THE VEILED GAZE: VISION, INTIMACY, AND GENDERED
SUBJECTIVITIES IN NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE’S FICTION

By
ANGELA KELSEY

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
1993
Copyright 1993
by
Angela Kelsey
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTERS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 MRS. WAKEFIELD’S GAZE</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 SENSE INTERMIXTURE IN &quot;RAPPACCINI’S DAUGHTER&quot;</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 MIRROR, MIRROR: &quot;THE BIRTH-MARK&quot; AND &quot;FEATHERTOP&quot;</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 &quot;SELF-SHUDDERINGS&quot; AND &quot;THE WITCHERY OF DRESS&quot; IN &quot;THE MINISTER’S BLACK VEIL&quot; AND &quot;LADY ELEANORE’S MANTLE&quot;</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 THE GAZE, SELF-CONSTRUCTION, AND CASTRATION IN THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKS CITED</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

THE VEILED GAZE: VISION, INTIMACY, AND GENDERED
SUBJECTIVITIES IN NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE’S FICTION

By

Angela Kelsey

December 1993

Chairperson: David Leverenz
Major Department: English

In the years 1830-1860, during which Hawthorne wrote
most of his fiction, a variety of forces worked directly and
indirectly to increase American society’s interest in sight,
voyeurism, appearances, and an elaborate system of
disciplinary practices for women. In this study I argue
that, particularly in his short fiction and The Blithedale
Romance, Hawthorne and his various male narrators play out
his and his society’s anxieties over vision, veiling,
imintacy, and gendered subjectivities.

The female characters I discuss here—in Chapter One,
Mrs. Wakefield of "Wakefield"; in Chapter Two, Beatrice
Rappaccini of "Rappaccini’s Daughter"; in Chapter Three,
Georgiana of "The Birth-mark" and Mother Rigby of
"Feathertop"; in Chapter Four, Elizabeth of "The Minister’s
Black Veil" and Lady Eleanore of "Lady Eleanore’s Mantle";
and in Chapter Five, Zenobia and Priscilla of The Blithedale
Romance—represent a wide variety of responses to the gaze.
As they and their actions define femininity or a feminine subject position for Hawthorne, that position shifts constantly.

Male characters and narrators are similarly at odds with a shifting standard of masculinity. Hawthorne’s male characters in the stories discussed in this study do not possess stable identities. Wakefield risks descending into oblivion after his attempt to own the gaze. By the end of "Rappaccini’s Daughter," Giovanni’s and Rappaccini’s attempts to control femininity leave them "blasted." Aylmer’s attempt at mastery of his wife and an always feminine Nature in "The Birth-mark" leaves his wife dead and him with another instance of failure to record in his folio. Reverend Hooper valiantly tries to escape the nakedness that he fears will come with intimacy with Elizabeth; his black veil, however, does not protect him from the contaminating monstrosity that he associates with femininity. And Coverdale, despite his attempts to fill himself with the details others hide, is reduced to a man alone with his material comforts. In all of these texts Hawthorne constructs and then dissects gendered subjectivities, both feminine and masculine.
INTRODUCTION

During the years 1830-1860, a variety of forces worked directly and indirectly to increase American society's focus on women's bodies and their management. This era saw the rise of the cult of true womanhood and the doctrine of separate spheres for women and men; an increase in urban growth and class upheaval; and the growth of social reform movements, particularly abolition, feminism, temperance, anti-prostitution, and health and fashion reform. Historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg has argued that this flux led to an increase in the degree of specificity of body maintenance and etiquette rules for women, many of which would be regulated by visual means, in the culture's attempt to maintain or restore social order. Also during the years 1830-1860, Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote most of his fiction. In this dissertation, I will argue that, particularly in his short fiction and The Blithedale Romance, Hawthorne and his various male narrators play out his society's anxieties concerning femininity, masculinity, and the new visual perspectives that worked to construct subjectivity.

We can place Hawthorne's interest in voyeurism within the larger context of vision, voyeurism, and gazing, particularly in the first half of the nineteenth century.
More specifically, woman's social role places her as the object of the gaze, whether in after-dinner entertainment or in fiction. Further evidence of intense interest in voyeurism, appearances, and an elaborate system of disciplinary practices for women can be found in Godey's Lady's Book, which was founded in 1830 and, by 1860, had a readership of 150,000 that spanned class and geographic boundaries. Godey's outsold "every other American magazine of its day by three to one." Godey's combined text with images to perpetuate the ideology that called for women to perform as the objects of male scopophilia, through both its attention to and encouragement of female readers' concern with fashion and appearance and through comments such as, in 1852, "It is a woman's business to be beautiful."

Taking a larger perspective, Michel Foucault has argued that a shift in the role of the visual came with the rise of the modern era in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In The History of Sexuality, Volume 1 he claims that the hysterization of women, which involved a thorough medicalization of their bodies and their sex, was carried out in the name of the responsibility they owed to the health of their children, the solidity of the family institution, and the safeguarding of society. It was the reverse relationship that applied in the case of birth controls and the psychiatrization of perversions: here the intervention was regulatory in nature, but it had to rely on the demand for individual disciplines and constraints (dressages). Broadly speaking, at the juncture of the 'body' and the 'population,' sex became a crucial target of a power organized around the management of life rather than the menace of death.
In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault explicitly links these "disciplines and constraints" to the gaze: "Discipline makes possible the operation of a relational power that sustains itself by its own mechanism and which, for the spectacle of public events, substitutes the uninterrupted play of calculated gazes."

Foucault’s work has been tremendously important to a feminist understanding of the gaze and its evolution as a means of masculine domination of women. However, he has been criticized for tending to ignore, with exceptions like the passage cited above, the role that gender plays in regimes of power, whether institutional, as in the prison or the clinic, or "relational," as in the gaze. Furthermore, as Lois McNay notes, "What Foucault’s account of power does not explain is how, even within the intensified process of the hysterization of the female body, women did not simply slip easily and passively into socially prescribed feminine sexuality." Psychoanalysis, here psychoanalysis-based feminist film theory, can provide a useful counterbalance to Foucault’s work because of its emphasis on subjectivity.

Before I turn to the theory, a brief look at Hawthorne’s sketch "The Canal Boat" (1835) will demonstrate the workings of many of the concerns I will discuss in the following five chapters: the gaze, with its potential for dominance and resistance; other senses, with their threat of excess and disruption; mirror relationships, with their
inherent acknowledgement of the other's relationship to the self; coupling and clothing, with their dual promise of intimacy and separation. In the Introduction and throughout this study I will emphasize femininity as the ground on which these questions are played out. However, Hawthorne's narrators and my analyses call masculinity into question as well. The narrator of "The Canal Boat" offers a fine first look at the ways that Hawthorne constructs and then dissects gendered subjectivities. First he focuses on femininity and then on masculinity.

In this short sketch, a strange Englishman walks around holding an "imaginary mirror" in which the passengers' and the narrator's "faces would appear ugly and ridiculous, yet still retain an undeniable likeness to the originals" (434). The narrator takes the Englishman's activities as license for his own gazing:

He lifted his eye-glass to inspect a Western lady, who at once became aware of the glance, reddened, and retired deeper into the female part of the cabin. Here was the pure, modest, sensitive, and shrinking woman of America: shrinking when no evil was intended; and sensitive like diseased flesh, that thrills if you but point at it; and strangely modest, without confidence in the modesty of other people; and admirably pure, with such a quick apprehension of all impurity.

In this manner, I went all through the cabin, hitting everybody as hard a lash as I could, and laying the whole blame on the infernal Englishman. At length, I caught the eyes of my own image in the looking-glass, where a number of the party were likewise reflected, and among them the Englishman, who, at that moment, was intently observing myself. (435)

The narrator gazes at the woman through the lens of the Englishman's apparently brief "glance," which completely
dominates her; she moves away from it into her proper sphere, "deeper into the female part of the cabin."

The narrator affirms the fact that he describes a type: "the pure, modest, sensitive, and shrinking woman of America." His treatment of the woman of America (embodied by these four traits) immediately undermines itself and its assumptions about femininity in a list of the ways that these traits make her respond to someone, presumably a man like the narrator. First, she shrinks even though he intends no evil. Second, she expresses sensitivity even though he has only pointed at her; here, however, he clearly points to the association between femininity and corporeal corruption that we will see throughout the stories. He further complicates her response by using the ambiguous "thrills," which often suggests a positive feeling of excitement. Third, she feels modesty but does not credit others with that sensibility. Fourth, she possesses purity, but easily "apprehends"--a verb which connotes both fear and understanding--impurity in her (male) counterpart.

The narrator immediately and abruptly follows this list of the woman’s characteristics with a peculiar statement of his own violence. His "[i]n this manner" suggests that either he has adopted the feminine position, a gesture we will see often in the following chapters whether with Wakefield, Giovanni, Aylmer, Feathertop, Hooper, or Coverdale. Another reading which is less likely
syntactically but more likely within my argument would be that he has adopted the position, "the manner," of the Englishman. But then he goes on to commit (or to imagine committing) a rampage, "hitting everybody as hard a lash as I could." Perhaps he only hits men, if he remains in the "male" part of the cabin, but presumably he does hit "everybody." Like Coverdale, he finds a way to blame his behavior or fantasy on another man with whom he identifies: here, the Englishman. The narrator makes explicit their connection, the Englishman's status as the narrator's other self, through their bond in a mirror (again, in the analysis that follows we will see other instances of subjects' identification with the other through gazing into a mirror)---and the Englishman also engages in "intently observing" the narrator. Here and elsewhere, male characters play out scenes of dominance through an exchange of the gaze.

In his exposition of femininity, the narrator (like Hawthorne's narrators) has also implicitly explored masculinity; he goes on to foreground this exploration. Later in the evening described above, the narrator listens to the sounds of the women undressing and writes, "My ear seemed to have the properties of an eye; a visible image pestered my fancy in the darkness; the curtain was withdrawn between me and the western lady, who yet disrobed herself without a blush." As usual, the visual rules, dominating the other senses. When the Western lady is unaware of the
gaze, she feels none of the modesty described earlier; this suggests that her modesty is a response to the intrusive gaze rather than an immutable trait. Furthermore, the narrator's imagination withdraws the curtain, which represents a barrier to intimacy in the veil of Reverend Hooper or the curtain that Zenobia draws against Coverdale in the boardinghouse. The narrator of "The Canal Boat" continues, obviously aroused: "Still, I was more broad awake than through the whole preceding day, and felt a feverish impulse to toss my limbs miles apart, and appease the unquietness of my mind by that matter" (436). He proposes to relieve corporeal chaos through the intimation that he "toss [his] limbs miles apart" in order to control the "matter." We will see "feverish" responses again; Giovanni wants Beatrice with similar passion, and this narrator proposes that self-violence that results in a fragmented self offers a solution to his problem.

He channels his fantasies of violence by going out on the deck to look at trees destroyed by the transformation of the swamp into the canal. His description of these trees continues the emphasis on bodily decay that he began in the discussion of the Western lady: "In spots, where destruction had been riotous, the lanterns showed perhaps a hundred trunks, erect, half overthrown, extended along the ground, resting on their shattered limbs, or tossing them desperately into the darkness, but all of one ashy-white,
all naked together, in desolate confusion" (437). Here he makes the bodily decay explicitly masculine: the limbs that the narrator has wanted to "toss . . . miles apart" become tree limbs, erect trunks that share the narrator's "desolate confusion," a state perhaps also shared by Wakefield, Giovanni, Aylmer, Hooper, and Coverdale.

In "The Canal Boat" Hawthorne clearly defines the masculine body and masculinity. Masculinity as a construct here opposes and always threatens to violate a femininity which is "pure, modest, sensitive, and shrinking." Masculinity leads men to be torn between intimacy and separation as played out through the gaze; male subjects seek both to dominate and identify with their objects. Masculinity suggests penetrating and violating gazes which seek to remove curtains put in place to prevent just such rupturing of individualities and subjects. But despite these suggestions of dominating violence, masculinity, like the tree limbs above, risks being "shattered," "naked" and thereby exposed to the gaze, and "overthrown."

Academic feminists interested in women's objectification by men and male characters like those listed above have been greatly influenced by Laura Mulvey's work on "the gaze," particularly her "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," which first appeared in Screen in 1975. Her notion of the gaze involves not mere looking but looking that represents an active use of power by the gazing subject
to dominate the person or character whom he places in the role of object by his gazing.  

Feminist film theory helps us to analyze Hawthorne’s fiction for a variety of reasons. First, both traditional narrative film and much of the fiction of the nineteenth century are popular forms produced for a wide audience. Even though Hawthorne disdained popular forms, much of his work was initially published in popular periodicals. Second, despite the genres’ wide appeal to women, the protagonists are predominantly male. Often, though not always, women characters function as spectacle rather than active participants in the texts’ action. Finally, as Mary Ann Doane argues, Mulvey’s theory of interacting looks can be used to understand a process of "olation," or reactionary regression against the feminization of the acts of reading of nineteenth-century narrative as well as viewing of twentieth-century film, in which the "spectator is almost always conceptualized in the masculine mode." Furthermore, what Doane sees in these texts as fear of the "potential feminization of the spectatorial position" leads to the narrators’ aggressive efforts to maintain their own positions as subjects of the gaze. For the narrators of many of the stories I will discuss here, for characters like Giovanni Guasconti of "Rappaccini’s Daughter," and for the character/narrator Coverdale of The Blithedale Romance, potential feminization indeed threatens to overtake them,
perhaps generating their aggressive anger at the women characters around them.

Mulvey bases her argument primarily on Freud and Lacan, whose formulations of the concepts of the gaze, castration, scopophilia, voyeurism, sadism, and fetishism provide the foundations of her thesis. Lacan's notions of the gaze and the mother-child relationship lead Mulvey to claim that the foremost goal of the male spectator's gaze is to see himself. As Mary Ann Doane points out, echoing Mulvey's reading of Lacan, Freud's "claim to investigate an otherness is a pretense, haunted by the mirror-effect by means of which the question of the woman reflects only the man's own ontological doubts." Second, castration is particularly important in Mulvey's schema because, as she writes, "The paradox of phallocentrism in all its manifestations is that it depends on the image of the castrated woman to give order and meaning to its world" (Mulvey 361). Third, scopophilia, for Mulvey and Freud, ranges from an erotogenic drive easily recognizable in children's desire to see the forbidden to "a perversion, producing obsessive voyeurs and Peeping Toms, whose only sexual satisfaction can come from watching, in an active controlling sense, an objectified other" (Mulvey 363).

Finally, given the male subject's preoccupation with castration and the necessity of a woman-object for his scopophilia as a means of overcoming his castration anxiety
and as a means of seeing himself, the man's look, according to Mulvey, will take one of two forms. In her terms, the first alternative, voyeurism, "has associations with sadism: pleasure lies in ascertaining guilt (immediately associated with castration), asserting control, and subjecting the guilty person through punishment or forgiveness." The second alternative, "fetishistic scopophilia, builds up the physical beauty of the object, transforming it into something satisfying in itself" (Mulvey 368).

Since Mulvey's article was published, feminists and other theorists (including Mulvey herself) have challenged, expanded, and refined her thesis to include more complex questions. What are the roles and responses of the female spectator? What is the difference between the look and the gaze? What are the consequences of a woman's possessing the look and the power shifts that might result? Does a woman subject who gazes occupy the "masculine" position? What are the possibilities for change and resistance inherent in different models of the gaze? In spite of the gap of period and overt concerns that would seem to separate recent feminist theorists and Nathaniel Hawthorne, he examines many of these questions, albeit within the constraints of often traditionally drawn gender roles.

Hawthorne plays in particular with the last question, concerning change and resistance. His women characters resist the constraints of femininity by refusing to become
objects of the gaze, exceeding the boundaries of femininity, and pushing the men around them to recognize, if not accommodate, their threatening intimacy. The male position, however, is not a stable one either. In Hawthorne’s fiction, male characters who seek to objectify the women around them also desire to be the object of the gaze, thereby assuming a position labeled "feminine." The ensuing disintegration of traditional categories results in death for the women characters and horror and confusion for the male characters.\(^{16}\)

We can go beyond this starting point to examine the gaze of the feminine other. Not only for Mulvey but for Hawthorne’s various narrators and male characters, castration and the taking of the female position become the principle threat to visual fantasies and desires and, ultimately, to subjectivity. In other words, the castration that appears to be a means by which male characters can construct their subjectivity also appears to be a threat and a potential resistance when female characters use it against them. With this in mind, then, I will want to emphasize the sometimes invisible but always present status of female characters as representative of the male characters’ and narrators’ fear of castration. But we must ask whether women characters and implied female readers are empowered by such a characterization, and if so, how.\(^{17}\)
Hawthorne's women characters also suggest the problems that plague her counterparts, the female spectator and the feminist reader.  


Hawthorne's male characters in the stories discussed in the following chapters do not possess stable identities; all of them "shudder" in response to their "shattered" state. Wakefield risks descending into oblivion after his attempt to own the gaze. By the end of "Rappaccini's Daughter," Giovanni's and Rappaccini's attempts to control femininity leave them "blasted." Aylmer's attempt at mastery of his wife and an always feminine Nature in "The Birth-mark" results in Georgiana's death and leaves him with another instance of failure to record in his folio. Hooper valiantly tries to escape the nakedness that he fears will come with intimacy with Elizabeth; while his veil does protect him from intimacy, it invites the gaze and with that the horror of feminization. And Coverdale, despite his
attempts to construct himself with the details of others' lives, can be reduced to a man alone with his material comforts, with the people he has sought to fill him up instead tossed miles apart.

In "The Canal Boat," the narrator recognizes the potential destruction of self inherent in the deployment of the dominating gaze. In Chapter One I discuss Mrs. Wakefield, whose actions lead to a shattering of her husband's masculinity. A woman who might appear to be trapped inside domesticity, and objectified by his staged observation of her, she manages to resist his attempts to dominate her through his gaze. Wakefield risks descending into oblivion because of his frustrated desires both to dominate his wife with his gaze and to be objectified himself by the gaze of the crowd.

Chapter Two consists of an analysis of "Rappaccini's Daughter" in which I argue that Beatrice Rappaccini threatens Giovanni Guasconti because of her excess and her intermixing of various essences. Her poison infects him as he becomes feminized in appearance and in internal physical qualities. By the time that Beatrice has died from the ingestion of an antidote, Giovanni and Rappaccini have also been left "blasted."

Similarly, in Chapter Three I discuss "The Birth-mark" and Aylmer's attempt to rid his wife Georgiana of her birthmark as a means of ridding himself of the mirror of his own
imperfection and impotence. Aylmer's actions demonstrate his fears of the vulnerability of his own masculinity to the monstrosity of the feminine mark.

In Chapter Four, I argue that Reverend Hooper of "The Minister's Black Veil" and Lady Eleanore of "Lady Eleanore's Mantle" try to hide with their garments (and Lady Eleanore's is explicitly rich) the diseases, physical and spiritual, that they hide within them. Reverend Hooper tries valiantly to escape the nakedness he fears will be the consequence of intimacy with his fiancee Elizabeth; his veil, however, does not entirely protect him. Lady Eleanore, the only woman character of this study who flagrantly exhibits pride and resists intimacy, receives punishment similar to that given to other resisting women characters—death—but her death results in the death of many others, thereby compounding her culpability.

My analysis concludes with a discussion of The Blithedale Romance in Chapter Five, in which the issues above—heterosexual coupling, disease and poison just beneath the surface, the role of adornment in hiding that disease, and the gaze by a detached observer—are played out fully. Although Coverdale ferrets out and then narrates the intimate details of that novel, by the end of his story he finds himself alone, oblivious to the significance of the suicide of Zenobia, yet another woman character who must die for her resistance to the male gaze.
Notes


2. Of course, as Martin Jay notes, the context is larger still: "[V]ision has been accorded a special role in Western epistemology since the Greeks. Although at times more metaphorical than literal, the visual contribution to knowledge has been credited with far more importance than that of any other sense." See "In the Empire of the Gaze: Foucault and the Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought," p. 176, in Foucault: A Critical Reader, Ed. David Couzens Hoy. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986. 175-204.

For a similar argument from a feminist perspective, see Evelyn Fox Keller and Christine R. Grontowski's "The Mind's Eye" in Sandra B. Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka, eds. Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology. Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science. Boston: D. Reidel, 1983. 207-224. They describe their article as a history of "the cultural and psychological meanings attached to the visual...[,] entwined as they are in the role which the visual has played in Western epistemology" (208).

Carol Shloss comments, "In his concern about vision, Hawthorne was hardly alone; in fact, he lived in an age that was preoccupied with optics. His friend Emerson articulated the sentiments of many New Englanders when he observed that sight was the most spiritual of all the senses. See In Visible Light: Photography and the American Writer, 1840-1940. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, 27.

3. See David S. Reynolds. Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988. He writes, "By the mid-1840s it had become a fad among upper-class couples to copy the model-artist idea [or tableaux vivants or poses plastiques] at home; often hostesses of dinner parties would dress in transparent gowns and give motionless portrayals of classical scenes." He concludes, "This social voyeurism was reflected in an intensified use of the voyeur style in popular novels of the 1840s. In the racy pamphlet fiction that comprised almost two-thirds of American novels published in the decade, we find many languorous accounts of voluptuous women in total or partial dishabille" (214, 215).

Along the same lines, but specifically concerning Hawthorne, Gloria Erlich notes, "In Hawthorne's private notebooks as in his scenes of public shaming, the act of watching is perceived as aggressive, a penetration of the private sphere as the one who is seen." Gloria Erlich, Family Themes and Hawthorne's Fiction: The Tenacious Web. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1984. 121.
Kenneth Dauber also notes the importance of the visual to Hawthorne: "Hawthorne's wisdom, that curious ambiguity which has so often been remarked, is his understanding of the incompleteness of vision." Rediscovering Hawthorne. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977. xi.


9. In "The Foucauldian Body and the Exclusion of Experience," Lois McNay argues, "The emphasis that Foucault places on the effects of power upon the body results in a reduction of social agents to passive bodies and cannot explain how individuals may act in an autonomous fashion. This lack of a rounded theory of subjectivity or agency conflicts with a fundamental aim of the feminist project to rediscover and reevaluate the experiences of women" (129).

   Diana Fuss notes, in "Reading Like a Feminist," (differences 1.2 [1989]: 77-91) "Another recurrent emphasis in Lacan's work ... is his insistence on the construction of the subject's sexuality rather than the de facto assignation of a sex at birth" (84).

10. Mulvey's comments on the looks of classical narrative Hollywood film will be particularly relevant to the present analysis: "There are three different looks associated with cinema: that of the camera as it records the prefilmic event, that of the audience as it watches the final product, and that of the characters at each other within the screen illusion" (Mulvey 373), "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation, Ed. Brian Wallis (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984), pp. 361-373. Reprinted from Screen 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 6-18. Subsequent page numbers will appear in the text from the Art After Modernism edition.
11. Mulvey's three filmic looks can be translated to narrative looks in fiction. The look from one character to another functions in much the same way as it does in film; the look of the camera becomes the look of the narrator (although fiction's use of words as its representational medium implies less direct gazing and more signs of the narrator's presence); and the look of the spectator becomes the look of the reader. At this point my analysis of a translation from film to fiction blurs the distinction between image in film and language in fiction; however, as Maggie Humm notes in "Is the Gaze Feminist? Pornography, Film and Feminism," Perspectives on Pornography: Sexuality in Film and Literature, Ed. Gary Day and Clive Bloom (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), "Film, pornographic or not, is no longer a silent medium. We need to understand the way that both language and image combine within film to dominate women" (70).

12. Doane writes, "[T]he rise of the novel as the most popular vehicle for the formulation of narrative is usually linked explicitly with a female reading public. The greater amount of leisure time associated with the woman authorized an analysis of the 'feminization' of the process of reading. Yet, although the cinema is often theorized as the extension and elaboration of the narrative mechanisms of the nineteenth-century novel, its spectator is almost always conceptualized in the masculine mode. It is as though the historical threat of a potential feminization of the spectatorial position required an elaborate work of generic containment..." Doane suggests here a process of change that moves backward.


In a related discussion of the gaze in her Feminist Theory and the Philosophies of Man (London: Croom Helm, 1988), Andrea Nye notes that, for Sartre, "The danger that the other poses for me is expressed in 'the Look'. When another consciousness looks at me, he radically disturbs the ordering of objects in the world around the centre of my consciousness; he represents, as a consciousness, another perspective that I can sense but never grasp. Most threatening of all, he turns me into an object for his gaze, jeopardizing my very being as a subject. My only recourse is to attempt to assert my subjectivity, dominate his gaze, and in turn reduce him to an object... However, even removing all other consciousnesses cannot satisfy a Sartrean subject. Others, in fact, are necessary. It is only by way of their view of me that I can know who I am, only from them that I can get an external view of myself" (Nye 81).
14. Another approach to the gaze is offered by various feminists. In her unpublished essay on *The Turn of the Screw*, Beth Newman argues that theories such as Mulvey's and Foucault's have "contributed to more general suspicions of what is being called the 'gaze.' In a critical climate that frequently represents the gaze as something sinister, as a sign of power and a means of control, it is easy to forget that being the object of someone's look can in some circumstances be pleasurable—even sustaining and necessary" (Newman 1).

In a different tone, E. Ann Kaplan notes in "Is the Gaze Male?," *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, Ed. Ann Snitow et al. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983, 309-327), "[W]e have (rightly) been wary of admitting the degree to which the pleasure [of Hollywood cinema] comes from identifying with our own objectification. Our positioning as 'to-be-looked-at,' as object of the gaze, has, through our positioning, come to be sexually pleasurable" (Kaplan 314).

Catharine A. MacKinnon argues in "Desire and Power: A Feminist Perspective," *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Ed. Cary Nelson. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988, 117-122), "What I think is that sexual desire in women, at least in our culture, is socially constructed as that by which we come to want our own self-annihilation; that is, our subordination is eroticized in and as female—in fact, we get off on it, to a degree" (MacKinnon 110).

In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, Donna Haraway writes, "I would like to insist on the embodied nature of all vision, and so reclaim the sensory system that has been used to signify a leap out of the marked body and into a conquering gaze from nowhere.... I would like a doctrine of embodied objectivity that accommodates paradoxical and critical feminist science projects: feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledges" (Haraway 188).

15. For example, Teresa de Lauretis writes,

For [Mulvey's] system of the look, the fundamental semiotic structure of cinematic narrative, attributes the power of the gaze to the man, be he the male protagonist, the director (or, more properly, the camera, as the function of enunciation), or the spectator.

If this analysis is correct (and everyone seems to agree it is, feminists and nonfeminists), then one may say that classical cinema endlessly replaces the oedipal fantasy of pursuit and capture, distance and desire, memory and loss. The analogy of cinema and dream is reconfirmed. Only, cinema does something more: it grants the fantasy. For a two-hour period and the relatively small price of the ticket, it actually performs the capture in behalf of the spectators. (Technologies of Gender 99).

16. Recent feminist work on the female spectator, including questions of why women have consistently found much pleasure in film, will be particularly relevant to my argument, so I will trace them briefly here.

As Jackie Byars notes, Mulvey’s revised argument concerning the female spectator is that by identifying with a masculine spectator, the woman spectator can gain access to "the never fully repressed bedrock of feminine repression. Mulvey insists that such an accomplishment is derived through a ‘trans-sex identification’ in which the female spectator temporarily remembers her masculine stage. Within a theory based on Freudian psychoanalysis, as Mulvey’s is, the male/masculine is active and normative, and there is no way to explain the female/feminine except through this ‘norm’" (Byars 111).

In order to avoid male-normative Freudian psychoanalysis, Byars relies on the theories of Nancy Chodorow. See her "Gazes/Voices/Power: Expanding Psychoanalysis for Feminist Film and Television Theory." The Female Spectator: Looking at Film and Television. Ed. E. Deidre Pribram. London: Verso, 1988. This emphasis on repression in Freud, Mulvey, and others suggests Frederick Crews’s comment in Sins of the Fathers: Hawthorne’s Psychological Themes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966): "Like Sade, Baudelaire, and Swinburne; like Melville and Poe, and like the ‘Romantic conservative’ Freud, Hawthorne rested his whole achievement on the premise that the only important truth is that which has been repressed" (Crews 271).

Kaja Silverman notes, "It is by now axiomatic that the female subject is the object rather than the subject of the gaze in mainstream narrative cinema. She is excluded from authoritative vision not only at the level of the enunciation, but at that of the fiction. At the same time she functions as an organizing spectacle, as the lack which structures the symbolic order and sustains the relay of male glances" (Silverman 131). "Disembodying the Female Voice." Re-Vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism. Ed. Doane et al. Los Angeles: University Publications of America, Inc., 1984.

In "'A Certain Refusal of Difference': Feminism and Film Theory," from Art After Modernism, Constance Penley notes this turn of Mulvey’s thinking. "[Mulvey] concludes that the female spectator is a transvestite..." (Penley 384, n.24).
17. Joan Copjec asks, "If we say that the subject (because constructed) is not master in her house, must we also say that she is mastered?" See "The Delirium of Clinical Perfection." *Oxford Literary Review* 8 (1986): 61.

Along similar lines, see Ellen Draper's "Zombie Women When the Gaze is Male," *Wide Angle*, Volume 10, Number 3, 1988: 52-62. She writes, "Yet the fact remains that these zombie women films [of the 30s and 40s] explored the camera's domination of women 40 years in advance of Laura Mulvey's postulation of the male gaze in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," and surely that should prompt us to re-examine the possibility that a feminist critique existed within the classical Hollywood system" (55).

18. Mary Ann Doane writes, "Fascinated by nothing visible—a blankness or void for the spectator—unanchored by 'sight' (there is nothing proper to her vision—save perhaps the mirror), the female gaze is left free-floating, vulnerable to subjection." "Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator," *Screen* 23.4 (1982), 85.
CHAPTER 1
MRS. WAKEFIELD’S GAZE: FEMININITY AND DOMINANCE IN "WAKEFIELD"

The eyes have been used to signify a perverse capacity—
honed to perfection in the history of science, tied to
militarism, capitalism, colonialism, and male supremacy—
to distance the knowing subject from everybody and
everything in the interests of unfettered power.--Donna
Haraway

The narrator of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s "Wakefield"
(1835) begins his story by revealing its origin and
summarizing its plot: "In some old magazine or newspaper, I
recollect a story, told as truth, of a man--let us call him
Wakefield--who absented himself for a long time, from his
wife" (130). This first sentence leads readers to
anticipate a story whose participants include Wakefield, the
reader, and the narrator; Wakefield’s wife is present only
as the occasion for Wakefield’s absence.

This sentence does in fact summarize the plot of this
very short story: Wakefield leaves his wife, lives for
twenty years only a block from home, and then returns after
as apparently little forethought as led to his departure.
If everyone performed her or his expected roles in a reading
which emphasized vision, Wakefield, subject of both the
journalistic story as well as the present one of the
narrator’s imagination, could be read as a voyeur who sets
up the scene of his absence in order to make his wife the
object of his persistent and sadistic gaze. His is not the only gaze, though; she is also subjected to the gazes of the complicit narrator, prominently figured as "I" in the first sentence of the story, and the readers, who join with the narrator as "us." A feminist perspective makes possible a variation on this reading.

Although the protagonist, narrator, and readers work within the predictable economy of the male gaze, Mrs. Wakefield finds ways to escape and exceed it, first by appropriating the look for herself, then by refusing to die or become an invalid in order to serve as Wakefield's mirror, and finally by even denying Wakefield her gaze. A feminist reader can similarly work the text both ways, as she emphasizes Mrs. Wakefield's response and resists what the story encourages: both identification and competition with Wakefield and the narrator. From her positions both outside and inside the narrator's sphere, a feminist reader can see the ways he seeks to manipulate everyone—Wakefield, Mrs. Wakefield, the crowd, the implied readers, and herself—in his attempt to obtain the gaze and its attendant power.

The first step of this rereading is to take Mrs. Wakefield into account, not just as the mark of Wakefield's absence or the object of his gaze, but as a separate subject in her own right, one who refuses to play object to Wakefield's subject." Her resistance drives the story both by revealing vanity as Wakefield's motivation and by forcing
him, through her refusal to participate properly in his scene, to look to others to satisfy his ocular desires. Furthermore, the narrator takes for granted a reader who is male. A feminist privileging of Mrs. Wakefield, coupled with a refusal to identify with the male narrator, reveals the narrator’s insistence on Wakefield’s symbolic castration and on the narrator’s own presumed phallic potency. He places himself in an adversarial relationship to Wakefield, in a scene of dominance that plays itself out in explicitly visual terms. A feminist reader thereby destabilizes the text, as she vies with the narrator in another adversarial relationship with him over possession of the gaze.³

For Wakefield, castration and the taking of the female position become the principle threat to his visual fantasies and desires and, ultimately, to his subjectivity. In other words, the castration that appears to be a means by which Wakefield can construct his subjectivity also appears to be a threat and a potential resistance when Mrs. Wakefield uses it against him. The often invisible but always present Mrs. Wakefield comes to represent the male character’s and narrator’s fear of castration. Through the narrator who imagines his actions, Wakefield makes his own story happen by abandoning his wife; there would be no story had he stayed home. The narrator fictionalizes Wakefield such that Wakefield’s primary goal in these actions is to be remarkable, to demonstrate that he deserves to be the object
of the gaze of his wife, the reader, and the narrator as a means of seeing himself. Wakefield's wife, then, as a fictional character, represents the subject/object dilemma that plagues her counterparts, the female spectator and the feminist reader.

"Wakefield" both obscures and calls attention to Mrs. Wakefield. The first paragraph, which the narrator calls the "outline" of the story that he remembers from "some old magazine or newspaper," serves as a guide to Mrs. Wakefield's buried importance to the story. In describing the familiar actions that we would usually summarize in terms of Wakefield's conduct alone (e.g., a man leaves his wife, stays away for twenty years, but watches her and their home every day, and finally returns as if nothing had happened), the narrator's language emphasizes Mrs. Wakefield and Wakefield's status as a married man. He begins by characterizing Wakefield as simply a man "who absented himself for a long time, from his wife." He calls Wakefield's actions "marital delinquency" and "a gap in his matrimonial felicity"; rather than referring to Wakefield alone, he describes him as part of a "wedded couple." When Wakefield finally goes home, the narrator says only that he becomes "a loving spouse till death" (130). The narrator introduces Wakefield's selfhood and actions entirely in terms of his marriage to Mrs. Wakefield.

Despite this implicit emphasis on Mrs. Wakefield, and
the narrator's attention to her at the beginning of the story, a few pages later he abruptly cuts off our interest, writing, "But, our business is with the husband" (133). From this point on the narrator carefully regulates the readers' access to Mrs. Wakefield, only mentioning her occasionally; she does threaten to disappear. However, the narrator's graceless transition away from Mrs. Wakefield invites us to examine more closely what he describes between the initial outline and his dismissal of her. It turns out that Mrs. Wakefield possesses a position of privilege in relation to the male gaze that would seem to dominate the story. This may be why she must be eliminated—by the end of the story everyone is gone, and the narrator leaves only himself visible to the reader.

The narrator's attempt to render Mrs. Wakefield invisible results in a different outcome. Mrs. Wakefield not only remains visible but she comes to possess a strangely multiple relationship to the gaze; she exceeds the "object" role the narrator assigns to her. Before the narrator shifts our attention away from her, Mrs. Wakefield makes Wakefield the object of her gaze. She, indulgent to [Wakefield's] harmless love of mystery, interrogates him only by a look. . . . After the door has closed behind him, she perceives it thrust partly open, and a vision of her husband's face, through the aperture, smiling on her, and gone in a moment. . . . When all others have given him up for dead, she sometimes doubts whether she is a widow. (132-3)

Her "look" leads her to what will be the narrator's
preferred reading of Wakefield's motives. At this point she dictates their interaction: only one who controls a situation can afford to be "indulgent," and the narrator connects this explicitly with her possession of the look and its potentially aggressive interrogation. In addition, the "vision" she receives of her husband gives her access to knowledge that no one else has. She resists the constraints here for the first time, and later resists by carrying on, refusing (by her failure to succumb to illness or death) to act as a mirror to Wakefield's absence.

The narrator affirms Mrs. Wakefield's superior relation to knowledge and the gaze throughout the three paragraphs between the marriage-based "outline" and the narrator's dismissal of her. He describes Wakefield as an average, even boring, Everyman: "Had his acquaintances been asked, who was the man in London, the surest to perform nothing today which should be remembered on the morrow, they would have thought of Wakefield." He goes on, however, to single out Mrs. Wakefield as a privileged reader: "Only the wife of his bosom might have hesitated. She, without having analyzed his character, was partly aware of a quiet selfishness, that had rusted into his inactive mind--of a peculiar sort of vanity, the most uneasy attribute about him . . ." (131-132). Although the narrator characterizes Mrs. Wakefield's analysis as inferior to his own, she is "partly aware" of the "vanity" that would begin to explain his
eccentric deed.

Even though Mrs. Wakefield plays object to the subject Wakefield’s gaze, his gaze does not determine her: she disappoints Wakefield by her lack of response, which the narrator characterizes obliquely throughout the story. Early in the story, the narrator advises Wakefield, "Remove not thyself, even for a little week, from thy place in her chaste bosom. Were she, for a single moment, to deem thee dead, or lost, or lastingly divided from her, thou wouldst be woefully conscious of a change in thy true wife, forever after" (133). Note the archaic diction of the narrator’s comments to Wakefield; he seems to be more pretentious when describing Mrs. Wakefield’s change to Wakefield than when describing it to his readers. She does change, but not in the way that Wakefield would want. Even though she becomes ill after his disappearance, she does not die. "In the course of a few weeks, she gradually recovers; the crisis is over; her heart is sad, perhaps, but quiet; and, let him return soon or late, it will never be feverish for him again" (136). Just as the narrator’s earlier reference to Mrs. Wakefield’s "indulgence" allows for the possibility that she controls herself if not Wakefield, here her recovery from losing him (while he remains trapped in obsessive looking) suggests Wakefield’s disempowerment through not seeing himself in the scene of his house, through her refusal to act as a mirror.
The narrator notes several times the disparity between Wakefield's affection for his wife and hers for him. "We must leave him, for ten years or so, to haunt around his house, without once crossing the threshold, and to be faithful to his wife, with all the affection of which his heart is capable, while he is slowly fading out of hers" (137). At the end of the story, this difference between their levels of feeling for each other becomes even more explicit as Wakefield imagines her reaction to his return. The narrator writes, from the perspective of Wakefield's fantasy, "When, after a little while more, he should deem it time to re-enter his parlor, his wife would clap her hands for joy, on beholding the middle-aged Mr. Wakefield. Alas, what a mistake!" (139). Wakefield's obsession with observing the effects of his "non-appearance" on his wife can be read as his desire to be the object of the gaze. He desires Mrs. Wakefield's gaze; she withholds it as she moves toward indifference and Wakefield becomes the object of the narrator's and the readers' gaze.

One might argue that Wakefield's plan allows him no interaction with his wife except for his surveillance of her. On this basis, he might appear to be the subject of the gaze; after all, he stays away at least in part in order to watch the effect of his absence upon his wife. The narrator elaborates on Wakefield's desire to affect his wife:
Furthermore, he is rendered obstinate by a sulkiness, occasionally incident to his temper, and brought on, at present, by the inadequate sensation which he conceives to have been produced in the bosom of Mrs. Wakefield. He will not go back until she be frightened half to death. Well; twice or thrice has she passed before his sight, each time with a heavier step, a paler cheek, and more anxious brow, and in the third week of his non-appearance, he detects a portent of evil entering the house, in the guise of an apothecary. Next day, the knocker is muffled. Towards night-fall, comes the chariot of a physician, and deposits its big-wigged and solemn burthen at Wakefield's door, whence, after a quarter of an hour's visit, he emerges, perchance the herald of a funeral. (136)

In Foucault's terms, we can see this surveillance as Wakefield's attempt to exert power over his wife: Wakefield notes the smallest details of movement that take place around his house. Significantly, they are the movements of male professionals (an apothecary and a physician) engaged in the work of caring for his wife's body. However, the narrator also describes Wakefield in terms of his visibility, here his "non-appearance," even though his objective is to see the effects of his absence, in a sense the effects of himself, upon his wife. Thus, if Wakefield does not affect his wife through his absent gaze, and if she does not see him, he cannot maintain his subjectivity.

We should examine for a moment the gender of this "reader" who possesses the gaze. In visual works from the tableaux vivants to classical Hollywood cinema, the spectator is usually presumed to be male, and Hawthorne implies a male reader as well. The precarious position of the female spectator, as evidenced by Mrs. Wakefield, can
also be seen in the narrator’s assumption of the female reader’s invisibility. He assumes a male reader who will identify with Wakefield and the narrator himself. At the beginning, he comments that Wakefield’s action of leaving his wife "appeals to the general sympathies of mankind. We know, each for himself, that none of us would perpetrate such a folly, yet feel as if some other might" (131). Thus the text works to align the readers, the narrator, and Wakefield as potential doers of eccentric deeds. He goes beyond the (some might argue) potentially neutral "mankind," characterizing the reader as "himself." On the other hand, even though Hawthorne’s narrator does not acknowledge a female spectator/reader, it is likely that Hawthorne was aware of a largely female reading public (including his wife, sisters-in-law, mother and daughters).^ At the same time, the narrator of "Wakefield" insists on the connections between Wakefield and the (male) reader. Allying himself with his reader as joint producers of the text which they will view together, the narrator comments, "What sort of man was Wakefield? We are free to shape out our own idea, and call it by his name" (131). Despite the extent to which this narrator constructs and speculates about Wakefield’s motives, he seems to feel both impatient dislike and grudging admiration for his creation. After a rather lengthy discussion of Wakefield’s potential motives and desires, he comments, "So much for the commencement of
this long whim-wham" (135), subverting any empathy the reader may feel for Wakefield.

The story's insistence on the complicity of the narrator, the male readers, the crowd, and its hero, Wakefield, emphasizes their shared looking and the power relations therein. The narrator painstakingly conveys the sense that just as he implicates his readers in Wakefield's gazing at his wife, he also implicates us in the general gaze. He tries to compel us to make Wakefield the object of our surveillance, a surveillance which Wakefield both wants to experience and to avoid. The narrator notes when Wakefield first leaves his home, "We must hurry after him, along the street, ere he lose his individuality, and melt into the great mass of London life. . . . He is in the next street to his own, and at his journey's end. He can scarcely trust his good fortune, in having got thither unperceived. . . . Doubtless, a dozen busybodies had been watching him, and told his wife the whole affair. Poor Wakefield! Little knowest thou thine own insignificance in this great world! No mortal eye but mine has traced thee" (133).

At this point the narrator offers three distinct readings. First, he suggests that Wakefield has only a tenuous hold on his "individuality," a trait which both makes him worthy of our attention and gives him the status of subject. Second, he sets up the similarity between
Wakefield and the "great mass of London life," people who might be also aligned with the reader. Finally and most important, he suggests the threat of "a dozen busybodies," stereotypically women, who might work against Wakefield and in league with his wife. Again, the narrator mixes threat and desire; the busybodies would subject him to their gaze, but they would also reveal him to his wife, thereby gaining for him her attention.

The narrator implicates the reader in Wakefield's gazing upon his wife by arguing for the Wakefield in all of us. He does this in several ways: first by arguing that the reader is capable of acting as Wakefield does, and then by connecting the act of gazing to the reader's acts of reading and interpretation. "Now for a scene! Amid the throng of a London street, we distinguish a man, now waxing elderly, with few characteristics to attract careless observers, yet bearing, in his whole aspect, the hand-writing of no common fate, for such as have the skill to read it" (137). Here we see the link between the "scene" to be viewed and the "hand-writing" to be read by one who possesses the necessary skill.

The narrator continues to cultivate the reader as spectator. "Watch him, long enough to see what we have described, and you will allow, that circumstances—which often produce remarkable men from nature's ordinary handiwork—have produced one such here. Next, leaving him
to sidle along the foot-walk, cast your eyes in the opposite direction, where a portly female, considerably in the wane of life, with a prayer-book in her hand, is proceeding to yonder church . . ." (137). If we as readers now follow the narrator's instructions, we will abandon our gaze upon Wakefield (whose lack of purposeful activity the narrator maligns by "leaving him to sidle") to share in the narrator's covert, Wakefield-like gazing upon his wife.

The narrator reveals his attitude toward Wakefield most clearly when he instructs the reader to watch and examine Wakefield. The presumably male narrator and the reader identify with the male hero, with the narrator playing the role of both camera and spectator. The narrator first encourages the reader to watch Wakefield and thereby to join him in complicity as subjects possessing the gaze when Wakefield is taking his leave: "Let us now imagine Wakefield bidding adieu to his wife. It is the dusk of an October evening. His equipment is a drab greatcoat, a hat covered with an oilcloth, top-boots, an umbrella in one hand and a small portmanteau in the other" (132). Thus he draws us into his fantasy and his story and then describes for us what we see together: Wakefield and, in particular, Wakefield's clothes and accessories.

These items are usually thought to be feminine concerns, particularly the concerns of feminine vanity. Here they are partially "masculinized" by the narrator's
terming them "equipment." We will be asked later in the story to view the details of Wakefield's revised clothing as signifiers of his revised self. "We may suppose him, as the result of deep deliberation, buying a new wig, of reddish hair, and selecting sundry garments, in a fashion unlike his customary suit of brown, from a Jew's old-clothes bag. It is accomplished. Wakefield is another man" (135). The narrator's concern with Wakefield's appearance and status as object of the gaze, both of which are associated with the feminine position, might be seen as part of Wakefield's feminization.

The narrator privileges vanity earlier, when he describes Mrs. Wakefield's perception of Wakefield's motives, calling it "the most uneasy attribute" about Wakefield. Later in the story the narrator appropriates Mrs. Wakefield's notion as his own, writing, "A morbid vanity, therefore, lies nearest the bottom of the affair" (134). Here the narrator echoes Mrs. Wakefield's "most" with his own "nearest" in attesting to the importance of vanity in explaining Wakefield's actions.

Note the repetition of "vanity" as an explanation for Wakefield's actions, since it suggests an attribute usually associated with femininity. While we might go along with any of the definitions listed in the Oxford English Dictionary (the quality of something futile, unprofitable, worthless, foolish, or a person's having an unwarranted high
opinion of him/herself, or emptiness or lightness), in common usage women (or women's makeup cases or tables) are most commonly associated with vanity. Vanity also implies a concern with appearance, or, more importantly, concern with being the object of the gaze. Mrs. Wakefield, in the position of female spectator, is the first to recognize her husband as similarly feminized. Vanity is particularly important because of its associations with the desire to be seen.

Thus for Wakefield the shift from subject to object begins: because his wife does not die in response to his absence, and so deprives him of the mirror he needs, he begins to seek the gaze of the crowd, even as he tries to avoid it. Stallybrass and White offer insight into the connections between the gaze of the crowd and class:

throughout the nineteenth century, the 'invisibility' of the poor was a source of fear. . . . The 'labouring' and 'dangerous' classes would be transformed, it was implied, once they became visible. On the one hand, there would be surveillance by policing; on the other, the inculcation of politeness through the benign gaze of the bourgeoisie."

As Wakefield moves from his comfortable home and transforms himself in part through the purchase of clothes worn by anonymous others, thereby connecting himself to them through what they have cast off, he also moves closer to the crowd whose recognition he fears and desires.

While Wakefield's purchase of clothes may seem to be a minor detail of Hawthorne's text, it represents an important
moment in Wakefield's relation to the crowd. As he changes from conventional husband to man of the crowd, he takes on their dress as well. Angela McRobbie describes the relationship of second-hand dress to poverty:

At an early point in its evolution the hippy subculture denounced material wealth and sought some higher reality, expressing this choice externally through a whole variety of old and second-hand clothes. None the less, these clothes were chosen and worn as a distinctive style and this style was designed to mark out a distance both from 'straight' and conventional dress, and from the shabby greyness of genuine poverty.?

Wakefield may not seek some higher reality, but he does express his renunciation of domesticity, and with that his movement toward the crowd, through his sartorial choice. As for many of McRobbie's members of hippy subculture, for Wakefield the recourse to second-hand clothing represents a chosen distancing from convention rather than real poverty.

The narrator principally advocates the importance of Wakefield's being seen by the crowd; he sets up Wakefield as further disempowered when the crowd no longer sees him. The narrator walks a fine line between the threat of disempowerment or castration and Wakefield's need to be seen in order to be empowered; Wakefield's fantasy thrills him in part because he risks being seen--he may take on the position of object that he dreads but secretly desires. The day after he leaves his wife, Wakefield goes back to look at his house to see the effects of his action, and presumably to reenter the realm of the potential of her gaze.
In "Wakefield," the narrator plays an active role in determining what the reader, as well as Wakefield, will "see"; furthermore, he specifically encourages the reader to ally himself with the narrator. The characters themselves participate in elaborately staged and acted out scenes of looking and being looked at. Despite the many instances of looking which can be construed as male, and despite the fate of Mrs. Wakefield, there are three sites of resistance to the apparently male power of the gaze: first, Mrs. Wakefield’s role in the story, second, the "feminization" of the male protagonist, and finally, the narrator’s reliance on the feminine trait of "vanity" to explain Wakefield’s actions.

Wakefield may be aligned with the reader, and the reader may be interested in him as a doer of eccentric deeds, but the narrator takes pains to repeat that, outside (or, in fact, because) of his misdeed, Wakefield does not merit the gaze of the crowd at large. "He had contrived, or rather he had happened, to dissever himself from the world--to vanish--to give up his place and privileges with living men, without being admitted among the dead. . . . He was in the bustle of the city, as of old; but the crowd swept by, and saw him not . . ." (138). The narrator states the outcome of Wakefield’s rather unconsidered deed as his absenting himself visually from the rest of society--he calls attention to this by setting off the infinitive "to
vanish" within dashes; he explicitly and in the cadence of a Biblical pronouncement states that the net effect is to make himself invisible--the crowd "saw him not." The narrator faces a dilemma: if Wakefield cannot attract the crowd's interest, then perhaps he cannot keep the readers'. On the other hand, the narrator feels compelled to maintain his own higher place in the dual hierarchies of possessing the gaze and maintaining the attention of the gaze.

The only time Wakefield does attract the attention of the crowd occurs under the watchful eye of Mrs. Wakefield, at the crucial moment of the charged look between them outside the church: "The sober widow, resuming her former pace, proceeds to church, but pauses in the portal, and throws a perplexed glance along the street. . . . And the man? With so wild a face, that busy and selfish London stands to gaze after him, he hurries to his lodgings, bolts the door, and throws himself upon the bed. . . . [A]ll the miserable strangeness of his life is revealed to him at a glance: and he cries out, passionately--'Wakefield! Wakefield! You are mad!'" (137-138). Only in this moment of receiving a brief acknowledgement from Mrs. Wakefield does Wakefield attract the gaze of "busy and selfish London"--but only because his response to getting what he wants (the gaze of his wife and the attention of the crowd) is to behave like a stereotypical (and feminine) agoraphobic or hysteric as he flees the scene.
If, under the terms the narrator has established, one’s subjectivity depends on possession of the gaze and one’s ability to read and interpret, then the narrator underscores Wakefield’s shaky status, perhaps in an attempt to shore up his own, when he shows his inefficacy as a reader (in contrast to his wife’s proficiency):

He gathers courage to pause and look homeward, but is perplexed with a sense of change about the familiar edifice, such as affects us all, when, after a separation of months or years, we again see some hill or lake, or work of art, with which we were friends, of old. In ordinary cases, this indescribable impression is caused by the comparison and contrast between our imperfect reminiscences and the reality. In Wakefield, the magic of a single night has wrought a similar transformation, because, in that brief period, a great moral change has been effected. But this is a secret from himself. (135)

Wakefield himself has little interpretive skill: "Yet, changed as he was, he would seldom be conscious of it, but deem himself the same man as ever; glimpses of the truth, indeed, would come, but only for the moment . . ." (138). Again we see truth in terms of vision: rather than a sustained and perhaps knowing gaze at truth, Wakefield is only allowed momentary "glimpses" or "a glance."

Wakefield’s inferior vision stands in contrast not only to his wife’s but also to the narrator’s: he cannot see or understand himself even when looking at himself.

In the narrator’s presentation, then, in addition to dominating his wife with the gaze, Wakefield wants to be the object of the gaze, the object of the gazing subject’s desire. Even his desire to be the object of the gaze is
ambivalent: despite his vanity, he flees. Again, after this same incident, the narrator writes, "Before leaving the spot, he catches a far and momentary glimpse of his wife, passing athwart the front window, with her face turned towards the head of the street. The crafty nincompoop takes to his heels, scared with the idea, that, among a thousand such atoms of mortality, her eye must have detected him" (135). The syntax here allows for either Wakefield or his wife to be the one characterized as being "among a thousand such atoms of mortality." If Wakefield's status is reduced to that of an atom, the passage suggests again the narrator's belief that one could not distinguish him from the crowd. However, if the narrator reduces Mrs. Wakefield to an atom, the passage again sets her up as sole possessor of the gaze; Wakefield reveals his conflicted desire to see his wife seeing him, to see himself in the mirror he wants to have constructed.

Wakefield's desire remains split. In the following passage, the direction of "backward" and the "doom" to which it might lead is ambiguous; we can read the doom therefore as either Mrs. Wakefield's gaze or the absence of it: "Little dreaming of the doom to which his first backward step devotes him, he hurries away, breathless with agitation hitherto unfelt, and hardly dares turn his head, at the distant corner. Can it be, that nobody caught sight of him? Will not the whole household--the decent Mrs. Wakefield, the
smart maid-servant, and the dirty little footboy—raise a hue-and-cry, through London streets, in pursuit of their fugitive lord and master? Wonderful escape!" (135). In this breathless language the narrator reveals both his own and Wakefield's fearful excitement at the prospect of Wakefield's falling under the gaze of various people—and he significantly links Mrs. Wakefield with the servants; perhaps along with Wakefield himself, he calls on the three of them to see Wakefield as their "lord and master." This language indicates the narrator's presumption that Wakefield's status as a masculine subject rests in the gaze of others.

Finally, the narrator resolves the story by Wakefield's return to the site of the beginning of his story. He has been remarkable, worthy of a tale, only during the twenty years in which he lives on the street next to his own. There he can "beh[old] his home very day, and frequently the forlorn Mrs. Wakefield" (130). One effect of this neat resolution is conclusively to establish the narrator's dominance over the story and all its characters and looks. After Wakefield's twenty years of gazing, he "enter[s] the door one evening, quietly, as from a day's absence, and bec[omes] a loving spouse till death" (130).

In the last lines of the story the narrator reaffirms the readers' complicity in the story and the danger inherent in losing one's "place": "Amid the seeming confusion of our
mysterious world, individuals are so nicely adjusted to a system, and systems to one another, and to a whole, that, by stepping aside for a moment, a man exposes himself to a fearful risk of losing his place forever. Like Wakefield, he may become, as it were, the Outcast of the Universe" (140). This last sentence is particularly striking since, at the outset of the story, the narrator invites us to "ramble with [him] through the twenty years of Wakefield's vagary, . . . trusting that there will be a pervading spirit and a moral, even should we fail to find them, done up neatly, and condensed into the final sentence. Thought has always its efficacy, and every striking incident its moral" (131).

If the crowd will pay attention to Wakefield, the narrator's fears for his story can be allayed--his readers will pay attention to his creation. But the narrator, who desires to master every gaze simultaneously, must still demand some of the reader's attention for himself. At the end of the story, the narrator calls attention to the readers' gazing and asserts his control over it when he cuts off our view of Mrs. Wakefield--the narrator must always attempt to maintain control, sometimes with a heavy hand, of who is subject and object of the gaze. The final conflict occurs between the narrator and the reader (either the implied male or the feminist with her focus on Mrs. Wakefield), his last rival for dominance and possession of
the gaze. Presumably the narrator could see beyond the threshold, as we gather from his earlier statement that, after crossing the threshold, Wakefield becomes "a loving spouse till death" (130). However, at the end of the story he denies the reader a look "across the threshold" even as he reasserts the unity of the reader with himself and Wakefield by calling Wakefield "our friend." He withholds from the reader the knowledge of whether Mrs. Wakefield will continue to resist playing loving spouse to Wakefield the "loving spouse." In his move to dominate the reader, the narrator succeeds in even further asserting his dominance over the female reader who may be identifying (against the grain) with Mrs. Wakefield when he comments that Wakefield behaved "unmercifully," yet reveals his amusement at the "joke" with which Wakefield has "quizzed" his wife.

"Wakefield" plays out a series of conflicting desires for dominance, with Mrs. Wakefield and the readers as the province of its exploration. First, Wakefield is torn between wanting to see the effect of his absence on his wife and wanting to be seen by her and the crowd. Similarly, the narrator wants to suggest a connection among himself, Wakefield and the reader at the same time he wants to dominate them. The feminist reader, aligned with both Mrs. Wakefield and the implied reader, resisting the identification the story encourages, might be seen as replicating the narrator's dominance and asserting herself
as the final controlling voyeur. I would argue, though, that the value of feminist studies of vision does not lie in an admission that one cannot escape the dominance of the gaze but in, as Haraway writes,

"a feminist writing of the body that metaphorically emphasizes vision again, because we need to reclaim that sense to find our way through all the visualizing tricks and powers of modern sciences and technologies that have transformed the objectivity debates."

Notes


4. In "Exposing the Verisimilar: Hawthorne's 'Wakefield' and 'Feathertop,'" Arizona Quarterly 45 (1989): 1-23, Ellen E. Westbrook writes, "Wakefield is preoccupied with his relationship to other people, a preoccupation expressed overtly as a fear of what he actually desires: to be seen... As Wakefield is ambivalent about being seen, the narrator is ambivalent about being heard" (7,8).
5. On the other hand, Nina Baym argues in *The Shape of Hawthorne's Career*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976, "[Up until at least 1851, w]orking in solitude, his pieces published anonymously, Hawthorne developed no real understanding of that audience whose favor he was soliciting; he was attempting to open an intercourse with a world he did not know" (63-64).


8. Haraway 189-190.
CHAPTER 2
SENSE INTERMIXTURE IN "RAPPACCINI'S DAUGHTER"

Hybridization . . . produces new combinations and strange instabilities in a given semiotic system. It therefore generates the possibility of shifting the very terms of the system itself, by erasing and interrogating the relationships which constitute it. In practice we often find hybridization, inversion, and demonization mixed up together.

Writing, then, made the grotesque visible whilst keeping it at an untouchable distance. The city however still continued to invade the privatized body and household of the bourgeoisie as smell. It was, primarily, the sense of smell which engaged social reformers, since smell, whilst, like touch, encoding revulsion, had a pervasive and invisible presence difficult to regulate.—Peter Stallybrass and Allon White

Just as Mrs. Wakefield subverts the gaze in "Wakefield," Beatrice Rappaccini is the agent of instability in "Rappaccini's Daughter" (1844). In this story Hawthorne takes a slightly different approach but continues to explore the power relationships endemic to the gaze, the non-visual ways women interact with the world, and the ways they interact with, differ from, and subvert, though they certainly do not replace, the gazes of the male readers, authors, narrators, and characters. Other senses and voices threaten the hierarchy of senses in which the visual remains perfectly on top, and the narrator completely controls it. The perceived threats result in the narrator's and Giovanni's intensified struggles for purity and ultimately
in the death of the text's simultaneously desirable and repulsive intermixture, Beatrice.

Beatrice Rappaccini, like Mrs. Wakefield, finds ways around being merely the object of the male gaze, although she is certainly subjected to it in the gazes of several separate but similar men. Here the distance between subject and object of the gaze is crucial: first, in terms of the necessity of it for most of Giovanni's voyeuristic watching, and second for the importance of distance to the practice and discourse of scientific observation that pervade the story. Like "Wakefield," "Rappaccini's Daughter" operates on a variety of levels of gazing. Its power for me constitutes its horror for its hero, Giovanni Guasconti: the story traces his reaction to the shifting of subject and object positions as well as Beatrice's alternative intermixtures.

"Rappaccini's Daughter" can be read as a text very much opposed to such "intermixtures" as arise from the blurring of boundaries and from the elimination of scientific distance in favor of closeness. The narrator comments, "Blessed are all simple emotions, be they dark or bright! It is the lurid intermixture of the two that produces the illuminating blaze of the infernal regions" (105). Throughout the story, we see a variety of "lurid intermixtures." Describing the plants so closely allied with Beatrice, herself an emblem of intermixture, the
narrator writes, "Several, also, would have shocked a delicate instinct by an appearance of artificialness, indicating that there had been such a commixture, and, as it were, adultery of various vegetable species, that the offspring of man's depraved fancy, glowing with only an evil mockery of beauty" (110). Here the dangling participle ambiguously mixes the "offspring" and "fancy"--one is "monstrous," the other is "depraved," and both are "glowing," similar to the "lurid intermixture" which "produces the illuminating blaze of the infernal regions": both commixtures are reviled but provide light which is necessary for sight. This adulterous, feminized fancy of mixtures suggests the point made by Stallybrass and White. They argue that this sort of mixture produces the possibility of "shifting" a semiotic system. Significantly, they also focus on smell, which "had a pervasive and invisible presence difficult to regulate." Thus in "Rappaccini's Daughter" the commixture of smells offers a doubled potential for slippage of the system which threatens to entrap women in the position of object of the gaze.

Scents become the favored symbols for the dangers of this feminine intermixture elsewhere as well. Mary Ann Doane describes "Christian Metz's analysis of voyeuristic desire [as a] social hierarchy of the senses: 'It is no accident that the main socially acceptable arts are based on the senses at a distance, and that those which depend on the
senses of contact are often regarded as "minor" arts (= culinary arts, art of perfumes, etc.).' The voyeur, according to Metz, must maintain a distance between himself and the image--the cinephile needs the gap which represents for him the very distance between desire and its object. In this sense, voyeurism is theorised as a type of meta-desire." In "Rappaccini’s Daughter," voyeurism clearly functions as the dominant mode, one that attempts from a distance to control all the senses. Yet the "art of perfumes" plays a role in the story as well. While perfumes attract him, Giovanni must continually work to maintain the hierarchy in order to avoid the castration threatened by association with the feminine and the lesser senses, here clearly associated with Beatrice Rappaccini.5

Answering Baglioni’s question about the scent in his chamber, Giovanni continues to use the language outlined above in his attempt to deemphasize the importance of scent. He says, "Odors, being a sort of element combined of the sensual and the spiritual, are apt to deceive us in this manner. The recollection of a perfume--the bare idea of it--may easily be mistaken for a present reality" against the encroaching and potentially deceptive other sense, scent.

Beatrice and her sister plant blur the boundaries between perfume, breath, and poison; these elements demand a closeness very different from the distance required of voyeurism or science. Beatrice tells the plant, "Yes, my
sister, my splendor, it shall be Beatrice’s task to nurse and serve thee; and thou shalt reward her with thy kisses and perfumed breath, which to her is as the breath of life!" (97). As night falls in the garden, the plants’ scent becomes explicitly breath: "Night was already closing in; oppressive exhalations seemed to proceed from the plants, and steal upward past the open window . . ." (98). For Beatrice, the plant’s breath serves as food; for Giovanni (early in the story) and the narrator, "oppressive." The narrator makes explicit the connection between the plant’s scent and that of Beatrice’s breath, noting, "A fragrance was diffused from [the shrub], which Giovanni recognized as identical with that which he had attributed to Beatrice’s breath, but incomparably more powerful" (113).

Senses merge further as scent and nourishment become interchangeable. The narrator describes Beatrice’s "inhaling [the plants’] various perfumes, as if she were one of those beings of old classic fable, that lived upon sweet odors" (102). Baglioni echoes this notion at the end of the story when he tells Giovanni the story of a woman who "had been nourished with poisons from her birth upward . . ." (117).

At the beginning of their relationship, Giovanni, whether in his capacity as a voyeur or as a scientist, eagerly learns all he can about Beatrice’s perfumes. He tells her, "[I]f fame says true—you, likewise are deeply
skilled in the virtues indicated by these rich blossoms, and these spicy perfumes. Would you deign to be my instructress, I should prove an apter scholar than if taught by Signor Rappaccini himself" (111). Here Giovanni clearly distinguishes between their ways of knowing: hers, the feminine--she knows of the plants' "virtues" and their "perfumes"; she will be his explicitly feminine "instructress" and his, the masculine--he will be a "scholar"; the alternative teacher is Dr. Rappaccini. Giovanni prefers her way of knowing to her father's. As he spends more time with her, he does learn from her, and the narrator begins to describe him in the mixed terms once reserved for Beatrice: "Giovanni was affrighted at the eager enjoyment--the appetite, as it were--with which he found himself inhaling the fragrance of the flowers" (123). The narrator calls attention to this mixture of senses in Giovanni by setting off "appetite" in dashes; Giovanni's response is reminiscent of both Beatrice's and the women of the legends who hunger for a scent.

The story combats the threat of intermixture and the power of scent by imposing a system of senses which values vision over scent and purity over intermixture. The story's male scientists, the narrator, and the frame narrator participate in this system as they simultaneously work to avoid intermixture with each other as well as their own temptations toward the lower senses or arts. Part of their
system demands a privileging of distance; before turning to
this it will be useful to explore Beatrice and her tendency
toward intermixture one step further.

Mary Ann Doane’s comments on the female spectator are
particularly useful for understanding Beatrice Rappaccini.

For the female spectator there is a certain over-
presence of the image—she is the image. Given the
closeness of this relationship, the female spectator’s
desire can be described only in terms of a kind of
narcissism—the female look demands a becoming. . . .
From this perspective, it is important to note the
constant recurrence of the motif of proximity in
feminist theories (especially those labelled ‘new
French feminisms’) which purport to describe a feminine
specificity. For Luce Irigaray, female autonomy is
readable as a constant relation of the self to itself.
. . .

She continues, "the pervasiveness, in theories of the
feminine, of descriptions of such a claustrophobic
closeness, a deficiency in relation to structures of seeing
and the visible, must clearly have consequences for attempts
to theorise female spectatorship." Beatrice Rappaccini’s
position as subject and object of the gaze, her closeness to
her sister/shrub, and her access to alternative senses can
be discussed in these terms of closeness and a strained
relation to the visible.

The story posits the visual as normative and dominant;
this system demands close examination in order to understand
how Beatrice works within and outside it. The story’s
outermost level of reader or viewer or seer of the text is
the reader, a reader constructed by the narrator and advised
both subtly and directly. The narrator invites this implied
(male) reader explicitly to participate in the story, particularly when he describes the "professional warfare of long continuance between [Professor Baglioni] and Dr. Rappaccini, in which the latter was generally thought to have gained the advantage." Here he presumes the reader to share scientific or scholarly objectivity: "If the reader be inclined to judge for himself, we refer him to certain black-letter tracts on both sides, preserved in the medical department of the University of Padua" (100). Thus the reader of the narrator's tale is given considerable autonomy, invited to stand back and "judge for himself." Of course, as was the case with "Wakefield," the narrator's implied reader is male; the female reader faces the familiar dilemma of split identification.

Before the reader encounters this narrator's idea of scientific objectivity, we (female or male) encounter the frame narrator, presumably a reviewer of the story supposedly written by M. de l'Aubepine. This narrator sets up the idea of scientific distance we will see throughout the story: "We do not remember to have seen any translated specimens of the productions of M. de l'Aubepine . . ." (91). He thus raises the subject of seeing "specimens," usually a word associated with the powerless objects of scientific gazing, before we even see the story. He continues, "In any case, [M. de l'Aubepine] generally contents himself with a very slight embroidery of outward
manners,—the faintest possible counterfeit of real life,—and endeavors to create an interest by some less obvious peculiarity of the subject" (92). The notion of the story as "very slight embroidery" subtly suggests that a kind of femininity may be at work on some unexpected yet marginal level of the text.

As was the case with the main character of "Wakefield," the male protagonist of "Rappaccini's Daughter," Giovanni Guasconti, bears a complex relationship to the gaze, a relationship that can be characterized at least in part by vanity. At the end of the story, in a moment approaching the crisis of his final meeting with Beatrice, the narrator writes, "Before descending into the garden, Giovanni failed not to look at his figure in the mirror; a vanity to be expected in a beautiful young man, yet, as displaying itself at that troubled an feverish moment, the token of a certain shallowness of feeling and insincerity of character" (121). Giovanni possesses a certain femininity, particularly with regard to the gaze. This femininity is apparent not only in his vanity about his appearance but also in the narrator's characterization of him as "beautiful," a word usually reserved for descriptions of women and objects. The beautiful Beatrice's greatest threat to Giovanni, a threat which becomes reality for a time, is that her intermixture will rub off on him and he will no longer be a purely visual, hierarchic, and male creature.
Even though Giovanni has hoped to find himself in Beatrice, when he looks in the mirror and finds her in himself, he experiences horror and rage.\textsuperscript{11} As I noted earlier, when Giovanni reveals his vanity by looking into the mirror, the narrator writes, "He did gaze, however, and said to himself that his features had never before possessed so rich a grace, nor his eyes such vivacity, nor his cheeks so warm a hue of superabundant life" (121). He admires his feminine traits so reminiscent of the excesses of Beatrice, but he does not realize that the "look" he likes so much in himself comes as a result of her influence. His and the narrator's inflated sense of the importance of the visual is most apparent here: he cannot see that he is becoming like Beatrice. As he looks vainly into the mirror, he asserts wrongly both his immunity to and difference from Beatrice, saying, "I am no flower to perish in her grasp!" (121). At that instant Giovanni sees the drooping flowers which have been affected by his breath, as if he had already become the woman he has been watching.

The narrator's blurring of Giovanni's gender description reveals a certain confusion of boundaries; the text explores such transgressions in other ways, too, as the narrator himself subverts what he attempts to impose. We see the first example of a concern with limits in the frame review: the reviewer writes of M. de l'Aubepine's work, "Occasionally, a breath of nature, a rain-drop of pathos and
tenderness, or a gleam of humor, will find its way into the midst of his fantastic imagery, and make us feel as if, after all, we were yet within the limits of our native earth" (92). In addition, Giovanni is also seen to be in danger in part because of "the tendency to heart-break natural to a young man for the first time out of his native sphere . . ." (93). The narrator writes of the garden, "In the midst, by the shattered fountain, grew the magnificent shrub, with its purple gems clustering all over it; they glowed in the air, and gleamed back again out of the depths of the pool, which thus seemed to overflow with colored radiance from the rich reflection that was steeped in it" (101). The emphasis on overflowing excess here and elsewhere suggests the narrator's concern that boundaries will be crossed, that limits will be transgressed.

The narrator continues to assert the importance of maintaining the hierarchy of the senses and strict adherence to boundaries: "The wisest course would have been, if his heart were in any real danger, to quit his lodgings and Padua itself at once; the next wiser, to have accustomed himself, as far as possible, to the familiar and daylight view of Beatrice--thus bringing her rigidly and systematically within the limits of ordinary experience" (105). The narrator posits that Giovanni must in his best scientific fashion "rigidly and systematically" restore Beatrice to the boundaries she tends to exceed. He
continues, "Least of all, while avoiding her sight, ought Giovanni to have remained so near this extraordinary being that the proximity and possibility even of intercourse should give a kind of substance and reality to the wild vagaries which his imagination ran riot continually in producing" (105). Here he suggests that the outcome of "near[ness]" and "proximity" will be "intercourse," and perhaps intermixture. I will return below to the possibility of restraining Beatrice’s excess, but it is important to note here that the narrator advises, as the minimal means of Giovanni’s protection, that Giovanni should avoid "her sight." This ambiguous construction can be read as either the sight of her or her gaze; either way, the comment suggests the danger inherent in Beatrice, whether she is subject or object of the gaze.

In part, Beatrice’s danger stems from her uncontrollable femininity and excess. Her sexuality, as opposed to visual science, becomes the most intimate trope for commixture of the lower senses. In the narrator’s first description of her, he writes, "Soon there emerged from under a sculptured portal the figure of a young girl, ... with a bloom so deep and vivid that one shade more would have been too much. She looked redundant with life, health, and energy; all of which attributes were bound down and compressed, as it were, and girdled tensely, in their luxuriance, by her virgin zone" (97). The "redundant"
Beatrice threatens to burst out of the limits of propriety at any moment, to become "one shade . . . too much."

Clearly, as many critics have said, her sexuality is what is "bound down and compressed" and "girdled tensely." As is the case in the narrator's prescription for Giovanni's escape from the disaster the narrator, the reader, and even Giovanni himself seem to know is imminent, the narrator writes that the second wisest option would be to bring "her rigidly and systematically within the limits of ordinary experience" (105). Finally, Baglioni wants to master her with his science-derived antidote: he tells Giovanni, "Possibly we may even succeed in bringing back this miserable child within the limits of ordinary nature, from which her father's madness has estranged her" (119). Giovanni echoes this hope even at the end of the story: "Besides, thought Giovanni, might there not still be a hope of his returning within the limits of ordinary nature, and leading Beatrice--the redeemed Beatrice--by the hand?" (126). His comments here are reminiscent of the frame narrator's comments above: he is concerned that as readers, despite Aubepine's excesses, we will still "feel as if, after all, we were yet within the limits of our native earth" (92).

Baglioni and Dr. Rappaccini serve as excellent examples of practitioners of a science which deploys vision from a distance. Both retain their manhood more completely than
Giovanni, arguably because neither indulges in closeness or exceeds boundaries. However, even they are not immune to the forces of boundary transgression at work in this story. Even when Rappaccini’s devotion to science seems extreme, it can be argued that he merely plays out the rules of the scientific/visual system to their logical conclusion. Baglioni, the rival colleague of Dr. Rappaccini, demonstrates both proficiency in the practice of voyeurism and interest in Giovanni’s gazing. He tells Giovanni, "You have heard of this daughter, whom all the young men in Padua are wild about, though not half a dozen have ever had the good hap to see her face" (101). The narrator aligns Baglioni with Giovanni as possessors of the gaze and Giovanni with Beatrice as its object when he comments, "It was Baglioni, whom Giovanni had avoided ever since their first meeting, from a doubt that the professor’s sagacity would look too deeply into his secrets. Endeavoring to recover himself, he stared forth wildly from his inner world into the outer one and spoke like a man in a dream. . . ." Giovanni tries to leave as Baglioni watches him, "smiling, but at the same time scrutinizing the youth with an earnest glance" (106). With Baglioni, Giovanni has his first experience of discomfort under the gaze. This discomfort occurs throughout the story when he finds himself positioned as the object of another man’s gaze.
The narrator links Baglioni's perceptive powers to his position as a scientist, a position that allies him with Rappaccini. Baglioni himself describes Dr. Rappaccini to Giovanni as a man who "has as much science as any member of the faculty--with perhaps one single exception--in Padua, or all Italy . . ." (99). It seems clear that the one exception would be himself (although Baglioni himself suggests that Beatrice's skill could make her his rival), particularly as we see the way his experimental, empirical scientific method is characterized as similar to Rappaccini's by the end of the story. However, despite Baglioni's superior position as scientist, and what we might anticipate as his immunity to the breakdown of hierarchies and boundaries, he is drawn to fiction: when he tells Giovanni about the story of the woman with perfumed breath, Giovanni replies, "I marvel how your worship finds time to read such nonsense, among your graver studies" (117). The text connects Rappaccini, too, to art, but here refers disdainfully to popular fiction.

From the first of the story, even when Dr. Rappaccini becomes the object of Giovanni's gaze into the garden and the narrator gives a description of his physical appearance through Giovanni's eyes, Dr. Rappaccini possesses a scientific, distant, objectifying gaze. As Giovanni watches Rappaccini at work in the garden, the narrator comments,

Nothing could exceed the intentness with which this scientific gardener examined every shrub which grew in
his path: it seemed as if he was looking into their inmost nature, making observations in regard to their creative essence, and discovering why one leaf grew. . . . Nevertheless, in spite of this deep intelligence on his part, there was no approach to intimacy between himself and these vegetable existences. On the contrary, he avoided their actual touch or the direct inhaling of their odors with a caution that impressed Giovanni most disagreeably. . . . (95-96)

The gardening/caretaking styles of Rappaccini and his daughter differ greatly. Despite his interest, he maintains his physical and emotional distance from these creatures of his science, while his daughter cares for them with a closeness that suggests a very different kind of relationship between self and other. Giovanni is "impressed" by the "caution" rather than the cause of the caution, the plants; we can see this response as perhaps indicative of Giovanni's less than complete devotion to distant science and a foreshadowing of his potential for intermixture with Beatrice and the closeness she represents.

According to Baglioni, Dr. Rappaccini's distance-keeping, even from the human objects of his observation, establishes him as a consummate scientist. He tells Giovanni that Rappaccini's "patients are interesting to him only as subjects for some new experiment. He would sacrifice human life, his own among the rest, or whatever else was dearest to him, for the sake of adding so much as a grain of mustard seed to the great heap of his accumulated knowledge" (99-100). The narrator notes a moment in the street when Dr. Rappaccini holds Giovanni in his gaze: "His
face was all overspread with a most sickly and sallow hue, but yet . . . pervaded with an expression of piercing and active intellect. . . . [Rappaccini] fixed his eyes upon Giovanni with an intentness that seemed to bring out whatever was within him worthy of notice. Nevertheless, there was a peculiar quietness in the look, as if taking merely a speculative, not a human, interest in the young man" (106-107). The description of Rappaccini's face, as seen through Giovanni's gaze, forces us to acknowledge the intermixing even within this character. Furthermore, Rappaccini has the ability to "bring out whatever was within him worthy of notice," perhaps thereby serving as a mirror for Giovanni in much the same way his daughter will. As Rappaccini looks at Giovanni with much the same gaze as that with which he looks at his plants, looking into their essences with his violating, phallic, "piercing" look, he at the same time seems to be able to deflect their looks, defying them to make him the object of their gaze even as they try.

Again because of his own attraction toward scientific observation, Baglioni serves as translator for Giovanni of what has just transpired between Giovanni and Rappaccini: he asks Giovanni, "'Has he ever seen you before?'" When Giovanni replies that he is not sure, Baglioni asserts, "He has seen you! he must have seen you! . . . For some purpose or other, this man of science is making a study of you. . .
You are the subject of one of Rappaccini's experiments!" (107). The text here blurs the boundaries between subject and object as Giovanni is both subject and object of Rappaccini's experiment. Baglioni retains his position as distant scientist even through the story's tragic finale. At the end, as Beatrice dies, "at the feet of her father and Giovanni . . ., Professor Pietro Baglioni looked forth from the window" (128). At this point, presumably from the window from which Giovanni has gazed upon Beatrice throughout the early part of the story, Baglioni remains safely in the position of the controlling voyeur, apart from other ways of knowing and sensing.15

Baglioni seems to be correct in locating Rappaccini's look in a larger system of looking. After Beatrice prevents Giovanni from poisoning himself in the garden by touching the purple flower, she leaves the garden, leaving him alone to see that Rappaccini has observed the entire exchange. Thus, in the system of layering of looks and shifting of subject and object positions that characterize this story, as Giovanni watches Beatrice with his eyes, he trades positions with her because her father, without Giovanni's knowledge, has been watching him. As his daughter drinks the antidote that will prove to be for her a deadly poison, Rappaccini looks again on the objects of his scientific experiment, verifying everything Baglioni has said about his devotion to science above all else. The narrator writes,
"[T]he pale man of science seemed to gaze with a triumphant expression at the beautiful youth and maiden, as might an artist who should spend his life in achieving a picture or a group of statuary and finally be satisfied with his success. He paused--his bent form grew erect with conscious power, he spread out his hands over them, in the attitude of a father imploring a blessing upon his children" (126). Like Baglioni, who remains uncastrated in the safe position of the voyeur in the window, Rappaccini also survives the story; we do not see his reaction to Beatrice’s death, but at this point he grows "erect with conscious power" as he seems "to gaze with a triumphant expression" on Beatrice and Giovanni. However, just as Baglioni’s association with fiction taints him, Rappaccini’s association here with art, even at his moment of triumphant erection, with art, particularly painting or sculpture, taints him.¹⁶

From his spatial vantage point, repeatedly characterized as "above" the garden, Giovanni Guasconti begins the story as a man confident in his position as subject/possessor of the gaze.¹⁷ He also corresponds to Laura Mulvey’s ideas about fetishistic scopophilia, with its reliance on the beauty of the object (here Beatrice and her garden, both as a whole and in its component parts.)¹⁸ In this story, both Beatrice’s and Giovanni’s physical beauty play a large part, as opposed to beauty’s relative unimportance in "Wakefield." Unlike Wakefield, Giovanni can
look upon Beatrice repeatedly, for his pleasure and at his leisure. Like Wakefield, at least initially he does not want to be seen; he wants to do his looking in secret. "Ascending to his chamber, he seated himself near the window, but within the shadow thrown by the depth of the wall, so that he could look down into the garden with little risk of being discovered. All beneath his eyes was a solitude" (101). In describing Giovanni's vantage point, the narrator emphasizes Giovanni's intention to secure a safe place, free from the "risk" of the gaze of another, from which to watch Beatrice. Furthermore, Giovanni's vantage point emphasizes his dominance over "[a]ll beneath his eyes" and his freedom from intimacy in "solitude."

Significantly, when Giovanni first looks down into the garden, he objectifies Rappaccini with his gaze: "His figure soon emerged into view, ... a tall, emaciated, sallow, and sickly-looking man, dressed in a scholar's garb of black. He was beyond the middle term of life, with grey hair, a thin grey beard, and a face singularly marked with intellect and cultivation, but which could never, even in his more youthful days, have expressed much warmth of heart" (95). A complex system of mutual gazing constitutes Giovanni's relationship to Rappaccini, and often the two men are equally unsure of who is gazing at whom. For example, when, after his first glimpse of Dr. Rappaccini Giovanni also first sees Beatrice, "Giovanni, at his lofty window,
rubbed his eyes, and almost doubted whether it were a girl tending her favorite flower, or one sister performing the duties of affection to another. . . . Whether Dr. Rappaccini had finished his labors in the garden, or that his watchful eye had caught the stranger's face, he now took his daughter's arm and retired" (97-98).

Giovanni's connection with Dr. Rappaccini extends to their shared occupation as scientist. Even though Giovanni never seems to study at the University, and shrinks from meeting his professors, he uses his scientific method of problem solving when his position with regard to Beatrice becomes too uncertain for him: "He resolved to institute some decisive test that should satisfy him. . . . His eyes, gazing down afar, might have deceived him as to the lizard, the insect, and the flowers; but if he could witness, at the distance of a few paces, the sudden blight of one fresh and healthful flower in Beatrice's hand, there would be room for no further question" (120-121). For both Giovanni and Dr. Rappaccini, then, Beatrice serves as the object of a visually oriented experiment. In describing Giovanni's thoughts, the narrator's language becomes direct, curt, strong. Giovanni's resolution goes beyond decision; "institute" suggests an action with the backing of strong authority or perhaps even a tradition of thought; combined with "decisive" it suggests Giovanni's participation in a masculine, controlling economy of science.
The narrator plays an important role in contributing to this story of voyeurism and the elevated status of the visual; he tells us a story largely made up of his hero’s observations. The narrator goes beyond reporting what his hero sees and questions Giovanni’s perceptions at almost every crucial moment. This questioning serves to reinforce the importance of the gaze and the narrator’s supremacy over all the characters—not only Giovanni but Baglioni and Rappaccini as well. In narrating the morning after Giovanni’s first sighting of Beatrice Rappaccini, he suggests that Giovanni’s opinions of the previous day may have been "errors of fancy, or even of judgment," brought on by darkness (98). The syntax here emphasizes the hierarchy of ways of knowing, suggesting that errors "of fancy" might be more likely to occur than errors of "judgment."

Later the narrator questions Giovanni’s visual judgment on the basis of his alcohol consumption rather than on the basis of the quality of light. His goal here seems to be a privileging of vision, specifically his own. After prefacing Giovanni’s encounter with Beatrice by suggesting that Giovanni is drunk, he proceeds to narrate the incident of her killing the lizard by means of her breath, but only after once again casting doubt as to Giovanni’s faculties: "But now," he writes, "unless Giovanni’s draughts of wine had bewildered his senses, a singular incident occurred"
Referring to this same incident, the narrator questions Giovanni's judgment based on his distance from the events he witnesses, for what will be the first of several times. He even interrupts himself to cast doubt on the story he prepares to tell, so that the reader sees Giovanni's actions and reads his perceptions through a veil of doubt: "It appeared to Giovanni, but, at the distance from which he gazed, he could scarcely have seen any thing so minute, it appeared to him, however, that a drop or two of moisture from the broken stem of the flower descended upon the lizard's head . . ." (102-103). The narrator calls further attention to his questioning of Giovanni by setting his doubt within dashes.

Finally, after Giovanni believes that he witnesses the bouquet he has given to Beatrice wilt in her hand, the narrator comments, "It was an idle thought; there could be no possibility of distinguishing a faded flower from a fresh one at so great a distance" (104). The diction of this sentence makes it difficult to determine whether this represents Giovanni's thought or the narrator's, but since Giovanni does register the thought, it seems likely that the narrator doubts him at least as much as he doubts himself, if he doubts himself at all. By the end of the story all of Beatrice's actions which lead to the narrator's doubting of Giovanni's visual perceptions have been repeated by Giovanni himself.
The text, the narrator, and Giovanni attempt to contain Beatrice in part by excluding her sexuality, or at least denying it. Giovanni also likes to believe that he can completely dominate her by his invasive voyeurism. However, just as we saw earlier that Beatrice escapes boundaries with her excesses, she escapes categories as well—she becomes continually not either/or but both. Trying to reassure himself of Beatrice's goodness, Giovanni remembers "many a holy and passionate outgush of her heart, when the pure fountain had been unsealed from its depths and made visible in its transparency to his mental eye; recollections which, had Giovanni known how to estimate them, would have assured him that all this ugly mystery was but an earthly illusion, and that, whatever mist of evil might seem to have gathered over her, the real Beatrice was a heavenly angel" (122). Here the narrator juxtaposes an excessive, uncontrolled "outgush" with Beatrice as "heavenly angel" at the same time he tries to affirm the hierarchy of heaven over earth. The narrator advocates the clarity of that which is "made visible in its transparency to [Giovanni's] mental eye," thereby invoking both the power of a visual science.

He also sees in her face an "expression of simplicity and sweetness; qualities that had not entered into his idea of her character, and which made him ask anew what manner of mortal she might be" (102). Even though he has tried to contain Beatrice in a system of "simplicity and sweetness,"
she always seems to defy him: "No sooner was Guasconti alone
in his chamber than the image of Beatrice came back to his
passionate musings, invested with all the witchery that had
been gathering around it ever since his first glimpse of
her, and now likewise imbued with a tender warmth of girlish
womanhood" (114). Again, Beatrice's "witchery" stands as a
contrast to Beatrice as "heavenly angel"; her warmth is
tempered by tenderness; her womanhood is girlish.25

This childishness on Beatrice's part becomes the
hallmark of their relationship after Giovanni gains
admittance to the garden.26 "She watched for the youth's
appearance and flew to his side with confidence as
unreserved as if they had been playmates from early infancy—
as if they were such playmates still" (115). Here
Giovanni's innocence is emphasized by the narrator's calling
him a "youth"; the surface of their relationship remains
childish, and they are never physically intimate:

they had even spoken love in those gushes of passion
when their spirits darted forth in articulated breath
like tongues of long hidden flame; and yet there had
been no seal of lips, no clasp of hands, nor any
slightest caress such as love claims and hallows. He
had never touched one of the gleaming ringlets of her
hair; her garment—so marked was the physical barrier
between them—had never been waved against him by a
breeze. On the few occasions when Giovanni had seemed
tempted to over step the limit, Beatrice grew so sad,
so stern, and withal wore such a look of desolate
separation, shuddering at itself, that not a spoken
word was requisite to repel him. (115-116)

Again we see the tension between a sexuality about to
escape, "gushes of passion" and "spirits . . . like tongues
of long hidden flame," and a defensive purity marked by a "physical barrier."

Despite the narrator's emphasis on Beatrice's childishness and the absence of intercourse (though there is intermixture) between the couple, Giovanni's looking and the narrator's language become more passionate and sexual as the story progresses, beginning with his reference to "the virgin zone." The narrator writes, "Beatrice now strayed carelessly through the garden, approaching closer beneath Giovanni's window, so that he was compelled to thrust his head quite out of its concealment in order to gratify the intense and painful curiosity which she excited" (103). We have a clear contrast here between Beatrice's petlike careless straying and Giovanni's passion. He is so aroused that he even reveals himself and his position as voyeur (with a thrust) in order to gratify his clearly sexual, "intense and painful" desire, which may also reveal some castration anxiety.

The narrator rather explicitly states what Giovanni hopes to gain through his contact with Beatrice: an understanding of himself.  "Day after day his pulses had throbbed with feverish blood at the improbable idea of an interview with Beatrice, and of standing with her, face to face, in this very garden, basking in the Oriental sunshine of her beauty, and snatching from her full gaze the mystery which he deemed the riddle of his own existence" (109-110).
Significantly, here he imagines a mutual, "face to face" gaze with Beatrice, but the narrator describes a fantasy not of sharing, but of violent taking as he imagines "snatching from her full gaze" "the riddle of his own existence." Later he continues to describe the results of Giovanni's gaze upon Beatrice, writing that Giovanni "seemed to gaze through the beautiful girl's eyes into her transparent soul, and felt no more doubt or fear" (112). This reference to Beatrice's transparency continues the story's repeated notion that Beatrice is easy to read and also emphasizes Giovanni's need for Beatrice's eyes to be merely something he can read or even see through, rather than themselves agents of seeing. The narrator perpetuates this idea of seeing into a person's soul when he writes, "There is something truer and more real than what we can see with the eyes and touch with the finger" (120). At this point we read the vague suggestion that, in the hierarchy of senses, there may be something, perhaps the heavenly, above even the visual.

With his entrance into the garden, "beneath his own window," Giovanni's position spatially as well as within the power dynamics of the gaze begins to shift. As soon as he realizes that Beatrice is about to find him, he imagines himself as the object of her gaze: "Giovanni had not considered with himself what should be his deportment; whether he should apologize for his intrusion into the
garden, or assume that he was there with the privity at least, if not by the desire, of Dr. Rappaccini or his daughter . . ." (110-111). When she sees him, their potential for "intercourse" and intermixture increases, resulting in a blurring of his subject position, only clearly masculine when he gazes from above.

He can no longer gaze in secret at Beatrice although, true to her depiction as childlike, she assumes that he has come only to look at the garden. She tells him, "'It is no marvel . . . if the sight of my father's rare collection has tempted you to take a nearer view'" (111). This "nearer view" continues to threaten the intermixture the narrator has argued that Giovanni must avoid. She continues, in response to his belief in rumors about her scientific knowledge,

"There are many flowers here, and those not the least brilliant, that shock and offend me when they meet my eye. But pray, signor, do not believe those stories about my science. Believe nothing of me save what you see with your own eyes."

"And must I believe all that I have seen with my own eyes?" asked Giovanni, pointedly, while the recollection of former scenes made him shrink. "No, signora; you demand too little of me. Bid me believe nothing save what comes from your own lips."

It would appear that Beatrice understood him. There came a deep flush to her cheek; but she looked full into Giovanni's eyes, and responded to his gaze of uneasy suspicion with a queenlike haughtiness. (111-112)

In this discussion of which senses are to be believed, we see that while Beatrice has access to hearing and vision, Giovanni must renounce the visual, or at least subordinate
it, in order to be with her. His renunciation, as well as her possession of the gaze, results in the beginning of his metaphorical castration suggested by the narrator’s comment that "the recollection of former scenes made him shrink." While his gaze becomes one of "uneasy suspicion," hers in contrast becomes one of "queenlike haughtiness." As film theorist Stephen Heath has noted, "If the woman looks, the spectacle provokes, castration is in the air."^\(^{29}\)

For some space of the story and their relationship Beatrice and Giovanni can maintain a certain amount of mutuality in their gazing. We must ask, though, whether it serves Beatrice or is only a means by which Giovanni can see himself. Feminist film critic Jackie Byars has argued "that a tradition of mutual gazing expresses a 'different voice' and a different kind of gaze that we've not heard or seen before because our theories have discouraged such 'hearing' and 'seeing.' . . . Only through a theory of psychoanalysis that denies connectedness and relies on separation, that denies the feminine and naturalizes the masculine, can we so polarize and simplify the relation between the text and its reader as to assume that all spectator voyeurism is inherently masculine."^\(^{30}\) Looking becomes central to the non-physical relationship between Beatrice and Giovanni. "By all appreciable signs, they loved; they had looked love with eyes that conveyed the holy secret from the depths of
one soul into the depths of the other, as if it were too sacred to be whispered away . . . " (115-116).

Beatrice Rappaccini functions as the text’s example of a character who can function not only in different positions with respect to the gaze but also can explore other ways of knowing characterized here by blurred boundaries. Her relationship with the plant in the garden is "close" in the terms suggested by Mary Ann Doane above. "Yet Giovanni’s fancy must have grown morbid, while he looked down into the garden; for the impression which the fair stranger made upon him was as if here were another flower, the human sister of those vegetable ones, as beautiful as they--more beautiful than the richest of them--but still to be touched only with a glove, nor to be approached without a mask. As Beatrice came down the garden path, it was observable that she handled and inhaled the odor of several of the plants, which her father had most sedulously avoided" (97). The narrator begins this point with questioning Giovanni’s "fancy" and emphasizing his position above the garden. He goes on to make a more important point: he links Beatrice’s "handl[ing]" and "inhal[ing]" of the plants in opposition to Giovanni’s seeing. He insists that distance must be maintained, either through glove or mask. The narrator concludes, "Flower and maiden were different and yet the same, and fraught with some strange peril in either shape"
(98). Here even the line between difference and sameness becomes blurred.

We can see blurring as a marker of reveals Giovanni's transformation, which begins early in the story. When Giovanni's watching Beatrice from above still constitutes their relationship, the narrator notes, "Whether or no Beatrice possessed those terrible attributes--the fatal breath--the affinity with those so beautiful and deadly flowers--which were indicated by what Giovanni had witnessed, she had at least instilled a fierce and subtle poison into his system" (105). Even though the change has begun, the narrator still emphasizes what Giovanni has "witnessed." Giovanni's change soon becomes evident again when Professor Baglioni remarks that Giovanni has become "altered" (106). By the end of the story, when Baglioni comes to his room, the process of change and intermixture has progressed nearly completion; Baglioni asks him, "'[W]hat singular fragrance is this in your apartment? Is it the perfume of your gloves?" (117). The emphasis here on perfume in Giovanni's gloves recalls the narrator's earlier comments on Rappaccini's "thick gloves" that, along with a mask, serve as his "armor" against the plants (96). By the end of the story, Giovanni has moved so far away from the distance- and visual-oriented science of Rappaccini that even his gloves, which can be seen as a means of avoiding dangerous closeness, have been pervaded by the poisonous
perfume. Like the narrator, he strives for scientific control yet his body, or the body of the text, betrays him with mixtures.

Giovanni's physical appearance represents a marker of his shift from masculine voyeur/scientist to perfumed intermixture (in which the intensified scientist component works as a defense against intermixture.) We know of Giovanni's beauty from the start; he charms his landlady, Dame Lisabetta, with his "remarkable beauty of person" (93). However, as the story progresses, the narrator describes him more and more in the same terms he uses to describe Beatrice; one example is the repetition of "glistening" or "gleaming" ringlets. In a passage early in the story, the narrator emphasizes Beatrice's closeness to the plant, writing, "Approaching the shrub, she threw open her arms, as with a passionate ardor, and drew its branches into an intimate embrace; so intimate, that her features were hidden in its leafy bosom, and her glistening ringlets all intermingled with the flowers" (102). Here, Beatrice loses her self in closeness with the plant; her "glistening ringlets" and the shrub's flowers become one.

But Giovanni's ringlets provide a cause for the narrator's comment and Beatrice's gaze; when Beatrice catches Giovanni in the act of looking at her from his window, she sees "the beautiful head of the young man--rather a Grecian than an Italian head, with fair, regular
features, and a glistening of gold among his ringlets—gazing down upon her like a being that hovered in mid-air" (104). On the other hand, the narrator reveals the contrasting distance between Giovanni and Beatrice, writing that Giovanni "had never touched one of the gleaming ringlets of her hair . . . " (116). While we can read these lines as suggestive of Giovanni's status as a superior, powerful being or as an insect to be killed by her breath, I want to call attention to the repetition of the description of "glistening . . . ringlets" to suggest Giovanni's potential transformation into Beatrice's counterpart, or even potentially another sister.

As Giovanni spends more and more time with Beatrice, larger boundaries also begin to blur. The narrator describes this shift in general terms: "Whatever had looked ugly was now beautiful; or, if incapable of such a change, it stole away and hid itself among those shapeless half ideas which throng the dim region beyond the daylight of our perfect consciousness" (114). Here the narrator even establishes a bond between himself and the reader, with whom he shares a "perfect consciousness," in opposition to Giovanni.

We can trace the merging of the Giovanni and Beatrice through the repetition of their shuddering at themselves. Beatrice is the first to shudder, as I noted above, when Giovanni presses her for physical closeness: her look
"shudder[s] at itself" (116). When Giovanni stands before a mirror in a pivotal moment I discussed above, and he realizes that he might be becoming more like Beatrice, "staring at his own reflection there as at the likeness of something frightful . . . then he shuddered—shuddered at himself" (121). Thus the narrator makes clear that just as Beatrice's "look . . . shudder[s] at itself," Giovanni shudders at his own reflection in what could be seen as a reversal of his tendency toward vanity. Finally, in the last scene, Beatrice asks Giovanni, "[W]hat hast thou to do, save with one other shudder at my hideous misery to go forth out of the garden and mingle with thy race, and forget that there ever crawled on earth such a monster as poor Beatrice?" (124-125).

Giovanni's realization of his connection to Beatrice leads him to a rage that may be his attempt to regain some of his masculinity. He tells Beatrice, using the language of blasted castration that he will repeat, "Yes, poisonous thing! . . . Thou hast done it! Thou hast blasted me! Thou hast filled my veins with poison! Thou hast made me as hateful, as ugly, as loathsome and deadly a creature as thyself—a world's wonder of hideous monstrosity!" (124). He repeats this language of poison throughout the story, and at this point the language of castration—"blasted"—echoes an earlier description of what Giovanni fears will happen to him as a result of simply
looking: "For many days after [the flower wilts in her hand] the young man avoided the window that looked into Dr. Rappaccini's garden, as if something ugly and monstrous would have blasted his eyesight had he been betrayed into a glance" (104). The passive voice and use of betrayal here transform Giovanni from looking agent to victim.

The narrator also suggests Giovanni's castration by the repetition of the verb "wither." Initially, the flowers Giovanni throws to Beatrice "wither in her grasp" (104). The narrator repeats the language when her writes that Giovanni "could not quite forget the bouquet that withered in her grasp" (120). But later, the flowers he buys specifically to test her "droop" in his hands (121). He now has the feminine power to castrate. Finally, in a fury, he tells Beatrice, "[T]hou hast severed me, likewise, from all the warmth of life . . . " (124). Again we see Giovanni "cut off."

At this point, Giovanni's anger takes over completely, and his gaze becomes a source of danger for her. Through his emphasis on the potential for harm in the gaze, the narrator works to reassert its primacy. The narrator writes, "[H]is wrath and despair had been so fierce that he could have desired nothing so much as to wither her by a glance . . . " (122). She realizes that his gaze endangers her: "Here Giovanni frowned so darkly upon her that Beatrice paused and trembled" (123).
Finally, at the end of the story, Beatrice reveals her understanding of the gaze and its own poison. "'I see it! I see it' shrieked Beatrice. 'It is my father's fatal science!'" (128). And she asks Giovanni, "O, was there not, from the first, more poison in thy nature than in mine?" (127). In visual terms, Beatrice acknowledges the role that objectifying science has played in her demise. The story ends with three men gazing at her corpse, and at each other. In the next chapter, we will see another woman fall victim to the relentless gaze of a scientist who treats his wife for what he sees as her poisonous femininity.

Notes


2. David S. Reynolds writes, "By 1844 Hawthorne was in a unique position among American authors dealing with women's issues. No other American writer had approached him in producing so large a variety of fictional heroines, from his heterogeneous characters of the 1830s to his more topical, socially representative heroines of the early 1840s. He was now ready to produce a heroine who fused opposite qualities and thus assumed stature as a truly complex memorable literary character. All his earlier tales had achieved combinations of different types of heroines but not fusions of different qualities in one person. In Beatrice, the poisonous angel of 'Rappaccini's Daughter' (1844), he created such a complex heroine" (Reynolds, Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville. New York: Knopf, 1988, 370-371).

3. This language as well as the quotes from the rest of this paragraph suggest miscegenation, which may have been in the background of Hawthorne's mind in 1844 and bears many of the same self/other dilemmas as the relationship between Giovanni and Beatrice.

5. In *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, (David Couzens Hoy, Ed., New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986) Martin Jay argues, "Feminists may choose to turn to touch or smell as more consonant with female than male sexuality, but Foucault was always too sceptical of any search for essentializing immediacy—and also, too unconcerned with female sexual experience—to feel that this choice provided an answer" (Jay 195).

6. The garden itself can be seen as a space of intermixture. In "Opening the Oval: A Study of the Oval Rooms of the White House, Washington, D.C." (unpublished conference paper), Natalie Fizer and Glenn Forley write, "The greenhouse, as a utilitarian space, and the later development of the conservatory, as a social space, extend the social practices of the drawing room. Like novel-reading, the growing of plants and flowers exemplify purposeful leisure as a female virtue.... Domesticating the agricultural associations of cultivation in its extension of, and association with, the female domain of the drawing room, the conservatory consolidates a cultural process that Raymond Williams describes as a shifting from a 'tending of things' to a more generalized 'human tendency'" (3).

7. See Mary Ann Doane, "Film and Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator," *Screen* 23.3-4 (1982), 78, 80. She concludes, "the entire elaboration of femininity as a closeness, a nearness, as present-to-itself is not the definition of an essence but the delineation of place culturally assigned to the woman. Above and beyond a simple adoption of the masculine position in relation to the cinematic sign, the female spectator is given two options: the masochism of over-identification or the narcissism entailed in becoming one's own object of desire, in assuming the image in the most radical way" (Doane 87).

8. Many critics read "Rappaccini's Daughter" in terms of conflicting dichotomies. For example, in *Hawthorne's Tragic Vision* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1957), Roy R. Male writes, "The central theme of the story can be stated simply enough. The inner world of human experience is a complex and ambiguous mixture of good and evil—the evil here taking shape in the two extremes of intellectual pride and gross materialism" (67).

Similarly, in *Rediscovering Hawthorne* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), Kenneth Dauber writes, "No matter how many stories we find in 'Rappaccini's Daughter' the message is the same in each. Aubepine, as noted at the very
start, clearly is on the side of innocence, against the side of evil (35).

Moving away from an emphasis on good versus evil, Frederick Crews writes in *Sins of the Fathers: Hawthorne's Psychological Themes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), "The essential action consists in the forming and resolving of [Giovanni's] attitudes, and the personages he meets are conveniently representative of the alternatives he has proposed to himself. And thus we seem justified in calling the tale a psychological allegory. None of the action is wholly fortuitous because none of it is wholly external to the hero's private thoughts" (124).

In *The Shape of Hawthorne's Career* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), Nina Baym calls the story "an allegory of faith. The question is not Giovanni's delusion but his belief. Had he believed in Beatrice, she would not have been poisonous" (107). She continues, "The story is also an allegory of sex.... It is evident in many ways that Beatrice's poison is her sexuality, particularly in the image of the deadly erotic flower with which she is identified" (108).


Many critics have commented on Hawthorne's intrusive narrator. John Doughton Hazlett comments that Hawthorne, "a writer with immense capacities for self-criticism, made clever use of conventional methods of symbolizing in order to question exactly the kind of symbolic reading of life that his own writing frequently seems to invite. To do this, he manipulated the conventions of the romance tale to seduce his readers into making the very kind of symbolizing errors he wanted to criticize" ("Re-reading 'Rappaccini's Daughter': Giovanni and the Seduction of the Transcendental Reader," *ESQ* 35 (1989): 43-68, 43).

10.In *Interpretive Conventions: The Reader in the Study of American Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), Steven Mailloux argues, "'Rappaccini's Daughter'... provides a good, compact example of the author's techniques of reader involvement.... Put most simply, the discourse begins with the presentation of an enigma that is slowly resolved while the text introduces two related plot conflicts: Hawthorne works out the conflicts as he simultaneously puts the reader through a test of his moral judgment" (73-74).

11. Nina Baym writes, "In ['Rappaccini's Daughter' and 'The Birth-mark'], it is impossible to distinguish revulsion from attraction, for exactly to the extent that these men are obsessed, possessed, with the woman's body they are revolted by it. I think we must say that these men actually perceive attraction as what we would think of as its opposite—repulsion" ("Thwarted Nature: Nathaniel Hawthorne as Feminist." American Novelists Revisited: Essays in Feminist Criticism. Ed. Fritz Fleischmann. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1982, 65).

12. As Leland S. Person, Jr. points out in Aesthetic Headaches: Women and a Masculine Poetics in Poe, Melville, and Hawthorne (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), "On the one hand [Giovanni] wants to bring Beatrice 'rigidly and systematically within the limits of ordinary experience'; on the other he is fascinated by the 'wild vagaries which his imagination ran riot continually in producing' (10:105)" (116).

13. Critics' views on the story's scientists vary. See for example Millicent Bell's Hawthorne's View of the Artist (New York: State University of New York, 1962): "That it is their perfectionist idealism that links together such 'scientific' seekers as Rappaccini and Aylmer, though one is revolting in his inhuman mania and the other almost admirable, is apparent when we recall that Hawthorne's are not empirical investigators of natural events, but Faustian necromancers who aspire to disclose the ultimate mysteries of the universe" (174).

In Hawthorne's Mad Scientists: Pseudoscience and Social Science in Nineteenth-Century Life and Letters (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1978), Taylor Stoehr writes, "Beatrice Rappaccini, for example, is herself a poisoned vessel devilishly prepared by her father. Her kiss is the most desirable, but also the most dangerous, of favors. And just as her breath is death to others, the strongest restorative is deadly poison to her. Indeed, no one in Hawthorne ever seems to be saved by medicine" (129).

M.D. Uroff writes in "The Doctors in 'Rappaccini's Daughter,'" (Nineteenth-Century Fiction 27 [1972]: 61-70), "If 'Rappaccini's Daughter' argues for any position concerning science, it argues for more objectivity, dispassionate research, and isolation. The doctors in Hawthorne's tale, like the doctors in mid-nineteenth-century America, are treacherously unscientific" (62). He continues, "Hawthorne's doctors are killers. Instead of healing, they poison, torment, and finally kill their patient. And they work neither from a dispassionate interest in scientific experimentation nor from a coldly objective view of human nature" (70).
14. Carol Bensick notes, "Since we know Giovanni has watched Rappaccini working in the garden, the fact that he does not recognize the doctor in the street strengthens the likelihood that Rappaccini does not know who the young man with Baglioni is. This being the case, the narrator's tendentious conjecture about Rappaccini's immoral failure to take a 'human interest' in the young man appears rather weak" (Bensick 55).

15. Charles Chappell argues that Baglioni is the murderer in "Pietro Baglioni's Motives for Murder in 'Rappaccini's Daughter'" (Studies in American Fiction Spring 1990, Volume 18, Number 1: 55-63): "Baglioni kills Beatrice because of the combination of two obsessive reasons: bitter jealousy of Rappaccini's ascendency to the status of most highly respected physician in Padua, and seething desire for revenge resulting from the thwarting by Rappaccini of Baglioni's elaborate scheme to destroy Rappaccini's experiments (and his reputation) through a devious exploitation of Giovanni" (Chappell 56).

16. This description brings to mind a variety of Hawthorne's artist or scientist figures, for example ... in "Drowne's Wooden Image," ... in "The Artist of the Beautiful," or Aylmer in "The Birth-mark" who believe the have achieved perfect art or science in the moment of creating something either immediately or ultimately destroyed.

17. Stallybrass and White argue for the importance of the voyeur's being above his object: "The gaze/the touch: desire/contamination. These contradictory concepts underlie the symbolic significance of the balcony in nineteenth-century literature and painting. From the balcony, one could gaze, but not be touched" (The Politics and Poetics of Transgression 136). Giovanni's seat by the window is much like a balcony; we will see the danger that comes to be linked with Beatrice's touch.

18. Critics tend to favor Giovanni and link him to Hawthorne. For example, Frederick Crews writes in Sins of the Fathers, "the Oedipal configuration of 'Rappaccini's Daughter,' as well as its religious confusion, may be traced from Giovanni's mind to Hawthorne's. Hence we can almost credit Hawthorne with a pitiless anatomy of an adolescent mind. We cannot call it entirely pitiless when the hero's vacillations and fantasies are so urgently those of the author" (134-135).

Carol M. Bensick notes in La Nouvelle Beatrice: Renaissance and Romance in "Rappaccini's Daughter" (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1985), "The character of Giovanni may easily be that of a psychologically realistic young man; we must only allow that his mind has been formed by the influences of a times and place other than the narrator's or our own" (42).
19. Frederick Crews writes in *Sins of the Fathers*, "The point is that there is a 'Rappaccini' ingredient in [Giovanni's] psyche, a streak of sadism originating in his fear of Beatrice" (129).

20. In "Re-reading 'Rappaccini's Daughter': Giovanni and the Seduction of the Transcendental Reader," *(ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 35 [1989]: 43-68), John Downton Hazlett writes, "Like us, Giovanni is a somewhat hesitant and confused 'reader' of the natural facts of the tale" (44) but concludes that a "closer look at the narrator's behavior, however, renders his judgment less than trustworthy" (60).

21. Roy R. Male writes, "All Giovanni's sense impressions are incorporated in his 'quick fancy.' In this story Hawthorne uses the word 'fancy' in a special sense: it is the faculty that receives and combines sense impressions. This conception, familiar in medieval and Renaissance literature (as well as in Coleridge and Keats), he probably derived from *Paradise Lost...*" *(Hawthorne's Tragic Vision* 64).

22. In *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), Mary Ann Doane notes, "Having and appearing are closely intertwined in the woman's purportedly narcissistic relation to the commodity. Commodification presupposes that acutely self-conscious relation to the body which is attributed to femininity. The effective operation of the commodity system requires the breakdown of the body into parts--nails, hair, skin, breath--each one of which can constantly be improved through the purchase of a commodity" (Doane 32). Although we do not see Beatrice purchasing commodities to improve herself, we do see the breakdown of her body into parts--particularly her breath is isolated, but also we see her practice of adornment or improvement when she is seen to array herself to heighten the connection between her and the flower.

23. David Leverenz notes in *Manhood and the American Renaissance*, "My own reading of 'Rappaccini's Daughter' finds two levels of deviousness. On the surface, as I have already been arguing, the narration first entices us toward Giovanni's seemingly legitimate fears, then exposes him as a junior version of Rappaccini and Baglioni.... At a little lower layer of deviousness, Hawthorne undermines his narrator's feminized authority by making his affirmations sound like accusations" (243).

24. Frederick Crews argues that "Giovanni's lurid intermixture of feelings springs not only from an ambivalence between childishness and womanliness in Beatrice, but from his own combination of fear and prurient interest with regard to her sexuality" *(Sins of the Fathers* 123).
25. See Margaret Hallissy, "Hawthorne’s Venomous Beatrice," Studies in Short Fiction 19 (1982): 231-239. She writes, "The young man must move beyond his initial sensory attraction for the female to an understanding of her total being. Then his fall into sexuality becomes fortunate, reconciling flesh and spirit" (239).

26. Many critics have noted the metaphorical rape of foliage as Giovanni enters the garden; Frederick Crews calls it "virtually pornographic" (Sins of the Fathers 123).

27. Kent Bales notes in "Sexual Exploitation and the Fall from Natural Virtue in Rappaccini’s Garden," (Emerson Society Quarterly 24 [1978]) "We are fairly advised, then, not to read the traditional hair and flower symbolism (including the blossom that Beatrice then plucks to ornament her bosom) as erotically characterizing her. The imagery is undoubtedly erotic: either incestuously homoerotic or—if the vegetable sister ‘created’ at her birth is taken to symbolize her—autoerotic. But it characterizes the imagination of the peeper rather than the sex life of the peeped upon" (Bales 138). This is interesting in terms of Doane’s comments about Irigaray and closeness.

In a different vein, Nina Baym writes, "... I have maintained that although women do not always signify the same thing in Hawthorne’s many fictions, they usually function in the same way. They represent desirable and valuable qualities lacking in the male protagonist. They offer him the opportunity to attain these qualities through erotic alliance or marriage. The man’s invariable failure to take the opportunity is harshly judged by the narrator in fiction after fiction" ("Thwarted Nature: Nathaniel Hawthorne as Feminist." American Novelists Revisited: Essays in Feminist Criticism. Ed. Fritz Fleischmann. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1982, 60).

Carol Bensick comments, "... 'Rappaccini’s Daughter' is the chronicle of Giovanni Guasconti’s consuming attempt to establish for himself once and for all what kind of thing Beatrice Rappaccini is" (6).

28. This line anticipates the conversation in Henry James’s Portrait of a Lady between Ned Rosier and Gilbert Osmond in which the men discuss Osmond’s collection on the surface and the availability of Pansy at the same time.

29. Kent Bales writes, "... Beatrice rejects the role of master, even the role of an equal, and instead prostrates herself before the enemy within. What makes her vitality so fragile, so quickly convertible into self-hatred?" (Bales, "Sexual Exploitations and the Fall from Natural Virtue in Rappaccini’s Garden," Emerson Society Quarterly 24 (1978), 140).


32. Crews argues that Giovanni "has cared only for his own attractiveness, and when this has been threatened--not destroyed, for presumable Baglioni's antidote will succeed with him--he revels histrionically in a bittersweet fantasy of annihilation" (*Sins of the Fathers* 130).

Person writes, "Hawthorne's use of the mirror in this scene suggest another of those doublings back upon the self of the 'horrible suspicions' which have risen out of the 'caverns of the heart'--a perception of the self as other in which the thoughts previously projected upon Beatrice are now projected upon the self's own mirror image" (*Aesthetic Headaches* 119).

33. Person continues his reading in favor of Giovanni, writing, "In saving his life by drinking the deadly antidote first, Beatrice condemns him to live out his life, not exactly as a woman, but as her male double--le beau empoisonneur. Whether or not he remains in the garden, he must remain alone for fear of infecting another with the person[poison?] he cannot be sure he has absorbed" (*Aesthetic Headaches* 121).
Thus the "object" is not as massive, as resistant, as one might wish to believe. And her possession by a "subject," a subject's desire to appropriate her, is yet another of his vertiginous failures. For where he projects something to absorb, to take, to see, to possess . . . as well as a patch of ground to stand upon, a mirror to catch his reflection, he is already faced by another specularization. Whose twisted character is her inability to say what she represents. The quest for the "object" becomes a game of Chinese boxes. Infinitely receding. The most amorphous with regard to ideas, the most obviously "thing," if you like, the most opaque matter, opens upon a mirror all the purer in that it knows and is known to have no reflections. Except those which man has reflected there but which, in the movement of that concave speculum, pirouetting upon itself, will rapidly, deceptively, fade.—Irigaray, Speculum of the Other Woman

One of the most fascinating aspects of Hawthorne's fiction is the way visual effects slip into visceral confusions. Visual perception seems always conditioned and unending, and yet at the same time a failure, a series of acts of repression and denial. This sense of perception is especially emphasized through the images of mirrors and of mirroring that appear virtually everywhere in his works, as in the story of "Rappaccini's Daughter" that I analyzed in the last chapter. There I argued that Giovanni Guasconti's horror by the end of that story results from his horrified realization that he has become like Beatrice Rappaccini in
physical appearance and poisonous power. Giovanni's relation to two mirrors—first a fantasy relation to Beatrice early in the story and later an encounter with an actual mirror—reveals first his attempts to "appropriate" her to find himself, and second his sense of horror and recognition when she fails to reflect him as he projects himself onto her and instead reflects for him his own lack.

Conventionally, in philosophy, literature, and aesthetic theory, mirrors are taken to represent at least the possibility of a stable image of things. Hawthorne draws upon this conventional promise, but only to show how wildly false he considers it to be. Mirrors function to expose pride and vanity as a moral surface, as well as the emptiness of the self that resides under vanity and the lack that resides under aggressive masculinity. Instead of stable reflections, the Hawthornean mirror represents shudderings: blurred movements, at once violent and erotic, between different forms and sources of representation. In the depths of Hawthorne's mirrors, we find surfaces. Instead of the perfection of identity, we find the indelibility of difference; instead of transcendence (and transcendental signifiers), the scarifying mark (and material signifiers); instead of phallic presence, a desire founded on absence; instead of correspondence, dissimilitude and dissymmetry; instead of fulfilled creation, abortive experiment; instead of refined sight, uncontrolled odors;
instead of beautiful sexual bodies, physically and morally corruptible materials; instead of the utopian ideal of self, marriage, and community, confusion and loss of identities within these forms.

In "The Birth-mark" (written in 1843, one year before "Rappaccini’s Daughter"), the shuddering involves Aylmer’s and Georgiana’s divided responses to the birthmark that energizes and horrifies both of them. In "Feathertop" (written in 1851 and his last short story), we see the metaphorical shuddering of Mother Rigby, Feathertop, and Polly. Considered together, then, these two stories allow us to see in Hawthorne’s mirrors a reflection of his attitudes toward masculinity—a recognition that under social constructions there is only absence—and femininity—a conception which includes concerns with excess, disease, intimacy, modesty, purity, shrinking, sexuality, and senses other than vision.

In "The Birth-mark," Hawthorne tells a story similar to "Rappaccini’s Daughter." A woman, Georgiana, has on her cheek a small hand-shaped birth mark which her husband, Aylmer, who a scientist, insists on removing. Rather than improving her, his procedure of removing the mark kills her. In "Feathertop," the creator is not a male scientist but a female witch who brings to life a creature she intended to be a scarecrow. She sends him to court the daughter of a prominent local man. In the process he realizes that he is
not the gentleman he appears to be, a realization which leads him to commit a kind of suicide in his despair. In each of the three stories (the two in this chapter and "Rappaccini’s Daughter") the characters who serve as the mirror(objects for the gazing subjects lead the subjects to horror which must result in the mirror/object’s death; this horror can be explained in part by invoking Freud’s notion of the uncanny and the male subject’s desire to see the feminine and his horror when he finally encounters it.

Significantly, Giovanni also finds this relation in the mirror. In a reaction we will see throughout this chapter and in Chapter Four as well, he shudders as he stands "motionless before the mirror, staring at his reflection there, as at the likeness of something frightful. . . . [T]hen he shuddered—shuddered at himself!" (RD 121). Giovanni’s relation to the mirror remains "feverish" throughout the story but changes from the feverish pleasure of his fantasy of taking himself from Beatrice (which also leaves her without a gaze and disavows her own power) into the reality, revealed by an actual mirror, of her having taken him over in the sensual, non-visual ways discussed in chapter 2. He wants to take from her a reflection of himself, but he finds that he has unexpectedly been penetrated by her. The narrator emphasizes the physicality of the visual relationship through shuddering, which bespeaks both horror and ecstasy, presumably opposed
emotions which for Giovanni are joined together along with desire and revulsion. The resulting confusion leads Giovanni to descend to the garden "desir[ing] nothing so much as to wither her by a glance" (RD 122).

Giovanni’s shuddering horrified desire can be further understood through Freud’s essay on "The 'Uncanny.'" "[T]he 'uncanny' is that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar." He continues, "It often happens that male patients declare that they feel there is something uncanny about the female genital organs. This unheimlich place, however, is the entrance to the former heim [home] of all human beings, to the place where everyone dwelt once upon a time and in the beginning." Irigaray refines Freud on the uncanny as follows: "Now the little girl, the woman, supposedly has nothing you can see. She exposes, exhibits the possibility of a nothing to see. Or at any rate she shows nothing that is penis-shaped or could substitute for a penis. This is the odd, the uncanny thing, as far as the eye can see, this nothing around which lingers in horror, now and forever, an overcathexis of the eye, of appropriation by the gaze, and of the phalomorphic sexual metaphors, its reassuring accomplices."

We can associate Freud’s association of the female genitals with the uncanny and with the simultaneously desired and horrifying female genitals as they are shown in
In *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible*, Linda Williams writes, "The money shot, however, succeeds in extending visibility to the next stage of representation of the heterosexual sex act: to the point of seeing climax. But this new visibility extends only to a knowledge of the hydraulics of male ejaculation, which, though certainly of interest, is a poor substitute for the knowledge of female wonders that the genre as a whole still seeks. The gynecological sense of the speculum that penetrates the female interior here really does give way to that of a self-reflecting mirror. While undeniably spectacular, the money shot is also hopelessly specular; it can only reflect back to the male gaze that purports to want knowledge of the woman’s pleasure the man’s own climax." We will return to the gynecological speculum, but for the moment let me suggest just that the money shot also suggests male narcissism—to see women’s ecstasy as dependent on male power and pleasure, or even homoerotic desire.

"The Birth-mark" can be read as Aylmer’s attempt to find in Georgiana the mirror of the feminine in himself and in her, an attempt with which she becomes complicit, as well as his own narcissistic desire to have a physically perfected wife. "Feathertop," with its female creator and male puppet, can be seen to reveal male and female lack in much the same way, although here the situation is reversed: a woman creates a man whose lack is his most evident
feature." In both of these cases Irigaray's comments cited at the beginning of this chapter come into play. Aylmer's attempt to "appropriate [Georgiana] is yet another of his vertiginous failures." Feathertop's "twisted character is [his] inability to say what [he] represents. . . . " He and his image "pirouetting upon itself, will rapidly, deceptively, fade." Both stories invoke the mirror only to find that it inevitably reflects castration and lack.

Just as Giovanni shudders in his moment of recognition of Beatrice or the horrifying feminine in himself (is this his money shot?), Aylmer's response to Georgiana's mark includes shuddering, a response that is divided in just the way we might expect Aylmer's response to the uncanny to be divided. Aylmer expresses his displeasure at her mark and clearly states its significance to him: the mark signifies her imperfection, and that imperfection is marked in feminine terms." He tells her, "[Y]ou came so nearly perfect from the hand of Nature, that this slightest possible defect--which we hesitate to term a defect or a beauty--shocks me, as being the visible mark of earthly imperfection" (B 37). Even though he begins by calling the mark a defect, and his repetition of that word lets that reading dominate, he also introduces the possibility that the mark is a thing of beauty; he immediately undermines that possibility by telling her that it "shocks" him. The narrator develops Aylmer's meaning later: "In this manner,
selecting it as the symbol of his wife's liability to sin, sorrow, decay, and death, Aylmer's sombre imagination was not long in rendering the birth-mark a frightful object causing him more trouble and horror than ever Georgiana's beauty whether of soul or sense, had given him delight" (B 39). Throughout the "body" of Hawthorne's work, the body, male or female, is liable "to sin, sorrow, decay, and death," but as he will see here and elsewhere the female body seems to be both more susceptible and more representative of decay. Aylmer quickly allows the mark to give him more "horror" than "delight," and either emotion might result in a shudder for him.

His response extends to explicit shudders when he sees her mark. At the beginning of the process of his treatment for the removal of the mark, "[a]s he bid her over the threshold of the laboratory, Georgiana was cold and tremulous. Aylmer looked cheerfully into her face, with intent to reassure her, but was so startled with the intense glow of the birth-mark upon the whiteness of her cheek, that he could not restrain a strong convulsive shudder. His wife fainted" (B 43). Again the mirroring of their gazes produces a chain of responses: he looks at her, supposedly intending support; her increased discomfort results in the intensification of the mark; and then he shudders in an unrestrained way that emphasizes his body as beyond his control. In response she faints, thereby simultaneously
revealing her body's undependability, its tendency toward corruption and breakdown, Aylmer's control over her, and the possibility of death—as well as the sexual component of all of the story's shuddering bodies. She also reveals, in her fainting in response to his unrestrainable "strong convulsive shudder," both the correspondence and the dissymmetry between them as evidenced through their gazes.

As a result of this treatment, "Georgiana soon learned to shudder at his gaze. It needed but a glance, with the peculiar expression that his face often wore, to change the roses of her cheek into a deathlike paleness, amid which the Crimson Hand was strongly out, like a bas-relief of ruby on the whitest marble" (B 39). Aylmer's gaze leads to an intensification of the birth mark, so that Georgiana's mirroring of Aylmer, instead of reassuring him, serves to reinforce his horror. Aylmer's shudder produces further self-horror and revulsion on Georgiana's part. Not only does she shudder in Aylmer's gaze, but she comes to try to avoid it, placing "her hand over her cheek, to hide the terrible mark from her husband's eyes." He responds, "Fear not, dearest! . . . Do not shrink from me! Believe me, Georgiana, I even rejoice in this single imperfection, since it will be such rapture to remove it." She replies, "Oh, spare me! . . . Pray do not look at it again. I never can forget that convulsive shudder" (B 44). The line between them, between who causes shuddering and who shudders, blurs,
and not only in Aylmer's mind, as Georgiana reveals when she tells him, "Tell me all the risk we run; and fear not that I shall shrink, for my share in it is far less than your own!" (B 51). She initially possessed the ability to distinguish between their "shares", but she seems to have lost that. The line between science and sexuality blurs as well, as Aylmer suggests "rapture" at performing the process to remove the mark.

The breakdown of boundaries here suggests the intermixture we saw in the previous chapter, and here the line between Georgiana and Aylmer blurs further as it becomes unclear who mirrors whom. Aylmer's shuddering continues as he performs his various experiments to remove the hand. "While thus employed, he failed not to gaze often at the fatal Hand, and not without a shudder. Yet once, by a strange and unaccountable impulse, he pressed it with his lips. His spirit recoiled, however, in the very act, and Georgiana, out of the midst of her deep sleep, moved uneasily and murmured, as if in remonstrance" (B 54). His shudder, that mixture of horror and ecstasy, marks the further mixing of his work, science—he is "employed" in removing the birthmark—with love and eroticism—he succumbs to "a strange and unaccountable impulse" and kisses it.

The interplay between Georgiana's birth mark, Aylmer's gaze and its attendant hatred, Georgiana's self-hatred and the increased color of the mark, her shuddering and his
shuddering, can also be illuminated by an understanding of Aylmer's position as scientist. As such, he is a person trained professionally and (in the case of Aylmer as it was with Giovanni and Drs. Rappaccini and Baglioni) personally to use skills of vision and observation of appearances. For Aylmer, with the two aspects of his life--his relationships to the woman and to science--hopelessly intermingled, the stakes of removing the mark are high. Aylmer transfers the visual components and demands of science to his marriage, and demands perfection of Georgiana's appearance as a result. Before he marries, Aylmer "had devoted himself, however, too unreservedly to scientific studies, ever to be weaned from them by any second passion. His love for his young wife might prove the stronger of the two; but it could only be by intertwining itself with his love of science, and uniting the strength of the latter to its own" (B 36-37). The narrator strangely ascribes the agency of this intertwining to Aylmer's "love for his young wife," as if it were a force operating independently of Aylmer himself.

Aylmer's science is not only mixed with his love for Georgiana but also with what might be seen as its opposite: magic. If science values knowledge, observation, and explanation of natural phenomena, magic values the unexplainable, the supernatural, that which cannot be explained through observation and rational knowledge. Aylmer tries to use science to conquer the hand which
represents not only horror but magic. As "Georgiana's lovers were wont to say, . . . some fairy, at her birth-hour, had laid her tiny hand upon the infant's cheek, and left this impress there, in token of the magic endowments that were to give her such sway over all hearts" (B 38). However, science is not a weapon against magic in this story as one might expect. Instead, Aylmer's science, like Dr. Rappaccini's, is strongly infused with magic.

Georgiana comes to doubt his ability to "cure" her in part because of the magic spiritualism of his science. Aylmer's initial treatment of the mark suggests three things: first, that the mark penetrates more deeply than skin-deep, and must be removed by means other than surface means. Second, that the results will only be visible to the mirror in their end result, even through the means to the results are themselves invisible. And third, Aylmer's science, and hence his identity as he sees it and projects it onto Georgiana, is suffused with elements of magic.

In a move reminiscent of "Rappaccini's Daughter," Aylmer begins his attempts to remove the visual problem of the mark by means of the tools of another sense: smell. As in "Rappaccini's Daughter," we are reminded of the importance of fragrance in what appears to be, and which the text openly insists to be, a visual economy. Aylmer begins by subjecting Georgiana to "an atmosphere of penetrating fragrance" (43), and encourages her to take a flower, "pluck
it, and inhale its brief perfume while [she] may" (B 45). Perfume continues to be characterized as strangely and threateningly mixed: phallic, penetrating, and impregnating, yet gentle and (essentially) coded feminine. Later Aylmer "showed her a small vial, in which, he remarked, was contained a gentle yet most powerful fragrance, capable of impregnating all the breezes that blow across a kingdom. They were of inestimable value, the contents of that little vial; and, as he said so, he threw some of the perfume into the air, and filled the room with piercing and invigorating delight" (B 47). When this story invokes scent, even it represents a disavowal of the pure codes of masculinity and femininity; however, it also represents pleasure and "delight." This therapy causes Georgiana to begin "to conjecture that she was already subjected to certain physical influences, either breathed in with the fragrant air, or taken with her food. She fancied, likewise--but it might be altogether fancy--that there was a stirring up of her system,--a strange indefinite sensation creeping through her veins, and tingling, half painfully, half pleasurably, at her heart" (B 48). This line between pain and pleasure that has begun to blur becomes even more confused when she enters the laboratory: "The atmosphere felt oppressively close, and was tainted with gaseous odors, which had been tormented forth by the processes of science" (B 50). As opposed to the delightful scent above, the odors of the
laboratory are "tainted," "tormented forth"—perhaps birthed—by masculine and visual science.

Aylmer breaks up his series of smell-based experiments with an abrupt shift which might be read as a return to the visual realm of mirror and surfaces but which has also elements of magic. After Aylmer's having Georgiana sniff the flower before it dies, the narrator recounts the next step of Aylmer's work to remove the birth mark: "To make up for this abortive experiment, he proposed to take her portrait by a scientific process of his own invention. It was to be effected by rays of light striking upon a polished plate of metal. Georgiana assented—but on looking at the result, was affrighted to find the features of the portrait blurred and indefinable; while the minute figure of a hand appeared where the cheek should have been. Aylmer snatched the metallic plate, and threw it into a jar of corrosive acid" (B 45). Two important points of the story emerge in this passage: first, the reference to the "abortive experiment" suggests of abortive creativity and its connections to the birth mark on Georgiana's face and the birth/production that takes place in "Feathertop," as I will discuss below. Second, the photograph promises both realism and mirroring and an association with both science and magic. Photography reveals Georgiana's face to be what I have argued and what Aylmer has feared: "blurred and indefinable."
As Cathy N. Davidson notes in "Photographs of the Dead: Sherman, Daguerre, Hawthorne," in the early days of photography, "Many people reported that they felt that, in a photograph, they were able to study—to see themselves as if for the first time, a phenomenon analogous to the similar revisions of self that occurred in the sixteenth century with advances in the production of mirrors." The story's invocation of seeing one's reflection has significance to "The Birth-mark" because Aylmer and Georgiana in fact see an emphasized birth mark that takes over the "blurred and indefinable" face. The photograph confirms Aylmer's and Georgiana's fear that the mark works as the best representation of her self.

Similarly, returning to the connection between pornography and photography, Linda Williams writes, "At issue here is not yet the appearance of the first hard-core films but instead an earlier moment when scientists first subjected the body's movement to the mechanical eye of a camera that saw better than the human eye." She continues, "As in most pornography, the woman's body is solicited, questioned, and probed for secrets that are best revealed when she herself is not in control." The probing of women's secrets by science is not limited to the photograph, pornography, or Aylmer. As Sally Shuttleworth notes in "Female Circulation: Medical Discourse and Popular Advertising in the Mid-Victorian Era," discussing the
controversy in the nineteenth-century medical community over the use of the speculum: "The speculum did have its enthusiastic supporters, however, as evidenced in Protheroe Smith's lyrical depiction of the virtues of his new design of speculum which 'accomplishes the object, never heretofore attained, of employing simultaneously both visual inspection and tactile examination. Technology here offers the fulfillment of the male erotic dream: the male gaze could follow the fingers and penetrate into the most hidden recesses of the female anatomy." The speculum accomplishes what neither the money shot nor Aylmer can: manual and visual penetration, with their resultant knowledge and pleasure. The erotic dream may also be to control her by causing her to shudder, in addition to controlling her with the clinical gaze.

Furthermore, even though, as I began to claim above, photography places Aylmer back in the realm of the visual and science, Davidson describes what amount to another intermixture, the intense aromas involved in the process of daguerreotypy: "[T]he prevalence of noxious gases in the daguerrean 'operating room' (as it was called) made intimations of mortality all the more plausible." Aylmer's laboratory, then, represents not only a room for operating on Georgiana's mark but an operating room for his proto-daguerrean experiment.

Davidson also suggests, further locating the role of
the photographing scene within the larger concerns of "The Birth-mark," that the work of photography represents an extension of Aylmer’s earlier (failed) work as he describes it in his folios: "the daguerreotype was the machine-age equivalent of the alchemical elixir of life—a Benjaminic allegory of the modern world if ever there was one." The goal of Aylmer’s career is to find the elixir of life, as Georgiana finds when she reads his journals. Although Aylmer does not write specifically about his photographic experiments here, his attempt to "spiritualize" "physical details" suggests that his attempt to treat Georgiana with daguerreotypy fits into the earlier (abortive and unsuccessful) pattern of his career. "He handled physical details, as if there were nothing beyond them; yet spiritualized them all, and redeemed himself from materialism, by his strong and eager aspiration towards the infinite. In his grasp, the veriest clod of earth assumed a soul. Georgiana, as she read [his journal accounts of past experiments], reverenced Aylmer, and loved him more profoundly than ever, but with a less entire dependence on his judgment than heretofore" (B 49).

As Georgiana learns more about him and realizes that not even scientific success fills the space of absence beneath Aylmer’s surface of productive scientist, her ability to perform the magic mirror function of which Virginia Woolf writes decreases: "Women have served all
these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and
delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its
natural size." As Irigaray notes, and as Georgiana
exemplifies, however, the man's relation to the mirror
threatens always to become unstable and "a game of Chinese
boxes," as it does here. Aylmer looks to Georgiana to
reflect his successful surface self only to find her
corruptible body and thus his own.

Finally, the photographing experiment reminds us of the
lack of distinction in both the story and Aylmer's
scientific practice between science and magic. Again,
Davidson: "Daguerreotypy particularly contested the
boundaries separating science and magic in that the method
of photographic reproduction as well as the physical
appearance of the daguerreotype reinforced preternatural and
extrahuman associations." Daguerreotypy, and Aylmer's
practice of it, provides another example of the
"contest[ing]" of boundaries we saw in "Rappaccini's
Daughter" and here again in "The Birth-mark."

Whether acted out in his previous experiments and in
his manipulations of his mirror, Georgiana, Aylmer's
narcissistic quest for transcendence leads him into the
border zones between sight and odors, beauty and corruption,
creation and abortion, and the spiritual and the material.
His quest also represents an attempt to understand the
uncanny relationship between the familiar and the unfamiliar
in his desire to find himself in Georgiana's otherness. He manipulates her body, using science that borders on magic, in order to form a perfect mirror image of himself. Because a perfect mirror image would reveal that his desire is founded on absence and lack, he kills Georgiana in the process. Where he fails to produce a perfect image of male lack in Georgiana, Mother Rigby succeeds in Feathertop.

Hawthorne again tries to bridge the gaps between magic and science with regard to creativity in "Feathertop." It is of course significant that in this story, with its feminine creativity at work, the process takes place completely through magic. Mother Rigby's status as a witch shows that Hawthorne has abandoned all pretenses of gender roles and scientific methods, even though they often break down as shown above. At another level, this story can be read as a satire of the Whigs, with Feathertop representing not all men but one category of men. Here, though, with Mother Rigby and Feathertop, we can examine Hawthorne's description of feminine/maternal creativity as expressed through a magical "birth" that results in a marked supernatural creature rather than a supernatural birthmark.

We can better understand Mother Rigby through the notion of the phallic mother. As Catherine Clement writes in "The Guilty One,"

The sorceress takes men's penes, as, from the child's point of view, the mother takes the father's penis. We
find ourselves in a kind of primal scene, which is
internalized to the space within the body. The center
of that space is opaque and organic: there the father-
penis encounters the mother-belly. One can't see any
more. But one well imagines the dreadful encounter
from which these excrement-children will again emerge.
The fact remains that in this phantasmic mythology the
sorceress and mother come together again--are one and
the same. Guilty."

Mother Rigby's goal is to create a mirror that is not a
woman but a man who will, through his own
lack/hollowness/castration, subvert the ideas that man is
not lacking and that woman should reflect him at twice his
size. So, after showing the breakdown of the man's relation
to his created mirror, he allows a woman to create a mirror
for man which reveals him in a way the mirrors men create
out of woman never can.

The narrator tells us that she is "one of the most
cunning and potent witches in New England" (F 224). His
description of her as "cunning and potent" makes her
witchcraft seem threatening and sinister as well as powerful
in a masculine way. Her association with the demon Dickon
also links her to a phallic power, but this demon is at once
the source of her power and her servant who brings her coal
for her pipe when she demands it; he is under her control as
she commands him "sharply" (F 226). Her control over Dickon
allows her to give him to Feathertop as well. The smoke he
brings gives Feathertop his life, and she tells him,
"[S]weet one, when thou shalt find thy pipe getting low, go
apart into some corner, and (first filling thyself with
smoke) cry sharply—'Dickon, a fresh pipe of tobacco!' and—
'Dickon, another coal for my pipe!—and have it into thy
pretty mouth, as speedily as may be" (F 235).

Even though she controls Dickon in a relationship which
emphasizes her status as a witch, the story also insists on
presenting her as a mother; despite the fact that there is
no mention of any biological children, she receives the
respectful title of "Mother." Not long after discussing her
potency, the narrator notes that the broomstick which
"serve[s] the scarecrow by way of a spinal column" was the
same one "on which Mother Rigby had taken many an airy
gallop at midnight" (F 224). The narrator makes her seem
benevolent here by describing her "witch" activity and power
in the light term "airy gallop." Her motherly creative
power is also here though, as she revises the Creation myth
by taking on the role of God and Adam as she uses one of her
phallic symbols, the broomstick (another is the pipe which
she smokes aggressively) to make another body just as God
used Adam's rib to make Eve.

She is determined to be more "motherly" than evil in
this creation, as opposed to creations of the past: "But on
this occasion, as she had awakened in an uncommonly pleasant
humor, and was further dulcified by her pipe of tobacco, she
resolved to produce something fine, beautiful, and splendid,
rather than hideous and horrible. . . . [She tells
herself,] 'I could [create a hobgoblin] if I pleased; but
I'm tired of doing marvelous things, and so I'll keep within the bounds of every-day business, just for variety's sake. Besides, there's no use in scaring the little children, for a mile roundabout, though 'tis true I'm a witch!'" (F 224). Here the narrator's intimate and folksy tone even as he describes "scaring little children" connects her witch and mother roles, and the text insists that they remain joined.

Before Feathertop comes to life, she "continue[s] to gaze with almost motherly affection at the figure in the corner" (F 226). Her "almost motherly affection" turns out to be far from motherly, however; she refers to Feathertop in progressively more abusive terms as she tries to bring him to life: "my pet" (F 228) and "my pretty lad" (F 229) become "lazy one" (F 229) and finally her tone changes and she calls him a "wretch" (F 230). The narrator describes her growing ill humor in terms which downplay her motherhood and emphasizes her role as witch: "But the fierce old hag began to get angry and show a glimpse of her diabolic nature (like a snake's head peeping with a hiss out of her bosom,) at this pusillanimous behavior of the thing, which she had taken the trouble to put together" (F 230). She continues, "Puff, I say, and suck in thy fantastic life along with the smoke; else I snatch the pipe from my mouth, and hurl thee where that red coal came from!" (F 230).

Finally, as Feathertop becomes more lifelike, "the old witch clenched her fist, and shook it at the figure. Not
that she was positively angry, but merely acting on the principle—perhaps untrue, or not the only truth, though as high a one as Mother Rigby could be expected to attain—that feeble and torpid natures, being incapable of better inspiration, must be stirred up by fear. But here was the crisis. Should she fail in what she now sought to effect, it was her ruthless purpose to scatter the miserable simulacrum into its original elements" (F 231). The tone here seems strangely mixed; while our response to Feathertop differs from our more sympathetic response to Georgiana, we almost inevitably respond with sympathy to this mother's "ruthless" decision to "stir up" action "by fear" or else "scatter the miserable simulacre." Again, her witch and mother personae are curiously joined as her ruthlessness and production of fear meet her desire for him to act as a child would. Her threat of scattering suggests also my Introduction's reading of "The Canal Boat," whose narrator wants to scatter his own limbs in a moment of frustrated and feverish desire.

What she proposes here, then, is a kind of abortion, which is reminiscent of the narrator's comment in "The Birth-mark" that Aylmer's attempt to remove Georgiana's birth mark with the scent of the flower is an "abortive experiment" (B 45). The language of abortion continues when the narrator of "Feathertop" connects his fictional creation to the creation of the gentleman scarecrow: "At its present
point of vivication, the scarecrow reminds me of some of the
lukewarm and abortive characters, composed of heterogeneous
materials, used for the thousandth time, and never worth
using, with which romance-writers (and myself, no doubt,
among the rest) have so over-peopled the world of fiction" (F 230). The narrator’s use of the language of abortion and
overpopulation to describe his creation and Mother Rigby’s
aligns the two of them with Aylmer and appeals to an ideal
of motherhood that only Mother Rigby can be seen to violate
literally; the scientist Aylmer or the writer can abort
their experiments or characters without the same potentially
damning associations. Even though the birthmark takes on
more "human" characteristics, Aylmer’s work is not cast as
abortion in the same way as Mother Rigby’s. As opposed to
Mother Rigby, whose killing of a scarecrow represents the
only "real" abortion, Aylmer succeeds in detaching
Georgiana, and the narrator of "Feathertop" succeeds in
detaching his other characters, from human reality, thereby
escaping being "guilty" mother/creators. However, although
Aylmer would disagree, he must take responsibility for his
abortive experiment. Mother Rigby kills only an artificial
snob, while he kills Georgiana when he detaches her from
human reality in his attempt to achieve his own
transcendence through her. The language of abortion in both
stories also suggests the creation of monstrosity, which
Joel Pfister has argued is "a metaphor for female ambiguity,
desire, and **power** in the eyes of males."²⁰ Monstrosity as a metaphor for femininity will become even more important in the following chapters.

Despite Mother Rigby’s bad mothering (from cruelty to the threat of abortion), when Feathertop finally speaks, his first word is "Mother" and the narrator engages our sympathy for him by presenting his first words as follows: "'Mother,'" mumbled the poor, stifled voice, "'be not so awful with me! I would fain speak; but being without wits, what can I say?'" (F 231). Mother Rigby softens: "'Thou canst speak, darling, canst thou?' cried Mother Rigby, relaxing her grim countenance into a smile" (F 231). Feathertop himself demands that Mother Rigby see herself and as a result that we, the readers, see her as his mother, by ending his every utterance to her with "mother." While we might read this passage as absurdly comic, Feathertop’s repetition of "mother" cannot avoid reminding Mother Rigby and the reader of the culturally overdetermined relationship between mother and child.

After invoking the mother-child relationship so insistently, though, the narrator moves away from it. Instead of convincing us of Mother Rigby’s motherhood, the story’s insistence on that role for her points out the artifice of Feathertop; we can never forget that he is a scarecrow, not a child. Mother Rigby more than anyone insists on the artifice of everything about him and her
deliberate construction of him as a mirror for other men, particularly gentlemen, more particularly Whigs. The narrator, too, is relentless in his characterization of Feathertop as an illusion. He calls him variously "a spectral illusion, and a cunning effect of light and shade, so colored and contrived as to delude the eyes of most men" (F 228-229), a "poor devil of a contrivance" (F 229), "conscious of its own unworthiness to be erect" (F 230), "miserable simulacre" (F 231), and "a work of art" (F 242). He praises his "garments [which] glistened . . . with an illusory magnificence" (F 234), and Mother Rigby tells him, "thou playest thy part to perfection" (F 235-236). Just as Aylmer's operating room could be called an operating theater, Feathertop becomes a character playing a part. In "The Birth-mark," Georgiana and her birthmark glisten as she refuses to play her part in Aylmer's drama, becoming an abortive experiment like Feathertop rather than Aylmer's fulfilled creation.

The point of this emphasis on Feathertop's simulated personhood is not to distinguish him from other people, but to show him to be their mirror image. He demands the look from the start—even before the smoke makes him come to life, "It had a strangely self-satisfied aspect, and seemed to say--'Come look at me!'" (F 226). In response, Mother Rigby tells him, "And you are well worth looking at--that's a fact!" (F 226). He becomes more mirror-like as the story
progresses, and by the time he meets Polly Gookin, the young woman Mother Rigby sends him to see, he had "throw[n] himself into an imposing attitude, [and] seemed to summon the fair girl to survey his figure, and resist him longer, if she could. His star, his embroidery, his buckles, glowed, at that instant, with unutterable splendor; the picturesque hues of his attire took a richer depth of coloring; there was a gleam and polish over his whole presence, betokening the perfect witchery of well-ordered manners. The maiden raised her eyes, and suffered them to linger upon her companion with a bashful and admiring gaze" (F 243-244). In the next chapter, we will see Lady Eleanore’s "witchery of dress"; here, manners serve much the same purpose as dress: to trick or deceive by covering the underlying lack. The maiden’s gaze here upon the simulacrum of Feathertop suggests the inevitable tension we have seen before between a woman’s gaze which both "linger[s]" and "admir[es]" but also only "suffer[s]" itself and must be bashful, perhaps because Mother Rigby has intended to provide Feathertop with a status above Polly’s own. Any complexity attributable to Polly in this sentence, however, soon drops away.

Polly’s relation to the mirror is more uncomplicated than any of the others we have seen. She plays the woman Giovanni’s mirror scene invokes: a stereotypical woman vainly gazing at her own reflection. After first seeing
Feathertop, Polly rushes to adorn herself in her best clothes to meet him. "Hurrying from her chamber to the parlor, she had ever since been viewing herself in the large looking-glass, and practicing pretty airs—now a smile, now a ceremonious dignity of aspect, and now a softer smile than the former—kissing her hand, likewise, tossing her head, and managing her fan; while, within the mirror, an unsubstantial little maid repeated every gesture, and did all the foolish things that Polly did, but without making her ashamed of them" (F 240). She practices all the attributes she thinks she will need to win Feathertop: first, a smile, second, "ceremonious dignity" to raise herself to the level she perceives to be his, and third and most important to her status as stereotype, a "softer smile."

All of this takes place in front of a mirror, which reflects "an insubstantial little maid," as lacking in substance as Feathertop himself. The narrator makes this point himself in his next sentence, emphasizing that her excessive of adornment of dress and manner violate the "simplicity" women should ideally exhibit (in contrast to the stereotype.) "In short, it was the fault of pretty Polly's ability, rather than her will, if she failed to be as complete an artifice as the illustrious Feathertop himself; and when she thus tampered with her own simplicity, the witch’s phantom might well hope to win her" (F 240).
While Polly can exist happily on the surface of the mirror, feeling no shame no matter what she sees in the mirror, Georgiana’s narrator insists that she possesses a "deeper" nature. Preoccupied with the distinction between surfaces, which can be seen by the mirror, and depths, which cannot be seen by the mirror but which must be seen by the male scientist, "The Birth-mark" brings us back to Freud’s uncanny and a more complex examination of gendered relations to the mirror than we see in "Feathertop." "The Birth-mark" problematizes the value of what anyone can learn from gazing into a mirror at all. From the start Aylmer is concerned that the deeper problem of the mark on Georgiana’s cheek is at least equal to but probably more important than its cosmetic flaw: the surface problem reveals what Aylmer sees as a deeper problem in Georgiana’s body and soul, and what is in fact his own corruption and materialism.

Describing the birth mark in language that suggests the intermixture of senses in "Rappaccini’s Daughter" as well as the intertwining of Aylmer’s loves for Georgiana and science, the narrator writes, "[I]n the centre of Georgiana’s left cheek, there was a singular mark, deeply interwoven, as it were, with the texture and substance of her face" (B 37). We will see in Chapter Four the interweaving of horror and disease in the fabrics of a veil and a mantle; here the (inextricably) embedded mark and the corruption it represents to Aylmer has permeated Georgiana’
being, far beyond what the mirror shows and far beyond what Aylmer wants to see in the woman who serves as a mirror of himself.

In Aylmer's nightmare about the mark, the embedding goes still further to defy the surface-depth opposition upon which traditional notions of the mirror rely because, as Aylmer cries out, "It is in her heart now--we must have it out!" (B 40). Aylmer maintains his dual preoccupations with science and romantic love as he praises her for leading him "deeper than ever into the heart of science" (B 41). Even though he credits her with helping him to further penetrate a discipline which relies on vision and examination, she taunts him with the same notion, calling into question his talents as a penetrating scientist: "Either remove this dreadful Hand, or take my wretched life! You have deep science! All the world bears witness of it. You have achieved great wonders! Cannot you remove this little, little mark, which I cover with the tips of two small fingers? Is this beyond your power, for the sake of your own peace, and to save your poor wife from madness?" (B 41). She actually taunts him here, telling him that he has "deep science." The exclamation points throughout, as well as her repetitious "little, little mark" bear witness to her frustration and anger at his scientific impotence.

The story continues to emphasize the mark's depth, revealing as it does so the need for deep science to
penetrate the body to the very regions invisible to the mirror. She tells him, "Perhaps its removal may cause cureless deformity. Or, it may be, the stain goes as deep as life itself. Again, do we know that there is a possibility, on any terms, of unclasping the firm grip of this little Hand, which was laid upon me before I came into the world?" (B 41). Here Georgiana raises the stakes higher: first the mark was skin deep, then interwoven into her face, then in her heart, and now it "goes as deep as life itself." Surely the text's insistent on ever-progressing depths indicates a male sense of the unattainability of the uncanny. Aylmer confirms Georgiana's comment, describing a potential treatment for the mark, "[T]his is merely superficial. Your case demands a remedy that shall go deeper" (B 47). The earth, too is also deep (and feminine); according to the narrator, Aylmer's work includes "explain[ing] the mystery of fountains, and how it is that they gush forth, some so bright and pure, and others with such rich medicinal virtues, from the dark bosom of the earth" (B 42). Nature's bosom as feminine represents a commonplace, but this line reemphasizes Aylmer's concerns with the penetration of depths.

All of these references to depths defy the mirror's importance at the same time they affirm it: only the surface mark is visible by means of sight and the mirror, yet the mark reveals the secret, invisible depths. By the end of
the story, Georgiana has so internalized Aylmer's shame that she tells him that she would "take a dose of poison, if offered by [his] hand," to which he replies, "I knew not the height and depth of your nature, until now. Nothing shall be concealed. Know, then, that this Crimson Hand, superficial as it seems, has clutched its grasp into your being, with a strength of which I had no previous conception" (B 51). By the end Aylmer begins to recognize the "strength" of the mark which he had initially thought was "superficial," visible in the mirror.

Throughout the previous two paragraphs, the story plays out two other tropes worth noting here: first is the anthropomorphizing of the hand, which possesses a "firm grip" and "clutche[s] its grasp into [Georgiana's] being. As I mentioned above, the hand takes on human qualities which make its removal by Aylmer (with Georgiana's problematized encouragement) liable to the accusation of abortion. The birth metaphor is present throughout the story, with its insistence on the "birth-mark, appears with renewed force here as Georgiana emphasizes that it "was laid upon [her] before [she] came into the world." Aylmer's acknowledgment of his lack of "previous conception" highlights his inability to penetrate the mark and his inability to create the "elixir of life," perhaps to him a facsimile of female creation. Male preoccupation with female "depths," whether creative or sexual, represents an
aspect of the uncanny and the problem of mirroring of general.

The story reappropriates the mirror at the end in order to reveal the depth of Georgiana's nature, but it still problematizes her relation to mirrors from the point at which she believes in Aylmer's view of the mark: "Still, whenever she dared to look into the mirror, there she beheld herself, pale as a white rose, and with the crimson birthmark stamped upon her cheek. Not even Aylmer now hated it so much as she" (B 48). She takes his feelings and magnifies them to twice their size, and the result is her increased self-hatred. By the end of the story, as she lies on what has become her death bed, she cannot escape the mirror. Awakened by Aylmer's talking to Aminidab, his servant, and his "laughing in a sort of frenzy," Georgiana "slowly unclosed her eyes, and gazed into the mirror, which her husband had arranged for that purpose. A faint smile flitted over her lips, when she recognized how barely perceptible was now that Crimson Hand, which had once blazed forth with such disastrous brilliancy as to scare away all their happiness. But then her eyes sought Aylmer's face, with a trouble and anxiety that he could by no means account for" (B 55).

Georgiana's "faint smile" here may represent a "depth" of independence beneath her (for the most part) acceptance of Aylmer's dissatisfaction with her mark. It also suggests
other faint smiles, for example, Wakefield’s as he walks out the door and, from the following chapter, Hooper’s persistent smile even as he wears the veil. All of these represent more complex emotions and motivations, even though they remain inexplicable, than do Polly’s performative smiles.

Aylmer and the mirror are placed in spatial and functional proximity to one another. Aylmer, though, so misinterprets what is happening to Georgiana that he sets up a mirror for her to see the surface of herself (that he believes he has successfully changed) even though what has actually occurred takes place on another level—the depths the story values but which the mirror cannot see—at the moment of her death. Georgiana moves from one mirror to another, and neither is accurate or perceptive; even as she seeks an answer from Aylmer we know that he has no idea of the cause of her fear, "trouble and anxiety."²¹

Like Georgiana, Feathertop dies after beholding himself in a mirror, and in his case the cause-effect link is explicit. After Polly is lured by Feathertop’s brilliance to look at him, "as if desirous of judging what value her own simple comeliness might have, side by side with so much brilliancy, she cast a glance towards the full-length looking-glass, in front of which they happened to be standing" (F 243-244). This mirror is "one of the truest plates in the world, and incapable of flattery." It alerts
her to Feathertop's flaw: "No sooner did the images, therein reflected, meet Polly's eye, than she shrieked, shrank from the stranger's side, gazed at him, for a moment, in the wildest dismay, and sank insensible upon the floor." As did Georgiana, Polly turns from the mirror to the man for explanation or confirmation of what she sees—-we do not know, though, what she sees when she looks at Feathertop. Feathertop's own look (as was the case for Giovanni and which Reverend Hooper will studiously avoid) is directed at his own figure in the mirror: "Feathertop, likewise, had looked towards the mirror, and there beheld, not the glittering mockery of his outside show, but a picture of the sordid patchwork of his real composition, stript of all witchcraft" (F 244).

Just as Polly looks to the mirror to evaluate herself, so does Feathertop; what is revealed, though, is not a "simple comeliness" but "a picture of the sordid patchwork of his real composition." The narrator suggests several levels of representation here, distinguishing among Feathertop's "real composition," "the glittering mockery of his outside show," "a picture" in the mirror, and even perhaps implying his own writing process.

The narrator expresses sympathy for Feathertop as well as a motivation for the creation of Feathertop and the story: "the wretched simulacrum! We almost pity him. . . . For perchance the only time, since this so often empty and
deceptive life of mortals began its course, an Illusion had
seen and fully recognized itself" (F 244). Feathertop goes
home and tells Mother Rigby, "I’ve seen myself, mother!—
I’ve seen myself for the wretched, ragged, empty thing I am!
I’ll exist no longer!" (F 245). She laments, "There are
thousands upon thousands of coxcombs and charlatans in the
world, made up of just such a jumble of worn-out, forgotten,
and good-for-nothing trash, as he was! Yet they live in
fair repute, and never see themselves for what they are!" (F
245). However, given the choice between whether to "thrust
[the pipe] into her own mouth or Feathertop’s," she "put[s]
the stem between her lips" and calls Dickon for another coal
(F 246).

The story thus becomes a self-reflexive mirror for its
readers as Feathertop, a fiction, sees itself. Hawthorne
often uses the metaphor of fictional characters as creations
to be dressed, and this story is no exception. Beyond this,
Feathertop’s self-recognition repeats the self-recognition
both Giovanni and Aylmer seek in the women they destroy. In
this case, however, the male character, thought a puppet not
a human male, must die in response to its own monstrosity.
We might examine further the implications of death of the
creation of the phallic mother, which is much like the
deaths of the daughters, lovers, or wives of the male
creator/scientists. When human male characters find their
own monstrosity, their own lack of phallic presence,
mirrored in women, the women must die. When Feathertop realizes his lack, he himself must die, not his mother/creator or some woman character of the story.

In the following chapter, these concerns reappear. Mirrors again come into play as the characters avoid them in order to avoid the evidence they find there of their own shattered subjectivities. The characters avoid not only their mirror images, though, but also others. Reverend Hooper, for example, takes on the black veil in order to avoid confronting the otherness he knows to be a part of himself, otherness he also recognizes in mirrors. Lady Eleanore likewise avoids the companionship of others, and she is punished with smallpox. Artifice of manner and "witchery of dress" continue to occupy our attention. Finally, in the two stories discussed here, the allegorical story masks the power of femininity. Similarly, in the next chapter, the story that might be read simply as political allegory must also be read in terms of the gendered subjectivities we have examined thus far.

Notes


3. Freud, 398-399.

4. Irigaray 47.

6. See Ellen D. Westbrook’s "Probable Improbabilities: Verisimilar Romance in Hawthorne’s 'The Birth-mark,'" *American Transcendental Quarterly* 3 (1989): 203-217. She writes, "Hawthorne’s method in a tale such as 'The Birth-mark' suggests what is at stake in the frameworks of perception that characters enact in their fiction and that we choose as readers while we make sense of the theaters we enter. Georgiana embodies the values traditionally assigned to women and with which the narrator is most sympathetic; the narrator grants her the greatest potential to resolve the ethical conflicts raised by the tale.... From those different vantage points, we are better able to renew our ethical stance within both lived and fictional experience" (215).

7. Few critics attend to Feathertop except to note it as a political allegory criticizing Whig foppery. Others have discussed it in terms of Hawthorne’s interest in witchcraft, connecting it with "The Hollow of the Three Hills," "Alice Doane’s Appeal," and "Young Goodman Brown." See, for example, Mary E. Rucker’s "The Art of Witchcraft in Hawthorne’s 'Feathertop: A Moralized Legend,'" *Studies in Short Fiction* 24 (1987): 31-39. She writes, "Hawthorne thus adopts the trappings of witchcraft only to expose its trickery" (34). Her analysis favors Feathertop over Mother Rigby: "Nor is [Feathertop] susceptible to a love that could grant him the substance necessary to gentlemanly conduct. Despite this flaw in Hawthorne’s characterization, the evolution makes Feathertop a morally worthy artifact that is independent of the limited woman who contrived him" (39).


8. In "Science and Art in Hawthorne’s 'The Birth-mark,'" (Nineteenth Century Literature 41 [1987]: 445-461) Mary E. Rucker writes, "Hawthorne implies ... that full knowledge of another’s nature is not a necessary condition of proper regard for the sanctity of his or her being. Like Giovanni, who eventually limits Beatrice’s selfhood to her poisonous body, Aylmer profanely circumscribes Georgiana’s selfhood to her physicality--more precisely, to her marred cheek" (456).


10. Williams 37.
11. Williams 51.


18. Hawthorne's last two stories, "Feathertop" (1852) and "Ethan Brand: A Chapter from an Abortive Romance" (1851), both concern abortive experiment, and perhaps function as self-reflexive commentaries on the impossibility of fulfilled creation through writing.


20. See Pfister, The Production of Personal Life: Class, Gender, and the Psychological in Hawthorne's Fiction. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991, 64. He specifically connects monstrosity to Georgiana's birthmark: "The etymology of 'monster' reminds one of the birthmark's disclosure of emotions, its tendency to show its hand: it is derived 'from the Latin monstrum, or monstrando, "showing"' (59). He continues, "'Monstrosity' had acquired significance as a term connoting female deviance as far back as the sixteenth century..." (70).

21. Barbara Eckstein writes in "Hawthorne's 'The Birthmark'" Science and Romance as Belief," Studies in Short Fiction 26 (1989): 511-519, "It is, according to this code [of romantic heroines], better for Georgiana to die for love and perfect beauty, the rewards of a heroine, than to live beyond the
romance plot—in marriage where her flaws are acknowledged" (514).
CHAPTER 4
"SELF-SHUDDERINGS" AND THE "WITCHERY OF DRESS":
"THE MINISTER'S BLACK VEIL" AND "LADY ELEANORE'S MANTLE"

In "Rappaccini’s Daughter" and "The Birth-mark," Giovanni and Aylmer try to make unconventional women conform to their expectations, and kill Beatrice and Georgiana in the process. In "Wakefield," the protagonist abandons his wife and home in an attempt to obtain the symbolic importance that comes with being the object of the gaze. In much the same way, in "The Minister’s Black Veil" Rev. Hooper moves away from what appears to be an inevitable domesticity, with its promise of a stable identity and its attendant threats of a smothering closeness or an excessive and monstrous femininity, into a world of death and absence. In taking on the veil, Hooper makes himself Other to himself; he becomes the monster that Beatrice is to Giovanni and Georgiana is to Aylmer. In response, he resorts to "self-shudderings." Terror, monstrosity, and otherness are woven into Hooper’s veil; smallpox is woven into Lady Eleanore’s mantle. Hooper puts his aggressiveness into the mirroring effects of his veil, thereby making over a piece of woman’s apparel into a weapon. In "Lady Eleanore’s Mantle," Lady Eleanore represents a monstrous version of
Hooper's femininity. While Hooper can hide behind not only the veil but also his maleness to avoid monstrosity, Lady Eleanore has no such refuge. Hawthorne tries to hide her femininity behind the frame of historical allegory in which he chooses to tell her story. However, precisely her femaleness allows her to receive strong punishment for her sin, which is much the same as Hooper's. In "Lady Eleanore's Mantle," Hawthorne demonstrates that when women move away from others, refusing to take the companionship offered to them, whole populations die because of such an unnatural act; furthermore, the woman herself must die a disfiguring and painful death as well as bear the guilt of contaminating a town.

Hooper and Lady Eleanore make their separation from others both material and virtually inevitable through their choices of adornment, a mode of expression usually associated with femininity. As we have seen throughout the previous chapters, vanity is by no means solely the province of Hawthorne's women; in fact, men and male subjectivity depend heavily on sartorial display. According to Kaja Silverman,

[J. C. Flugel in The Psychology of Clothes] concludes that since the eighteenth century [men's narcissistic and exhibitionistic] desires have been obliged to seek out alternate routes of gratification, and have consequently undergone the following vicissitudes: 1) sublimation into professional "showing off"; 2) reversal into scopophilia; and 3) male identification with woman-as-spectacle. . . . The last of these vicissitudes, male identification with woman-as-spectacle, has not received the same amount of critical
attention, although it would seem the most potentially destabilizing, at least in so far as gender is concerned. Flugel remarks that this identification may take the culturally acceptable form of associating with a beautiful and well-dressed woman, or the much more extreme and 'deviant' form of actually adopting female mannerisms and dress (i.e., of transvestism). I would maintain that it also coexists with other classically male 'perversions,' helping to determine the choice of a fetish, and structuring even the most conventionally heterosexual of voyeuristic transactions.

Rev. Hooper utilizes all three "routes of gratification." His veil allows him a professional status that would probably have otherwise eluded him; he practices a kind of scopophilia with the girl whose funeral he performs; and most importantly, he identifies with "woman-as-spectacle," all by taking the veil.

Again, returning to Silverman, "[T]he male subject is as dependent upon the gaze of the Other as is the female subject, and as solicitous of it--in other words, . . . . he is as fundamentally exhibitionistic." Femininity and masculinity for Hawthorne seem to include questions not only of exhibitionism but also of disease, corruption, mystery, and monstrosity that are for the most part located in an implicitly feminine body. To a certain extent, then, by focusing attention on his body (by covering a portion of it with an article of clothing coded feminine) Hooper becomes feminized. From within my argument in the previous chapter, words such as "terrible," "horrible," and "monstrosity," which have been linked to femininity in other stories, are here associated with the veil and what it covers.
Finally, there are many instances of shuddering, the response of horrified ecstasy we have seen before.

In Chapter 3 I argued that characters’ relations to actual mirrors and to each other, which could be characterized as mirror relationships, reveal a breakdown of expected categories in the Hawthornean world. Hawthorne continues to dissect those categories in the stories I will discuss here, as a minister, Reverend Hooper, and an aristocratic woman, Lady Eleanore Rochcliffe, demonstrate the consequences of using their clothing to separate themselves from the world. In "The Minister’s Black Veil," a story divided by two public events basic to ordinary life—a wedding and a funeral—Hawthorne emphasizes a rejection of coupling and domesticity and a deliberately chosen, extreme separation. Hooper’s separation from the rest of the world, though, consists of a coupling of sorts with the otherness within himself which he embraces, as well as with the sin in everyone else’s heart. In "Lady Eleanore’s Mantle," Hawthorne emphasizes the funeral and its final separating: she never becomes close to anyone but instead chooses a proud distancing—and the town and the narrator punish her gleefully and harshly. Unlike Mrs. Wakefield, Beatrice, Georgiana, Hooper’s fiancee, Elizabeth, and even, to a lesser extent, Mother Rigby, Lady Eleanore is neither loving and solid nor a seductive, flawed angel, and
she pays a high price for her independence. She rejects out of hand the options for femininity we have examined so far.

Hooper's calling, completely apart from his taking the veil, potentially feminizes him. According to Ann Douglas, the evolution of the role of women in the mid-nineteenth-century was paralleled by the role of their ministers; ministers therefore possessed an ambiguous gender role. Hooper's status as a minister potentially removes whatever security he might have had in a masculine subject position; the veil makes his positioning further ambiguous.

Hooper's profession demands plainness and somber dress; clothing for him is only marked by his own design, and thus he conforms to Silverman's notion of the exhibitionistic man. Hooper's clothes could be free from "reading" or analysis, yet he chooses to subject himself to the gaze of the town; his gesture of taking the veil is not unlike the transformations represented by Wakefield's purchase of the used clothing of people he does not know or Mother Rigby's dressing Feathertop from numerous sources. Hooper takes on, voluntarily, the mark which leads to his being relentlessly interpreted by others.

Hooper's taking on the veil moves him toward femininity at least in terms of his dress. As J. Hillis Miller notes, "No doubt part of the disquieting effect of Hooper's black veil lies in the fact that it is an ordinarily feminine article of clothing worn by a man."
Hooper is a weird kind of transvestite, weird because wearing the veil by no means feminizes him nor even makes him sexually neutral. He remains aggressively masculine, patriarchal. He comes gradually to be known 'throughout the New-England churches' as 'Father Hooper.' . . . " I would disagree with Miller's "aggressive" denial of femininity; it is precisely the ambiguity that I want to explore here.

In Hawthorne's fiction the mirror represents instability and confusion as well as vanity and narcissism; this conflicted relationship continues in "The Minister's Black Veil." As Hooper raises his glass to drink after toasting the just-married couple, he sees himself in the mirror. "At that instant, catching a glimpse of his figure in the looking-glass, the black veil involved his own spirit in the horror with which it overwhelmed all others. His frame shuddered--his lips grew white--he spilt the untasted wine upon the carpet--and rushed forth into the darkness" (43-44). The narrator's dangling participle suggests that the veil sees itself; this possible reading, though not as plausible as Hooper's seeing himself, adds to the ambiguity of the veil's role to Hooper. Furthermore, the veil is a mirror for the town. I will discuss this passage twice again: later in the chapter as it provides an interesting parallel to Lady Eleanore's spilling of the wine, and again as it elaborates my sense that Hooper cannot allow himself to be intimate with Elizabeth. As Colacurcio notes, Hooper
has "spill[ed] the wedding toast," thereby indicating his incapacity for closeness and traditional heterosexual coupling. Here Hooper experiences much the same response to his mirror image that we have seen: he shudders in response to the horror of himself.

His relation to mirrors becomes part of the myth that circulates around him. "In truth, his own antipathy to the veil was known to be so great, that he never willingly passed before a mirror, nor stooped to drink at a still fountain, lest, in its peaceful bosom, he should be affrighted by himself. . . . It was said, that ghost and fiend consorted with him there. With self-shudderings and outward terrors, he walked continually in its shadow, groping darkly within his own soul, or gazing through a medium that saddened the whole world" (48). Again, we see Hooper afraid of himself, engaged in "self-shudderings" reminiscent of Giovanni's and Aylmer's and avoiding a feminized mirror, the "bosom" of a fountain, lest he see his monstrous self. Furthermore, the narrator distances Hooper from the crowd of onlookers in much the same way Wakefield's narrator separated him from society.

The crowd in this story performs two functions: first, to look at Hooper and second, to provide examples of the heterosexual coupling that pervades the story. The sexton, who serves as a representative of the crowd's sentiment and as the director of their attention, even "pull[s] lustily at
the bell-rope" (37). He thereby sets the stage for a story relentlessly obsessed with sin and sexuality. He also gets the first look at Hooper, and in response to his cry of "astonishment" at the veil, "All within hearing immediately turned about, and beheld the semblance of Mr. Hooper, pacing slowly his meditative way towards the meeting-house. With one accord they started, expressing more wonder than if some strange minister were coming to dust the cushions of Mr. Hooper's pulpit" (37-38). The crowd acts as a unified reader, reacting at once to the sight of the minister as pointed out by the sexton. When Hooper makes his customary greeting, the parishioners are so "wonder-struck . . . that his greeting hardly met with a return." The sexton, up to this point the voice of the crowd, comments, "I can't really feel as if good Mr. Hooper's face was behind that piece of crape" (38).

As usual, the gaze also functions as a kind of mirror, allowing Hooper to see himself in the crowd. In this case, Hooper and his congregation share the feminine reflective role and its attendant horror. "Such was the effect of this simple piece of crape, that more than one woman of delicate nerves was forced to leave the meeting-house. Yet perhaps the pale-faced congregation was almost a fearful a sight to the minister, as his black veil to them" (39). Here the veil, repeatedly characterized as simply a piece of crape, and which we will see later called insignificant when worn
in its proper way, that is, by a woman, has the power to frighten a "woman of delicate nerves." On one hand, we see the narrator implicitly ridicule a woman for her hyper-delicacy (remember "The Canal Boat"), but on the other hand we see a woman fleeing from the sight of the man; Hooper has become the horror. The narrator continues to assert a mirror-like relation between Hooper and the congregation when he suggests that they may be frightful to him just as he is frightful to them.

As in "Wakefield," the narrator shows the hero of "The Minister’s Black Veil" to be not unlike the crowd whose gaze he seeks. Mr. Hooper, like many of Hawthorne’s heroes, is not heroic at all, not outstanding, not glorious or deserving of our attention, admiration, or praise. The narrator describes him in terms which suggest a ministerial Wakefield: "Mr. Hooper had the reputation of a good preacher, but not an energetic one: he strove to win his people heavenward, by mild persuasive influences, rather than to drive them thither, by the thunders of the Word" (39). Here in the description of his preaching style, Hooper, like Wakefield, is nothing special; it takes some extraordinary deed to make him deserve our (or Mrs. Wakefield’s, or the congregation’s) gaze.

Hooper’s narrator continues to characterize him as a man of the crowd, or at least one of good judgment: "By persons who claimed a superiority to popular prejudice, it
was reckoned merely an eccentric whim, such as often mingles with the sober actions of men otherwise rational, and tinges them all with its own semblance of insanity. But with the multitude, good Mr. Hooper was irreparably a bugbear" (47-48). While this passage might seem to separate Hooper from the crowd because of the alienation they experience in response to the veil, the narrator also characterizes his actions as somehow common, happening "often" to "sober" men, "all" of whom experience a similar response. The language here suggests "Wakefield" and its hero whose action represents something that anyone might do as well as the mingling and intermixture responsible for horror in "Rappaccini's Daughter."

The church leaders would seem to agree that Hooper is "a bugbear"; they cannot even talk to him. The meeting between Hooper and the church leaders raises issues of openness, closeness, and distance. As Hooper sits silently in his home with his visitors, he waits for them to state the purpose of their call. "Thus they sat a considerable time, speechless, confused, and shrinking uneasily from Mr. Hooper's eye, which they felt to be fixed upon them with an invisible glance" (45). Subjected to Hooper's gaze, which is all the more powerful because of its invisibility, the church members occupy a traditionally feminized position: "speechless, confused, and shrinking uneasily."
In direct contrast to the "abashed" church leaders, throughout the story various women do not find it difficult to comment on his veil and appearance. Perhaps, as we have seen in previous chapters, a female subject's already marginalized position allows her to manipulate the very categories that always threaten to confine her. An "old woman" connects the veil with a change in Hooper: "He has changed himself into something awful, only by hiding his face" (38). Unlike the changes in other characters we have seen resulting from someone else's agency, Hooper's changes are solely the result of his own actions. The church leaders' and the sexton's readings emphasizes something on his face, while a woman reads that he has hidden his face.

Women readers of the veil insist on its association with femininity. One woman points out, "How strange . . . that a simple black veil, such as any woman might wear on her bonnet, should become such a terrible thing on Mr. Hooper's face!" This woman reader becomes important because she not only points out the monstrosity that occurs when a man wears feminine clothing but she also sheds light on marriage and male subjectivity in her exchange with her husband, who is not insignificantly a physician, caretaker of the body and both linked to and separated from the domestic ideal of woman. She tells her husband, "... I would not be alone with him for the world. I wonder he is not afraid to be alone with himself!" to which he replies,
"Men sometimes are so" (41). This conversation illuminates two issues of coupling: the woman fantasizes about being alone with Hooper, a situation which would probably only happen between a woman and either her husband or a doctor or a minister; and her husband reveals that Hooper's condition results not solely from his veil but also from his masculinity, which makes him, like "men," sometimes afraid to be alone with himself. This will prove important later when we see Hooper's relation to himself as a kind of coupling.

From the start the story foregrounds a series of heterosexual couples. On Sunday morning, a series of courtship rituals are foregrounded: "Spruce bachelors looked sidelong at the pretty maidens, and fancied that the Sabbath sunshine made them prettier than on week-days" (37). Perhaps the sort of well-scrubbed and innocent flirtation that the narrator describes here, which one would expect would lead to a well-scrubbed domesticity, is precisely what Hooper wants to avoid. Consider Nietzsche's comments on why people clothe themselves, comments which can be read as a call for manliness (a category Hooper has radically called into question by his taking on the veil):

How morality is scarcely dispensable. --A naked human being is generally a shameful sight. I am speaking of us Europeans (and not even of female Europeans!). . . .--it seems that we Europeans simply cannot dispense with that masquerade which one calls clothes.

Now consider the way "moral man" is dressed up, how he is veiled behind oral formulas and concepts of decency--the way our actions are benevolently concealed
by the concepts of duty, virtue, sense of community, honorableness, self-denial—should the reasons for all this not be equally good? I am not suggesting that all this is meant to mask human malice and villainy—the wild animal in us; my idea is, on the contrary, that it is precisely as tame animals that we are a shameful sight and in need of the moral disguise, that the 'inner man' in Europe is not by a long shot bad enough to show himself without shame (or to be beautiful). The European disguises himself with morality because he has become a sick, sickly, crippled animal that has good reasons for being 'tame'; for he is almost an abortion, scarce half made up, weak, awkward.

It is not the ferocity of the beast of prey that requires a moral disguise but the herd animal with its profound mediocrity, timidity, and boredom with itself. With morality the European dresses up—let us confess it!—to look nobler, more important, more respectable, "divine"—

Perhaps, just as we said of Wakefield, Hooper tries to both disguise and throw off his "mediocrity, timidity, and boredom" by wearing the veil; one way to avoid the tameness (yet also the monstrosity) he fears is to eschew domesticity and coupled intimacy.

Even though he remains unmarried throughout the story, Hooper is cast as a man of admirable domestic habits (which do not require the attention of the gaze) even on his own. "Mr. Hooper, a gentlemanly person of about thirty, though still a bachelor, was dressed with due clerical neatness, as if a careful wife had starched his band, and brushed the weekly dust from his Sunday's garb" (38). The wife here is invoked even though Hooper has no wife. The narrator immediately follows the reference to the wife (or the wife-suggesting habits) with the means by which Hooper has set out to override them: "There was but one thing remarkable in
his appearance. Swathed about his forehead, and hanging down over his face, so low as to be shaken by his breath, Mr. Hooper had on a black veil. On a nearer view, it seemed to consist of two folds of crape, which entirely concealed his features, except the mouth and chin, but probably did not intercept his sight..." (38). This represents the most detailed description of the veil, and it serves two functions: first, to again suggest that Hooper makes himself "remarkable" only by taking on a new and extreme covering object of dress; and second, to distance him from the domestic coupling his normal dress demands.

The narrator describes Hooper as a man given (until the veil, at least) to tidy domestic habits which are safely within the realm of unremarkable and acceptable behavior. His impending marriage to Elizabeth, his fiancee, makes that domesticity even more tidy, as her brusquely efficient manner will show. Her manner also foreshadows what Hooper's manner as minister will become; Colacurcio notes that Hooper's efficiency as a minister has not been characterized as positive.11 Elizabeth is also a potentially ambiguous figure: while she represents the domestic ideal of a New England housewife, she also does her best to avoid the "feminine" responses of fainting and fear that characterize the reactions of other women. Her name suggests that she is not the shrinking woman of Hawthorne's own age but instead one of the women he would invoke in The Scarlet Letter:
Morally, as well as materially, there was a coarser fibre in those wives and maidens of old English birth and breeding, than in their fair descendants, separated from them by a series of six or seven generations. . . . The women, who were now standing about the prison-door, stood within less than half a century of the period when the man-like Elizabeth had been the not altogether unsuitable representative of the sex.\textsuperscript{12}

By her name as well as her demeanor, Hooper’s Elizabeth seems to be one of the women Hawthorne’s \textit{Scarlet Letter} narrator would characterize as "man-like," as opposed to, perhaps the physician’s wife in "The Minister’s Black Veil" or other shrinking, fearful, "feminine" women. From this standpoint, Elizabeth’s gendered subjectivity (perhaps like Hooper’s on the basis of his profession and his remarkable actions) can be seen as being ambiguous. On the other hand, she represents the marriage coupling into which Hooper has planned to join, and thus she represents an intimacy and ordinary intimacy and domesticity which he rejects.

The narrator follows his account of the (male) church leaders’ inability even to speak of the veil to Hooper with Elizabeth’s cool response, which sets her apart from everyone, men and women: "But there was one person in the village, unappalled by the awe with which the black veil had impressed all beside herself" (45). She is contrasted explicitly to the church leaders: "When the deputies returned without an explanation, or even venturing to demand one, she, with the calm energy of her character, determined to chase away the strange cloud that appeared to be settling round Mr. Hooper, every moment more darkly than before"
Elizabeth is thus the characteristic New England woman who might "chase away the strange cloud" with the same "calm energy of her character" that she would use to iron Hooper's shirts, if given the opportunity.

Just as Mrs. Wakefield both knows and sees through Wakefield and is the recipient of the pain of his actions, Elizabeth is granted by the narrator the first right to an explanation. "As his plighted wife, it should be her privilege to know what the black veil concealed. At the minister's first visit, therefore, she entered upon the subject, with a direct simplicity, which made the task easier both for him and her" (45). The narrator emphasizes the right to intimacy that inheres in marriage: it "should" be Elizabeth's right to know Hooper. Furthermore, the narrator characterizes their exchange as a "task," thereby invoking the kind of domestic activity their relationship promises.

As opposed to everyone else in Milford, and specifically as opposed to the doctor's wife, the superstitious old woman, and the woman walker, Elizabeth refuses to read the veil metaphorically; she reduces its significance to mere fabric. She tells Hooper, with that "energy" that almost palpably bustles around her, despite its "calm," "No, . . . there is nothing terrible in this piece of crape, except that it hides a face which I am always glad to look upon. Come, good sir, let the sun shine
from behind the cloud. First lay aside your black veil: then tell me why you put it on" (45). Miller considers this an "invitation" which "has a sexual implication." I would argue instead that her request furthers her matter-of-fact way of dealing with Hooper and his display.

Here Elizabeth is portrayed as the most conventionally admirable and level-headed character (and again, certainly the most sober-minded woman) of the story, yet her calm assurance and interpretation of the veil prove completely wrong. She is confident enough to instruct him, to order him to be reasonable, in a way that the church elders cannot even approach. Like Mrs. Wakefield, she watches patiently as "Mr. Hooper's smile glimmered faintly" (46). Hooper follows his little smile with a deferral to the spiritual veil he invokes throughout the story: "There is an hour to come . . . when all of us shall cast aside our veils. Take it not amiss, beloved friend, if I wear this piece of crape till then" (46). He is careful to distinguish between the spiritual "veils" that everyone wears and the "piece of crape" he wears, apparently claiming that his piece of fabric is merely a symbol for the spiritual veil and not a veil in itself (although of course Elizabeth knows better).

Elizabeth suggests even another level of meaning of the veil in her reply: "'Your words are a mystery too,' returned the young lady. 'Take away the veil from them, at least’" (46). The narrator continues to characterize Elizabeth as
level-headed and Hooper's equal; her reply is called a "return," indicating that Hooper's behavior does not intimidate her. She also continues in her authoritative tone to tell him what to do, and to raise the question (much, again, as Mrs. Wakefield did) of interpretation.

More significantly, he also likens the veil, his relationship to it, and the resulting relationship with the otherness (perhaps femininity, perhaps aggression he would see as opposed to his ministerial self) in himself, to a kind of coupling, perhaps even a marriage that will supplant his marriage to Elizabeth. He replies to her request to take the veil away from his words by saying, "Elizabeth, I will, . . . so far as my vow may suffer me. Know, then, this veil is a type and a symbol, and I am bound to wear it ever, both in light and darkness, in solitude and before the gaze of multitudes, and as with strangers, so with my familiar friends. No mortal eye will see it withdrawn. The dismal shade must separate me from the world: even you, Elizabeth, can never come behind it!" (46). Hooper here lays down several paradigms for his and our understanding of the significance of the veil. First, he suggests that his wearing of the veil is based on his vow which binds him, restricts him, as to how far he can reveal himself to Elizabeth; this vow takes precedence over his marriage or engagement vow to her. The vow of "ever" further suggests a marriage-like promise to himself, as does his list—"in
light and darkness, in solitude and before the gaze of multitudes, and as with strangers, so with my familiar friends"--which resembles the "in sickness and in health" list of a marriage vow.

Hawthorne's narrator returns to this cadence at the end of the story as he summarizes Hooper's life: "In this manner Mr. Hooper spent a long life, irreproachable in outward act, yet shrouded in dismal suspicions; kind and loving, though unloved, and dimly feared; a man apart from men, shunned in their health and joy, but ever summoned to their aid in mortal anguish" (49). Here the words suggest the components of a marriage vow--an "irreproachable" and long life, kindness, lovingness, health and joy. Yet they also evoke the antithesis of a marriage vow--"dismal suspicions," "unloved," "dimly feared," and "shunned." The conclusion reemphasizes Hooper's disavowal of heterosexual coupling in favor of a bond with the otherness of himself as he expresses it through the veil.

The potentially concealing veil makes Hooper vulnerable to the gaze, and he reveals his awareness of his vulnerability to the gaze in its different forms. Again, like Wakefield, he attracts the gaze by his exceptional behavior, yet thinks that by means of the veil he can hide from it. He also, however, suggests a spatial or physical dimension to the gazes in addition to the visual one. He invokes the visual, saying, "No mortal eye will see it
withdrawn." But then, particularly with regard to Elizabeth, the veil becomes a physical barrier, perhaps to physical as well as visual and spiritual closeness: "The dismal shade must separate me from the world: even you, Elizabeth, can never come behind it!" (46). He describes Elizabeth's relation to himself and the veil in explicitly physical terms, emphasizing her physical presence over the visual presence of her gaze. Hawthorne often plays out in his fiction the relationship between vision and physical (as well as emotional) intimacy, as we have seen in many stories, most notably in Giovanni's relationship to Beatrice Rappaccini, one which the narrator marks by visual rather than physical intimacy. Here Elizabeth's response further supports my point; she reads Hooper's taking the veil as evidence of physical peril: "What grievous affliction hath befallen you . . . that you should thus darken your eyes for ever?" (46). Again, Elizabeth puts a new spin on things, suggesting as she does a physical disease (which we will soon see made explicit in "Lady Eleanore's Mantle"), a "grievous affliction."

Just as we saw Georgiana's strength of character with Aylmer when she asserts that she would rather die in the attempt to remove the birthmark than live with it, the narrator emphasizes Elizabeth's strength (as opposed to, say, the other women who are superstitious or to Hooper himself). "For a few moments she appeared lost in thought,
considering, probably, what new methods might be tried, to withdraw her lover from so dark a fantasy, which, if it had no other meaning, was perhaps a symptom of mental disease. Though of a firmer character than his own, the tears rolled down her cheeks. But, in an instant, as it were, a new feeling took the place of sorrow: her eyes were fixed insensibly on the black veil, when, like a sudden twilight in the air, its terrors fell around her. She arose, and stood trembling before him" (47). The narrator offers the notion, despite the potential confusion of his dangling modifier, the notion that Elizabeth's character is "firmer" than Hooper's.16

In any case, we see another instance of Elizabeth's being more "man-like" than Hooper and the convergence of sexuality and horror that results. Hooper asks her, "And do you feel it then at last?" (47). His question echoes the doctor's question to his wife regarding the effect of Hooper's veil on her: "Do you not feel it so?" (41). In both cases men are concerned that the women to whom they are closest are as sensitive as they. "She made no reply, but covered her eyes with her hand, and turned to leave the room. He rushed forward and caught her arm" (47). She covers her eyes with her hand in both a cutting off of her own gaze combined with a mirroring of Hooper's veil: she also blocks her face from his gaze, because at this point his veil actually mirrors her.
This moment represents both the first point at which they touch and the first point at which Hooper shows any emotion. "'Have patience with me, Elizabeth!' cried he passionately." Again, for the first time he responds with passion or even emotion instead of his insipid smile. After promising her that the veil will be removed in the afterlife, he tells her, "Oh! you know not how lonely I am, and how frightened to be alone behind my black veil. Do not leave me in this miserable obscurity for ever!" (47).

Elizabeth demands that he lift the veil, he declines, and "She withdrew her arm from his grasp, and slowly departed, pausing at the door, to give one long, shuddering gaze, that seemed almost to penetrate the mystery of the black veil. But even amid his grief, Mr. Hooper smiled to think that only a material emblem had separated him from happiness, though the horrors which it shadowed forth, must be drawn darkly between the fondest of lovers" (47). Hooper does not clarify the meaning of the veil’s ability to "shadow forth" horrors. Perhaps it brings them out; perhaps it places them into shadows in which they are less visible--but then, due to the syntax, the veil itself becomes part of the "horrors" which "must be drawn darkly between the fondest of lovers" (47). Again Hawthorne invokes the couple, and a separation which is both fearful and sought after. Elizabeth’s "shuddering gaze," linked as it is to sexuality and power, threatens to "penetrate" the veil (remember the man-like
Elizabeth); clearly the veil serves as a barrier to sexual as well as emotional intimacy with Elizabeth.17

The emphasis on coupling continues as the other major cultural/societal event that Hooper attends—both on the same day, which is also the first day of his wearing the veil. Of course both of these occasions are associated with veils on their own: the shroud or the wedding veil—but for both occasions the minister's wearing the veil proves highly significant, inappropriate, and disturbing. As Kaja Silverman notes in the context of a discussion of T.E. Lawrence's wearing the wedding clothes of an Arabian man, garments associated with a wedding "carry a powerful erotic resonance. To wear them is to be in a position to love that image of the Other's virility which has become the self."18

"When Mr. Hooper came, the first thing that their eyes rested on was the same horrible black veil, which had added deeper gloom to the funeral, and could portend nothing but evil to the wedding" (43). In wearing the veil of a bride to a wedding, Hooper takes on (and would seem both to love and abhor) the Other's femininity.

The two events are explicitly linked by, again, the woman. "The bridal pair stood up before the minister. But the bride's cold fingers quivered in the tremulous hand of the bridegroom, and her death-like paleness caused a whisper, that the maiden who had been buried a few hours before, was come from her grave to be married" (43). Here
the woman of the funeral and the woman of the wedding are even assumed to be the same woman, suggesting both the interchangeability of the women and of the two ceremonies.

Once Hooper has taken on the veil which deprives him of one kind of intimacy and bond with another, he moves closer to bonds with death. The veil (again, like Wakefield's disappearance) elevates Hooper above the ordinary, and his sermon is like none before it: It "was marked by the same characteristics of style and manner, as the general series of his pulpit oratory. But there was something, either in the sentiment of the discourse, or in the imagination of the auditors, which made it greatly the most powerful effort that they have ever heard from their pastor's lips" (40). Like Wakefield, Hooper stands apart from his former self, thereby entitling himself to the gaze of the crowd/congregation, by his change of dress. Hooper has moved away from the less powerful style that characterized his previous preaching and into a more powerful style which is noted for its darkness and "gloom."

The narrator's telling implicitly connects the gentle gloom of Hooper's temperament, which overflows into or infuses the sermon, to secret sin. His next sentence: "The subject had reference to secret sin, and those sad mysteries which we hide from our nearest and dearest, and would fain conceal from our own consciousness, even forgetting that the Omniscient can detect them" (40). Even as Hooper's sermon
ostensibly discusses "secret sin," he also describes the very questions of intimacy, of "hid[ing]" and "conceal[ment]" that pervade the story.

Reading "The Minister’s Black Veil" in light of Pfister’s association of monstrosity and the feminine, we can see that the narration continues to emphasize here. "A subtle power was breathed into his words. Each member of the congregation, the most innocent girl, and the man of hardened breast, felt as if the preacher had crept upon them, behind his awful veil, and discovered their hoarded iniquity of deed or thought. Many spread their clasped hands on their bosoms" (40). So Hooper, alongside "the Omniscient," is perceived to have the power to see people’s secret sins, so clearly located in their breasts. Earlier the narrator located Hooper’s horror of the mirror in the bosom-fountain; here, in a sentence which categorizes by gender, we see again the bosom as the site of the monstrous. Their covering their shame by "spread[ing] their clasped hands on their bosoms" is not unlike Adam and Eve’s covering their nakedness after the Fall. Hooper, in his extra layer of concealing clothing, obtains the power, heretofore only held by God, to see within people’s hearts.

The narrator takes great pains to absolve Hooper: "There was nothing terrible in what Mr. Hooper said; at least, no violence; and yet, with every tremor of his melancholy voice, the hearers quaked. An unsought pathos
came hand in hand with awe. So sensible were the audience of some unwonted attribute in their minister, that they longed for a breath of wind to blow aside the veil, almost believing that a stranger's visage would be discovered, though the form, gesture, and voice were those of Mr. Hooper" (40). The narrator's "at least, no violence" suggests by denial that violence is possible from Hooper; the congregation's quaking suggests that his voice produced a violent response, one not unlike the shuddering we have seen earlier. The narrator takes pains to absolve Hooper, in contrast to Lady Eleanore's narrator's emphasis of her guilty violence. If "form, gesture, and voice" are discernable, yet the covered face will perhaps reveal a completely different person, then the veil and what it covers or might reveal become over-invested with power and meaning.¹⁰

The dead continue to be the only ones who can see him; his movement away from coupled relationships becomes complete. The doctor comments at the beginning of the story that the veil "makes [Hooper] ghost-like from head to foot" (41). After he gives up his evening stroll to the cemetery because of people's stares, "A fable went the rounds, that the stare of the dead people drove him thence. . . . [Children's] instinctive dread caused him to feel, more strongly than aught else, that a preternatural horror was interwoven into the threads of the black crape" (48). We
will see with "Lady Eleanore's Mantle" that physical horrors can also be woven into fabric; for Rev. Hooper, metaphorical horror serves a similar purpose.

The veil does aid Hooper in his ministerial duties, particularly those that concern death and dying. "Among all its bad influences, the black veil had the one desirable effect, of making its wearer a very efficient clergyman" (49). As I noted above, Hooper's veil actually makes him more like Elizabeth, with her "calm energy" and efficient manner, than he was before. His relationship to his dying parishioners offers more than solace, however, and when he approaches them to console them, they experience the same shuddering that Hooper (and Giovanni and Georgiana and Aylmer) experience. "[A]s he stooped to whisper consolation, they shuddered at the veiled face so near their own. Such were the terrors of the black veil, even when Death had bared his visage!" (49). The narrator suggests that the "terrors of the black veil," connected as it is to the horror and monstrosity of femininity, exceed even Death, whose face the dying experience without the buffer of a veil; clearly the horror lies in the veil and what it signifies rather than in any secret sin of Hooper's.

Hooper's proclivity for ministering to the dying and performing funerals as well as the importance of his own funeral are prefigured by the funeral he performs on the first day he wears the veil; like the dying people above and
like Hooper himself, this corpse shudders in response to Hooper. "[I]f her eye-lids had not been closed for ever [sic], the dead maiden might have seen his face. Could Mr. Hooper be fearful of her glance, that he so hastily caught back the veil? A person . . . scrupled not to affirm, that, at the instant when the clergyman's features were disclosed, the corpse had slightly shuddered, rustling the shroud and muslin cap, though the countenance retained the composure of death. A superstitious old woman was the only witness of this prodigy" (42). The narrator doesn't really make clear whether a "person" of the beginning of the incident is the same as a "superstitious old woman" of the end—if so, he undermines the authenticity of the event by suggesting the woman's predisposition to believe or invent such a scenario.

However, this passage is significant for three reasons. First, there is the suggestion that in death the girl has a gaze that Hooper fears—she would not have had such a powerful gaze in a living or upright position. Second, again we see a separation between movement of the clothing—the shroud and cap rustled—and the stillness of the countenance. Third, his separation between clothing—which here reveals—and countenance—which here reveals nothing—is reminiscent of the doctor's fear that despite the various things about Hooper that have stayed the same, he still has become a stranger because his face is now covered. Finally, and most important is the corpse's shuddering, the response
we saw throughout the mirror chapter and which for Hawthorne seems again and again to represent a mixture of sexuality and horrified fear.

Throughout the story the minister tries to spiritualize the veil, linking it to God, sin, and death, but the narrator continually returns the meaning of the veil to his concern for heterosexual coupling. In Hooper’s eulogy for the girl, he prays that the congregation "and himself, and all of mortal race, might be ready, as he trusted this young maiden had been, for the dreadful hour that should snatch the veil from their faces" (42). Presumably his point is that in the dreadful hour their sin would be exposed; perhaps also he suggests a final judgment in which the shameful flesh of the body falls away. The coupling continues after the funeral when a woman tells her "partner," a male mourner with whom she is walking, "I had a fancy . . . that the minister and the maiden’s spirit were walking hand in hand" (43). As is the case in so many of these stories, even when they suggest heterosexual couplings, such couplings seem to inevitably go awry. Just as the doctor and his wife speculate about the minister alone with the doctor’s wife, here we have the walking companions (who may themselves be hand in hand) speculating that the minister is coupled with the dead girl (who is the only one who might have been able to see behind the veil.) Furthermore, once again it is the woman (as the doctor’s
wife and the superstitious old woman) who has either the knowledge or the fantasy of Hooper’s untoward couplings. These couplings serve to sexualize Hooper—even as he rejects intimacy.

On the night of Hooper’s death, all of his studiously non-coupled relations attend him—the physician, the church leaders, and a young minister—though the narrator takes pains to note that none of these relationships is truly intimate: "Natural connections he had none" (50). Presumably a "natural" relationship would be one of blood or marriage. However, the narrator gives great weight to Elizabeth’s presence: "There was the nurse, no hired handmaiden of death, but one whose calm affection had endured thus long, in secrecy [sic], in solitude, amid the chill of age, and would not perish, even at the dying hour. Who, but Elizabeth!" (50). With the story’s emphasis on Death (whose horror is rivaled by Hooper in his veil), the narrator’s contrasting of Elizabeth to a "hired handmaiden of death" suggests once again her potentially domestic and perhaps subservient role. The narrator also again characterizes her as "calm," and her solitary life, extending into lonely old age, suggests Mrs. Wakefield and her own abandonment.

Even in Hooper’s death, the narrator emphasizes the potential of the relationship with Elizabeth which Hooper rejected through his donning of the veil that separates
them. "Even if his bewildered soul could have forgotten, there was a faithful woman at his pillow, who, with averted eyes, would have covered that aged face, which she had last beheld in the comeliness of manhood" (50-51). Here she is at his deathbed, though she never was in his marriage bed; the narrator reminds us of Hooper's previous "comeliness of manhood," a sexuality that Hooper rejected. Thus at the end of this story the two ceremonies--funeral and wedding--are again linked together. Sexuality and horror, joined again and again in the act of shuddering, result in a similar trembling in this death-bed scene.

When the friend shows his inmost heart to his friend; the lover to his best-beloved; when man does not vainly shrink from the eye of his Creator, loathsomely treasuring up the secret of his sin; then deem me a monster, for the symbol beneath which I have lived, and die! I look around me, and, lo! on every visage a Black Veil! (52)

Even at the end Hooper avows his monstrosity, his implicit femininity, which constitutes his decision to separate himself from the rest of the world. He also asserts the similarities among himself and this reduced "crowd."

"The Minister's Black Veil" ends with Hooper's burial and the narrator's morbid fantasy of Hooper's face "moulder[ing] beneath the Black Veil" (53). Just this kind of bodily decay serves as part of the allegory of "Lady Eleanore's Mantle," which begins (after a brief frame narrative concerning the Province-House) with Lady Eleanore's arrival at the time of a funeral.
The frame narrative concerning the Province-House, as well as the historicity of the story, allow for reading it as historical allegory. In such a reading, Lady Eleanore becomes a female scapegoat for a pro-democracy allegory. Michael Colacurcio performs just such a reading; he suggests relationships not only among Puritan sumptuary rules, concerns about pride and the mantle of this story, but also among the chaos and fear of the crowd, small-pox epidemics, and the potential for revolution. Hawthorne's telling of Lady Eleanore's story within the frame of historical allegory (and Colacurcio's reading it as such) deflects attention away from the fact that her actions are not unlike Hooper's. In fact, one might argue that Hooper hides a similar mixture of inward arrogance and self-disgust, and Lady Eleanore "reflects" it as monstrosity.

The crowd which greets her plays an important role in this story, whether as adoring viewers in the opening scenes, victims of the small-pox Lady Eleanore inflicts, or as the mob which burns her in effigy. This crowd suggests both Wakefield's crowd and my discussion in Chapter Two of Stallybrass and White's characterization of the crowd and its potential for corruption. Like Hooper also, Lady Eleanore both courts the crowd and sets herself apart from it; the crowd idealizes her aristocratic background at the same time that it despises her for it. In another sphere, she rejects domestic intimacy, but unlike Hooper her removal
from others is based not on secret sin but on an outward pride coupled with physical corruption.

The feminine body (whether female of feminized as in the examples of Giovanni or Hooper) often represents a site of corruption and disease. As Sally Shuttleworth notes in *Body/Politics*, "We are all familiar with the Victorian trope of the angel in the house: The male returns from his contaminating material labors in the outer world to be spiritually refreshed by his angel within the inner sanctum of the home. This outer/inner polarity existed, however, in direct conjunction with another formulation of the inner/outer divide: women were outwardly fair, but internally they contained threatening sources of pollution." Lady Eleanore is neither an angel of the house--she rejects the heterosexually coupled, domestic role that Elizabeth, for example, seeks--nor a male character who can afford to be contaminated because of the cleansing effects of his wife. Significantly, in this story often read as an allegory of pride and class disturbance, the aristocrat who brings the plague of the body and spirit is a woman, not a man.

Lady Eleanore's "sources of pollution" appear at first to be spiritual rather than physical: "Lady Eleanore was remarkable for a harsh unyielding pride, a haughty consciousness of her hereditary and personal advantages, which made her almost incapable of control. . . . [T]his
peculiar temper was hardly less a monomania; or, if the acts which it inspired were those of a sane person, it seemed due from Providence that pride so sinful should be followed by as severe a retribution" (273-274). This is the first of several references to Lady Eleanore's deserving punishment for her faults, particularly pride, one associated in part with vanity and here with physical beauty. As opposed to Giovanni, whose vanity results in the death of a woman character, a woman character's pride results in the death of the crowd.

Her physical beauty is attributed in part to an article of clothing which marks her, much as the veil marks Hooper: The narrator comments that the women of the region believed "that their fair rival was indebted for much of the irresistible charm of her appearance to a certain article of dress—an embroidered mantle—which had been wrought by the most skilful artist in London, and possessed even magical properties of adornment. On the present occasion, however, she owed nothing to the witchery of dress, being clad in a riding-habit of velvet, which would have appeared stiff and ungraceful on any other form" (274). Characterized as rivals reminiscent of Georgiana's rivals in "The Birthmark," the women of the crowd recognize the importance of the mantle, attributing to it "irresistible charm" and "magical properties of adornment" and acknowledging the possibility of the "witchery of dress." The narrator, in a
reading which opposes theirs, affirms her beauty even in clothing which might have made another woman appear to be "stiff," or possibly masculine, or dead. Indeed, the narrator characterizes the mantle as the work of a dying woman, "the last toil of her stiffening fingers" (284). This toil, coupled with the "witchery of dress," suggests Mother Rigby of "Feathertop." Mother Rigby, Lady Eleanore, and the creator of the mantle provide alternative models of femininity. Unlike Mrs. Wakefield and Elizabeth, who suspend their lives after men reject them, or Beatrice, Georgiana, or Zenobia of The Blithedale Romance, who die for their excessive femininity, these women exert a malevolent and phallic power.

Lady Eleanore, like Hooper, uses her appearance both to gain the attention of the crowd of gossips and to deny them intimacy with her. Her mantle suggests the following two references to embroidered clothing. First, Nietzsche, again from The Gay Science: "But perhaps this is the most powerful magic of life: it is covered by a veil interwoven with gold, a veil of beautiful possibilities, sparkling with promise, resistance, bashfulness, mockery, pity, and seduction. Yes, life is a woman." These words connect Hooper's veil and Lady Eleanore's embroidered mantle; his definition of "woman" suggests Lady Eleanore's combination of "resistance" and "seduction." And second, again from The Scarlet Letter, the passage in which Hester's "A" and its
embroidered work are discussed by women, "gossips," who view her and admire her skill but chastise her for her pride:

On the breast of her gown, in fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread, appeared the letter A. It was so artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy, that it had all the effect of a last and fitting decoration to the apparel which she wore; and which was of a splendor in accordance with the taste of the age, but greatly beyond what was allowed by the sumptuary regulations of the colony" (57).

"She hath good skill at her needle, that's certain," remarked one of the female spectators; "but did ever a woman, before this brazen hussy, contrive such a way of showing it! Why, gossips, what is it but to laugh in the faces of our godly magistrates, and make a pride out of what they, worthy gentlemen, meant for a punishment?" (58).

For Hester, as for Lady Eleanore, pride and punishment are joined. Furthermore, her harshest critics, like Lady Eleanore’s (and like Georgiana’s as well) are other women, "gossips." Just as the narrator of "Lady Eleanore’s Mantle" calls for Lady Eleanore’s punishment for the sin of pride and excessive adornment, the narrator of The Scarlet Letter chastises Hester for her transformation of punishment into a means of expression of pride.

Like Hooper, Lady Eleanore avoids intimate contact with others, yet maintains a pseudo-intimacy with the crowd. When she arrives, a man whom she has driven mad by not requiting his love offers his back for her to walk on. She comments, "When men seek only to trampled upon, it were a pity to deny them a favor so easily granted--and so well deserved!" (276). The narrator comments, highlighting the
woman's pride, beauty, and the response of the crowd, "... never, surely, was there an apter emblem of aristocracy and hereditary pride, trampling on human sympathies and the kindred of nature, than these two figures presented at that moment. Yet the spectators were so smitten with her beauty, and so essential did pride seem to the existence of such a creature, that they gave a simultaneous acclamation of applause" (276). To be sure, passage addresses the allegorical argument concerning the story as indictment of the aristocracy. However, it also suggests again the relationship between the crowd and Lady Eleanore—a relationship intimate in much the same way we today have intimate relationships with celebrities, that is, we know intimate details about their lives without knowing them—which emphasizes the crowd as "spectators" "smitten" by her "beauty." Their being smitten here becomes literal after the spread of the plague. In addition, they acknowledge that her "pride" is "essential" to her as a "creature" to be admired—though perhaps not as a person with whom one might have an intimate connection.

The cry for punishment and vindication, absent from "The Minister's Black Veil," pervades this story, suggesting that women and women characters—whether Mrs. Wakefield, Georgiana, Beatrice, or Zenobia (and excepting Mother Rigby, who manages to avoid punishment)—must be punished even when their actions are much like the actions of male characters
who receive no punishment. The doctor says, "... I could well nigh doubt the justice of the Heaven above us, if no signal humiliation overtake this lady. ... She seeks to place herself above the sympathies of our common nature, which envelopes all human souls. See, if that nature do not assert its claim over her in some mode that shall bring her level with the lowest!" (276).24 The doctor uses the language of law to argue for "justice" as spiritual punishment—"humiliation"—for a spiritual crime: "plac[ing] herself above the sympathies of our common nature." He also suggests, through his comments that Lady Eleanore does not contain herself within the nature that "envelopes all human souls," that she exceeds boundaries in much the same way as Beatrice and Georgiana, both of whom must die. Here, however, "nature" rather than a male character metes out the punishment.

One might argue both that Lady Eleanore deserves punishment while Hooper does not because Hooper hurts no one (except of course Elizabeth) through his rejection of human sympathies. Furthermore, his sartorial display is much more subdued than Lady Eleanore's. In fact, Hawthorne's narrator describes a much more elaborate social scene in this story than in the former. The following description of elaborate dress, among men and women, occurs at a ball. Note Hawthorne's own preoccupation with and attention to lavish description and his own "extravagance of eulogy," which
suggests not only the narration to follow but also the funereal motif that we see throughout these stories preoccupied with display.

"Without much extravagance of eulogy, the spectacle might even be termed splendid; for, according to the fashion of the times, the ladies shone in rich silks and satins, outspread over wide-projecting hoops; and the gentlemen glittered in gold embroidery, laid unsparingly upon the purple, or scarlet, or sky-blue velvet, which was the material of their coats and waistcoats. . . . " (277). The narrator obviously relishes his "unsparing" description of the extravagance of "embroidery, laid unsparingly upon the purple, or scarlet, or sky-blue velvet." He goes on to distance himself from the scene he so lovingly describes:

"The altered taste of the present day--a taste symbolic of a deep change in the whole system of society--would look upon almost any of those gorgeous figures as ridiculous . . . " (277). Clearly, though, society has not changed so much that he does not take pleasure in his description.

Even alongside the excess, though, Lady Eleanore's stands out for its extravagance. Again, we have recourse to the comments of the "gossips," that feminine voice of the crowd that we have seen in "Wakefield" and "The Minister's Black Veil" as well as The Scarlet Letter. Here they claim the "magic properties" of the mantle, much like the properties that transform Hooper (277). They also suggest,
though, that its properties spring from its connection to death, its being "the handiwork of a dying woman, and, perchance, owed the fantastic grace of its conception to the delirium of approaching death" (278). The dying woman suggests three things: first all the dying women we have seen thus far—imagine Beatrice Rappaccini leaving such a marker of her poison. Second, he suggests Mother Rigby, who fashions Feathertop from clothes and magic. Finally, he reminds us of the inevitable tendency toward death and corruption that contaminates the women of so many of the stories I have examined here, regardless of their physical beauty.

Lady Eleanore’s corruption results from her incapacity for intimacy, and the narrator judges her harshly, calling her condition a "moral deformity," thereby again connecting spiritual and physical conditions. He goes on to emphasize her lack of feminine desire for intimacy as "the deeper scorn of one whose spirit held itself too high to participate in the enjoyment of other human souls . . . " (278). When she does try to participate in such interactions, her response is the same one we have seen before: she shudders. "[W]ith a nervous shudder, she seemed to arouse her energies, and threw some bright and playful, yet half-wicked sarcasm into the conversation" (278-279). Even her attempts to be "bright and playful" contain "half-wicked sarcasm." As she exceeds the boundaries of human
nature by standing "above" them and refusing intimacy, her onlookers go so far as to question her "sanity" (279)

The crowd's questioning of her sanity reminds us of the insanity of her suitor, Jervase Helwyse, who serves throughout the story as a repository of her cruelty but emerges triumphant at the end as he leads the mob which burns Lady Eleanore's effigy and her mantle. Despite his madness, he continually emphasizes the aspect of her character that most connects her to Hooper: her separation from society. He offers her a glass of wine, saying, "[F]or your own earthly and heavenly welfare, I pray you to take one sip of this holy wine, and then to pass the goblet round among the guests. And this shall be a symbol that you have not sought to withdraw yourself from the chain of human sympathies--which whoso would shake off must keep company with fallen angels" (280). Just as in "The Minister's Black Veil" the wine of the wedding toast represents people's intimate ties to one another. As I noted above, Hooper spills the wine in response to seeing his reflection in the mirror; here, in the scuffle that ensues around this incident, "the sacramental cup was overturned, and its contents sprinkled upon Lady Eleanore's mantle" (280). The "overturning" of the cup suggests the overturning of both the religious ceremonies invoked here--marriage and baptism (suggested by "sprinkled")--and its repetition here gives
further credence to Colacurcio's reading of Hooper's wine spilling as "premature ejaculation."^{25}

The man also refuses to deny the connection between the wearing of the mantle and separation: he "offered a new and equally strange petition to Lady Eleanore. It was no other than that she should throw off the mantle, which, while he pressed the silver cup of wine upon her, she had drawn more closely around her form, so as almost to shroud herself within it." If not already clear, Jervase makes clear that the mantle, much like the veil, serves as a death shroud as well as an adornment. Her response is to draw "the rich folds of the embroidered mantle over her head, in such a fashion as to give a completely new aspect to her beautiful face, which--half-hidden, half-revealed--seemed to belong to some being of mysterious character and purposes" (281). Again this suggests Hooper in the words set off by dashes--"half-hidden, half-revealed"--and parishioners who come to see his figure though they cannot see his face, which is itself only half-concealed by the veil. Furthermore, it emphasizes that because of her failure to form intimacies she is not quite human but instead "some being," just as initially she is characterized as "a creature." Despite suggestions of his monstrosity, Hooper, unlike Lady Eleanore, remains human throughout his story; the woman character can much more easily be portrayed as something else.
Immediately after this ball, a plague of small-pox sweeps through the town; unlike Hooper, who ministers to the dying, Lady Eleanore's essential monstrosity causes people to die. The plague she brings is even worse than the usual smallpox: "it was distinguished by a peculiar virulence, insomuch that it has left its traces--its pitmarks, to use an appropriate figure--on the history of the country, the affairs of which were thrown into confusion by its ravages" (282). In both its virulence, reminiscent of Beatrice's powerful poison, and its facial disfiguring, reminiscent of Georgiana's birth-mark, Lady Eleanore's small-pox is "peculiar[ly]" feminine. The narrator also notes the "confusion" that it causes, much like the chaos we have seen in the other stories when femininity turns into poison and threatens death to male characters and here, the crowd.

The crowd figures prominently in the story after the onset of the plague; those who once adored her beauty now revile her. It works in much the same way we have seen it in earlier stories, serving as both arbiter of morality and giver of attention through its gaze. "The crowd raved against the Lady Eleanore, and cried out that her pride and scorn had evoked a fiend, and that, between them both, this monstrous evil had been born" (284). While we have seen other the tropes of other stories repeated here, one that has been absent thus far is that of birth, as we saw it in both "The Birth-mark" and "Feathertop." Whereas Mother
Rigby's collaboration with Dickon produced the rather benign Feathertop, the collaboration between Lady Eleanore's "pride and scorn" and "a fiend" results in a "monstrous evil." As I noted in the previous chapter, the term "monstrous" suggests the feminine, thus further marking the plague as an extension of essential feminine corruption.

This story stands out among all that I have discussed here for its palpable expression of anger at the feminine; while other feminine characters have been mutilated and killed, here not only does small-pox ravage Lady Eleanore but the crowd (led by Jervase Helwyse, who is transformed from madman to leader) burns her effigy and her mantle. Although she once scorned the norms of intimacy that "envelope" most humans, in this procession her effigy is "enveloped with a richly embroidered mantle; while in advance stalked Jervase Helwyse, waving the red flag of the pestilence" (288). Colacurcio refers to this mob as hysterical, suggesting that their red flag of Pestilence reinscribes "what Cotton Mather had allegorized as 'Flags of Pride.'" Even though she cannot be contained in life, in death her poisonous mantle envelops her, and both are destroyed. Jervase Helwyse's transformation allows him not only to walk but to "stalk," suggesting his new haughtiness after his ultimate triumph over Lady Eleanore. Not only does he escape the plague (an escape which the doctor
attributes to his madness), he also leads the crowd which once applauded while she used him as a "footstool."

As opposed to the endings of "Rappaccini's Daughter," "The Birth-mark," and even, to a lesser extent, The Blithedale Romance, in which the women characters' last words before death indict the male characters who have done them violence, here Lady Eleanore's last words are instead an admission of her own shame, her own assumption of blame. The narrator describes Helwyse's last interview with Lady Eleanore, in words reminiscent of the "blasted" Giovanni, in which she is a "contorted" "figure," "struggling to hide its blasted face" (287). No longer a woman (note the genderless pronoun) or even a "creature" or a "being," she is now merely a figure with a "blasted face." She tells him, "[L]ook not now on the woman you once loved! The curse of Heaven hath stricken me, because I would not call man my brother, nor woman sister. I wrapt myself in PRIDE as in a MANTLE, and scorned the sympathies of nature; and therefore has nature made this wretched body the medium of a dreadful sympathy. You are avenged--they are all avenged--Nature is avenged--for I am Eleanore Rochcliffe!'" (287). Lady Eleanore makes clear that she understands her death to be retribution for the sin of failure to maintain intimacies of others. Rejecting "the sympathies of nature," she conforms to the demands of the allegory, becoming a "wretched body," a "medium of a dreadful sympathy." As if acknowledging that
her sin—although it seems clear that her sin is femininity rather than pride—warrants ghastly, disfiguring death, she repeats three times that Jervase, the crowd, and Nature (presumably all her victims) have been avenged; the "justice" demanded earlier has occurred. Perhaps Lady Eleanore takes on the punishment not only for her own femininity but also for Hooper's; both characters mix aggression with femininity, yet only the biological woman receives punishment.

Notes


2. Silverman, "Fragments of a Fashionable Discourse" 143.

3. As Joel Pfister notes in The Production of Personal Life: Class, Gender, and the Psychological in Hawthorne's Fiction (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), both Georgiana and Beatrice are linked to monstrosity, a term with a long historical association. "'Monstrosity' had acquired significance as a term connoting female deviance as far back as the sixteenth century..." (Pfister 70).

   In "The Veil of Words in 'The Minister's Black Veil,'" (Studies in Short Fiction 25 [1988]: 41-47) Norman German writes, "An argument can be built ... to show that Hawthorne painstakingly worked out his themes even on the most fundamental linguistic level" (41).

4. Hawthorne comments on the questions of clothing and revelation in several places. See, for example, his Italian Notebooks (Centenary Edition. Volume XIV), April 22, 1858: "Man is no longer a naked animal; his clothes are as natural to him as his skin, and sculptors have no more right to undress him than to flay him" (177).

   His Love Letters (Love Letters of Nathaniel Hawthorne 1839-1841. Washington, D.C.: NCR/Microcard Editions, 1972. 1907), May 19, 1840: "It is not that I have any love for mystery; but because I abhor it--and because I have felt, a thousand times, that words may be a thick and darksome veil of mystery between the soul and the truth which it seeks."
Wretched were we, indeed, if we had no better means of communicating ourselves, no fairer garb in which to array our essential selves, than these poor rags and tatters of Babel.

And in "The Old Manse": "So far as I am a man of really individual attributes, I veil may face; nor am I, nor have ever been, one of those supremely hospitable people, who serve up their own hearts delicately fried, with brain sauce, as a tidbit for their beloved public."

5. As J. Hillis Miller notes, "If a funeral becomes an uncanny resurrection as an effect of the veil, a wedding on the other hand becomes a funeral" (Miller, Hawthorne & History: Defacing It. Cambridge, Mass.: Basil Blackwell, 1991, 79).

6. See Ann Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture. New York: Doubleday, 1988. "Cut off at every point from his masculine heritage, whether economic, political, or intellectual, the liberal minister was pushed into a position increasingly resembling the evolving feminine one. Who else was barred with him from the larger world of masculine concerns, who else was confined with him to a claustrophobic private world of over-responsive sensibility, who else but the American lady? . . . The liberal minister was losing his role among his society’s leaders; his place was increasingly in the Sunday school, the parlor, and the library, among women and those who flattered and resembled them" (42-43).

In a footnote to the story, Hawthorne notes Hooper’s connection to the historical figure Joseph Moody, "who died about eighty years since, [and] made himself remarkable by the same eccentricity that is here related of the Reverend Mr. Hooper" (37). In her story "New England Ministers," (The Writings of Harriet Beecher Stowe Volume 14. Stories, Sketches, and Studies. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1967) Harriet Beecher Stowe discusses Moody; she also discusses the effects of wearing a veil in "The Mourning-Veil." In that story, a mourning veil is mistakenly delivered to a family who comes to need it after the death of a child. The mother comments, "'[H]ow dismal it must be to see the world through such a veil as this!," to which her minister replies, "'And yet, till one has seen the world through a veil like that, one has never truly lived'" (Stowe 207). The narrator comments, "She took up the dark veil and looked on it kindly, as on a faithful friend. How much she had seen and learned behind the refuge of its sheltering folds!" (Stowe 216).

In "The Biblical Veil: Sources and Typology in Hawthorne’s 'The Minister’s Black Veil,'" (Texas Studies in Literature and Language 31 [1989]: 169-195), Frederick Newberry discusses Moody and the historical and religious background: "Granting that Joseph Moody’s veil, as recorded in Hawthorne’s footnote, has a different ‘import’ from that of Hooper’s, similar historical factors help clarify the intentions of each man in concealing his face. Both, it must
be remembered, are latter-day Puritan ministers and, as Hawthorne was fully aware, would be thoroughly versed in the covenant's doctrine of visible sanctity and in the New England habit of scanning the natural world for signs of God's wonder-working providence" (Newberry 177).

See also Michael J. Colacurcio's *The Province of Piety: Moral History in Hawthorne's Early Tales*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984. He sees "The Minister's Black Veil" as "a model of Hawthorne's 'moral history' at its most complex and demanding" (Colacurcio 315). He also connects Hooper name with historical minister's Hooker and Cooper.

7. Miller 83.


9. Colacurcio notes that this flirtatious emphasis on clothes would offend a "strict Sabbatarian" (320).


11. See Colacurcio, 326.


13. Miller 86.

14. Colacurcio would seem also to disagree with Miller; he writes that "marriage to Elizabeth would have been a fairly transcendental affair" (349).

15. See Frederick Newberry on the importance of Hooper's characterization of the veil as a "type and a symbol" as well as for a discussion of the importance of Biblical veils (Newberry 179-183).

16. Of course the narrator's use of "firmness" suggests erection, especially read against Colacurcio's repetition of the word in the opening pages of his reading of this story. He writes, "Once we take [Hooper's setting in the time of the Great Awakening] seriously, everything begins to make a much fuller and firmer sense" (318). He continues, "[W]e do get an absolutely firm sense of the relation between a heightened spiritual awareness and the disruption of ordinary affairs" (319). I would argue that Colacurcio's insistence on a rigorously historical reading bespeaks his quest for "firmness." His reading nearly completely elides questions of gender—he comments at one point, completely unself-consciously, "[N]ot even semiological translation can save
Hooper in our human sympathies: that such a metamorphosed thing can produce noticeable religious results, the remainder of Hooper’s 'efficient' ministry amply demonstrates; but the well-tempered critic may be excused for not wanting his daughter to marry one" (344).

17. Although Hooper rejects a marital coupling with Elizabeth by donning the veil, his duties as minister lead to continual encounters with women. As Miller writes, "In 'The Minister’s Black Veil' Hooper’s relations to three different women are specified: the dead maiden for whom he performs the funeral service, the live maiden for whom he performs the wedding ceremony, later on the same day, and his fiancee Elizabeth. In all three cases the minister’s black veil is a barrier between the two" (84). He continues, referring to Poe’s assertion of Hooper’s supposed crime, "No doubt it was that transgression dear to Poe’s own imagination, necrophilia. Hooper likes them dead" (85). Miller’s provocative reading does suggest that the veil serves as a "barrier" to intimacy; however, his coarse assertion of necrophilia seems to be extreme.


19. See J. Hillis Miller: "if prosopoeia is the ascription of a name, a face, and a voice to the absent, the inanimate, or the dead, and if this trope is transferred from that universal act whereby we assume a person’s face, voice, form, and figure are signs of the subjectivity of that person, good parson Hooper has put not the figurative but the originary literal version of this act of reading in doubt. He has done this by removing one of its essential elements, the face, though leaving the rest, the voice, gesture, form, figure, and name. Hooper’s veil also interrupts the process whereby each of us interprets himself in the same way, for example when we look in the mirror..." (Miller 74).


22. In The Production of Personal Life, Joel Pfister writes, "Christopher Lasch, for instance, has proposed that we read what the psychoanalytic community calls narcissism as a sociological sign of our own times. Today, he notes, cases of obsessional neurosis are infrequent, but 'in Freud’s time, hysteria and obsessional neurosis carried to extremes the personality traits associated with the capitalist order at an
earlier stage in its development—acquisitiveness, fanatical devotion to work, and a fierce repression of sexuality.' G. J. Barker-Benfield, writing on the mid-nineteenth-century American middle class, arrived at much the same conclusion about monomania as a caricature of the bourgeois ethos: 'Monomania was the appropriate form of derangement for a society preoccupied with self-making and individualism'" (Pfister 28).


24. Colacurcio notes that this doctor's name is Clarke, and suggests numerous Puritan physicians of the same name. I want to point out also that Clark is the name of the young minister who, with the doctor, the elders, and Elizabeth, waits by Hooper's death bed in "The Minister's Black Veil."

25. See Colacurcio, 337.

26. Kenneth Dauber writes in Rediscovering Hawthorne (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), "Verbal wit ... is directed against a lady, a 'queenly maiden,' the Virgin Mother, described as harsh, distant, literally 'unyielding.' She cannot even weep. The lady is dry, and the child, denied nurture, his own brain parched by madness, turns the instrument of oral satisfaction against the breast that will not feed him" (76).

   He continues, "The 'diseased mortality' of the self-sufficient lady denies her all-encompassing subjectivity, and Jervase, his madness dissipated, unites with the townsfolk in celebrating the new era. The way is prepared for Eros to inherit the Province-House" (78).

   Colacurcio finds a historical reference to Lady Eleanore's plague in the small-pox epidemic of 1721 (Colacurcio 424).

27. See Susan Sontag's AIDS and its Metaphors (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988): "What counts more than the amount of disfigurement is that it reflects underlying, ongoing changes, the dissolution of the person. Smallpox also disfigures, pitting the face; but the marks of smallpox don't get worse. Indeed, they are precisely the stigmata of a survivor. The marks on the face of a leper, a syphilitic, someone with AIDS are the signs of a progressive mutilation, decomposition, something organic" (Sontag 41). Sontag also discusses Poe's "Masque of the Red Death" (1842), which has many points in common with both "The Minister's Black Veil" and "Lady Eleanore's Mantle."

   Hawthorne suggests in "The New Adam and Eve" (1843) that a similar plague decimates the population of the world. Adam and Eve visit a prison, which also houses a hospital; the narrator writes, "[T]his edifice was a hospital for the direst
disease which could afflict their predecessors. Its patients bore the outward marks of that leprosy with which all were more or less infected. They were sick—and so were the purest of their brethren—with the plague of sin. A deadly sickness, indeed! Feeling its symptoms within the breast, men concealed it with fear and shame, and were only the more cruel to these unfortunates whose pestiferous sores were flagrant to the common eye. Nothing, save a rich garment, could ever hide the plague-spot" (254). Hawthorne suggests not only "Lady Eleanore's Mantle" but also "The Minister's Black Veil," in which Hooper reminds his onlookers that they, too, bear the sin which his black veil hides.

28. See Colacurcio, 440. He uses the term "hysterical" without psychoanalytic examination. Interestingly, he emphasizes Hooper's fiancee as "[t]he very reverse of hysterical" (342). Hysteria is a condition generally ascribed to women; Elizabeth, again, is "man-like," as opposed to the crowd which here is coded in this feminine term.
CHAPTER 5
THE GAZE, SELF-CONSTRUCTION, AND CASTRATION IN THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE

In the previous chapters we have seen men leave women to watch them from not very far away, or abandon them to take mysterious vows to veils; we have seen men try to change women and kill them in the process; and we have seen women with power create puppet men or die of disfiguring diseases because of their pride. In *The Blithedale Romance*, based on Hawthorne’s Brook Farm experience and published in 1852, we see gender and power relations functioning in familiar ways. We also see masculinity examined more rigorously than we have seen since "The Canal Boat" through relationships of desire and identification among men, as opposed to the professional relationships among Rappaccini, Baglioni, and Giovanni or Aylmer and Aminidab or even the narrator-character relationship of "Wakefield" or the minister-elders relationship of "The Minister’s Black Veil."

All of these relationships among men, despite their differences, rely on femininity for their definition and sustenance.

The constructions of masculinity and femininity examined thus far have depended on the gaze, and *The Blithedale Romance* continues this emphasis. Coverdale uses
the gaze both to stave off intimacy and to serve as its substitute, in much the same way as Giovanni and Beatrice replaced touching with mutual gazing in "Rappaccini's Daughter" or Hooper at once isolated and called attention to himself by taking the veil in "The Minister's Black Veil." Coverdale also uses the gaze to avoid his own feminization and castration, both of which must lead to death. As a means of trying to avoid this threatened death, Coverdale employs the gaze to construct himself—as long as he has details to tell, he can maintain his relationship to the reader. In addition to gaining the gaze of the reader, Coverdale constructs himself through fictional constructions of others, so even as he is put together he is fragmented; he is not unlike Feathertop or Frankenstein's monster, and he must receive a similar fate, even if it is metaphorical rather than literal. Gazing also represents desire here, but just as the gaze gives way not to intimacy but separation and dominance, desire gives way to death.

"Rappaccini's Daughter," too, was concerned with other intermixtures and questions of purity; Coverdale's mixing of selves in his attempt to form a single self results in anxiety in Blithedale as well. We do see, however, two "pure" examples of gendered subjectivities. Critics have argued that Priscilla and Hollingsworth make up the ideal nineteenth-century domestic pairing—a submissive woman coupled with a dominant man—and that Hawthorne sets this up
in order to critique it.¹ I suggest that Priscilla and Westervelt (not Hollingsworth who, though masculine, has too much of the feminine to be "pure") epitomize their genders and gendered relationships—with Priscilla as feminine and submissive but also as vacuous, and Westervelt as excessively masculine. Coverdale strongly identifies with parts of both of these characters. He also identifies with Moodie/Fauntleroy as the component of his shattered subjectivity preoccupied with his own status as a gentleman. Coverdale fragments and fictionalizes the lives of these characters, along with the lives of the more complex Hollingsworth and Zenobia, as a means of supplementing his own lack. This lack, combined with his desire for Hollingsworth, a desire which he recognizes to be inevitably suffused with death, must lead to a crisis, and Zenobia, like the women characters we have seen throughout, must pay the price of the connection between desire and death.

In Male Subjectivity at the Margins, Kaja Silverman discusses these conflicted desires: "[T]he death drive must be rigorously differentiated from the repetition which leads to mastery. The death drive can perhaps best be defined as the compulsion to repeat experiences of an overwhelming and incapacitating sort—experiences which render the subject hyperbolically passive. Mastery, on the other hand, results when these same experiences are actively repeated—then they are linguistically rather than affectively reprised."³ The
Blithedale Romance can be read as evidence of Coverdale's death drive: in his narrative, he repeats experiences in which he is overwhelmed, incapacitated, and passive. His repetition of these experiences also suggests the different but related drive toward mastery; in the retelling of others stories he gains access to an active position. It is also important to understand Coverdale's subject formation in terms of castration. Again, turning to Silverman: "Physical castration consequently provides the form through which the subject is ideologically encouraged to live—or not to live—the loss of being, and all subsequent crises that reprise that loss. It is not surprising, then, that when the male subject is brought into a traumatic encounter with lack, as in the situation of war, he often experiences it as the impairment of his anatomical masculinity. What is really at issue, though, is a psychic disintegration—the disintegration, that is, of a bound and armored ego, predicated upon the illusion of coherence and control."

Coverdale perpetually faces the risk of disintegration as he tries to bind up a self, with the "illusion of coherence and control," from the fragments of a narrative he cannot entirely control even as he constructs it.

Silverman notes that "female subjectivity represents the site at which the male subject deposits his lack." Coverdale "deposits his lack" on Zenobia in much the same way that Wakefield deposits his on Mrs. Wakefield, or
Giovanni on Beatrice, or Aylmer on Georgiana, or Hooper on Elizabeth, or Jervase Helwyse on Lady Eleanore. We can categorize most of Hawthorne's woman characters as follows: women who faithfully wait, such as Mrs. Wakefield and Rev. Hooper's Elizabeth, and live alone while their men play out their fears of intimacy and desire to be spectacles; women whose excesses leave them diseased and ultimately dead, for example Beatrice, Georgiana, and Lady Eleanore—Zenobia fits most comfortably, but not completely, into this category--; and exceptional women in these stories who seem to represent Hawthorne's ideal: women who may survive, though with little substance, such as "Feathertop"'s Polly and Priscilla. All of these women characters seem to have little choice but to react to the actions of the men around them; all the men must encounter also the constraints of their various narrators.

Hawthorne's narrators intrude on the stories they tell, whether it is the narrator of "Wakefield," who vies with Wakefield for the reader's attention, or the narrator of "Rappaccini's Daughter," who calls into question Giovanni's perceptions at every turn. Coverdale, the narrator of this most autobiographical text, is also perhaps the most intrusive of Hawthorne's narrators, and he clarifies the issues of separation and intimacy as they are played out through the gaze. Coverdale acts out of his own need to
create a subjectivity made up of the lacking subjectivities of others.

An examination of Coverdale as a narrator identifies the various desires which motivate his actions and his narration, desires which must lead ultimately to violence and death: his desire to be unique yet a part of the community (remember Wakefield); his desire for Hollingsworth; his desire to have others recognize his emotions even though he does not want to expose them; and most important, his desire to attain privileged access to everyone else's desire. He notes details he admits to be "too slight for record." He continues, "It must be owned, too, that I had a keen, revengeful sense of the insult inflicted by Zenobia's scornful recognition, and more particularly by her letting down the curtain; as if such were the proper barrier to be interposed between a character like hers and a perceptive faculty like mine" (173). He portrays his own "sense" as "keen" and "revengeful." He indirectly acknowledges, with words buried within his accusation of others, his desire for revenge against Zenobia. He sees her as culpable for "inflict[ing]" "insult" much like the one she will later threaten with her dagger-like glance. As we have seen often, curtains, whether metaphorical or physical, work as barriers to intimacy as well as barriers against the intermixture that
always threatens when the intimacy both desired and feared looms just out of reach.

Coverdale feels most comfortable engaging in his voyeuristic practices in the protected isolation of his hermitage, but even there the conflicted intimacy Coverdale seeks also threatens physical violence--here strangulation and later a stabbing penetration--both to him and to those he views. Coverdale's hermitage offers an example of the conflation of viewing--the distanced gaze that eschews physical contact--and strangulation--the violent physical extension of too-close intimacy. While unexpected because it demonstrates the breaking down of the division between visual and touching relationships, physical violence can be traced throughout the novel. The hermitage combines Rappaccini's garden with Giovanni's window to form a place of visual dominance. Coverdale describes it as "a kind of leafy cave, high upward into the air, among the midmost branches of a white-pine tree. A wild grapevine, of unusual size and luxuriance, had twined and twisted itself up into the tree, and, after wreathing the entanglement of its tendrils almost around every bough, had caught hold of three or four neighboring trees, and married the whole clump with a perfectly inextricable knot of polygamy" (117). This elevated viewing place serves as a sheltering curtain for Coverdale and, as a result of his viewing, serves as the tie that binds the group at Blithedale together. The grapevine
"of unusual size and luxuriance" may be Coverdale’s imagined phallus, which catches hold of "three or four neighboring trees"—Zenobia, Hollingsworth, Priscilla, and Coverdale (the fourth term which can be included or not as necessary). His focus on phallic plentitude also reveals anxiety about lack and castration, and his reference to marriage and polygamy suggests tension between gazing and merging with others even as he tries to form a self out of them. Coverdale’s description of the hermitage does not end with marriage; he continues, describing it as womblike and constricting. "A hollow chamber of rare seclusion had been formed by the decay of some of the pine branches, which the vine had lovingly strangled with its embrace, burying them from the light of day in an aerial sepulchre of its own leaves. . . . Had it ever been my fortune to spend a honey-moon, I should have thought seriously of inviting my bride up thither. . . . It symbolized my individuality, and aided me in keeping it inviolate. . . . I brought thither no guest, because, after Hollingsworth failed me, there was no longer the man alive with whom I could think of sharing all" (118). After earlier writing that the place represents not only a kind of strangulation and marriage of trees but also a place to bring a bride, Coverdale raises two profound dilemmas: first, the place also represents his individuality, which he succeeds in keeping "inviolate" even as he violates others’ and uses the fragments to construct
his own individuality. Second, the bride he wants to bring
to the hermitage is not Priscilla or Zenobia but
Hollingsworth. More important, though, is the connection
between the hermitage with its links to intimacy and
marriage and the gaze, with death; it is a "sepulchre" for
Coverdale and the individuality he attempts to fashion.

From his safe sepulchre, Coverdale can observe others
and provide himself with material to repeat in the
satisfaction of his death drive. He asserts, though, that
his work has value for others as well. Coverdale argues
vigorously for the value of his perceptive services, yet
Zenobia refuses to play along; she resists being viewed and
examined by him at every turn. Aware of his viewing
throughout, she often reminds him of his propensity to turn
the details of others' lives into literature. While this
point is neither underevaluated in criticism nor disguised
in the novel, it is particularly relevant to my argument
here because of both Coverdale's construction of himself
through his fictional constructions of others and for the
way that Zenobia becomes a work of art. Turning Zenobia
into art works as part of Coverdale's domination, self-
protection, and self-construction."

His identification with the passive Moodie represents
one part of Coverdale's quest for intimacy and the identity
to be had through the deployment of the gaze. Discussing
Mr. Moodie, he writes, "In the wantonness of youth,
strength, and comfortable condition,—making my prey of people's individualities, as my custom was,—I tried to identify my mind with the old fellow's, and take his view of the world..." (105). He contrasts his own "youth, strength, and comfortable condition" to Moodie's age and discomfort, thereby acknowledging obliquely his sense of himself in Moodie. He offers a moment of self-critique, acknowledging that he makes "prey" of people, particularly the details or fragments of their "individualities." In consciously trying to atone for preying by identifying with Moodie, he takes on Moodie's point of view and thereby appropriates Moodie's "view of the world" at the same time he sympathizes with him.

Coverdale's further plays out his identification with Moodie through the way both men view Zenobia. Moodie describes her, through Coverdale, as "a very fine woman, [who] makes a brilliant figure in the world, with her beauty, and her talents, and her noble way of spending her riches..." (107). Here Moodie emphasizes her beauty and her money. Later, in Coverdale's imagined version of the interview between Moodie and Zenobia, Moodie tells her, "You are beautiful, they tell me; and I desired to look at you" (200). Moodie's desire to gaze upon a woman he knows to be his daughter possesses significant erotic potential, and his use of the gaze to displace desire for intimacy with his daughter cements his connection with Coverdale.
Coverdale’s investment in Moodie makes Moodie’s patch, which serves as a sort of half-veil to Coverdale’s gaze, particularly troublesome. This half-veil suggests Coverdale’s similar half-identification with the part of Moodie that has constructed himself in various ways throughout his life. Moodie veils himself to Hollingsworth’s gaze as well: "... they set forth together, old Moodie keeping a step or two behind Hollingsworth, so that the latter could not very conveniently look him in the face" (108). "Drawing nearer, there was a shy look about him, as if he were ashamed of his poverty; or, at any rate, for some reason or other, would rather have us glance at him sidelong than take a full front view. He had a queer appearance of hiding himself behind the patch on his left eye" (103). While Moodie’s poverty is a given, we see no indication of his shame except from Coverdale, raising the possibility that Coverdale projects his own feelings of financial inadequacy onto Moodie. Coverdale repeats his irritation with Moodie’s nondisclosure. "... I could not resist the impulse to turn quite round, so as to catch a glimpse of his face, almost imagining that I should see another person than old Moodie. But there he sat, with the patched side of his face towards me" (107).

Moodie finally deliberately gives Coverdale what he desires, just before Moodie tells the saga of his life. He
Coverdale says, "If this good wine . . . should make my tongue run too freely, I could never look you in the face again."

Coverdale replies, "You never did look me in the face, Mr. Moodie, . . . until this very moment" (191). Coverdale oddly echoes his own moment of gazing triumph with Moodie at the end of the novel when he reveals his "love" for Priscilla and tells the reader, "As I write [this disclosure, the reader] will charitably suppose me to blush, and turn away my face:---" (251). Like Wakefield and his narrator, Coverdale desires and fears attention--it is the purpose of his narrative and more particularly his confession. The disclosure serves the purposes of both the death drive and the drive toward mastery, in Coverdale’s repetition of his passivity in the situation at Blithedale and his dramatic linguistic reprise which gives him a sense of activity as well.

Moodie’s ballad represents Coverdale’s anxiety concerning his class-construction, but more important is Coverdale’s anxiety concerning his gender construction, and the more direct threat of castration which arises from within that part of his constructed self. For this part of himself, Coverdale relies on Westervelt, whose physical power and status as Zenobia’s former husband represent potency; Coverdale’s detailed description of his teeth and dress, however, represent fragmentation and loss via external, and hence visible, qualities. Coverdale
recognizes the Westervelt side of himself and does not deny it even as he despises it. T. Walter Herbert has called Westervelt "a monster of hypermasculinity." When they first meet, Westervelt foregrounds the connection Coverdale denies, calling him "friend." Coverdale recalls, "For my part, I should have taken it as far less an insult to be styled 'fellow,' 'clown,' or 'bumpkin.' To either of these appellations my rustic garb (it was a linen blouse, with checked shirt and striped pantaloons, a chip-hat on my head, and a rough hickory-stick in my hand) very fairly entitled me" (111). While Coverdale claims to be self-conscious about his dress, he also describes for the reader's gaze the details of his own appearance as seen by Westervelt. He knows that while his dress signifies his manly strength it also signifies a diminution of his gentlemanly intellectual prowess. Almost immediately, he shifts positions and describes Westervelt's appearance in still more detail: "His hair, as well as his beard and mustache, was coal-black; his eyes, too, were black and sparkling, and his teeth remarkably brilliant. He was rather carelessly but well and fashionably dressed, in a summer-morning costume. . . . I hated him partly, I do believe, from a comparison of my own homely garb with his well-ordered foppishness" (112). He describes the fragmented and artificial details--hair, beard, mustache, eyes, teeth--and then notes Westervelt's careless in contrast. Coverdale's companion suggests his
own identity even as he comes up short in comparison. Furthermore, his repetition of his own passivity in response to Westervelt allows him to meet the demands of the death drive.

Coverdale foregrounds and repeats his identification even more clearly later: "I detested this kind of man; and all the more because a part of my own nature showed itself responsive to him" (121). He repeats Westervelt’s physical description through others’ appropriated narratives as well. Zenobia calls him (or his counterpart in her legend) "the handsomest man in the whole world" (128). Similarly, in Moodie/Fauntleroy’s legend Coverdale writes, "He was a marvellously handsome man,—still youthful, too, and fashionably dressed" (197). Despite Coverdale’s mixed admiration and self-directed hatred, by the end of the novel he responds angrily to Westervelt’s impatience with Zenobia’s suicide. "Heaven deal with Westervelt according to his nature and deserts!—that is to say, annihilate him" (245). Both Westervelt’s "nature" and "deserts" associate him with Coverdale’s desires concerning voyeurism, castration, and death. When Coverdale sees Westervelt on stage, he thinks, "It was Westervelt. A quick association of ideas made me shudder from head to foot . . . " (208). His entire body convulses in the visceral response that marks Coverdale’s identification, revulsion, and desire.
While Coverdale identifies with Moodie and Westervelt and takes parts of them to construct himself and satisfy the requirements of the death drive, he also identifies with Priscilla, whom he represents as the epitome of nineteenth-century femininity. This identification coupled with her disregard for him allows him to also experience masochism, and with it what Silverman calls "masochism's capacity for transforming pain and despair ... into 'life.'" When he tries to torment her by exclaiming about Zenobia and Hollingsworth, who are walking together, she dismisses him. "But observe how pleasantly and happily Zenobia and Hollingsworth are walking together. I call it a delightful spectacle.... Any man, even if he be as great as Hollingsworth, might love so magnificent a woman. How very beautiful Zenobia is! And Hollingsworth knows it, too" (143). "'Go on before,' said Priscilla, abruptly, and with true feminine imperiousness, which heretofore I had never seen her exercise. 'It pleases me best to loiter along by myself. I do not walk so fast as you.' With her hand, she made a little gesture of dismissal. It provoked me; yet, on the whole, it was the most bewitching thing that Priscilla had ever done" (143). In his attempt to construct himself, to make a "life," Coverdale relishes even this kind of dismissal.

Coverdale uses his ostensible passion for Priscilla to play each member of the group against another. He tells
Zenobia, "There were other reasons . . . why I should have demonstrated myself an ass, had I fallen in love with Priscilla. By the by, has Hollingsworth ever seen her in this dress?" (182). Here Coverdale performs a transaction with Hollingsworth, using not Zenobia’s appearance (as he did with Moodie) but Priscilla’s. He demonstrates, with the nonexistent transition from himself and Priscilla to Hollingsworth and Priscilla, that Hollingsworth is the object of his desire, his fantasized "bride." Even though Coverdale’s feminized position with regard to Hollingsworth suggests that Coverdale would be Hollingsworth’s bride, in Coverdale’s hermitage fantasy Hollingsworth is the bride who would be brought there on the honeymoon.

Despite Coverdale’s well-known confession of love for Priscilla at the end of the novel, he makes Priscilla stand in for Hollingsworth, and he makes clear the importance of his being able to transform her to meet his own needs. He confesses this openly: from his hermitage, he asks a bird to tell Priscilla "that if any mortal really cares for her, it is myself; and not even I, for her realities,—poor little seamstress, as Zenobia rightly called her!—but for the fancy-work with which I have idly decked her out!" (119–120). He cares for her with a passion reserved for someone whom he can adorn with the "fancy-work" of his idle brain, someone whom he can "deck out" to meet his own needs of desire and self-construction.
Coverdale makes Priscilla just as much a part of his constructed self as he has Moodie and Westervelt. He describes her transformation (perhaps from seamstress to woman adorned with fancywork) as the transformation of a butterfly. "The vague perception of [Priscilla’s figure], as viewed so far off, impressed me as if she had suddenly passed out of a chrysalis state and put forth wings" (171). Coverdale wants to claim that Priscilla is the only one to change from worm to butterfly at Blithedale; however, he, too, experiences a transformation.

He arrives there somewhat feminized from his life of leisure in town, becomes further feminized due to his illness (and at this point most like Priscilla), and finally (at least physically) manly and like Hollingsworth. He describes his pre- and post-Blithedale self as feminine when he returns to town. "All the effeminacy of days past had returned upon me at once" (160). If he is feminized before going to Blithedale, his illness at the beginning of his time there results in further effeminacy. After his convalescence is nearly completed, he comments, "I decided that it was nonsense and effeminacy to keep myself prisoner any longer" (80). This effeminacy that, as with his other desires, Coverdale both seeks and despises, also identifies him with Priscilla. His illness leads him to become "a skeleton above ground" (80)—a condition much like Priscilla on her arrival at Blithedale.
Priscilla embodies a femininity that, Coverdale notes, as opposed to "the noble earthliness of Zenobia’s character," consists of an "impalpable grace [which] lay so singularly between disease and beauty" (120). Hawthorne’s women characters can inhabit a narrow space between disease, which results in death, and beauty, which also results in death if they should cross the line into excess. Coverdale recognizes, as revealed by his fears of castration, that he is not exempt from this tendency toward decay and death.

Coverdale recovers from his effeminate illness, and he quickly becomes, through Hollingsworth’s care and influence, strong and manly; his illness signifies a pathway between the two states. "I was now on my legs again. My fit of illness had been an avenue between two existences; the low-arched and darksome doorway, through which I crept out of a life of old conventionalisms, on my hands and knees, as it were, and gained admittance into the freer region that lay beyond" (83). He goes on to characterize his transformation as a changing of clothes. "The very substance upon my bones had not been fit to live with in any better, truer, or more energetic mode than that to which I was accustomed. So it was taken off me and flung aside, like any other worn-out or unseasonable garment; and, after shivering a little while in my skeleton, I began to be clothed anew, and much more satisfactorily than in my previous suit" (83). As it does
for Wakefield and Hooper, for Coverdale a change of clothes signifies a change of self.

He continues this preoccupation with clothing and it leads him into what becomes a preoccupation with his new manly physique; he cannot completely shed the delight in foppishness that he shares with Westervelt, and that delight separates him from Hollingsworth. "So we gradually flung [our old clothes] aside, and took to honest homespun and linsey-woolsey. . . . After a reasonable training, the yeoman life throved well with us. Our faces took the sunburn kindly; our chests gained in compass, and our shoulders in breadth and squareness; our great brown fists looked as if they had never been capable of kid gloves" (86). Although Coverdale’s fist becomes a source of amusement to Hollingsworth, who comments, "Just think of him penning a sonnet with a fist like that" (89), Coverdale continues to profess his own physical prowess.

In explicitly phallic terms, he ridicules the lack of masculinity in other men who come to visit them at Blithedale: "I seldom saw the new enthusiasm that did not grow as flimsy and flaccid as the proselyte’s moistened shirt-collar, with a quarter of an hour’s active labor under a July sun" (103). He suggests that other men face the castration that he works in his every act to escape. Foreshadowing Whitman’s frontispiece to Leaves of Grass, he fantasizes to Hollingsworth that he "will be painted in my
shirt-sleeves, and with the sleeves rolled up, to show my muscular development. What stories will be rife among them about our mighty strength!" (145). Coverdale seeks to be the object of gossip, a desire that goes so far as to allow him to write such sentences about himself in retrospect, thereby hoping to achieve masculine mastery and to stave off castration and the death drive.

Hollingsworth’s "mighty strength" constitutes a major part of Coverdale’s fascination with him from the start. Describing Hollingsworth’s entrance, Coverdale writes,

Hollingsworth’s appearance was very striking at this moment. He was then about thirty years old, but looked several years older, with his great shaggy head, his heavy brow, his dark complexion, his abundant beard, and the rude strength with which his features seemed to have been hammered out of iron, rather than chiselled or moulded from any finer or softer material. His figure was not tall, but massive and brawny, and well befitting his original occupation, which—as the reader probably knows—was that of a blacksmith. As for external polish, or mere courtesy of manner, he never possessed more than a tolerably educated bear; although, in his gentler moods, there was a tenderness in his voice, eyes, mouth, in his gesture, and in every indescribable manifestation, which few men could resist, and no woman. (55)

Coverdale describes Hollingsworth with even greater care and attention to detail than he offered in his description of Westervelt. Westervelt’s well-groomed self stands in contrast to Hollingsworth’s "shaggy," "rude," "hammered" "massive and brawny" figure. Their difference goes beyond this to Hollingsworth’s more important qualities of "gentle[ness]" and "tenderness." Coverdale himself
represents a man who cannot resist Hollingsworth's more tender qualities, mixed in as they are with his brawniness.

Coverdale, that mixture of the qualities of others, finds in Hollingsworth a mirror which reflects him at three times his size, and the two men first realize their attraction to each other in the eroticized place of the bedroom, even if it is a sick room. After their mutual seduction, Coverdale transforms the bed from a lover's bed to a death bed, indicating in the process his knowledge that such a desire must result in death. Early, however, Coverdale enthuses, "Hollingsworth's more than brotherly attendance gave me inexpressible comfort. Most men ... have a natural indifference, if not an absolutely hostile feeling, towards those whom disease, or weakness, or calamity of any kind, causes to falter and faint. ... But there was something of the woman moulded into the great, stalwart frame of Hollingsworth; nor was he ashamed of it, as men often are of what is best in them. ..." Coverdale again praises Hollingsworth's hybrid nature, one that Coverdale, identifying as he does with Priscilla and Westervelt, can appreciate. Coverdale makes it clear that their relationship has been "more than brotherly" and that Hollingsworth is comfortable with his womanly side.

Coverdale takes one step further, to the death bed that represents the inevitable outcome of their hybrid desire. "Happy the man that has such a friend beside him when he
comes to die! and unless a friend like Hollingsworth be at hand,—as most probably there will not,—he had better make up his mind to die alone. How many men, I wonder, does one meet with, in a lifetime, whom he would choose for his death-bed companions!" (66). He continues, "Now, were I to send for him, he would hardly come to my bed-side, nor should I depart the easier for his presence" (67). He distinguishes Hollingsworth from all other men. His emphasis on the man's being his death-bed "companion" even suggests the fantasy that they would share the death-bed, rather than that Hollingsworth would sit beside him.

It may seem that this desire would exist only on Coverdale's side, and they may be, but he represents Hollingsworth's feelings as similarly intense. While Coverdale is convalescing, and therefore in a weakened condition, the two engage in a vehement debate over Fourierism. Hollingsworth reveals his inflexibility, saying, "I never will forgive this fellow! He has committed the unpardonable sin; for what more monstrous iniquity could the devil himself contrive than to choose the selfish principle,—the principle of all human wrong, the very blackness of man's heart, the portion of ourselves which we shudder at, and which it is the whole aim of spiritual discipline to eradicate,—to choose it as the master-workman of his system? To seize upon and foster whatever vile, petty, sordid, filthy, bestial and abominable corruptions
have cankered into our nature, to be the efficient instruments of his infernal regeneration!" (77). As we have seen, many of these negative characteristics—vile, petty, sordid, filthy, bestial, abominable corruptions—suggest femininity. Furthermore, Hollingsworth (who, despite his gentle side displays clearly misogynist views by the end of the novel) suggests that Fourier has committed a "monstrous iniquity" which represents "the portion of ourselves which we shudder at." Hollingsworth, like Giovanni, Aylmer, and Hooper, shudders at Coverdale's femininity and monstrosity, which he shares and reflects.

After this debate, the two men question whether Coverdale will commit to Hollingsworth's philanthropical project, and the conversation takes on the tone of another "proposal," invoking the marriage that Coverdale has fantasized throughout. Hollingsworth asks, "But how can you be my life-long friend, except you strive with me towards the great object of my life?" Coverdale does not narrate his reply, but writes in retrospect, "Heaven forgive me! A horrible suspicion crept into my heart, and stung the very core of it as with the fangs of an adder. I wondered whether it were possible that Hollingsworth could have watched by my bed-side, with all that devoted care, only for the ulterior purpose of making me a proselyte to his views!" (80). Coverdale's indignation at Hollingsworth's "ulterior purpose" seems ridiculous in light of his own ulterior
purposes of storing up currency and self-making fragments of others in his relentless pursuit of gazing; more important, he emphasizes the bed side and Hollingsworth's devoted care.

Coverdale deeply wants to experience intimacy with Hollingsworth, in death if not in life. He notes later, "Had I loved him less, I might have used him better" (91) but goes on to say, "I loved Hollingsworth, as has already been enough expressed. But it impressed me, more and more, that there was a stern and dreadful peculiarity in this man, such as could not prove otherwise than pernicious to the happiness of those who should be drawn into too intimate a connection with him. He was not altogether human. There was something else in Hollingsworth besides flesh and blood, and sympathies and affections, and celestial spirit" (92). Just as above we saw Hollingsworth's intermixture of tenderness and brawn, here Coverdale has begun to realize the further mixture of "stern and dreadful peculiarity" as well. Coverdale now explicitly fears the intimacy he has desired, and his concern that Hollingsworth may not be entirely human is not unlike Giovanni's fears of Beatrice after he has attained his desire.

While Hollingsworth may indeed want Coverdale to participate in his philanthropy, he also loves him in much the same confused and intermixed way. Coverdale and Hollingsworth, like Giovanni and Beatrice, avoid touch as a means to assure their safety from corruption. When their
relationship is breaking down, again over the question of Hollingsworth’s mission,

It seemed his intention to say no more. But, after he had quite broken off, his deep eyes filled with tears, and he held out both his hands to me. ‘Coverdale,’ he murmured, ‘there is not the man in this wide world whom I can love as I could you. Do not forsake me!’ As I look back on this scene, through the coldness and dimness of so many years, there is still a sensation as if Hollingsworth had caught hold of my heart, and were pulling it towards him with an almost irresistible force. It is a mystery to me how I withstood it. . . . Had I but touched his extended hand, Hollingsworth’s magnetism would perhaps have penetrated me with his own conception of all these matters. But I stood aloof.

Love means penetration and uncontrolled intermixture, as borne out through sexuality, here as it does in "Rappaccini’s Daughter." Coverdale represents the tenderly "murmur[ing]" Hollingsworth as castrated, as "quite broken off," even as his "magnetism" could still "penetrate" Coverdale if he allowed it.

Hollingsworth continues his impassioned proposals of eternal devotion: "'Why do you bring in the names of these women?' said he, after a moment of pregnant silence. 'What have they to do with the proposal which I make you? I must have your answer! Will you devote yourself, and sacrifice all to this great end, and be my friend of friends forever?'" As Hollingsworth renounces women and then follows a "pregnant silence" with a "proposal" that Coverdale "devote" and "sacrifice" himself to him "forever," Hollingsworth demonstrates that he, like Coverdale, chooses a homoerotic, if not a homosexual relationship over a
heterosexual one. He still does not stop, and says, "Be with me . . . or be against me! There is no third choice for you" (151). This, too, follows with a moment of penetration. After Coverdale refuses, "The heart-pang was not merely figurative, but an absolute torture of the breast. I was gazing steadfastly at Hollingsworth. It seemed to me that it struck him, too, like a bullet" (151). Here they seem to suggest, or Coverdale projects, that this mutual penetration through the gaze will result in feminization."

After their rejection of each other, and the painful penetration that follows, their relationship shifts irrevocably in a moment of Coverdale's departure that is marked by the removal of even the gaze; the result is death for both of them. "I had a momentary impulse to hold out my hand, or at least to give a parting nod, but resisted both. . . . Being dead henceforth to him, and he to me, there could be no propriety in our chilling one another with the touch of two corpse-like hands, or playing at looks of courtesy with eyes that were impenetrable beneath the glaze and the film. We passed, therefore, as if mutually invisible" (158). They withdraw from each other not only physically, which would be significant in itself, but visually, which suggests a complete break. The death-bed scene that Coverdale replays throughout the novel with varying casts of characters receives another production
here: now that their eyes are impenetrable to one another, they are "dead to each other," and their hands are "corpse-like." In a sense, Coverdale has now lived the death-bed scene he desired with Hollingsworth, although instead of providing comfort, Hollingsworth is dead as well.

For Coverdale and Hollingsworth desire must end in metaphorical if not literal death, and Coverdale attributes much the same view to Zenobia. In Silverman's terms, "female subjectivity represents the site at which the male subject deposits his lack." Zenobia, then, must live out Coverdale's death drive. Her opacity problematizes any attempts to determine her desire; Coverdale appropriates her unrequited desire for Hollingsworth as a place to locate his own "lack." Zenobia, too, joins marriage, intimacy, and strangulation, continuing the fears of intimacy that we saw played out in the fears of intermixture in "Rappaccini's Daughter" and anxiety over heterosexual coupling in "The Minister's Black Veil." She asks Westervelt, to whom she was once married, "With what kind of being am I linked?" and goes on to claim that the "miserable bond" she feels "will strangle me, at last!" (123). For Zenobia, her bonds to Westervelt, and perhaps her sisterly bond to Priscilla as well, represent potentially deadly threats, and potential parallels between Zenobia and Coverdale in that both fear being violated by others. Coverdale suggests that Priscilla also resembles the vine of his hermitage, suggesting that
the two of them are strangling vines. He writes, "... Priscilla's love grew, and tended upward, and twined itself perserveringly around this unseen sister; as a grapevine might strive to clamber out of a gloomy hollow among the rocks, and embrace a young tree standing in the sunny warmth above" (196). Here Zenobia is the "young tree" to Priscilla's vine, thus setting up the identification between Coverdale and Priscilla. Embracing has meant strangulation throughout, with closeness always bringing with it the threat of castration and death.

Despite Coverdale's shared fear with Zenobia over being strangled by closeness, his identification with Priscilla leads him to be critical of Zenobia's ambivalence toward her; their bonding through flowers is reminiscent of Beatrice Rappaccini's relationship to the poisonous flower who is her half-sister, just as Zenobia is Priscilla's half-sister. From the start, Zenobia is less than enthusiastic about the widely-held assumption that she will be the one to care for Priscilla. "Evidently, Priscilla found but scanty requital for her love" (73). Her irritation toward Priscilla is expressed most fully when she tells her, "Well, well; since you insist on my being angry, come to my room, this moment, and let me beat you!" (99). Zenobia's threat of violence may well be sisterly humor, but given the rest of the novel's violence, it may also serious; an alternative
reading might be that it is Coverdale who fantasizes that this detail applies to him.

Zenobia tempers her anger toward Priscilla and by the end of the novel seems to evolve a rather sophisticated understanding of their relationship. Zenobia dresses Priscilla so that the younger women nearly outshines her beauty. Coverdale "wondered what Zenobia meant by evolving so much loveliness out of this poor girl. It was what few women could afford to do; for, as I looked from one to the other, the sheen and splendor of Zenobia's presence took nothing from Priscilla's softer spell, if it might not rather be thought to add to it" (181). Zenobia is aware of the way she and Priscilla have functioned as a pair. She tells her, "But I never wished you harm. You stood between me and an end which I desired. I wanted a clear path. . . . You have been my evil fate . . . " (226). Moodie/Fauntleroy, through Coverdale and with his own fragmented self expressed best through his two daughters, provides the most compelling analysis of the relationship between Zenobia and Priscilla: "Zenobia has the splendor, and not the shame. Let the world admire her, and be dazzled by her, the brilliant child of my prosperity! It is Fauntleroy that still shines through her! . . . My poor Priscilla! Priscilla! I love her best,—I love her only!—but with shame, not pride. So dim, so pallid, so shrinking,—the daughter of my long calamity!" (202). Even
though we might value Zenobia over Priscilla, Coverdale and Moodie agree that the "shrinking" girl, linked to shame, should be loved better than the daughter of pride. Pride represents an intolerable sin it is found in a woman.

Perhaps inevitably, the violence threatened throughout the novel must be discharged even before its ultimate release in Zenobia's suicide and the retrieval of her body. When these ambivalently yet powerfully charged ties among the characters break down, violence follows: "Zenobia and Hollingsworth were friends no longer. If their heart-strings were ever intertwined, the knot had been adjudged an entanglement, and was now violently broken" (222). Here the term "entanglement" seems to be inevitably negative, a relationship that must be broken off, suggesting Hollingsworth's breaking off with Coverdale. Coverdale continues the metaphor of intertwining that he has begun in his hermitage, but here he unravels the knot.

Coverdale possesses a painful awareness of his relationship to these entanglements. Even though he wants to dominate and appropriate the others through his gaze, he also wants to be loved by them. He arranges hierarchies to demonstrate his place among the three or four trees he holds dear and, more important, to establish neat divisions to counter the disintegration of categories all around him. With regard to the whole circle, he complains, "In the midst of cheerful society, I had often a feeling of loneliness."
For it was impossible not to be sensible that, while these three characters figured so largely on my private theatre, I--though probably reckoned as a friend by all--was at best but a secondary or tertiary personage with either of them" (92). In the midst of people who consider him a friend, he experiences loneliness and isolation; he fails to realizes that if he regarded them as friends rather than as "characters" on his "private theatre" he might occupy a more intimate circle in their relationships.

His hierarchies center around Priscilla’s regard for him, thereby emphasizing his identification with her. After describing Priscilla’s relationships to Hollingsworth and Zenobia, he comments, "I should have thought all the better of my own qualities, had Priscilla have marked me out for the third place in her regards. But, though she appeared to like me tolerably well, I could never flatter myself with being distinguished by her as Hollingsworth and Zenobia were" (73-74). He looks to Priscilla as a mirror to help him to reflect his own qualities that he does not find in his other (masculine) mirrors, Old Moodie/Fauntleroy and Westervelt. Finally, he comments, "Priscilla’s heart was deep, but of small compass; it had room but for a very few dearest ones, among whom she never reckoned me" (158). His recognition of Priscilla’s limitations may signal some recognition of his own.
In contrast to his erotic preoccupations with Priscilla and Hollingsworth, Coverdale’s relationship with Zenobia, the most powerful feminine force of the novel, is the least erotically charged of all, in spite of his imagination of her nakedness; its lack of erotic charge can be seen from both their points of view. This relationship is the most indecipherable of the novel; Zenobia stands outside of Coverdale’s triangle of identification. She tells him at the end, after she and Hollingsworth have irrevocably broken, "It is an endless pity . . . that I had not bethought myself of winning your heart, Mr. Coverdale, instead of Hollingsworth’s. I think I should have succeeded, and many women would have deemed you the worthier conquest of the two. You are certainly much the handsomest man. But there is a fate in these things. And beauty, in a man, has been of little account with me, since my earliest girlhood, when, for once, it turned my head" (231-232). Here she invokes Westervelt, that simultaneously hypermasculine and dandified side of Coverdale.

Zenobia’s beauty provides a point of discussion and meaning throughout the novel--she fears Coverdale’s turning her into literary art through the repetition of her story, but he also makes her a figure of visual art as well. Coverdale describes her as a work of art: "But, those costly robes which she had on, those flaming jewels on her neck, served as lamps to display the personal advantages which
required nothing less than such an illumination to be fully seen. Even her characteristic flower, though it seemed to still be there, had undergone a cold and bright transfiguration; it was a flower exquisitely imitated in jeweller's work, and imparting the last touch that transformed Zenobia into a work of art" (176). With this reading of her beauty, Coverdale can remain somewhat detached. He describes her in terms of a "display," of not her but "the personal advantages." His emphasis on her flower's "cold and bright transfiguration" suggests his connection of it to his own cold tendency toward the gaze. Thus he can observe her with great detachment, which he seems to demand.

However, his perception changes. "In the gorgeousness with which she had surrounded herself,—in the redundance of personal ornament, which the largeness of her physical nature and the rich type of her beauty caused to seem so suitable,—I malevolently beheld the true character of the woman, passionate, luxurious, lacking simplicity, not deeply refined, incapable of pure and perfect taste" (177). He admits to his own malevolence here and seems to criticize Zenobia for her lack of simplicity, a quality we have seen demanded of women throughout the previous chapters, most notably perhaps in Polly of "Feathertop." Woman should be neither passionate nor luxurious, both of which deny her "pure and perfect taste." In this regard she is like
Beatrice Rappaccini, with her "redundance," "largeness," and "the rich type of her beauty." At the same time, the connection between Coverdale and Giovanni becomes more explicit.

He goes on to describe his own sense of conflict over her excess, and his need to position her in the role of the actor of his drives and desires, and in fact he reverses his judgment. "But, the next instant, she was too powerful for all my opposing struggles. I saw how fit it was that she should make herself as gorgeous as she pleased, and should do a thousand things that would have been ridiculous in the poor, thin, weakly characters of other women. To this day, however, I hardly know whether I then beheld Zenobia in her truest attitude, or whether that were the truer one in which she had presented herself at Blithedale. In both, there was something like the illusion which a great actress flings around her" (177). She plays the part he demands, in much the same way that Lady Eleanore, for example, surrounds herself with clothing as part of her role in the text. In the cases of Lady Eleanore and Zenobia, surrounding the self with clothing ultimately invokes the image of the shroud.

The great contrast of Zenobia's life and beauty, of course, is her death, at which point she acts out the role Coverdale has demanded. The men who find her body in the river marvel at how ugly she becomes. Coverdale writes, "Were I to describe the perfect horror of the spectacle, the
reader might justly reckon it to me for a sin and a shame. .
. . Of all modes of death, methinks it is the ugliest"
(239). One wonders how Coverdale might view death by
poisonous antidote, failed removal of a facial birthmark, or
disfiguring small-pox. He goes on to describe it in some
detail, to capture rather well the "perfect horror of the
spectacle." But he continues to call it ugly and compare it
to her beauty in life: "Six hours before, how beautiful! At
midnight, what a horror! A reflection occurs to me that
will show ludicrously, I doubt not, on my page, but must
come in, for its sterling truth. Being the woman that she
was, could Zenobia have foreseen all these ugly
circumstances of death,—how ill it would become her, the
altogether unseemly aspect which she must put on, and
especially old Silas Foster's efforts to improve the
matter,—she would no more have committed the dreadful act
than have exhibited herself to a public assembly in a badly-
fitting garment!" (241). Of course Coverdale suggests the
doubling of Priscilla as the Veiled Lady on display and
Zenobia on display as a beautiful piece of art.

Furthermore, he gives Zenobia control over her status
as object of the gaze, imagining her "exhibit[ing] herself."
He also again raises the notion of Lady Eleanore, who is
beautiful in life, even in a riding habit that might appear
"stiff" on other women but who, like Zenobia, is ravaged in
her death. Zenobia's body becomes stiff under her clothing
in death: "Her wet garments swathed limbs of terrible inflexibility" (239). Here, then, nakedness leads to castration and death, and the veil represents woman and her move to attract and deflect the powerful male gaze.

Part of Coverdale’s resistance to Zenobia must surely come from the fact that she recognizes his gazing and not only questions him regarding it but also directly opposes it to any romantic interest or possibility of a loving relationship. Thus she is even more appropriate as the woman who must play out Coverdale’s death drive. She tells him early in the novel, "Mr. Coverdale, . . . I have been exposed to a great deal of eye-shot in the few years of my mixing in the world, but never, I think, to precisely such glances as you are in the habit of favoring me with. I seem to interest you very much; and yet—or else a woman’s instinct is for once deceived—I cannot reckon you as an admirer. What are you seeking to discover in me?" His reply calls up Giovanni’s hope of "snatching from [Beatrice’s] full gaze the mystery which he deemed the riddle of his own existence" (RD 110). "'The mystery of your life,' answered I, surprised into the truth by the unexpectedness of her attack. 'And you will never tell me.' She bent her head towards me, and let me look into her eyes, as if challenging me to drop a plummet-line down into the depths of her consciousness. 'I see nothing now, said I, closing my own eyes, 'unless it be the face of a sprite
laughing at me from the bottom of a deep well.’” (71-72). He perceives her question to be an ambush, and as he notes, surprise leads him to a rare moment of self-disclosure. He continues, again, raising and denying the possibility of romance with Zenobia: "It was purely speculative; for I should not, under any circumstances, have fallen in love with Zenobia. The riddle made me so nervous, however, in my sensitive condition of mind and body, that I most ungratefully began to wish that she would let me alone" (72). Coverdale cleverly turns her perception of his threatening gaze into his perception of her threatening gaze, thus emphasizing the exchange that takes place between them and that will have to take place if he is to be saved from his own tendency toward castration and death.

Later she repeats her indictment of Coverdale’s gazing. He has claimed that he would be a "loyal," "faithful," and "honest," if not "wise" confidant to her. She tells him, again raising the question of his motives or detachment, "Honesty and wisdom are such a delightful pastime, at another person’s expense" (157). She tells him later, "You are a poet,—at least, as poets go, now-a-days,—and must be allowed to make an opera-glass of your imagination, when you look at women. . . . You know not what you do! It is dangerous, sir, believe me, to tamper thus with earnest human passions, out of your own mere idleness, and for your sport. I will endure it no longer! Take care that it does
not happen again! I warn you!" (182). Zenobia emphasizes the danger of Coverdale's actions, and her urgency as she demands that he stop and warns him of unspoken consequences suggests that she recognizes the role she will play in his drama.\^15

After the moment when Zenobia offers to beat Priscilla, Coverdale glimpses her, and she dispenses eye-shot of her own.\^16 Many of Zenobia's attributes--her opacity, her ambiguous desire for Hollingsworth, and her status as both art object and actress--set her up to be not the feminine woman represented by Coverdale but "woman." In Spurs Jacques Derrida claims that Woman does not believe in castration:

Unable to seduce or to give vent to desire without it, "woman" is in need of castration's effect. But evidently she does not believe in it. She who, unbelieving, still plays with castration, she is "woman." She takes aim and amuses herself (en joue) with it as she would a new concept or structure of belief, but even as she plays she is gleefully anticipating her laughter, her mockery of man. With a knowledge that would out-menace the most self-respecting dogmatic or credulous philosopher, woman knows that castration does not take place. This formula, however, must be manipulated with great prudence. Inasmuch as its undecidable mark, a non-mark even, indicates that area where castration is no longer determinable, it describes a margin whose very consequences are incalculable.\^17

For Zenobia the "consequences" become her suicide, but she becomes (instead of Coverdale's pawn or an actress of her death) a mockery of him. Her death ultimately signals his castration rather than a deferral of it; in the retrieval of her body, Coverdale feels the castration and she does not.
Even before her death, Zenobia threatens to turn Coverdale’s fears back onto himself. "Zenobia bade Hollingsworth good-night very sweetly, and nodded to me with a smile. But, just as she turned aside with Priscilla into the dimness of the porch, I caught another glance at her countenance. It would have made the fortune of a tragic actress, could she have borrowed it for the moment when she fumbles in her bosom for the concealed dagger, or the exceedingly sharp bodkin . . . " (99-100). Here Coverdale’s wish to see others’ secret looks provides him with something which he might not wish to see; if Coverdale’s reliance on the gaze indicates his fear of castration, Zenobia’s access to a gaze of her own that reminds him of sharp objects suggests that he fears castration precisely from her. However, the novel’s ending reverses the castration and Coverdale fails in his attempt to deposit his lack on Zenobia.

In another instance, Coverdale covertly observes her cutting look, now directed at Westervelt. Here, her look provides even more information. At the close of Coverdale’s interview with Zenobia in her boarding-house drawing room, she leaves with Priscilla and Westervelt, who offers one arm to Priscilla. "He offered the other to Zenobia; but she turned her proud and beautiful face upon him, with a look which—judging from what I caught of it in profile—would undoubtedly have smitten the man dead, had he possessed any
heart, or had this glance attained to it. It seemed to rebound, however, from his courteous visage, like an arrow from polished steel" (184-185). Her arrow look should have killed Westervelt (and may well have offered some harm to Coverdale had he "caught" enough of it) but Westervelt deflects it on the basis of his own high polish. Hypermasculine and already revealing the symbols of castration, perhaps Westervelt is not so vulnerable to the threat of castration and death as is Coverdale, a man who focuses so singlemindedly on his own death drive.

Zenobia repeatedly cuts Coverdale with her gaze. When Westervelt discovers Coverdale’s spying through the boarding-house window and summons Zenobia, she "appeared at the window, with color much heightened and eyes which, as my conscience whispered me, were shooting bright arrows, barbed with scorn, across the intervening space, directed full at my sensibilities as a gentleman. If the truth must be told, far as her flight-shot was, those arrows hit the mark. She signified her recognition of me by a gesture with her head and hand, comprising at once a salutation and dismissal" (172). Here the arrows are poisoned with "scorn," perhaps the emotion most feared by Coverdale. More important, she (or more precisely he, in his interpretation) has called into question his "sensibilities as a gentleman." Her simultaneous "salutation and dismissal" suggests the response to one whom one considers a friend but not an
intimate. She rejects him after acknowledging him with a
gaze, withholding it and making him invisible in another
repetition of the parting scene with Hollingsworth, another
repetition of her mockery of Coverdale’s castration fears.

Hollingsworth experiences two instances of cutting
violence from Coverdale. At the moment of the Veiled Lady’s
show at which Hollingsworth rescues Priscilla, Hollingsworth
is the victim of stabbing by means of Coverdale’s words.
Coverdale asks Hollingsworth, before the show, what he has
done with Priscilla. Coverdale recalls, "He gave a
convulsive start, as if I had thrust a knife into him,
writhed himself round on his seat, glared fiercely into my
eyes, but answered not a word" (208). Hollingsworth
understands the concept of stabbing, offering to Zenobia,
"Show me one selfish end, in all I ever aimed at, and you
may cut it out of my bosom with a knife!" (224). In the
reversal that marks the boat scene, he stabs her bosom, yet
Coverdale receives the castration.

Coverdale admits that he is also capable of gazing with
arrows and he directs them toward Hollingsworth in a reprise
of their earlier penetrating parting scene: when he sees
Hollingsworth years after Zenobia’s death, he speaks "with a
bitter and revengeful emotion, as if flinging a poisoned
arrow at Hollingsworth’s heart" (246-247). Hollingsworth
may be vulnerable while Westervelt is not because of
Hollingsworth’s own more ambiguous subjectivity.
Throughout Hawthorne’s texts, ambiguity leads to vulnerability, and Coverdale clearly presents the dangers inherent in ambiguously constructed subjectivities.

If we take the freedom to put a friend under our microscope, we thereby insulate him from many of his true relations, magnify his peculiarities, inevitably tear him into parts, and, of course, patch him very clumsily together again. What wonder, then, should we be frightened by the aspect of a monster, which, after all,—though we can point to every feature of his deformity in the real personage,—may be said to have been created mainly by ourselves. (91)

He knows that as a practitioner of the gaze he connects himself to science, to a "study" with a "microscope." He also knows that the result of such work will be physically hazardous: dismemberment of the object of study "into parts." Beyond this, he suggests that the subject will have to be patched together, raising the specter not only of his own patched together self but also of Moodie’s patch. He goes on to link the construction, and thereby himself, to monstrosity.

Hollingsworth, the man Coverdale believes to be accepting of his feminine qualities, explicitly connects monstrosity to femininity.

Man is a wretch without woman; but woman is a monster—and, thank Heaven, an almost impossible and hitherto imaginary monster—without man as her acknowledged principle! As true as I had once a mother whom I loved, were there any possible prospect of woman’s taking the social stand which some of them—poor, miserable, abortive creatures, who only dream of such things because they have missed woman’s peculiar happiness, or because nature made them really neither man nor woman!—if there were a chance of their attaining the end which these petticoated monstrosities have in view, I would call upon my own sex to use its
physical force, that unmistakable evidence of sovereignty, to scourge them back within their proper bounds. (140)

He calls women without men monsters, and his reference to "abortive creatures" suggests both Georgiana and Feathertop. Furthermore, he suggests violence, perhaps of the kind we have seen throughout the stories examined in this study, perhaps a "scourge" to reinstate the order that we have seen the monsters challenge here, to place them "within their proper bounds," and eliminate their excess.

By the end of the novel, though, Hollingsworth becomes a monster. "Are you a man? No; but a monster! A cold, heartless, self-beginning and self-ending piece of mechanism!" (224). Even though Hollingsworth does not commit the self-construction that Coverdale does, Zenobia accuses him of being similarly self-absorbed and therefore a monster. Hollingsworth’s mixture of gendered attributes also would make him a monster under the criteria that Coverdale outlined.

The monstrosity of Zenobia, Hollingsworth, and Coverdale represents at once their shattered subjectivities and Coverdale’s desire for dominance over them. He desires to gaze and dominate, though, in order to compensate for what he recognizes as his lack. He imagines and stages various scenes to observe the others interacting around him. others, and his dream of his relationship with them. His dream represents one of these staged interactions in which
he remains passive. After he leaves Blithedale to return to town, he dreams about Hollingsworth, Zenobia, and Priscilla. "In [my dreams] of the last night, Hollingsworth and Zenobia, standing on either side of my bed, had bent across it to exchange a kiss of passion. Priscilla, beholding this,—for she seemed to be peeping in at the chamber-window,—had melted gradually away, and left only the sadness of her expression in my heart" (167). At this point he connects himself with Priscilla in voyeurism; in fact, her position from outside the window places her even further outside the scene than Coverdale. Her status as a vacant outsider (despite Coverdale's duplicitous positioning of her at the center of the community) leads to her being unscathed by the chain of death and castration at the end of the novel. Coverdale's allegiances will show that whatever ambivalence he may feel about being privy to a "kiss of passion" between Hollingsworth and Zenobia may not spring from his feelings for her but his feelings for him.

This dream has been much discussed, but I want to push it a bit further here. The bed here could be a child's bed, as John Dolis would claim: "Again the impotent outsider, Coverdale can do nothing more than observe the passion of this primal scene, the sexual fury of Hollingsworth's desire. . . ." The dream also represents another of Coverdale's death-bed fantasies, another fusion of death and desire. Coverdale repeats the death-bed dream
at the end of the novel in the removal of Zenobia’s body from the river.

Coverdale invites this connection by his reference to a second dream just before he inaugurates the search for Zenobia: "I must have fallen asleep, and had a dream, all the circumstances of which utterly vanished at the moment when they converged to some tragical catastrophe, and thus grew too powerful for the thin sphere of slumber that enveloped them" (233). Coverdale repeats the passive death drive narrative as he watches Zenobia’s body pulled from the water and the penetration of it by Hollingsworth as Coverdale looks on helplessly. In both of these scenes Coverdale appropriates intimate moments between Zenobia and Hollingsworth, moments in which he plays no active part, in order to experience the intimacy he desires without its attendant risk.

Just as Coverdale witnesses the kiss above his bed, he witnesses the penetration across him. Hollingsworth "at first sat motionless, with the hooked pole elevated in the air. But, by and by, with a nervous and jerky movement, he began to plunge it into the blackness that upbore us, setting his teeth, and making precisely such thrusts, methought, as if he were stabbing at a deadly enemy" (238). Coverdale’s emphasis on the "jerky" thrusts, and his fantasy that Hollingsworth directs them at an enemy (Zenobia is his enemy in the contest for Hollingsworth) suggest the
inevitable sexuality of the scene. Hollingsworth does stab her: "the drift of the stream had again borne us a little below the stump, when I felt,—yes, felt, for it was as if the iron hook had smote my breast,—felt Hollingsworth's pole strike some object at the bottom of the river! Coverdale identifies so strongly with Zenobia, both from his position as voyeur but more important from the position of his own wanting to be penetrated by Hollingsworth, that he feels the pain of the wounding in his own body. He repeats "felt" three times, revealing that despite his best attempts to make Zenobia the victim of castration, he, too, receives the wound.

Zenobia plays out what Derrida describes in *Spurs*:
"Castrated, she castrates and plays at her castration in the parenthetical epoch. She feigns her castration—which is at once suffered and inflicted. From afar she would master the master and with the same blow (in fact 'the same thing') that produced his desire, kill him." After committing suicide, Zenobia "[f]rom afar" reverses the castration Coverdale has inflicted on her. His feeling of the stabbing inflicted on her body by Hollingsworth represents her "master[ing] the master . . . with the same blow" that Hollingsworth inflicts on her.

Throughout this study women characters have performed a similar movement. Even as Hawthorne has set up traditional gendered subjectivities and relationships, women characters
have found ways around them. The reverse might seem to be the case. Indeed, among the male characters I have discussed here only two have died—Feathertop, a puppet, and Rev. Hooper, who dies of old age—yet women characters have died of poison, surgery, disease, and suicide. However, in these texts and for these women characters death seems to be a means not only to escape the constraints of cultural definitions of femininity but also, and more important, it is a means by which to demonstrate the male subjects' dependence on femininity for definition and displacement of castration anxiety. Through death, the women characters remove the support they provide as sites of displacement through the gaze, and male lack collapses upon itself.

Notes

1. Many critics comment on the related issue of mixture in the novel. For example, Darrel Abel (The Moral Picturesque: Studies in Hawthorne's Fiction. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1988) writes, "In fact, The Blithedale Romance is a hybrid production half romance and half social commentary, which is perhaps why Henry James pronounced it an inconclusive 'mixture of elements'" (Abel 271).

Similarly, Judy Schaaf Anhorn ("'Gifted Simplicity of Vision': "Pastoral Expectations in The Blithedale Romance." ESQ 28 (1982): 135-153) writes, "It is in this fusion of the ancient pastoral themes with his romantic's embattled faith in nature's living language that Hawthorne reveals Blithedale's double debt to his own past and literary pastoralism" (136).

2. Colacurcio notes the novel's emphasis on separatism: "Blithedale studies an ironic repetition: the confident assurance of America's new fraternity of social projectors is superimposed on the classic New England errand of reform by separated, tribalist example" (33).


5. Silverman, 62.


8. Thomas F. Strychacz ("Coverdale and Women: Feverish Fantasies in *The Blithedale Romance.*" *ATO* 62 (1986): 29-45) notes, "There is little difference, in effect, between the social ritual of the Veiled Lady and Coverdale's private allegorization of Zenobia and Priscilla. Hawthorne also communicates a penetrating sense of the problematic of the novel's modes of perception in a society already dominated by false images. The deep structure of *The Blithedale Romance* demonstrates a close connection between fantasies about women in art and in the imagination, and the roles of women in society. Hawthorne's concern is not slavishly to recreate his culture's images and values, but rather to point out the morbid psychology which underpins the 'feverish fantasies' of both controllers and controlled" (44).

9. See Herbert's *Dearest Beloved*, 20. Along the same lines, Millington calls what he sees as Westervelt's visible erection the "permeation of desire by aggression" (Millington 159).

10. Silverman, 257.

11. Silverman notes this tendency toward feminization in much theorizing of male homosexuality. She discusses Leo Bersani's "Is the Rectum a Grave?" at some length, noting that for him, "this feminization of the male homosexual is effected more at the level of the body than at that of the psyche, which seems to remain irreducibly masculine until the point at which it is 'shattered'" (351).


("Restructuring the Case Against Hawthorne's Coverdale." Nineteenth-Century Fiction 40 (1986): 387-399) notes that the text "implicate[s] Coverdale, as author, in a uniquely Hawthornian crime: a murderous betrayal both of the human heart and the artistic process" (387-388). She continues, "Because of the peculiar and uneven nature of Coverdale's narrative, the question is not whether he literally murders Zenobia (this can neither be proven nor disproven) but whether Hawthorne, in his manipulation of Coverdale, has created a murderous narrator who, like one of Poe's more ambivalently murderous narrators, attempts to use his narration to justify and conceal his darker nature" (393).

14. This point suggests Richard H. Millington's reading of "The Minister's Black Veil" (Practicing Romance: Narrative Form and Cultural Engagement in Hawthorne's Fiction. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), in which he argues that "Hooper's strategy has been to make himself a piece of art, a "figure" instead of a "face" (30). In this case, while Zenobia maintains some agency in dressing herself, Coverdale controls her dressing in his narrative.

15. According to Pfister, "Coverdale miscasts Zenobia as Ophelia rather than a Beatrice who fights back. In doing so, Coverdale, like Aylmer, attempts to reconstruct the properly feminine body. But Hawthorne has Zenobia refuse to cooperate" (91).


18. On the other hand, David Leverenz argues that Coverdale, especially through his confession of love for Priscilla, "reveal[s] the most buried aspect of his feelings, his desire not for dominance but to be humiliated" (252).

19. Millington writes, "Coverdale's identification of himself with Priscilla is made on the basis of a shared tenuousness of identity; both are elided from the central action of the scene" (161). He continues, "Coverdale's dream, then, replicates the novel's essential distinction between characters who seem endowed with selfhood and those who experience identity as an inner absence" (164).

20. See Dolis, 130.
21. Spurs 89.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Angela Kelsey was born in 1964 in Hollywood, Florida. She has lived most of her life in Florida, and received her B.A. and M.A. in English from the University of Florida. She plans to continue university teaching after the completion of her doctorate.
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

David Leverenz, Chair
Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Daniel Cottom
Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Anne Goodwyn Jones
Associate Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Elizabeth Langland
Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Kim Tanzer
Associate Professor of Architecture
This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December 1993

Dean, Graduate School