Hawthorne's Theory of Art: A Reflection of His Theory

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A REFLECTION OF HIS THEORY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS. .................................................... iii

Chapter
I. INTRODUCTION. ..................................................... 1
II. HATHORNE'S THEORY OF ART .................................... 13
III. THE PROTOTYPES OF THE ARTIST:
     AYLER AND DR. RAPPACCINI ................................. 41
IV. THE ARTISTS: DOWNE AND WARLAND ......................... 57
V. CONCLUSION. .......................................................... 75

BIBLIOGRAPHY. ............................................................ 83
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nathaniel Hawthorne, like other major writers of the mid-nineteenth century period known as the American renaissance in literature, was faced with the problem of justifying imaginative thought to a practical and materialistic society. As did the others, Hawthorne found his most effective mode of expression in symbolism. His achievement as a symbolist has a special relevance for the student of aesthetic values in New England a century ago, and for others who seek to understand the creative process and its significance in any era. To express his ideas concerning art and its relation to life, he transformed objects selected from nature or natural surroundings into symbols of art. By placing these objects in the hands of artist types who were actually participating in professions with the potential to perform valuable functions in society, Hawthorne demonstrates that with a combination of exceptional mechanical skill and love for mankind, man living his life can become a creative individual in any type of work and can produce a creation symbolic of truth, which possesses both ideal beauty and a warm lifelike quality. Using professional people with diversified occupations, rather than limiting himself to the artist in the more conventional sense
of the painter or sculptor, and common objects, Hawthorne conveys his deep involvement with democracy. He implies through his symbols of the process of artistic creation a universality of experience. He defends his imaginative thought by demonstrating its educational or ethical value, and he does this in a language which a practical and materialistic society could understand and hopefully appreciate.

This expression of art could not be achieved with mere words, but could only be conveyed through the symbol as Hawthorne conceived of it—an organic metaphor serving as a mediator between man and nature by communicating living truths. Because of this contribution to the powers of communication through his development in the concept of the symbol, Hawthorne stands out distinctly as an accomplished literary artist in his time and in the world of literature. His theory of art is so comprehensive and so complex that the entire body of Chapter II is devoted to its explication.

Chapter III and Chapter IV deal with the application of this theory. Careful analyses of four attempted symbols which were chosen as particularly effective representatives of Hawthorne's theory of art are presented to illustrate this theory. These images are the elixir of life created by Aylmer, an alchemist and chemist; the shrub created by Dr. Rappaccini, a botanist and physiologist; a wooden image created by Drowne, a wood carver; and a mechanical butterfly created by Owen Warland, a watchmaker. These attempted symbols occur

These symbols represent and reveal Hawthorne's art as their creators represent the artists of his theory. Two of these attempted symbols representative of ultimate achievements are produced by artist types who are in the area of science. This analysis reveals that a truly ideal symbol of art could not be created by the scientifically oriented mind who blindly attempted to create without love or desire to serve his fellow man. This artist type does not achieve truth; neither does he gain any reward. His attempted symbol becomes an allegorical image warning against the dangers of his process of creation.

The other two symbols were created by individuals who possess mainly artistic talent or mechanical skills. But through a love of human hearts they achieve the truth. And with an intense desire to embody it into a concrete image in order to make their ideas of beauty apprehensible to other people, they create living organic symbols of art. Because the audience is small who can enjoy Warland's creation and because of its frailty the butterfly is not as nearly ideal.

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as the symbol created by Browne. From its position as figurehead of a ship, his wooden image will serve as a source of beauty and truth for people all over the world, as should the ideal work of art of Hawthorne's theory.

Therefore through these attempted symbols of creation used by Hawthorne as the most effective mode of communication of his theory of art, his ideas concerning the inner and outward struggles of a man as a creative artist are reflected. In support of such an analysis Charles Feidelson states that a study of Hawthorne's concept of symbolism serves as a key to his situation and to that of other artists of his time, as well as a connecting link between the literature of their period and that of the present time.²

Although most of Hawthorne's stories involve both elements of allegory and the symbol, he did not make a distinction between them. He was interested in both as devices of ambiguity which combined to carry out his desire to suggest the multiple meanings and complexities in the life of the creative individual or artist. A strict separation between the two terms was irrelevant to his purpose.³ However, Hawthorne normally considered the symbol, emblem, image, type, or other synonyms with the smaller elements, and allegory was considered the larger framework in which these symbols or


images occurred. But since that time these terms have been
differentiated by specific definitions as much as possible.
An awareness of the differences between the symbol and alle-
gory makes it easier to evaluate the relative success of the
artist's images as symbols of art according to Hawthorne's
conception. The Handbook to Literature defines allegory in
this manner:

A form of extended metaphor in which objects
and persons in a narrative either in prose
or verse, are equated with meanings that lie
outside the narrative itself. Thus it
represents one thing in the guise of another--
an abstraction in that of a concrete image.

Therefore, in the use of allegory the image represents only
one idea or situation which can be traced from story level to
the level of the idea presented; there is a one-to-one relation-
ship (a fixed meaning) between the image and the idea.

A symbol is "an image which evokes an objective reality
and has that reality suggest another level of meaning." In
other words, "The symbol does not 'stand for' the meaning:
it evokes an object which suggests meaning." Within a symbol
the image and idea are fused and inseparable; in the fusion
the idea is often more interesting than its concrete expres-
sion which is allegory, for example, the symbol of the scarlet

4Ibid., p. 124.
5William Flint Thrall and Addison Hibbard. A Handbook
to Literature (1st rev. ed.: New York: The Odyssey Press,
6Ibid., p. 473.
letter on which Hawthorne based a novel. The symbol connotes various associated meanings operating on many different levels; since the symbol embodies more than one idea, it is ambiguous. This ambiguity and independence of meaning give the symbol "permanent objective value" in contrast to allegory which has a fixed meaning.

In summation, allegory is a means of equating in a rational and coldly mathematical way some abstract idea with an appropriate object or person or action, and the symbol indicates a more richly subtle and suggestive relationship between an image and the ideas it suggests. There is no evidence in Hawthorne's writing that he considered allegory an inferior form, but it is obvious from these definitions and a knowledge of his ideas and intentions that the symbol, because of its power of suggestiveness, would be a superior means of communication for the specific purpose of conveying his complex theory of art and life. These two generalized definitions of symbol and allegory will be used in the analysis of the four selected images.

As already mentioned, Hawthorne used both the symbol and allegory in his writings, and sometimes they were so closely associated that the ambiguity made it difficult to distinguish between them; however, if his ability to create

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8 Thrall and Hibbard, Handbook to Literature, p. 478.

9 Turner, Introduction and Interpretation, p. 124.
symbols failed, either intentionally or unintentionally, the
images became too controlled and one-dimensional and the
result was allegory. It seems logical, therefore, that the
successful symbol, according to general definition and to
Hawthorne's conception of the ideal symbol as created by the
artist type should most nearly embody and reflect because of
this quality of the symbol the author's theory of art and
artistic creation. For there Hawthorne expressed the most
fundamental truths through the medium of these images.

These particular images were selected for study because
they are created by artist types who have this common goal:
to create, by exerting all their creative energy or skills,
a most beautiful object synonymous with the goal of Hawthorne's
art. These characters which are singled out for study,
however, are not all artists in the usual sense of the term,
but all these figures possess similar qualities, particularly
abnormally acute intellectual gifts—whether scientific
knowledge or artistic mechanical skills—which qualify them as
creative individuals and consequently as artist types. They
also share the quality of impersonality and a common tendency
to stand apart from the crowd because of their professional
devotion. All these artist types produce an image or physical
object symbolic of their artistic achievements as a result of
a particular process followed to create the beautiful.
Naturally these men of varying professions will attempt to
achieve their goal by various means, and the most successful
achievement should reflect the ideal method.
These characters are considered artist-types and their creations are considered representative of Hawthorne's art because the destinies of the artists and the creative individuals are so closely related that the characters are just other images of the artist in Hawthorne's works. The majority of the characters throughout his stories are either clergymen, physicians, or mechanical artists or artists in actuality; and most of them can serve as an illustration of some aspect of the situation of the artist or creative intellect.

Various critics support this assumption. For example, Millicent Bell has written an entire book based on this idea: "Not only in the nature of their destinies, but in the personal qualities that distinguish them from the generality of men, the nonartists in Hawthorne's fiction often display an unmistakable relationship to his artists." She makes a study of these prototypes of the artists, as Hawthorne portrayed them, and presents her opinions concerning Hawthorne's theory of art as disclosed through the characters. Because these artists are not created as living people, but types, as a result of the slight detail in characterization, they can be studied collectively as representative of the early American creative artist.


11 Ibid., p. x.
W. C. Brownell supports this idea that Hawthorne's characters function as types, and not as individuals, in his book *American Prose Masters*. Leland Schubert, also acknowledging the tendency towards distinct types in Hawthorne's delineation of characters, attributes the presence of this quality to a lack of variety and a large amount of repetition of certain qualities. This can be explained by the fact that Hawthorne chose to deal with the destiny of men in general--or artists in general--and not with a particular man's individual complexities.

Both an awareness of critical opinion and a comparison of these specific characters selected for study with the actual artists in the stories confirms the existence of such artist types in Hawthorne's works, "refractions of the artistic nature." For these reasons it is assumed that Aylmer, the alchemist; Dr. Rappaccini, the botanist and physiologist; Browne, the wood carver; and Owen Warland, the watchmaker are prototypes of the artist. Their artistic

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14 There has been much speculation as to whether these artists and artist types and their problems of creation are relevant to Hawthorne's own personal situation. The best of his critics have not reached a common agreement; however their omnifarious opinions are interesting.

15 Bell, *Hawthorne's View of the Artist*, p. x.
inclinations will be supported by passages cited from the stories. When these artists and their achievements are analyzed, one will attain knowledge of the artists' situation and the nature of their art through the trial and error, or trial and success, of their attempts to create a symbol of beauty.

Because of the lack of detail the characters themselves often serve as symbols, but the main emphasis is on the attempted symbols representing the character's creative achievements.

A knowledge of Hawthorne's theory of art is essential in order to conduct this investigation of the attempted symbols selected for analysis here. Statements concerning his theory, proposed intentions, and definitions were taken from Hawthorne's notebooks, the introductions or prefaces to his works, and the actual stories. Opinions and ideas relative to his theory of art will be validated by such informed critics and biographers as Randall Stewart, Newton Arvin, F.O. Matthiessen, C.E. Woodberry, N.H. Pearson, Roy Male, Richard Fogle, and others. Yvor Winters' *Maulde's Curse* and certain other negative views of Hawthorne's literary achievement have not been cited here, on the basis that they seem irrelevant to the central concept of this study. This theory of art including the concept of the symbol constitutes the second chapter of this thesis.

The works from which these images were selected were written in the very beginning of his literary career after his graduation from Bowdoin College in 1825; at this time he returned to his home in Salem and secluded himself, making
conscious attempts to perfect his already noticeable talents. The results of this period were *Fanshawe* (1828), a short novel, and *The Twice Told Tales* (1837). The second edition of *The Twice Told Tales* (1842) was followed by *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846)—a collection different only in that the stories were of greater length and imaginative range. These early writings have been evaluated by Hyatt H. Waggoner as "a literary achievement of the first order" due to the richness of his symbols and themes. Hawthorne became known as one of the great writers of the short story. These tales provide valuable information regarding Hawthorne's development as an author during the early stages of his career, for within this period he is seen to grow until the artistic mold of his genius is fully formed. These short stories give valuable hints for the interpretation of his later and more nearly perfect works.

Hawthorne's underlying purpose was "to open an intercourse with the world"; as Feidelson points out he wanted to serve as a mediator between "private vision" and "the common sense objective world." The atmosphere that he wanted to establish for his efforts to combine the abstract idea and the concrete image is described in the preface to *The Blithedale Romance*: a "Fairy Land, so like the real world, that in a suitable remoteness, one cannot well tell the difference, but

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16 Hawthorne, *Selected Tales*, p. v.


an atmosphere of strange enchantment.⁹ This was the world of the romance; he chose it as a basis from which he developed his own conception of the genre. Because the "province of romance is halfway between the spirit and reality," the ordinary could be spiritualized or idealized so that the valuable truth, which was hidden under the burden of being commonplace, could be revealed.²⁰

However, Hawthorne felt handicapped even with this genre because the American writer was not granted all the advantages which the European writers had been given; he was not allowed the same amount of license regarding probability. As a result of trying to overcome this barrier by creating "a neutral ground where the Actual and the Imaginary might meet," so that he could express "the highest truths through the familiar words and Images," he discovered another problem was a lack of available materials to supplement his slight experience, from which to draw the details for composing the tales.

In searching for details for the setting and framework of his stories, Hawthorne turned to history; at this time there was an increase in historical research. The people felt that knowledge of the past was necessary in order to predict the future growth of the United States. Hawthorne's reading included colonial histories and diaries by such men as William Bradford, John Winthrop, Samuel Sewall, Thomas Hutchinson, and particularly Increase and Cotton Mather; these writers were

⁹Hawthorne, Complete Novels and Selected Tales, p. 439.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 439.
particularly perceptive of evil and guilt and their effects on man and nature, supplying Hawthorne with valuable information for his stories. Other materials consisted of separate histories of Boston, Plymouth, Lynn, Nantucket, and Salem; many volumes of the Massachusetts Historical Collections; and Bancroft’s History of the United States. English Annual Registers, English State Trials, newspapers, and court trials were among his favorites because of their subjects—cases of guilt and retribution and human judgments on morality.

This research of the history of New England provided a firm and distinct framework for the tales, which he had formerly found lacking; he could now give form to his ideas. However, in his most original tales the body or strength of the story is often the moral thought and not details or facts.

It is in the historical and romantic tales that Hawthorne’s imagination developed along with his power of insight, and in them he also gained power of the physical object, the symbol, which was “to serve as the medium for moral suggestion often difficult to put into words, of that sort whose effect is rather in the feeling than in the thought.” From his New England heritage, as Norman Pearson indicates, Hawthorne also gained “a sense of the depth and complexity of man’s inner life,” acquired through the habit of introspection which provided the means to see beneath man’s exterior into his

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21 Turner, Introduction and Interpretation, p. 17.
22 Woodberry, Nathaniel Hawthorne, pp. 134-35.
23 Ibid., pp. 134-35.
inner nature. Consequently, he developed a deeper trust in man's heart than in his lips. Hawthorne, in other words, inherited Puritan psychology (as evidenced by his concern for moral issues in the stories), introspection, and psychological analysis, but he did not inherit Puritan theology. His primary interest, as stated by him in the preface to *The House of Seven Gables*, was "the truth of the heart," universal truth, not a particular theological doctrine.  

With this genius, or poetic insight, Hawthorne spent much time meditating on the abstract facts of life, and often his imagination worked through the concrete physical object by contemplating it until the moral intention was fused with the object and revealed by it. This ability to free the inner life through the medium of the concrete object led to a repeated use of the symbol and the development of his conception of it. Through this device he was able to relate "truths of which every human soul is profoundly, though unutterably conscious"; he definitely attained a highly communicative method of expression through the execution of the symbol in the romantic tales. As it became a major means of conveying his theories concerning art and life, his stories gained new depth and strength; they passed from mere historical tales to

24 Hawthorne, *Complete Novels and Selected Tales*, p. ix.


tales possessing Hawthorne's original attempts to create the symbol--his most notable means of communication. This explanation of the role and resultant significance of the symbol in Hawthorne's works supports the utilization of this concrete image as a guide to his theory of ideal art.

Because of Hawthorne's belief in the close relationship between experience and art, he often altered the methods and resources of the narrative art in order to concur with his needs in expressing the truths of human experience (including the artist's situation) contained in his theory. He had in a way created his own genre and devices for use within it; for example, allegory and symbolism were subjected to such alterations. He chose these modes because they enabled him to give greater expression to the inner conflicts of man, and he felt an obligation or duty "to portray the bewildering contradictions of the spirit." 28

Since Hawthorne's concern was "the truth of the human heart," he was primarily a moralist and observer of life. The subjects or main themes of his stories are composed of the various types of individuals (including the artist), and his problem of the soul, indicating this interest in the mind and heart of man involving his inner experiences both physical and psychological. As his power of insight increased, his tales also grew in intensity and scope.

Concerning this power of insight, one of his friends said he possessed "the awful power of insight: into the essential

28 Matthiessen, American Renaissance, p. 314.
truths of the human heart); his fiction reveals the tragic balance between the dynamic creative individual and the harsh limiting conditions of human life. Hawthorne realized both the power and danger in art and the resultant moral problem which is presented to the artist. His awareness was due—in addition to his Puritan background and "humanitarian reverence for the sanctity of the individual spirit which the artist冷ly investigates"—to another motive: "an awareness that art claims to be a new and real creation in status and form, as such, is not subject to any external discipline." This awareness is expressed in story after story containing the theme of the consequences of artistic creation.

In writing about "the truth of the human heart," Hawthorne often dealt with the principle of evil and its effect on human behavior because he accepted it as a part of art and reality; however, he felt man's capacity for evil was over-estimated. The tales are studies of human life and not just evil alone; he saw good effects evolving from the situation of sin such as a resultant understanding of one fellow man. Hawthorne viewed man as a combination of good and evil which is illustrated by types of characters, such as these artists, as they act out their relationship to these opposing principles.

30 Feidelson, Symbolism, p. 234.
and represent the effects of good and evil on their various temperaments. The most frequent themes in Hawthorne's stories are the artist's (or creative individual's) place in society and the nature of good and evil as it is observed in various situations; of course the main interest here is on the symbol or image representative of his ultimate achievement to create the beautiful and the artist's process of creation.

In order to attempt an analysis of the success of the symbol and the method of its achievement, it is necessary to understand the major intentions of Hawthorne's art and his concept of the symbol; the second chapter explains these theories and with this knowledge, the symbols selected were evaluated.
Hawthorne's theory of art is evidenced through the functioning of the artists and the symbols, or objects, of their artistic achievement in the stories chosen for analysis here. His theory is synthesized from statements concerning literary intentions and methods in the notebooks, the prefaces and introductions, and in the actual works.

Hawthorne's feeling that his world needed "a more earnest purpose, a deeper moral, and a closer and homelier truth" resulted in the following goal: to communicate a sense of deep truths.\(^{32}\) The influence of Puritanism in New England made him very conscious of the moral aspects of life, for the main interest of these people was the life of the soul; he inherited the ability to see beneath the surface of things. The habit of observation and the power of insight came so natural to him that he often did not realize its existence because, according to G.E. Woodberry, "so inbred in him is that preconception of the Christian soul, whose moral fortune alone constitutes the significance of life."\(^{33}\) This temperament, along with his personal reserve, was so imbedded that it

\(^{32}\)Turner, Introduction and Interpretation, p. 15.

\(^{33}\)Woodberry, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 157.
controlled his art from within. The objectivity of his art of observation made his works universal and democratic.

Charles Foster points out that Hawthorne said, "An innate perception and reflection of truth give the only sort of originality that does not grow intolerable." This perception was obtained by meditation upon outward objects with an imaginative mind until they "assumed a relation both to truth and himself." Poetic insight, the gift of the artist, is defined by Hawthorne as "the gift discerning, in this sphere of strangely mingled elements, the beauty and majesty compelled to assume a garb so sordid." This doctrine of intellect, or poetic insight, is a very important aspect of Hawthorne's theory. The emphasis on thought as a part of creation distinguishes him from writers who often desired only a startling effect achieved without contemplation; Hawthorne's goal, says Foster, was "a high and beautiful seriousness."

Although Hawthorne insisted on the necessity and power of intellectual thought, he did not believe one could create a work of art using only this quality of poetic insight. In "Earth's Holocaust" the narrator of the story comments, "but if we go no deeper than the intellect, and strive, with merely

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34 Charles Foster, "Hawthorne's Literary Theory," PMLA LVII (March, 1942), p. 250.
36 Ibid., p. 250.
37 Ibid., p. 250.
that feeble instrument, to discern and rectify what is wrong, our whole accomplishment will be a dream." 38

Although the gift of insight was an outstanding and distinguishing quality of the artist, the power to see into men's souls was often an unpleasant awareness. The power posed great dangers for the artist because too much dependence on one's intellect leads to intellectual pride, and intellectual pride results in the isolation of the artist. In the preface to The Old Manse, the author says, "Works being written by men who, in the very act, set themselves apart from their age are likely to possess little significance when new, and none at all when old." 39 He continues by stating that true genius "melts away many ages into one, and effects something permanent," and of course, one must live in touch with the world in order to achieve such an act.

Hawthorne did not advocate complete reliance on the intellect, neither did he believe that man could create something more nearly perfect than nature. He realized nature's supremacy when, upon observing nature's beauty, he declared, "Art has never invented anything more beautiful." 40 And in that same passage he recognized God as the creator of the beautiful and as the higher power who bestows the gift of poetic insight. He believed that "the crowning glory"--of poetic insight--could be acquired only when the artist

38 Hawthorne, Selected Tales, p. 372.
39 Ibid., p. 338.
40 Ibid., p. 388.
acknowledged a power "higher and wiser than himself making him its instrument."

Whereas Hawthorne felt that the artist, when he had developed as closely as possible to the point of perfection, could be fairly independent, he did not believe the artist should live in an ivory tower, or be separated from humanity because of his profession, even though the tendency was inherent in the situation. When Hawthorne asserted his desire "to open intercourse with the world," he was recognizing the artist's duty to and dependence on society. In order to justify his art to a practical society, it must perform this social function: "to achieve communicability, to preach wisdom." To acquire such wisdom and understanding, the author realized, one must observe man, and he felt that this observation must be accompanied by the warmth of human sympathy.

The heart (as opposed to the head or intellect) to Hawthorne, was "an avenue leading to truth," and this is expressed in such stories as "Earth's Holocaus" and "The Hall of Fantasy"; this illustrates, says Foster, that the author agreed with Pascal's statement that "the heart has reasons which reason does not know." In the introduction to The Scarlet Letter, the writer speaks of "the genial atmosphere which a literary man requires, in order to ripen the best

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41 Foster, "Hawthorne's Literary Theory," p. 249.
42 Ibid., pp. 252-53.
43 Bell, Hawthorne's View of the Artist, p. 77.
44 Foster, "Hawthorne's Literary Theory," p. 249.
harvest of his mind," stressing that warm human communication was essential.\(^45\) It was in an atmosphere of reciprocal love that he could find reality. An awareness of the value of the heart is necessary for an understanding of his art; the importance of it is emphasized by numerous symbols and direct references to it in his works.

The warmth of human sympathy was a requisite of his endeavor "to give a more lifelike warmth that could be infused to those fanciful productions."\(^46\) The relationship he advocated was not necessarily a love between a man and woman, but, as Marius Bewley explains, just a "current of sympathy among these inner spheres, and it binds or ought to bind all men together."\(^47\)

Just as Hawthorne could not accept complete dependence on the intellect, neither could he approve artistic creation with the sole power of human sympathy or love. For ideal artistic creation he required man's entire powers "cultivated to the utmost, and exerted with the same prodigality as if he were speaking to the nation at large on the floor of the capitol."\(^48\)

This idea of a balanced combination was based on the romantic theory of Coleridge which includes this statement:

\(^45\)Hawthorne, Complete Novels and Selected Tales, p. 131.

\(^46\)Matthiessen, American Renaissance, p. 206.

\(^47\)Marius Bewley, "Hawthorne and 'The Deeper Psychology,',' Mandrake, II (1956), p. 369 (Hereinafter referred to as "Deeper Psychology."

\(^48\)Foster, "Hawthorne's Literary Theory," p. 251.
"A poet's heart and intellect should be combined, intimately and unified with the great appearance of nature...." Hawthonne clearly expressed the belief that a failure to use this combination would result in "a concrete arrangement of crystallizations, or even icicles as cold as they were brilliant." True genius was achieved, as indicated by Foster, only when, in Hawthorne's words, "a great heart burns at the household fire of a grand intellect."

The vision of truth perceived with the balance of head and heart by the creative genius must be presented with subtlety, for Hawthorne believed that "the highest merit of art is suggestiveness." He indicates his preference for the vague and indefinite as he observes a scene from nature mirrored in a river: "Surely the disembodied image stands in closer relation to the soul," as he questions the nature of appearance and reality. He found the reflected image more attractive than the original. The manner in which he would achieve the suggestiveness of the reflected image was the method of poetic idealization. In the story "The New Adam and Eve" he asserts, "It is only through the medium of the

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51 Foster, "Hawthorne's Literary Theory," p. 249.

52 Ibid., p. 249.

53 Ibid., p. 242.

54 Hawthorne, Selected Tales, p. 390.
imagination that we lessen those iron fetters which we call reality." 55

Hawthorne's interest in the quality of suggestiveness and the method of idealization originated in the romantic theory of Coleridge; this method involved selecting an object from nature, or his natural surroundings, and meditating upon it until it was reshaped, explains Foster, "to demonstrate the abiding truths of human experience on an ideal plane." 56

The fact that these objects are idealized does not mean he wanted to attain complete romantic escapism. On the contrary, the ideal which he chose to present in art was the real; it was not, Matthiessen states, "actuality transformed into an impossible perfection, but actuality disengaged from appearance." 57

Hawthorne, realizing the superiority of nature—the source of the objects for idealization—to art, did not attempt to distort the truth by striving to make art supreme, or to appear so; in his opinion, "art and the realm of the imagination were not final facts but valuable in educating the soul." 58 In the preface to *Snow Image* the writer defends idealization by saying, "There is no harm, but on the contrary good, in arraying some of the ordinary facts of life in a slightly idealized guise." 59 The effect Hawthorne hoped to

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56Foster, "Hawthorne's Literary Theory," p. 2545.
58Foster, "Hawthorne's Literary Theory," p. 234.
achieve in art with this method of idealization is revealed in
The Marble Faun when he describes the masterpieces of antique
sculpture "still shining in the undiminished majesty and beauty
of their ideal life"; this supports the idea that art "both in
its intention and its lasting result raises its material to the
level of contemplation, freed from accidents and irrelevancies."

Hawthorne's genius was imaginatively and creatively rich
because it was his nature to be meditative or reflective; he
often indulged in the state of reverie or musing as a source
of pleasure. He was able to experience in his imagination the
conflict of opposites (which are included in his vision of
reality) and to interpret the significance of the process; he
possessed, in Matthiessen's opinion, what every true artist
must achieve: "the ability both to record his observation and
even more important, the power to understand the valuable and
educational aspects of the situation observed."61 The stories
reflect this manner of thinking; there is perpetual contrast
between romance and reality, actuality and illusion, the natural
and the supernatural, and the concrete and the abstract.

His desire to communicate through suggestiveness by the
method of idealization determined his modes of expression.
Because of the frequency of the contrast between appearance and
reality involved in the method of achieving suggestiveness, he
believed it was necessary for him to move his stories and novels
to a realm apart from real life, so that they would not have to

60 Matthiessen, American Renaissance, p. 263.
61 Ibid., p. 112.
be compared with reality and be considered a failure. With this in mind he adopted the medium of romance. 62 In the romance the atmosphere could be, as Hawthorne described it, "a day dream, and yet a fact, and thus offering an available foothold between fiction and reality"; he was permitted a freeing of the imagination, ambiguity, and unreality without question. 63 This does not indicate that Hawthorne's matured concept of art and reality selected the ideal instead of the real; in the romance he was able to present his idea of the sort of relationship which should occur between the two. 64

The purpose of this genre was not to be fancy or picturesque but, as Frederick Crews explains, "to penetrate the deceptive, congenial surface and reach the terrible core of man's being." 65

The desire "to open intercourse with the world" for the purpose of conveying truths and the desire to achieve this communication with suggestiveness also directed Hawthorne to the use of allegory. His literary methods were affected by his reading of great allegorists as Spenser, Milton, and Bunyan; because of their ability to relate truth, they influenced his belief that allegory was the best means of communicating his imaginative thoughts. However, through the 

62 The genre of the romance is introduced in the introduction along with a description of the form.

63 Hawthorne, Complete Novels and Selected Tales, p. 439.

64 tale, Hawthorne's Tragic, p. 263.

use of allegory, Hawthorne was destined to arrive at even greater imaginative expression through the device of the symbol. Even though the "allegorical personifications," as Roy Male says, were a valuable means of elucidating the action of the chief character (in this instance the artist), the symbol of art is the most valued mode of communication of his theory of art in his works.66

Allegory differs from symbolism in that it imposes form, whereas the symbol, as Hawthorne uses it, is an organic unit which grows out of itself; according to Coleridge, the symbol "partakes of the reality which renders it intelligible."67 However, R.H. Fogle points out that even allegory often appears faintly organic in Hawthorne because his "innate quality of vision," his Puritan inheritance, caused him to see spiritual meaning in all living things; his allegory was "inseparable from moral complexity and aesthetic design."68 Matthiessen, speaking of Hawthorne's use of allegory and symbolism says, "And if the material world often becomes impalpable in his pages, abstractions can take on, not exactly flesh and blood, but enough intensity to make them imaginatively alive."69 Therefore, Hawthorne also improved the effectiveness of allegory. But the fact that he was not a pure allegorist is indicative by his statement of literary habit in which he

67 Thrall and Hibbard, Handbook to Literature; p. 888.
68 Fogle, Hawthorne's Fiction, p. 7.
69 Matthiessen, American Renaissance, p. 245.
"let the story tell itself from within according to his impulse, and not shape it from without by his own predetermined purpose," as a strict allegorist would not have done. But this was not always his habit, or it often failed and symbolism became allegory. However, Charles Feidelson points out that Hawthorne did chiefly aspire "to suggest a situation in which everything perceived has the symbolic status of an aesthetic object."  

Perhaps Matthiessen makes the best distinction between the most typical symbolism and allegory of Hawthorne, by comparing them to Coleridge's distinction between imagination and fancy. Using Coleridge's terms he says, "symbolism is esemplastic, since it shapes new wholes; whereas allegory deals with fixities and definites that it does not basically modify." He further explains the variance by stressing that allegory "can only be spoken consciously," but with the symbol "it is very possible that the general truth represented may be working unconsciously in the writer's mind"; therefore, "the advantage of symbolic writing over allegory is, that it presumes no disjunction of faculties but simple predominance." With this explanation of Hawthorne's symbols, it is easier to understand how they complement his theory; however, it was necessary to use a simpler definition for the purpose of identifying and categorizing the objects of artistic creation.

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70 Woodberry, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 148.
71 Feidelson, Symbolism, p. 6.
72 All the quotations in this paragraph are cited from Matthiessen, American Renaissance, pp. 149-50.
for further study. Then they were evaluated according to the requirements which Hawthorne set for the devices. Therefore, these definitions were used: allegory was considered the one-dimensional images, and the symbol was the attempted organic, living metaphor of Hawthorne's own conception.

The age in which the imaginative writer, including Hawthorne, purposed "to make a fusion between appearance and what lay behind it" and to communicate it to mankind, in order to justify art as a necessary part of society, inevitably chose the symbol as the primary means of expression. Only the symbol could serve as a language to suggest ideas of such an ambiguous and elusive nature as appearance and reality; such a message could not be related by direct statement. As an artist, or creative writer, it was Hawthorne's duty to find a special language to communicate the complexity of experience through his literature and only through the organic metaphor--the symbol--could he obtain ultimate expression.

The importance of the ability to create such metaphors is recognized when one becomes aware that "the production of great art is usually described in the 'creative metaphors of great life.'" The symbolic truth relayed through these metaphors, or symbols, is known as "the fundamental justification for all serious literary art"; therefore, the more ability one possesses to create such symbols, the greater his art

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73 Matthiessen, American Renaissance, p. ix.
74 Ibid., p. x.
will be, as well as the vindication for its existence. Hawthorne stood out in this area of achievement; he gave the symbol new dimensions with his skillful fusion of thoughts with objects. Hawthorne, as Coleridge, believed "those obscure ideas that are necessary to the moral perfection of the human being"—"ideas of being, form, life, the reason, the law of conscience, freedom, immortality, God"—could be conveyed most effectively by symbolic language and should, therefore, be reserved "for these objects, which their very sublimity renders indefinite, no less than their indefiniteness renders them sublime."  

The symbol was a relatively new device in the hands of American writers; they had not placed much emphasis on its utilization, even though it is a basic device in imaginative literature. The earlier authors such as Emerson and Thoreau had given their main energies to profound thinking and not its embodiment in the physical object; this is where Hawthorne makes an important contribution. The account in the introductory chapter of *The Scarlet Letter* exposes him as a symbolist, when revealing his response to the discovery and perception of the symbol, a scarlet letter, which is the basis of the novel. He says, "Certainly, there was some deep meaning in it, most worthy of interpretation, and which as it were, steamed forth from the mystic symbol, subtly communicating itself.

to my sensibilities, but evading the analysis of my mind." 77

It is obvious that this symbol was a worthy one after his presentation of it in the novel which is his most notable example of excellence in executing the symbol.

An important aspect of the symbol is indicated in the above passage; it denied a rational analysis of the mind, therefore it was irrational. The symbol had an objective visible meaning, but also, as characteristic of the symbol, there was concealed behind the letter an "invisible profounder meaning." 78 This meaning was a result of the ability of the symbol to organize a wide variety of ideas into single and sometimes simple acts of understanding—to make unconscious reflections of reality apprehensible to the human mind.

Although Hawthorne borrowed symbols from the Gothic romance, the symbols which he created were much more trenchant than those of the practitioners of the Gothic style. 79 He felt the functioning of their images had been hidden behind rational thought; they were static, not operative. According to William B. Stein in his book Hawthorne's Faust: Study of the Devil Archetype, Hawthorne's symbols exceed their prototypes in the Gothic style by two important qualities: his symbol generates a body of ideas pertaining to human destiny—the static Gothic symbol is transformed into a dynamic image—

77 Hawthorne, Complete Novels and Selected Tales, p. 102.
79 Bell, Hawthorne's View of the Artist, p. 69.
and Hawthorne's symbol functions as a separate unit of meaning which the former does not do. This latter quality is significant in relation to the development of this thesis because it indicates that the symbol has a value within itself, and therefore supports an attempt to study it as a reflection of Hawthorne's theory of art and the process of creation.

These distinctive qualities also differentiate Hawthorne's symbol from those of other writers who used the device—particularly Poe who also borrowed from the Gothic romancers—and who like them produced mainly a static symbol. The dynamic living quality was a great development in the concept of the symbol in America; Hawthorne shaped his imaginative thoughts into visible forms in the living symbol. With this instrument of communication, he was able to express more than the rationale of the theologian or the dialectician in his attempt "to interpret the wonder and mystery of life." Of his symbolistic endeavors Woodberry says, "this new mystery is the physical object that he seizes upon and in his imagination works as if it were clay, recreating so that it becomes more than pure symbol...it is almost vitalized into a shape of its own." 80

This organic or living quality can be traced back to Coleridge's romantic theory of art as many other aspects of his theory. The reconciliation of opposites was considered the highest art by Coleridge; he said, "Art...is the

80 Woodberry, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 144.
mediator between, the reconciler of, nature and man." 81 The quality which assisted in achieving the balancing of these opposing principles was the imagination. The medium through which the imagination worked to reconcile and achieve art was the symbol; for if art was to be the mediator between man and nature "for any set of opposites the form must be an object with living quality—not a dead copy." 82 The symbol represents, as mediator between man and nature, the "third thing" which cannot be expressed in a rational statement, for it is the living reality—truth. 83 The symbol serves as a "bridge or link" between the opposing principles. 84 Hawthorne uses the symbol as an ethical instrument; only by the "charged symbol, at once concept and experience" can man receive this type of education revealing a deeper moral or spiritual truth. 85 Through these opposing principles, says William Stein, Hawthorne illustrates that the duals of nature (and of human experience) are the basis of harmony in the universe, for when these opposites are resolved the reconciliation elucidates the nature of the secret unity; he thought that opposites exist for the purpose of leading the way to harmony. A valuable


82 Bate, Criticism, p. 361. See preceding note for details of publication.


84 Ibid., p. 115.

aspect of the symbol, therefore, is to give insight into this resolution or reconciliation of opposing principles; but it has another important quality: "its effect is to ease and govern the restlessness of the heart and mind"--it admonishes the conscience to beware of evil.  

Hawthorne's literary intentions included another quality other than truth: his theory necessitated the creation of the beautiful. It is a known feature of the romantic theory that beauty accompanies the pursuit of truth; therefore, Hawthorne's works acquire beauty by the same methods by which they attain truth. In the romantic theory, from which Hawthorne developed his ideas, beauty is defined as "the mediator between Truth and Feeling, the Head and Heart." Beauty was the means through which the artist could achieve truth, the goal of art; it was "a way of rendering truth realizable to the total mind, through the medium of the humanly persuasive symbol." Coleridge gives this definition of beauty: "It is the abstract, the unity of the manifold, the coalescence of the diverse; in the concrete, it is the union of the shapely (formosum) with the vital." His definition is similar to Hawthorne's ideas on beauty, for he believed, as pointed out by Foster, that beauty was composed of vitality and loftiness. It is through

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86 Bate, Criticism, p. 359.
87 Ibid., p. 359.
88 Ibid., p. 359.
89 Coleridge, On Poesy or Art, as cited in Bate, Criticism, p. 395.
the beauty of nature that the artist carries out the creative process; from nature he selects the physical object for meditation and idealization in the process of creating the symbol—or art. The objects are selected from the beautiful in nature because nature "symbolizes the spiritual life of man and hence to the higher life in which the spiritual life of man participates within us and abroad." 

Beauty is not the pursued end of art, but it is the means through which the artist creates art which is beautiful, as a result of perceiving truth in the process of the reconciliation of opposites effected in the idealized symbol. This method of idealization, in which events and materials are reshaped by meditation until they "take on the guise of truth universal and poetically beautiful," achieving Hawthorne's literary aims, beauty and truth, is in operation throughout these stories as successful living symbols are created; these ideal symbols are created by certain artist-types who follow Hawthorne's theory of the ideal creation.

Hawthorne's statements on morality lend a universal quality to his works; they are the same observations which could be made about man today, and Pearson points out that they give his writings "atmospheric intensity" and "unity of tone," thereby achieving beauty through their truths.

His skillful techniques in imaginative composition

91 Brooks, Literary Criticism, p. 393.
92 Hawthorne, Complete Novels and Selected Sketches, p. x.
93 Ibid., p. x.
and insight into the human situation truly gave his works superior beauty. W.C. Brownell acknowledges Hawthorne's achievement of beauty in the tales—"works of pure literature"—as a result of their originality, spirituality, and harmony, mentioning that the "prevailing tone" of his criticism was that these writings were "exquisitely beautiful—with their exceptional quality."94

When evaluating the success of the attempted symbols created by these various artists selected for this study, these qualities—truth, beauty, suggestiveness, and organic vitality—will be determining factors in this evaluation of the selected images in these four stories.

Next this knowledge of Hawthorne's art must be taken to the works for the purpose of observing the symbols in observation. His theory of ideal art is developed through the functioning of the slightly sketched artist types of his fiction. The fact that the conscious artists and the articulate thinkers possess qualities in common, and that he identified the situation of the artist with many other characters leads to the fact that all these characters included in this investigation are considered artist-types. The artist, according to Hawthorne, was "a man, susceptible to certain temptations and a certain fate common to many men."95 This fate usually consisted of being marked an outcast because of his profession by the practical Puritan society; this fact

94Brownell, American Prose Masters, p. 45.
95Bell, Hawthorne's View of the Artist, p. iv.
concerning the artist's problem in society inspired Hawthorne to attempt to defend the imaginative writer and his work.

Hawthorne's concern for the tragic dilemma of the artist in America is evidenced through the artist characters in his fiction, such as those studied here as a means of communicating his theory of art. The ideas of Hawthorne included in his conception of artists are inseparable from his views relative to the creative intellect; his vision of the artist is, says Miss Bell, "the most profound definition of the artist achieved by anyone writing at this time." 96

The artist figure had its source in real people from the real world; many particular qualities associated with the artists can be traced to their origin in his notebooks in which he recorded his observations on life. The artists enact their process of creation in the New England setting of the author's day, but under his influence their world becomes the universal world of humanity—or of artists. His faith in Christianity, placing significance only on the inner soul of man—not outward appearances—considering mankind "one and indivisible," gave his works the spirit of democracy and universality, and allowed him to overcome provincialism. 97

Hawthorne's concern with only the inner actions of man in general explains the reason for the slight detail in the delineation of his characters; his interest was in the universal—the destiny of men in general—not the particular

96 Ibid., p. 3.

97 Woodberry, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 156.
man. Instead, he created character types which served as prophetic images; they were a set of explanatory symbols which "vibrate with a particular intensity in a moral ambivalence that is objectively grounded in Hawthorne's society." 98

These types of artists have very important and specific functions in these tales. They perform symbolic actions depicting the process of nature and the life of man—particularly the struggle of the artist to create—which synthesizes experience in a symbolic structure—an image conveying symbolic truth which only the symbol can communicate.

The strife of the artist involved in the process of creation suggests the ambiguity of experience; it has become an accepted fact that man's destiny is shaped through a life of struggling. Through observation of these characters one gains insight into the ideas that motivate men in their roles in life. The tales contain an ambivalent attitude toward the artist, one may be godlike or ideal and another devilish or Faustian; ambiguity is present in the symbolic actions of the artists, in Hawthorne's statements on the nature of art, and in the attempted symbols.

The ambiguity enabled Hawthorne to introduce "the marvelous without offending probability." There is a constant contrast between appearance and reality involving darkness and lightness; the dark indicates the difficulty of seeing and the light helps one to see through opacities. The light, says Fogle, is "clearly of design" and the dark represents his

"tragic complexity"; but Hawthorne developed the ability to achieve "a classic balance" which occurs somewhere between the two. However, this ambiguity gives subtlety to his works and the multiple meaning enriches his art. Somewhere in this multiple meaning is a theory in which there is a reconciliation of opposites in a balance; the key to the most nearly perfected balance will be the symbol of the artist's ultimate achievement. Whether or not the image created is a successful symbol, according to Hawthorne's theory of ideal art, is determined by the individual or artist-type who created it and the methods of his creative process, and "in connection with this situation, they take on a particular importance and enhanced effectiveness." Therefore, if an image conveys hints of imbalance, or if it does not measure up to the standards of ideal art as conceived by Hawthorne, the artist who created it did so without observing the combination of intellect with human sympathy as recommended by the author. Here lies the primary function of the artist; he is to attempt to create the beautiful--an ideal work of art. Once the artist performs this function of creating a symbol of his achievement, this sketchy character disappears into the background and the symbol exists apart from the artist in whom it had its origin. Then the image or symbol, determined by the qualities of it in relation to Hawthorne's standards, stands

100 Jacobi, Psychology of C.G. Jung, p. 114.
alone representing the artist's achievement and the reflecting manner of its creation.

This analysis operates on two levels by evaluating the attempted symbols of the artist types as portrayed in the stories, and at the same time observing and appraising Hawthorne's skill in the execution of the organic symbol. Although the artist types in Chapter III do not succeed in creating a living symbol of art but an allegorical image this does not reflect Hawthorne's inability to create symbols, but the failure of the imbalanced method used by Aylmer and Dr. Rappaccini in attempting to create the beautiful—an ideal symbol of art. In Chapter IV the examples of living symbols of art which meet Hawthorne's requirements reveal both the success of the process of creation illustrated by Drown and Warland as well as the success of Hawthorne in achieving such an effective mode of communication through the symbol, or organic metaphor, as he developed it in his theory of art.
CHAPTER III

THE PROTOTYPES OF THE ARTIST: AYLMER AND DR. RAPPACCINI

The symbol or image of the artist's achievement reflects the quality of the artistic process through which it was created—the motives and purposes of a particular type of artist. For example, if a symbol possesses the qualities necessary in Hawthorne's theory of the ideal symbol of art—truth revealed by suggestion, beauty, organic vitality, and an effect of easing and satisfying the mind and heart of the artist—the method behind this creation will also contain the attributes which Hawthorne required for creating the ideal symbol of art. The necessary method was a combination of intellect or poetic insight and the warmth of human sympathy. As pointed out by Joyce Cary, the embodiment of the reconciled conflict in the true symbol communicating the beauty and harmony of its unity "enables a man to live with truth." 101 In fact, the truth revealed by this charged symbol—"at once concept and experience"—created through the artist's struggle to achieve the balance, is the only vital truth that man can attain and "art is the only means by which we can achieve it." 102

102 Ibid., p. 174.
However, if the artist does not create with the combination of head and heart, the symbol will reflect the imbalance by possessing a predominance of evil, representing the artistic situation in which it was created. Imbalance evolves when the artists, or creative intellects, overlook the limitations and boundaries of their complex lives, evaluating themselves as all good, or all bad; both ideas of perfection end with the isolation of the individual resulting from his intellectual or spiritual pride.\(^{103}\) Overindulgence in anything was sin to the Puritan mind in New England, and to Hawthorne the pride resultant of the creative intellect's situation was "the root of all evil, for pride is a voluntary separation."\(^{104}\) It caused the artist to break human ties in order "to attempt to appropriate something for one's exclusive use, to elevate one's self above one's fellows, to attain a fanciful peculiar excellence."\(^{105}\) Isolation caused by pride made the artistic creation impossible, for Hawthorne, like Coleridge, believed that in order to have true artistic genius one must "live in the universal, to know no self but that which is reflected only from the faces around us, our fellow creatures, but reflected from the flowers, the trees, the beasts, yea from the very surface of the waters and sands of the desert."\(^{106}\)

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\(^{103}\) Fogla, Hawthorne's Fiction, p. 6.  
\(^{104}\) Stewart, Biography, p. 255.  
\(^{105}\) Ibid., p. 255.  
\(^{106}\) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Philosophical Lectures, cited by Wimsatt and Brooks, Literary Criticism, p. 394.
The sin and evil of creating without the proper balance explains why the symbol would be controlled by evil if created in such a situation. If controlled by the evil force, the image will be one-dimensional, hence more allegorical than symbolic, serving as a warning of the dangers involved in the artistically oriented life. It would naturally be a failure as a symbol, although both are valuable devices of expression; however, the most nearly perfected symbol of art of Hawthorne is the object of this investigation. This explanation should serve as guide for the search for Hawthorne's ideal symbol of art.

The first artistic creation presented for analysis is the elixir on which Aylmer—an accomplished alchemist and chemist—concentrated all his powers. The creation of the elixir was an endeavor representative of all his professional prowess and the means by which he would attempt to achieve his proposed intention: to remove the birthmark, "a symbol of imperfection," from the cheek of his beautiful wife Georgianna, so "that the world might possess one living specimen of ideal loveliness without semblance of flaw" (p. 205). He purposed to create the beautiful and perfect in nature. All the individuals in this study share the common goal of the creation of the beautiful which coincides with Hawthorne's artistic intentions. Although the author indicates that Aylmer is "a man of science, an eminent proficient in every branch of natural philosophy," his method includes many qualities inherent in the

107 Passages from the four selected stories which are more significant or difficult to locate will be cited by page numbers in the text. See n. 1, p. 3 for publishing information for Waggoner's and Pearson's editions of Hawthorne's works.
creative process in which the artists of these stories engage; therefore, Aylmer is considered an artist-type and a revelation of the life endured by the creative intellect, or artist (p. 203).

Aylmer's imagination--indicative of Hawthorne's method--reflected upon the single flaw in his wife's beauty until the frightfulness of it could be no longer endured. Finally when he could not bear the thought of the imperfection any longer, he persuaded Georgianna to allow him to remove the "tiny hand" on her cheek.

In setting up the experimental environment in which he would seek to perfect his wife's beauty, one becomes aware of the similarities of Aylmer's setting with Hawthorne's ideas of a creative atmosphere. Aylmer places his wife in an apartment, which he has prepared for the sole purpose of the experiment. Upon viewing the scene, Georgianna remarked that it "looked like enchantment"; it was "a pavilion among the clouds" and a "magic circle" (p. 211). The alchemist continues the creation of fanciful and imaginative effects until he achieves a sort of fairyland, just as Hawthorne had proposed to create for the setting of his romantic tales--"a neutral world between thought and the objective world."

Aylmer's preference for suggestiveness and subtlety is also revealed through his scenery when he speaks of "that bewitching yet indescribable difference that makes a picture and image [by reflection] more attractive than the original" (p. 212). Aylmer attempted to contrive artificially the nature or natural surroundings from which Hawthorne selected his
objects for meditation and idealization; here he placed Georgianna and her birthmark, and here he administered the elixir created for the purpose of perfecting his wife's beauty—the objects of his intellectual pursuits. Throughout the story Aylmer continues to use, as Frederick Crews stresses, "skills that are unmistakably artistic," including the language used in evaluating great art. 108

The power behind Aylmer's creation was his intellectual knowledge; he says, in an attempt to give his wife the same confidence he has in his power of intellect, "I have spent much thought on the subject. . . . I am convinced of the perfect practicality of its removal" (p. 207). Also emphasizing his ability as a creative intellect are the great stacks of books and accomplishments enumerated in the development of the story; however Georgianna foreshadows the outcome of his experiment when she states that "his most splendid outcomes were almost invariably failures, if compared with the ideal at which he aimed" (p. 214).

Throughout the development of the story Aylmer experiments with several draughts of ambiguous quality—one of which was called a "precious poison" and a "virtuous potency"—which fails to remove the birthmark. With each failure Aylmer realizes that he must find a remedy "that shall go deeper"; this suggests one of Hawthorne's aims—a deeper art (p. 213).

At last Aylmer achieves the perfect draught and he says, "Unless all my science has deceived me it cannot fail" (p. 218).

108 Crews, Sins of the Fathers, p. 156.
The object representative of his ultimate achievement was carried to Georgianna in a crystal goblet: it was "a liquor colorless as water, but bright enough to be the draught of immortality" (pp. 217-218). This image, says Woodberry, serves as "the guiding clue of the imagination in working it out"--a reflection of the process of creation. 109

The initial effect of the elixir--as an attempt to create a symbol of art leading to beauty--was a failure; Aylmer's goal to create the perfect in nature did not end with success. Even though the elixir removed the birthmark, it also took away his wife by taking her life, because the perfect could not exist on earth. Therefore he was not allowed to possess his perfect beauty. The destructive power of the elixir, the controlling evil in it, reveals the imbalance of the artist's method. Although Aylmer's attempt to create a true symbol of art failed, the image serves as a reflection of the reason for the alchemist's defeat.

The success of the elixir as an ideal symbol of art is determined by its ability to relate truth through the balancing of opposites in the image, its suggestiveness and organic vitality, and its beauty and satisfying effect. First of all Aylmer's process of creation did not include the perception of truth which Hawthorne believed was essential for conveying symbolic truth. He thought that in order to create, the "crowning glory of the artist" was the realization of a higher power and His supremacy over man's achievement. Hawthorne

109Woodberry, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 147.
asserts this truth for the benefit of the reader: "She permits us indeed to mar, but seldom to mend, and like a jealous parent, on no account to make" (p. 208-9). If Aylmer had been aware of this truth, he would have realized the fruitlessness of his venture.

Aylmer had also previously forsaken intellectual pursuits "in unwilling recognition of the truth, against which Seekers sooner or later stumble" (p. 208). Stewart remarks that Aylmer's blind faith and love of science led him to believe that "he would ascend from one step of powerful intelligence to another until he should lay his hand on the secret of the creative force, and perhaps make new worlds for himself." It restrained him from recognizing the truth. He thought he had achieved success, as with "the philosophic investigation characteristic of a man of science," he observed his wife's struggle with death levied by the evil potion; Georgianna had to explain that she was dying. This indicates the vast extent of his refusal to accept the reality of imperfection and of the failure of his intellectual power.

Neither was the elixir successful in being suggestive. Its description--"a liquor colorless as water, but bright enough to be the draught of immortality."--reveals the clarity of its statement of the evil out of which it was created and the dangers involved in artistic creation.

The lack of subtlety in this image gives it a static quality instead of the organic vitality insisted upon by Hawthorne. Because of the overriding power of intellect...

110 Stewart, Biography, p. 249.
behind its creation, there had been no conflict to embody or to resolve in the image; there was no luxuriance of meanings conveyed by the image to give it a dynamic quality. One reason for this is that the object was created in an artificial nature, not true nature or natural surroundings from which the object was supposed to have been selected according to Hawthorne's theory. This image of the elixir was borrowed from Gothic romance; the elixir as a curse instead of a blessing was one of Hawthorne's favorite ideas.  

William Stein in Hawthorne's Faust: Study of the Devil Archetype includes in his study of Hawthorne's use of Gothic materials states that when physical objects such as magic portraits or enchanted mirrors possess supernatural qualities this is suggestive of the presence of the devil's controlling power. Since the elixir did possess the supernatural power of removing the birthmark, this statement may be applicable to it, and evil—or the devil—was definitely the controlling idea of the elixir.

Therefore, the elixir does not satisfy the requirements imposed by Hawthorne's theory of creation of the ideal living symbol. It did not achieve and communicate truth with subtlety and organic vitality; it did not attain the goal of his pursuit—perfect and ideal beauty on earth—and its creation did not give the artist satisfaction. According to Hawthorne's definition of the ideal symbol, it does not qualify, but it is instead, because of its one-dimensional quality—or clarity of

111 Bell, Hawthorne's View of the Artist, p. 69.
statement—an allegorical image, possessing a prominent tendency toward evil, warning one of the dangers inherent in artistic and intellectual creation when pursued to perfection.

When Aylmer's powers of imagination failed, his attempted symbolism became allegory; the reason for Aylmer's inability to create symbolic truth was the failure to use the balanced combination of head and heart. His blind faith in science and his desire to achieve perfection overpowered his love for his wife. This was obvious from the beginning when he decided to subject his wife to the dangers of the experiment. Intellectual pride resulted in his isolation within the laboratory and the seclusion of Georgianna in a special apartment "within which no evil might intrude." In preparing the apartment for the experiment Aylmer used heavy draperies to shut out the sunshine—symbolic of human warmth—which he said "would have interfered with his chemical process" (p. 210). It is ironical that in his attempts to keep out any evil influence he is committing the "unpardonable sin," as Hawthorne defined it in his American notebooks, "a want of love and reverence for the human soul," by breaking their bond with the world. 112

Aylmer attempted to justify his actions by assuming the nobility of the idea to achieve perfection, but no matter how high the aim is, it is "a mistaken idealism if it breaks human ties, if it rends apart the social fabric." 113 Without the


113 Stewart, Biography, p. 254.
combination of intellectual gifts with sympathy for humanity, according to Hawthorne's theory, Aylmer could not perceive deep truth, and without this perception he could not attain "imaginative reality" required to create symbolic truth; the heart was the only "avenue to truth." Through the operation of the creation of the symbol the true artist gains an insight into reality; hence Aylmer was not able to create a true living symbol because he was disillusioned by the image even after the elixir was administered. The insubstantial quality of the image goes along with Hawthorne's statement on excessive intellectual pursuits: "If we go no deeper than the intellect, and strive with merely that feeble instrument, to discern and rectify what is wrong, our whole accomplishment will be a dream."

Certainly Aylmer's ambitious pursuits of the intellect had distorted his mind and disillusioned him until he thought he could perfect nature; he reflects, "What will be my triumph when I shall have corrected what nature left imperfect in her fairest work" (p. 203). His pride of intellect causes him to lose touch with humanity—the basis of happiness—and the elixir of life, the emblem of his achievement, reflects the disastrous results of that sort of life. Hawthorne concludes the story with this criticism of Aylmer's process of creation:

Yet had Aylmer reached a profounder wisdom, he need not have thrown away the happiness which could have wove his mortal life of the same

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115 Hawthorne, Selected Tales, p. 372.
texture with the celestial....he failed to look beyond the shadowy scope of time, and living once for all in eternity, to find the perfect future in the moment (pp. 220-21).

Because Aylmer refused to go deeper than the intellect into the heart, he did not have the power to understand the valuable educational aspects of his own situation.

Hawthorne frequently related isolation and tragic failure to the quest for unlimited knowledge and perfection in the artist figure in order to warn one of the dangers faced in the struggle to create art. Aylmer is one of the many characters through which he explored the unbalance resulting from inhumanity; his reflection on this balance of the head and heart constitutes one of his major themes.

Dr. Rappaccini--another prominent scientist and physician--is a very similar artist type; both he and Aylmer possess qualities indicative of the Faust image in Gothic romance and they both convey the dangers faced by those who ambitiously seek illicit knowledge denying love and understanding.

Dr. Rappaccini also aspired to create the beautiful. Like Aylmer, he was a scientist and his power is explicit in a personal description: "A face singularly marked with intellect and cultivation, but which could never, even in his more youthful days, have expressed much warmth of heart" (p. 273). With his scientific knowledge, he spent his time observing intently each individual plant in his garden. Dr. Rappaccini's process varies from Aylmer's method; Aylmer confined himself to his laboratory and Georgianna's apartment in an artificial setting, but Dr. Rappaccini is a botanist and the objects of his observa-
tions are live in nature. Because Hawthorne states that nature and natural surroundings are the best source of objects for idealization, Dr. Rappaccini's attempted symbol of the beautiful should have some advantage over Aylmer's elixir.

Giovanni, a character involved in the story, remarks, upon observing the garden that it should serve "as a symbolic communion with Nature" (p. 273). If Dr. Rappaccini can achieve through his process a living symbol—a mediator between man and nature—this would truly be the garden's purpose; however, a closer look at this creation is necessary.

The center of attention in the garden is a magnificent shrub with "a profusion of purple blossoms each of which had the luster and richness of a gem; the whole together made a show so resplendent that it seemed to illuminate the garden, even had there been no sunshine" (p. 269). In this object of nature Dr. Rappaccini had achieved the beautiful; it was his "chief treasure"—the symbol of his ultimate achievement. But further and closer observation of the shrub by Giovanni, who continues to give comments inherent in Hawthorne's theory and in contrast to Dr. Rappaccini's methods, makes him aware that this seemingly beautiful plant has a deadly poisonous effect—"did conceal a deadlier malice"—which far outweighed its beauty. And a "questionable and ominous character distinguished the whole garden" (p. 271).

Because of the beauty and splendor and perfume of the shrub, "it could be mistaken for a present reality," but as the story develops, Giovanni affirms that evil is the dominating
quality of the bush. He describes it as an "adultery, of various vegetable species, that the production was no longer of God's making, but the monstrous offspring of man's depraved fancy, glowing only with an evil mockery of beauty" (p. 283).

Since Dr. Rappaccini had combined his laboratory with nature he had achieved a more complex image of his creative power. But again the object does not resolve the conflict and there is a predominance of evil in the shrub which negates any possibility of a true organic metaphor, or ideal symbol, which has the power of reconciling opposites, and thereby serving as a mediator between man and nature. Because the achievement does not meet the requirements of Hawthorne's concept of the symbol, it is obvious that Dr. Rappaccini did not have a "communion" with nature which would have resulted in the power of symbolic language. The reason for the lack of communication was that Dr. Rappaccini examined the shrub by purely scientific observation and there was "no approach to intimacy between himself and these vegetables" (p. 270). Because of its unnatural and evil quality--as a result of being created merely by intellect--contact with the plant would have poisoned him with "a terrible fatality."

Dr. Rappaccini's power of creation was composed of "merely a speculative, not a human interest," explaining why he did not succeed. He, like Aylmer, cared "infinitely more for science than for mankind," and he too failed to create the perfectly beautiful in a symbol of art because his intellectual pride caused him to refuse to see the truth--to realize he was
striving to go beyond the limitations of man in trying to create the perfect beauty in nature. Dr. Rappaccini was so obsessed with his "perverted wisdom" or evil powers that he gazed upon his creations as "an artist who should spend his life in achieving a picture or a group of statuary and finally be satisfied with success" (pp. 297-98). He is completely unaware of the truth and his pursuits end with the disastrous result of the death of his daughter.

Because he did not have the balanced combination, his emblem of achievement also became an allegorical image revealing the evil of "the depraved fancy" behind its creation and its "evil mockery of beauty" instead of its ideal form—the living symbol of truth. The shrub is definitely "monistic in its growth," says Fogle, making one aware of the horrid effects of an "exclusively scientific attitude toward life." 116

Results particularly illustrated by Aylmer and Dr. Rappaccini are the dehumanizing of the detached observer of life and the sacrifices of the objects of experimentation, which in these two examples included human lives. Of course, this lack of sympathy also makes them unable to create the beautiful or to embody their ideas of beauty in an object from nature. Aylmer and Dr. Rappaccini are prototypes of the artists who possess this scientific attitude; with their dependence on abstract thoughts without knowledge of humanity and the concrete world, they are unable to fuse their rational ideas with the physical object. Their intellects have advanced so far that

116 Fogle, Hawthorne's Fiction, p. 234.
they have no awareness of the meaning of morality or ethics; they are indifferent towards religion. This situation, explains William B. Stein in Hawthorne's Faust, occurs when the intellect rules and there is no possibility of reconciling the values of science and those of Christianity, nor one of reconciling the opposites which are inherent in the symbolic process. Hawthorne's theory specifies that one cannot create without "moral conversion" or perception of the truth which usually evolves by a tragic experience of the heart.

Examples of imbalance of evil other than Aylmer and Dr. Rappaccini include such figures as Goodman Brown who suffers from egocentric self-righteousness. He is so possessed by the idea of his goodness that he will not accept the truth that man must contain some evil and that only God is perfect. He refuses to love his wife and children because they are contaminated by evil and he believes he is pure. An overzealous defense of righteousness also leads to evil because, as in this instance, it results in the denial of human love and the isolation of the individual. Hilda, an artist in The Marble Faun, is so pure that she cannot extend sympathy to her close friend who has sinned. She does not know that, in Hawthorne's message, sin is the common quality of all humanity; it is the element that draws man together in a common bond.

The painter in "The Prophetic Pictures" is a similar example of the artist type who neglects human sympathy but has great ability; however his ability is relative to his success as a painter, not as a scientist. He too creates an image, a
prophetic picture (also of supernatural qualities), which brings him into contact with his conceivably evil powers. Instead of facing the truth and heeding its allegorical warning, he runs from his profession, which necessitates a cultivation of such powers, with fear and turns to the life of the wanderer.

Stein, in discussing in his book *Hawthorne's Faust* the Faust images which are illustrated by characters who in striving for illicit knowledge neglect to realize their limitations, states that these individuals who are attempting to know themselves must learn that they must not try to become demons or gods, but instead that they are imperfect individuals who can live meaningful lives, before they can realize their own personal roles in life.

These figures who do not attain a true vision of reality because they fail to profit by the warning given by evil (by refusing to accept it as a part of human experience), are as a consequence overwhelmed by it. They attempt to conquer blindly the universal force of nature "of which man is just a tool" because they will not come to terms with truth.
CHAPTER IV

THE ARTISTS: DROWNE AND OWEN WARLAND

The attempted symbols of Aylmer and Dr. Rappaccini reflected the evil situation in which they were created. The fact that the objects of their achievement operated on the less significant level of the allegory, instead of the powerful medium of the living symbol, also indicated that the creation behind them was deficient in some aspect which was the lack of human sympathy.

The next emblem or attempted symbol to be evaluated, according to Hawthorne's theory of the ideal symbol or art, is the wooden image of a lady created by Drowne, a New England wood carver. His goal, as designated for him by a ship owner and commander, was "the handsomest image that the skill of man can cut out of timber"; therefore, Drowne, like all the other artist types, attempted to create the beautiful—an ideal work of art (p. 1116).

The source of the objects on which he concentrated his powers—the wood which he shaped into human form—came directly from the trees in nature, corresponding with the ideal source of objects as indicated by Hawthorne. Drowne's profession, the carving of figureheads for New England ships, is closer to the realm of art than that of Aylmer and Dr. Rappaccini, the scientists; however, wood carving was more of a mechanical
skill and was not considered inside the realm of what is known as conventional art with painting, sculpturing, or writing. Nevertheless, his methods and skills are very similar to those of the actual artist.

The ship owner requests that Drowne "lay aside all other business and set about this forthwith" (p. 1117). This temporary isolation was considered necessary by Hawthorne, during the time of the creation, so that his creative imagination could develop to its highest point without interference by the harsh everyday life, although the artist could not stay in isolation to the extent of breaking all ties with humanity. Drowne agrees to devote all his time to the project, saying, "I'll do my utmost to satisfy you," and begins his process of creation (p. 1117). Because he works at night and in secrecy, there is an atmosphere of imaginative mystery linked with his endeavor; his usual admirers become "sensible of a mystery in the artist's conduct" which reminds one of the world of fantasy sought for by Hawthorne.

A description of Drowne's image during an early stage of creation shows signs of following close to the specifications of ideal art as professed by Hawthorne: "It seemed as if the hamadryad of the oak had sheltered herself from the unimaginative world within the heart of her native tree, and that it was only necessary to remove the strange shapelessness that had incrusted, and reveal the grace and loveliness of a divinity" (p. 1118). Even in this initial step of the process there was "an effect that drew the eye from the wooden
cleverness of Browne's earlier productions and fixed it upon the tantalizing mystery of this new project" (p. 1113).

The power which Browne possessed was different from the intellectual or factual knowledge of Aylmer and Dr. Rappaccini used in their attempts to create the beautiful. Although he was very young, the woodcarver, through the skillful use of his hands, had attained a great deal of recognition and admiration in his art; his exceptional talent, obvious since childhood, is described as "a knack--for it would too proud a word to call it genius--a knack, therefore for the imitation of the human figure..." (p. 1117). His power was of the head and the hands as opposed to the heart, but it was a gift of the mind enabling him to exhibit mechanical skill in his trade, not an accumulation of scientific facts.

As already mentioned, Browne's wooden images were so skillfully formed that they only lacked "one other touch," but the concern here is with his ultimate achievement. During this time, however, since these former works, Browne had been deeply involved in the single task of creating the most beautiful figurehead for the commander's ship. As he progressed, he explains to an artist friend named Copley (who serves as a knowledgeable critic of Browne's works) saying, "But there has come a light into my mind... that the one touch which you speak of as deficient is the only one that would be truly valuable, and without it these works of mine are no better than worthless abortions" (p. 1119). He compares his former works with the work of an inspired artist to the
difference between a "sign-post daub" and one of the painter's "best pictures." This acceptance of this particular truth--the realization of his limitations--distinguishes Drowne's process from the obsessive quests of Aylmer and Dr. Rappaccini. With this knowledge Copley can not understand why Drowne's images did not show the advantage of the "singular depth of intelligence" (knowledge of truth), for he believed, as Hawthorne, that "that sense of deficiency...and which was so rare in a merely mechanical character must surely imply genius" (p. 1119). This genius could be that one required by Hawthorne for the ideal symbol of art.

An evaluation of the image will determine whether or not Drowne has developed the theory involving the ideal combination. The initial effect of this image on the critic, Copley, who makes statements analogous to Hawthorne's ideal theory of art and therefore very advantageous ones, is one of astonishment. He says, "If this work were in marble it would make you famous at once; nay, I would almost affirm that it would be an era in art. It is as ideal as an antique statue, and yet as real as any woman whom one meets at a fireside or in the street" (p. 1120). This valuable statement of the critic includes the very combination of the excellence of Greek sculpture with the warmth and vitality of human sympathy--a sort of combination of classicism and romanticism--and it suggests Hawthorne's theory of the ideal beauty as it originated with the European romantics. This effect alone is a most significant achievement, but one must go farther to
arrive at a decision concerning its success as an ideal symbol of art as Hawthorne defined it. It must give truth through the process of creation and communicate this truth with suggestiveness; it must possess organic vitality and it must have a satisfying effect on its creator.

Hawthorne, and Coleridge, had stated that through the process of creating, involving all of one's powers of intellect, understanding sympathy, and imagination, one is able to perceive the truth that is to be the message of his symbol. Drowne says, "A well-spring of inward wisdom gushed within me as I wrought upon the oak with my whole strength, and soul, and faith" (p. 1120). He had perceived and accepted the truth which is one of the primary requisites of the symbol of art; it "had a natural truth that it seemed impossible for the most fertile imagination to have attained without copying from real prototypes" (p. 1120).

As for the manner in which the image conveyed this truth, it was through suggestiveness, indicated by such phrases: "vague in outward presentment," "irregular and misty outward," "general design," and "though not precisely regular" (p. 1120). The story also indicates that "the observer rather felt, or was led to imagine, than really saw what was intended by it" (p. 1120). This statement is very similar to the description of the effect of the Scarlet Letter upon Hawthorne as he discovered it; he says the letter was "communicating itself to my sensibilities, but evading the analysis of my mind." The act of perception of the symbol illustrates the development of
his own conception of the symbol. The "denseness" of this process of perception implies the reason why the final achievement, if successful, is "subtly imaginative and only occasionally blemished by the kind of mechanically obtrusive fancy." The image definitely meets the standards which Hawthorne set for this means of communicating truth; he much preferred the rich suggestiveness of the symbol above the direct or didactic statement. The author's own conception of the romantic theory places supreme value on an art that "suggests far more than it shows" (p. 1120).

Hawthorne's idea of the true living symbol of art was an organic metaphor—a lifelike symbol necessary in order to convey truth. The story relates that "gradually by a magic touch, intelligence and sensibility brighten through the features, with all the effect of light gleaming forth from within the solid oak. The face became alive" (p. 1120). She was so lifelike that when Browne displayed her, his masterpiece, for the people of the village to enjoy and view, they beheld the figure with fear because "as if, not being actually human, yet so like humanity, she must be something preternatural" (p. 1121). The people of the village, in fact, confuse the real life model with the image because it was so convincingly alive. Browne had acquired that genius which enabled him to give that life giving touch turning a wooden image into a living character; this was the aspect missing from his earlier carvings.

In Hawthorne's theory, beauty was inherent when the quality of truth was possessed by the image; to him beauty was a means to truth for it was truth. As for Drowne's creation's face, "it was a beautiful, though not precisely regular and somewhat haughty aspect but with a certain piquancy about the eyes and mouth, which of all expressions, would have seemed the most impossible to throw over a wooden countenance" (p. 1120).

In addition to this beauty and truth within Drowne's image, this passage also suggests, by the "haughty aspect" and "piquancy about the mouth and eyes" included in her expression, that a little of the evil quality could reside in her form. Copley, the artist, noticed the "look made up of pride, coquetry, and gleam of mirthfulness" on her face, which he interpreted as her enjoyment of the admiration of her image (p. 1123). But the "bigots of the day" suspected "the possibility of evil spirits entering into the form" (p. 1123). This presence of good and evil suggests the reconciliation of opposites which the author believed was achieved by the true symbol, giving it a dynamic quality. It also reflects the harmony which results from the resolution of good and evil in the image.

The wooden lady meets Hawthorne's requirements for the ideal symbol of art. It assists the artist in perceiving truth: it communicates truth by suggestiveness; it has organic vitality necessary to convey living truth; and the beauty which is inherent in all these qualities. This symbol is ideal
art; "it is a way of rendering truth realizable to the total mind, through the medium of humanly persuasive symbols." It is a means by which the artist achieves a great deal of satisfaction; for as a true symbol, its effect is "to ease and to govern the mind and heart" because, according to the author's concept, it resolves the conflict of opposing principles in experience. Knowledge of his work of art was sufficient for Drowne; he felt the composure and satisfaction which comes after one's completion of a successful process. He refuses to accept any monetary reward for the work, suggesting that as an artist the process of creation was enough reward in itself. He says in regard to Copley's comment on the sculptor's rules of art, "I know nothing of marble statuary, and I know nothing of his rules of art: but of this wooden image...I may say I know something....If I can produce my desired effect by painted wood those rules are not for me, and I have a right to disregard them" (p. 1124). The artist, noting the woodcarver's feeling of accomplishment entitling him to transcend all rules, states that he has "the very spirit of genius" (p. 1121). Drowne's statement that he has achieved the desired effect supports and concludes the analysis of the image, accepting it as an ideal symbol of art.

With the acquisition of an example of the ideal organic metaphor of Hawthorne's theory, it is possible to observe the process of creation behind its achievement as a likely example of the ideal method of creation. It will be interesting to discover how a mechanical wood carver, outside the realm of art, can acquire the "life-giving touch" and create an ideal
symbol, as well as detecting the contrasting elements of the ideal creation with those of Aylmer and Dr. Mappaccini.

It has already been mentioned that Browne had a distinct talent for carving wooden images--his gift of the mind--but somewhere after the time he devoted all his powers to the figurehead of the lady, a new power had been acquired: something had inspired him giving him the "singular depth of intelligence." Something had given him the ability to give to the image "the ethereal essence of humanity," of which "the slightest portion would have outvalued the utmost degree" of his former talent which was entirely a mechanical skill for carving figures (p. 1118). The first sign of an additional power is indicated as the artist catches a glimpse of Browne engaged in the process of creation; he was "bending over the half-created shape, and stretching forth his arms as if he would have embraced and drawn it to his heart; while, had such a miracle been possible, his countenance expressed passion enough to communicate warmth and sensibility to the lifeless oak" (p. 1119). That this passion was present is confirmed when the woodcarver speaks of "this creature of my heart" with a sense and depth of passion that causes his voice to falter. At this time Copley saw for the second time "that expression of human love which, in a spiritual sense,...was the secret of life that had been breathed into the block of wood" (pp. 1120-121). Browne's process does contain the ideal combination of the head and heart, poetic insight and love, as deemed essential by Hawthorne; therefore, it is confirmed
that the quality of the symbol—a living organic metaphor—reveals the same quality of the process behind it, which is also ideal. Drowne has accomplished his goal to create the beautiful because he had attained the right combination of powers, illustrating Coleridge’s statement, and Hawthorne’s belief, that images only become “poetic for works of art” when human and intellectual life is transferred to them from the poet’s creator’s own spirit.”

It was also Coleridge’s and Hawthorne’s belief that “every human being, then is, so far as he perceives anything at all, a creator and an idealizing agent.” Because through love Drowne was allowed to perceive his limitations, and through perception he acquired the power of idealization, he was able to create a living symbol of art. As the source of the inspiration and the object of his passion, Drowne had a beautiful lady from real life as a model. His love for her was so intense that he even looked upon the wooden image with “a lover’s passionate ardor.” The process which coincides with Hawthorne’s theory of beauty and love is described by Copley when he says, “No wonder that she inspired a genius into you, and first created the artist who afterwards created the image” (p. 1124).

Aylmer and Dr. Rappaccini were not allowed to possess the gifts of the true genius because of their pride and dependence on their intellects. They would not recognize the truth

118 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Letters, as cited by Wimsatt and Brooks, Literary Criticism, p. 403.
119 Wimsatt and Brooks, Literary Criticism, p. 393.
of their limitations; they felt no need for human love. As a result of their imbalance their emblems of achievement became allegory, a less effective form of communication, whereas Drowne acquired the combination which enabled him to create the organic metaphor, which was the ideal aim of Hawthorne’s conception of romantic art.

However, Drowne’s attainment of the “light of imagination and sensibility” was only temporary; love “rendered him a genius for that one occasion” (p. 1124). The story poses the possibility that “in every human spirit there is imagination, sensibility, creative power, genius, which according to circumstances, may be either developed in this world or shrouded in a mask of dullness...” (p. 1123). Through Drowne, Hawthorne illustrates the ideal combination by his ability to develop his creative powers by laying aside material labors. Even though it was only for a short time, Hawthorne supports the value of isolation in “The Hall of Fantasy” by stating, “Let us be content...with merely an occasional visit, for the sake of spiritualizing the grossness of actual life, and prefixing ourselves in a state in which the idea shall be all in all.”

Another artist type who proposed to create the beautiful is Owen Warland, a watchmaker. He, like Drowne, possessed a talent for being extremely skillful with his hands; his main purpose, like Drowne’s, was not actually inside the realm of art, but his mechanical ingenuity includes artistic methods. In fact, many times he is referred to as the “artist of the

120 Foster, “Hawthorne’s Literary Theory,” p. 254.
beautiful" in the story of the same title. Warland's pursuits are accompanied by his main power—an artistic gift of the mind—and they are also conducted at night and in secret, especially when he becomes more involved in his attempt "to put the very spirit of beauty into form and give it motion" (p. 156). The object of his contemplation and idealization was the butterfly. He attempts to "spiritualize machinery"; he makes trips into nature to observe the living butterfly in order to learn its secret, so that it could be fused into his mechanical one. This goes along with Hawthorne's romantic theory that nature and natural surroundings are the best source of objects for acquiring the ideal symbolic truth in art. In fact, the author notes Warland's proper selection: "The chase of butterflies was an apt emblem of the ideal pursuit in which he had spent so many golden hours; but would the beautiful idea ever be yielded to his hand like the butterfly that symbolized it?" (p. 251).

This passage indicates that Warland had the same intention as Hawthorne. This is expressed in the story as the artist's responsibility: "Alas that the artist, whether in poetry, or what ever must content himself with the inward enjoyment of the beautiful, but to chase the flitting mystery beyond the verge of his ethereal domain, and crush its frail being in seizing it with a material grasp" (p. 252). In other words, Warland wanted "to give external reality to his ideas" (p. 252). This is synonymous with Hawthorne's attempt to create the organic metaphor.
After much conflict between material and spiritual, organic and mechanic, and practical and aesthetic, indicative of the artistic life in the American society, with "much thought, minute toil, and wasting anxiety, through the use of all his powers Owen Warland succeeds in creating his ideal symbol of art--the butterfly. An immediate factor in favor of the symbol is that it represents to the Romantics beauty in ideal form: "its ancient association with the psyche is in full accord with the subjectivity inherent in Romantic aesthetic theory; furthermore, it spectacularly demonstrates the metempsychosis Emerson called 'the law of the universe.'" 121

Warland bears the final result of his labors to Annie, his inspiration, and presents it as "this spiritualized mechanism, this harmony of motion, this mystery of beauty." (p. 262). The narrator comments, "Nature's ideal butterfly was here realized in all its perfection" (p. 262). The mysterious quality associated with the butterfly adds to its suggestiveness. The effect of contact between the butterfly and characters representative of materialism deadens its colors and finally crushes it, suggesting the effect of the practical world on the creative artist's endeavors. For this reason both Browne and Warland had to submit to isolation in order to create.

As a living symbol, its qualities were so lifelike that Annie could not decide whether the butterfly "was indeed a living creature or a piece of wondrous mechanism." The "artist

121 Hale, Hawthorne's Tragic Vision, p. 35.
of the beautiful" says, "it may well be said to possess life, for it has absorbed my own being into itself; and in the secret of that butterfly, and its own beauty—which is not merely outward, but deep as its whole system—is represented the intellect, the imagination, the sensibility, the soul of an Artist of the Beautiful!" (p. 262). He has embodied ideas of the beautiful into a mechanical butterfly, creating a living symbol of ideal art, the organic metaphor. These qualities included in his description suggest he has the inspired genius of the true romantic artist and his symbol reflects such an ideal combination as advocated by Hawthorne's theory.

The symbols of art created by Browne and Warland illustrate aesthetic reality as described in "The Antique Ring" with this statement: "You know that I can never separate the ideal from the symbol in which it manifests itself." This inseparable resolution is a requisite of the true symbol.

Like Browne, Warland's process of creation included a combination of ingenious mechanical skills and human love. Also, the source of the watchmaker's inspiration was a beautiful woman, for he "had persisted in connecting all his dreams of artistic pursuit with Annie's image; she was the visible shape in which the spiritual power that he worshipped and on whose altar he hoped to lay a not unworthy offering" (p. 257). She inspired his creative imagination.

Although it was implicit that Browne had a secret and unrequited love for the model of his image, his suffering is

not as apparently tragic as that of Warland's when he loses Annie by her marriage to Robert Danforth. Yet her love continues to inspire Warland's efforts and enables him to create a symbol that has come from "his master's heart." The loss of Annie and the lack of sympathy for his artistic pursuits almost destroy Warland; he is forced into isolation because of the conflicts of his profession. Here the writer describes the sort of character which the ideal artist must acquire: "A force of character that seems hardly compatible with its delicacy; he must keep faith in himself while the incredulous world assails him with utter disbelief" (p. 248).

The tears which stained Drowne's face and the period of Warland's desolation indicate the tragedy necessary for "the purification of 'that inward sphere'" and the consequent attainment of truth. Hawthorne believed that the heart was the only way leading to truth, and Drowne and Warland illustrate this process. Roy Male asserts that in Hawthorne's works, efforts to achieve art without tragedy can only be mechanical and that until this perception, "artistic or moral conversion," occurs "the Romantic categories 'organic' and 'mechanical' remain ambiguous terms in art and ethics."\(^{123}\)

Both Drowne and Warland achieve the "crowning glory" realizing they are only "instruments of a higher power." It is evident, by the organic symbols of art created by these two artist types, that they did perceive the truth and achieve a

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\(^{123}\) Male, Hawthorne's Tragic Vision, p. 35. This book includes a very interesting and informative chapter on what he calls the "organic-mechanical antithesis."
reconciliation of opposites by uniting the organic and mechanical in the physical object, a quality of the ideal symbol.

Particularly Warland's process of creation relates the terrible truth about the artist's struggle, but also the great satisfaction involved in "rendering raw material and heated thought into malleable form." Through Annie "as representative of the world," Warland had successfully combined "the concrete particular and the universal," hence performing "the responsibility of the artist. But, as it is stated in the romance, "the world could never say the fitting words or feel the fitting sentiment which should be the perfect recompense of an artist who symbolizing a lofty moral or a material trifle, converting what was spiritual gold, had won the beautiful into his handiwork" (p. 265).

One of Hawthorne's most informed biographers, G.E. Woodberry, comments that "The Artist of the Beautiful" is the unique story "representing Hawthorne's powers, methods, and successes, technically and temperamentally as well as in the imaginative reach and spiritual appeal," by which he should be known.

Through Warland's process of creation, he demonstrates that "the reward of all high performance must be sought within itself, or sought in vain," for the materialistic observers of his triumph could not appreciate his work. The value of the symbol to the artist is in the enjoyment of the reality that

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124 Ibid., p. 38.
125 Woodberry, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 149.
he could fuse his ideas into a physical object—not the appreciation for the symbol. Annie's child, mistaking the golden mechanical butterfly for a living creature, at once demonstrates the success of the symbol in giving the illusion of dynamic life and the impossibility of sustaining its ideality in the clutch of warm human activity. But the symbol continues to be vastly important in that it makes the romantic ideal of the beautiful, including moral truth, perceptible to the moral senses of all people who choose to view it in the proper perspective.

And even more vital, these ideal symbols of art as created by Drowne and Warland reflect or communicate the ideal process by which the artist who uses the ideal combination can create a work of art which must combine the organic and the mechanical, the ideal and the real, heart and head, the rational and the irrational, the particular and the universal, as well as other opposing principles. Through the act of experiencing these two ideal creations, one becomes aware of the many facets of Hawthorne's art and the richness of meaning conveyed by the organic symbol, as well as the trials and experiences of any creative intellect—but particularly of the artist. Even though these tales included within this study are among his first literary achievements, the works are filled with valuable insights into his method and the great power of communication acquired through the development of his concept and the use of the symbol as an organic metaphor.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This investigation of Hawthorne's symbols or images representing the ultimate achievement of varying artist types and consequent deviation in methods of artistic creation exemplifies from both a positive and negative point of view the resultant accomplishments of the contrasting processes used by the artist types. Hawthorne's selection of the artist types, their different temperaments, and the various situations which can result from the attempt of artistic creation combine to create Hawthorne's world of imaginative reality: an atmosphere where the ideal and the real can meet.

The images created by the sole power of intellectual knowledge illustrate the impossibility of creating true art with such an imbalance. Hawthorne shows these achievements as failing to function as organic symbols and as becoming one-dimensional allegory. Thus he implies that the method behind their creation was lacking in some quality that he deemed essential. A continued examination of these attempted symbols substantiates this idea, for such artist types prove to be possessed with the pride of intellect which isolates them from the world, and which by its influence blinds them so
that they do not perceive the truth necessary for the creation of art.

However, these allegorical images are valuable in their single statement of warning of the dangerous results involved in obsessive intellectual pursuits. In such quests the individual neglects to become involved with the human heart which is the only "avenue" to truth, thereby demonstrating Hawthorne's strong belief in the necessity of human sympathy for the perception of symbolic truth which is essential to the process of artistic creation.

The symbols of Browne and Warland, the wooden image and the butterfly, most closely approximate living organic metaphors symbolic of ideal art. By reflecting the qualities specified in Hawthorne's concept of the symbol, they indicate that the situation out of which they were created was the ideal process of creation. That method was fundamental to the development in the artist of the qualities considered necessary by Hawthorne for the creation of art.

Further analysis of these ideal symbols reveals the combination of intellect, or poetic insight, with warm human sympathy as the only successful combination in the process of artistic creation. The wooden image and the butterfly represent truth as a culmination of process which effects the resolution of opposing principles. Ideal beauty and a warm life-like vitality are therein communicated by suggestiveness and the combination gives the effect that the artist who created the symbol has achieved satisfaction to as high a degree as mortality can allow.
Love and involvement with human sympathy require contact with humanity resulting in "tragic vision" on the part of the artist, or of any other creative individual. Only thus can man attain an understanding of his fellow man on Hawthornesque terms. Only thus can he attain awareness of the common quality of imperfection which binds all men together. Through developing and following the process considered ideal by Hawthorne, the artists in these stories create successful symbols of art as they rise to their highest aesthetic and moral development. Their art achieves the truly organic symbol, which alone can represent truth.

In this investigation Hawthorne's execution of both allegory and the symbol has been observed. It is evident that this organic metaphor, the ideal symbol, has been effectively developed by Hawthorne for conveying his complex theory of art. His theory includes a comprehensive vision of reality, or the truths of human experience. He accepts the existence of sin and evil in the world and studies their consequences, which are illustrated as either destructive or creative.

The lifelike symbols of art, created by Drowne and Warland, reflect the harmony of opposing principles of life which can be perceived through appreciation of the ideal symbol of art; they exemplify the sense of reward which results from balanced artistic creation. In his organic metaphors Hawthorne achieved a reconciliation of opposite forces more fully than the other artists of his time. He achieves, and illustrates how others can achieve, the resolution of such opposites as
mechanical and organic, the real and the ideal, and the good and evil; he does so by embodying his complex theory in the physical object—the symbol.

When the artists Drowne and Warland combine mechanical skills and human love, they work with delicate creative genius to create an ideal symbol of art; they perceive and communicate truth; they gain personal satisfaction and as much admiration from others as the true artist can ever hope for. Through their creation of living symbols, Hawthorne demonstrates the usefulness of art by such a resolution of the organic and mechanical in a world rapidly becoming mechanized. The symbol takes on ethical implications and a sort of spiritual value to a world in which religion, industry, and literature were being affected by mechanization.

Hawthorne indicates through these artistic creations and their creators the value and necessity for developing morally along with, and in pace with, technological advancement. The dangers inherent in indifference to making this adjustment are evidenced in the failures of the scientific prototypes of the artist, Aylmer and Dr. Rappaccini. The true artists, like Drowne and Warland, are able to perceive truth and beauty, and to make these ideas apprehensible to humanity, through the creative force of human love, but not by purely intellectual pursuits. Rational thinking such as that of Aylmer and Dr. Rappaccini did not attain the imaginatively creative powers which assist an intuition or perception of truth. Therefore the successful artistic life is revealed as desirable and
rewarding, regardless of its limitations and conflicts in the American society.

Because these living symbols of art are created by artisans and professional men, who are functioning members of society, suggesting that anyone who chooses to follow his method can lead a creative life, Hawthorne's practice and theory reflect the spirit of democracy which pervaded the period. Because his symbols were selected from nature or natural surroundings and because his ideas for characters and details were taken from the American past or from his own observations recorded in the notebooks, his early works indicate the increasing feeling of independence and nationalism in the United States. This dependence on almost purely American materials marks the beginning of a truly American literature.

Unlike the earlier colonial writings, Hawthorne's works were not sermons or mere records of events. Outward expression of inner truths in these early romantic tales not only illustrates Hawthorne's organic theory of art and the symbol, but also demonstrates the educational and ethical value of the imaginative art which was relatively new in America. His art was and is a source of pleasure and new meaning. Hawthorne's symbols of art are interesting to compare with those of his contemporaries.

Hawthorne's communication through living symbols is more richly suggestive, as compared with the symbolic expression of Emerson. Even though both Emerson and Thoreau also believed
in the necessity of the organic quality in art, only in Walden did either fuse their ideas into a concrete image as completely as in the Hawthorne symbols discussed in Chapter III and Chapter IV. They realized the conflict between the organic and the mechanical, but they did not deal with its resolution in the symbol as thoroughly as did Hawthorne. These Transcendental optimists minimized or ignored the presence of evil. The tension of the opposing principles in Hawthorne's symbol was much more expressive than the abstruse statements of Emerson and Thoreau.

Although both Hawthorne and Poe borrowed symbols from Gothic literature (considered a well-known source), Hawthorne's symbols seem more capable of communicating living daily truths than those of Poe. Poe's symbols lack the dynamic quality of Hawthorne's. Hawthorne's attempts to create a living organic metaphor led to the transformation of the static Gothic symbols (as well as other objects of nature or natural surroundings) into dynamic living symbols.

Both Hawthorne and Melville recognized the presence of evil in the world and both realized the power of the organic metaphor as a valuable ethical instrument; however, Hawthorne was able to accept evil and to resolve the conflict of evil with good in the ideal symbol of art. Melville presents the ambiguities of experience in his living symbols. His symbols, such as the great white whale, reflect his obsession with evil that offers no assurance ever of a reconciliation reflecting truth and beauty such as Hawthorne's ideal symbol conveyed.
Hawthorne's theory of art and his symbols differ from those of Whitman, who also believed in the organic theory of art, but was an optimist whose symbols express his faith in the future with a hopefulness Hawthorne's vision would not allow.

Hawthorne's use of the symbolism and the spirit of democracy reflected in his works place him in the category with these American Renaissance writers who shared these concerns. However, his achievement in these areas has a unique quality growing out of both his philosophical and aesthetic values.

Not only did Hawthorne stand out in his own time but his continuing prominence as a creative artist can also be seen by his influence on later great writers, such as Henry James, major American novelist in the late nineteenth century. James' theory of art, or fiction, was greatly influenced by Hawthorne's originality and genius. He was most impressed by the intensity of Hawthorne's vision of truth and the effectiveness of his literary form through which he expressed it. James was also devoted to a study of the moral problems of men. In The Art of Fiction he expresses the belief (also Hawthorne's) that the moral sense and the artistic sense were very closely related. He, too, chose to explore in the romance the meaning of life and art through the artist figure, or the creative intellect, who strived to give expression to this meaning. James, like Hawthorne, found a reward or satisfaction in the aesthetic sensibility of the artist. Both found compensations for the problems and limitations of the artist in America.
This observation of Hawthorne's organic metaphors as symbols of ideal art reflects the educational, ethical, and aesthetic values inherent in the artist's life. The value of the ideal symbol for the artist lies in its ability to embody one's ideal of beauty and truth in an image perceivable to the ordinary person; however, the symbol also stands alone as a source of pleasure and as a valuable instrument in suggesting the power and worth of art. Hawthorne's theory of art, as expressed by the organic symbols and the artists who create them, contributed much toward a justification of the imaginative art and the aesthetic sensibility of the artist within the framework of a democratic society.
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