging himself from the motherly woman, Hester. Nothing matters to him except his own sin, a central object in his self-contained universe. Completely isolated from human reality, he even ignores the Christian dogma of Original Sin when he blurts, triumphantly and complacently, "[B]ehold me here, *the only one* sinner of the world!" (italics mine) (254). We laugh at his tragicomical or seriocomical behavior, at the childish adult in his unchilded enthusiasm: "God's eye beheld [the carnal letter]. The Angels were forever pointing at it! The Devil knew it well, and fretted it continually with the touch of his burning finger!" (255). Entrapped irredeemably in the unsubstantial solipsistic world, he becomes at last his own god or demon. Though enervated by Hester's love, Dimmesdale's puritanical conscience forged under Chillingworth's influence exerts its full and most dreadful power and ends in martyring him. As time passes, the lives of the two, Dimmesdale and Hester, become more and more contrastive. At the end, Hester is in a favorable position to relate with her real self and with the world from which she has been estranged, to re-claim her humanizing womanly love. Dimmesdale estranges himself from his real self and world, and dies loveless.

Now that the analyses of the four personages have been completed, some syntheses will be necessary in the concluding chapter. This will help us accomplish the original intention of this paper, that is, to convincingly explain how Hawthorne's motivation for writing *The Scarlet Letter* is relevant to his personal familial problems. For this purpose, we will put special emphasis on the correlation between the family-obsessed author and his *Doppelgänger* (Dimmesdale), the character that resembles the author most closely. In doing so, we will keep the following in mind: on the one hand, the major personages represent some aspects of the disintegrated selves of Hawthorne himself; on the other hand, they reflect the family members around Hawthorne.

Conclusion

The basic necessary condition for the solidarity and spiritual stability of the family is the consanguineous emotion that members of the same culture share.

Hence, it follows that child-rearing style depends on the society where the parents belong. In Hawthorne's day, the father of a family in Europe or America would have predominated over domestic affairs and acculturated the children to social values. The son, in his turn, would have modeled himself after the authoritative father and thereby established his own identity as a man and acquired masculinity. The middle-class Mannings imposed on Hawthorne a strict Franklinian (practical) demand unfavorable for a person gifted in the arts. Perhaps, like Pearl (or Dimmesdale) in his fiction, fatherless Hawthorne indefatigably sought a model (in Pearl's case, the counter model) of masculinity (femininity), and unfortunately found the most suitable man in Uncle Robert, his virtual father-surrogate. Under his uncle's influence, Hawthorne unintentionally strengthened his own tendency to depend, which made it paradoxically difficult for him to attain masculinity; and was unable to feel unadulterated filial emotion for that man in question despite his educational and financial help, as I have shown in chapters I and II of this paper. To make matters worse, Hawthorne was persistently traumatized by his own feelings of guilt for disobeying the work ethic.

Incidentally, along with the familial influence and lingering Puritan tradition, the American cultural tendency to stay fresh and untrammelled by authoritative European culture may, ironically, have facilitated Hawthorne's morbid determination to preserve childish naiveté and preference for dependence to an exorbitant degree. These features may have been reinforced not by the Emersonian insistence on independence, but oppositely by dependence on the authoritative paternal person, Robert Manning. Ironically, his critical dismissal from the Custom House was a golden] opportunity to bid farewell to what he had been. By the time he unconsciously fulfilled the conditions for writing *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne had already arrived at the dominant age that enabled him to paternally overlook the neglectful attitude of the childish old men employed at the office. Then his discharge from the surveyorship combined with the subsequent loss of his mother urged him to write the story. Dismissal from the clerkship was a symbolic decapitation. It was done to return him, as one twice born, from his previous state as a person not yet established financially or professionally, to his new state as a self-conscious writer. He bade farewell to Uncle Sam and Uncle Robert, mollified the grip of the internalized imposition (the dictatorial conscience) from Uncle Robert, and renounced any responsibility to become a man

of affairs. While the accuser on-record was described in “The Custom House” of *The Scarlet Letter* to be Hawthorne’s paternal aristocratic forefather, who (probably) said, “A writer of story books! . . . why, the degenerate fellow might as well have been a fiddler” (10), the real accuser was the deceased uncle (Robert Manning), who had kept the penniless author feeling like a mere *fiddler* or a man of uncertain masculinity. From Uncle Robert(’s influence) Hawthorne was finally relieved.

Hawthorne’s mother died little more than a month after the loss of his government sinecure, the event that propelled him free from his uncle’s influence. He had to bid farewell to what he had been in the life with his mother, whether willing or not. After graduating from Bowdoin College in 1825, he was virtually secluded in the home where his mother had resided: he went in the direction opposite to the one most ordinary youth would have taken. Along with the father-surrogate’s tacit pressure to submit childishly to himself, Hawthorne’s regression in the mother’s home and his lack of confident masculinity and love (both of which should have been achieved outside the family) stunted his maturation. As for his love, his elder sister’s lifelong objection to his marriage, what Young characterized as an objection tinged with incestuous motives, might have obstructed his passage to acquiring mature love in place of sisterly affection and caused him to choose for a wife the semi-invalid, asexual Sophia, a woman remarkably contrastive to his sister. His long seclusion or literal withdrawal from reality made him childishly dependent and fearful of reality outside. This explains why the dominant character should be Hester, never Dimmesdale, the latter being the most suitable for Hawthorne’s *Doppelgänger*. Here we can see Hawthorne soberly trying to confront his previous childish self, groping for an exit out of the labyrinth of family.

The family-obsessed author attempted to cure himself by a method a therapist might attempt, that is, by refracting his real family members in the romance. Meantime, he projected his disintegrated selves, beautified or defaced, into the four personages.

Despite the difference of gender identity, Hester is the author’s hopeful self, the self he did not actually possess. Looking at how she behaves, we see that he could hardly help correcting himself, yet he also tended to depend on women like her for shelter.

Pearl is the promise of rebirth for Dimmesdale and the author. Placed in a normal or rather ideal family situation, Pearl succeeds in finding her own father and in getting womanhood. Pearl is exempted from the bad spiritual influence (i. e., bigoted Puritanism) of her true father, Dimmesdale, and is guaranteed her womanhood by him. When a baby, she receives medicine from her quasi-father, Chillingworth, in prison; when seven years old, she is bequeathed a great fortune by him. She is cared for physically and financially by that man, but receives no bad spiritual influence from him. She has no familial problem. To be sure, the author idealizes the child (Pearl) too strongly and should submit tamely to our criticism that Pearl is deprived of the reality both Pearl and Hawthorne (or his *Doppelgänger*, Dimmesdale) must face.

Dimmesdale and Chillingworth are both entrusted with Hawthorne's plight. Unlike Pearl, Dimmesdale and Hawthorne fail in seeking father-surrogates and in acquiring manhood. Hawthorne was dominated financially and spiritually by his father-surrogate, Robert Manning, while Manning unintentionally deprived Hawthorne of manhood. Dimmesdale is controlled physically and mentally by his doctor/father-substitute, Chillingworth, and Chillingworth intentionally deprived Dimmesdale of manhood.

Chillingworth is triply significant: first, neither Chillingworth nor Hawthorne can enjoy his due domestic affection to the full; secondly, Chillingworth has tried to revenge himself on the cuckold (symbolic) father; and most importantly, Chillingworth assumes the role of the father-surrogate and demands expiation for the adultery of the hypersensitive minister. In forging conscience, Puritanism is to Dimmesdale what the work-ethic was to Hawthorne. Sexuality is to the former what libido (that finds its outlet in writing) was to the latter. Both sexuality and that kind of libido must be suppressed by the paternal figures. Dimmesdale and Hawthorne must obey their superiors, Roger Chillingworth and Robert Manning, for fear of guilty feelings. Dimmesdale's result is naturally the same as Hawthorne's: just as the minister is left childishly dependent on and neurotically fixed to the demanding father figure, so too is the author in spite of his original intention to grow up an autonomous male adult. It follows that the author criticized and even ridiculed the minister while repeating what the minister does exactly.

Thus, paradoxically, Hawthorne managed to reunite his disintegrated selves

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by purposefully projecting them. Once liberated from his feelings of guilt for disobeying the practical demands of his Uncle Robert, Hawthorne could devote himself to writing. His decision to stop publishing anonymously or under pseudonyms at least attested to his ardor to be a genuine professional writer. As an author he made *The Scarlet Letter* half confessional and half mysterious, leaving us to interpret him through the story and thereby linking himself with us, the readers, or the world outside.

Notes

1. In "The Custom House" of *The Scarlet Letter* and the Preface to *The House of The Seven Gables* (1851), Hawthorne clarified his literary attitude and approach to creating his works. His works, he wrote, were not *novels* faithful to his experience, but *romances* where, given enough "latitude" to choose materials and create, he might penetrate into the hidden under the real world. According to his definitions for both the novel and romance, *The Scarlet Letter*, of course, can be regarded as a romance in which he selects his own experiences and shapes them into a pattern.
2. See, Allan Lefcowitz, "Apologia pro. Roger Prynne: A Psychological study," *Literature and Psychology*, 24 (1974), 34-44. For details on the latter type of relation between the two, see chapter III of this paper.
3. Ethan Brand and Dr. Rappaccini have committed the same sin.
4. See, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, (1939; rpt. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), Book III, Chapter IX.
5. Fick says, "Each of the three key personages of the story" "experienced the sense of isolation, physical or spiritual, which is the inevitable consequence of sin" (102-6).
6. Pearl longs for a father, too, but not for the purpose of establishing Puritan identity. In this point, the idealized child turns out to be an antithesis not only to Puritanism as we have found in chapter II, but also to Dimmesdale (her own father).

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Farewell to the Masochistic Symbiosis with the Sadistic Superego Paternal Figure: Hawthorne in *The Scarlet Letter*

SASAKI, Eitetsu

Before writing *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-64) was hard hit emotionally and economically by the death of his mother and his dismissal from the Custom House. These crises alerted the author to his own abnormal obsession with the family and motivated him to write *The Scarlet Letter*. In this paper I posit that Hawthorne wrote *The Scarlet Letter* as an exercise in self-debate, self-criticism, or self-rediscovery. Then I go on to compare the author to the four main characters of the story. Drawing from biographic details and applying the psychological theories of Freud and Fromm, I try to clarify how the author rediscovered his unknown self and adopted new roles and a new way of life.

In his self-therapeutic process, Hawthorne projects his disintegrated selves into the four personages of the story, especially Arthur Dimmesdale, and observes how they behave. Noteworthy is the abnormal symbiosis forged by Chillingworth and Dimmesdale — the sadistic yet paternal physician, and the guilt-ridden and therefore masochistic minister. Yearning for domestic bliss but rejected by Hester, who has a baby with the young minister, Chillingworth punishes the cuckold with insinuating remarks and transforms himself into a satanic man. Yet as a paternal physician, he diligently cares for and loves the emaciated minister. Dimmesdale, meanwhile, is drawn to compulsively fortify himself with the orthodox Puritan doctrine and to confine himself within an illusory realm where he is protected from his own sexual desire. It is reasonable for Dimmesdale to accept Chillingworth's proposal that they live together under the same roof. The sadistic paternal figure Chillingworth therefore stands before the guilt-stricken Dimmesdale as a proxy of Puritanism, though his association with Indians unmistakably exposes his stance as an irreligionist. Thus, as if exem-

plifying the psychological theories of Freud and Fromm, Chillingworth and Dimmesdale establish a punishing-punished, controlling-controlled, or sadistic-masochistic symbiosis in a complicit yet unknowing way. Hester, meanwhile, tries to save Dimmesdale and helps him grow emotionally by engulfing him with a womanly love that he childishly denatures into motherly love. Pearl persistently nags Dimmesdale to confess his identity as her biological father, but Dimmesdale defers this confession to the last moment before his death. It follows that neither Hester nor Pearl is efficacious against the symbiosis of Dimmesdale with Chillingworth.

Let us compare the mock family members Chillingworth, Dimmesdale, Hester, and Pearl with Hawthorne and his real-life family around him. Here we see a resemblance between the textual figures and the real-life ones. Both Chillingworth and Hawthorne's maternal Uncle Robert Manning evince an authoritative, disciplinarian, paternal attitude. As a mock Puritan God, Chillingworth helps the minister forge his self-tormenting cruel conscience, while Robert Manning implants into the mind/conscience of Hawthorne the Puritan work ethic. Just as the Puritanism represented by Chillingworth is internalized and subsumed by the minister (and emotionally ails him), so the work ethic represented by Manning deprives the author of his willpower to write a work of art, and strikes him with feelings of guilt. Here it is only natural that the immature minister and author in apprenticeship, both in need of emotional protection, seek out Hester and Hawthorne's mother and elder sister, Elizabeth and Ebe (Elizabeth). Pearl and Hawthorne look alike in their determination to search for a father, though only the former can look forward to a promising future.

In what Hawthorne describes as an appropriate realm in writing a Romance, "a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other," Hawthorne exposes his previous infantile self, the self that his father substitute incarcerates in the ferocious Freudian Superego. Hawthorne ridicules himself for having been wholly dependent on the parental figures — emotionally on the maternal figures and financially on the paternal figures. Thus, *The Scarlet Letter* is his proclamation of farewell to his filiopiestic self.