

THE MARBLE FAUN AND A WRITER'S CRISIS

It has often been intimated that the failure of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* as a work of fiction may be attributed to that loss of creative energy which often seems to affect the unknown sources of human artistic power¹. This intimation seems however rather facile, especially in Hawthorne's case where there is reason to believe that there were external causes for this failure, namely his seven years abroad in England and in Italy². Indeed the fact that Hawthorne was still at his best in *The Marble Faun* whenever he moved on the same symbolic level of tragic complexity as experienced in his previous romances and stories, proves that his artistic powers were still functioning whenever they were not distracted by heterogeneous elements derived from a different level of experience. It seems, therefore, that there were external causes for Hawthorne's failure, and I am inclined to believe that they may be found in the European influence to which he was exposed before and during the time of composition of his last romances. I am especially alluding to a « technical »³ reason for Hawthorne's failure in the manipulation of his fictional material; and in this respect there are a few factors to be kept in mind. In the seven years spent in Europe, for instance, Hawthorne's creative productivity was limited: he completed only one romance, *The Marble Faun*,

1. See especially JOHN T. FLANAGAN, « Point of View in *The Marble Faun* », *Die Neuren Sprache*, XI, Series 2, (Heft 5, Mai 1962), 218-224.

2. See RANDALL STEWART'S fundamental biography of Hawthorne, *Nathaniel Hawthorne; A Biography*, New Haven, 1948.

3. As suggested by EDWARD M. CLAY in « The Dominating Symbol in Hawthorne's Last Phase », *AL*, XXXIX (Jan, 1968), 506-516; 507.

published in 1860. Besides that, he wrote a first draft of two other romances which were left unpublished at his death, *The Ancestral Footstep*, composed between April and May of 1858, and eventually published after Hawthorne's death by his son Julian in 1882; and *Dr. Grimsbaw's Secret*, composed between 1860 and 1861 and published posthumously in 1882; he also left unfinished two other romances, *Septimius Felton*, on which he worked between 1861 and 1863 and which was eventually published in 1871-72, and *The Dolliver Romance*, begun between 1863-1864⁴.

All these works of the last period of Hawthorne's life show a considerable uneasiness on his part in handling characters, plots, and narrative structures. Even recurring secondary motifs — like the importance of tradition in English society, or the impact of figurative arts⁵ and Catholic religion⁶ on the Italian scene, etc. — instead of creating a tight centripetal coordination with the main narrative theme of

4. See EDWARD HUTCHINS DAVIDSON, *Hawthorne's Last Phase*, New Haven, 1949.

5. On this subject there are many interesting works, such as MILLICENT BELL, *Hawthorne's View of the Artist*, New York, 1962; GENE A. BARNETT, «Art as Setting», *Arts and Letters*, LIV (1965), 231-247; PAUL BRODTKRABD, JR., «Art Allegory in *The Marble Faun*», *PMLA*, LXXVII (June 1962), 254-267; VAN WYCK BROOKS, «Rome: Hawthorne», in *The Dream of Arcadia*, (1760-1915); EMILIO CECCHI, «Hawthorne e Melville a Roma», in *Scrittori Inglesi e Americani*, Milano, 1962; I, 127-130; HARRY LEVIN, «Statues from Italy: *The Marble Faun*», in *Refractions: Essays in Comparative Literature*, Oxford 1966, 192-211; MARIO PRAZ, «Impressioni italiane di Americani dell'800», *Studi Americani*, IV, 85-107; GIUSEPPE PREZZOLINI, «Gli Hawthorne a Roma», *Nuova Antologia*, Settembre 1950, 69-78; and HAROLD MCCARTHY, «Hawthorne's Dialogue with Rome: *The Marble Faun*», *Studi Americani*, XIV, 97-112.

6. This topic is amply treated by HENRY FAIRBANKS in «Hawthorne's Catholic Church», *Boston University Studies of English*, I (Aut. 1955), 148-165; and in *The Lasting Loneliness of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, Albany, 1965. See also JAMES K. FOLSOM, *Man's Accidents and God's Purposes: Multiplicity in Hawthorne's Fiction*, New Haven, 1963; ENRICO NENCIONI, «Nathaniel Hawthorne», in *Saggi critici di Letteratura Inglese*, Firenze, 1897: 434-436; SALVATORE ROSATI, *L'Ombra dei padri. Studi sulla letteratura americana*, Roma, 1958: 23-34.

each romance, become elements of disturbance and often of disintegration of the fictional unity of the stories. So that, while recognizing a praiseworthy curiosity on the writer's part for new forms of life and culture⁷, their unassimilated presence also underlines Hawthorne's awkwardness in handling unusual fictional material. Hawthorne's method of writing becomes rigidly stratified, rather than remaining dialectically ambiguous as in his best works, and loses sight of that typically Hawthornian quality aptly called by John C. Stubbs, « structured complexity »⁸. This narrative quality — the dialectical ambiguity or « balance of opposites » typical of Hawthorne's best writing — is especially evident in the artistic process of transforming outside reality into literary form. Although Hawthorne had time and again stated his belief in the need for a close relationship between what R. K. Gupta called « the world of reality and the world of art »⁹, his best romances have demonstrated that the artist as such has to arrive at « the blend of the ideal and the real »¹⁰ by transforming reality with the help of the imagination. It is in fact the « poet's haunted » imagination that can bring into existence « beings and objects grander and more beautiful than we can anywhere find in reality »¹¹. It seems, however, that in the

7. As GENE A. BARNETT has pointed out: *op. cit.*, p. 247. See also MARIO PRAZ, « Ciò che gli stranieri vedono nell'Italia », in *La Casa della Fama*, Milano, 1952: 163-164.

8. JOHN C. STUBBS, « Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*: The Theory of the Romance and the Use of the New England Situation », *PMLA*, LXXXIII (Oct. 1968), 1439-1447; 1440. See also AUGUSTO GUIDI, « Le Ambiguità di Hawthorne », *Studi Americani*, I, 125-142.

9. R. K. GUPTA, « Hawthorne's Theory of Art », *AL*, 40 (Nov. 1968), 309-324; 312.

10. STUBBS, *op. cit.*, p. 144. For a sound and exhaustive discussion of another of Hawthorne's last works, the collection of sketches called *Our Old Home*, see the very interesting article of PIETRO SPINUCCI, « Hawthorne fra presente e passato: *Our Old Home* », in *Studi Americani*, XIV, 113-163.

11. In Hawthorne's own words describing Miriam's studio in chapter V of *The Marble Faun*. NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, *The Marble Faun*, or *The Romance of Monte Beni*, Houghton, Mifflin, and Co., (Boston, 1888), Vol. VI. [Henceforth referred to as *TMF*].

last phase of his creative production, Hawthorne's imagination did not work on these premises at all times. The world of reality as seen in real life, and also recorded in his notebooks, is absorbed directly into the world of art of his last romances without too many efforts towards artistic transposition being attempted by his imagination.

The reasons for this lack of artistic ability to rework fictional material may be found in the world of reality used by the writer as background to the plots of his last romances. It is a world unusual for Hawthorne, providing very different settings from that all-American New England situation which he had adopted as the ideal background for his previously aptly constructed romances¹². These new settings are European — Italian in *The Marble Faun* — and as such they are not so well understood or emotionally accepted as is his own New England world, and consequently they remain merely journalistic descriptions heavily hindering the fictional structures of the romances¹³.

Hawthorne's first contact with Europe was in England, where he arrived with his whole family and his faithful friend and publisher William D. Ticknor in July 1853, to act as American consul in Liverpool. His mission kept him very busy during the four years of his appointment and he often complained about his heavy schedule which made it impossible for him to devote any time to writing. However, if we take a look at the voluminous notebooks that he wrote in those years, we wonder about the sincerity of that statement. It seems more probable that Hawthorne was just taking his time, collecting material for future romances to which he intended to dedicate his whole time once free from his public engagements. He was then discovering a new world, new ideas and purposes of life, new and fascinating legends of a

12. STUBBS, *op. cit.*, p. 1447.

13. See JOHN HUZARD, «Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*», *Italica*, XXXV (June 1958), 119-124.

past that he, as an American, could only hear of but never possess.

As it is easy to see from a few letters written by Hawthorne from England to friends in the States¹⁴ and from many passages in his *English Notebooks*¹⁵, Hawthorne reacted to England sometimes with bitterness and aversion¹⁶ especially against their British national pride and their continuous criticism of American social and political behaviour¹⁷.

Although from a utilitarian point of view Hawthorne preferred his own country to England and to any other European place he visited, if we look a little deeper into the *English Notebooks* and his letters, we can see that Hawthorne's attitude towards England was not simply dictated by biased prejudices, as hinted by Henry James¹⁸.

Because of the questioning quality of his intellectual approach to life, Hawthorne could not accept England so completely as Henry James did. But he did not reject it completely either. He could find in English society and culture some values that he could never have found in America and he appreciated them sincerely. After a visit to Charlecote Hall, Hawthorne wrote in his journals:

14. CAROLINE TICKNOR, *Hawthorne and his Publisher*, Houghton, Mifflin Co., (Boston, 1913), p. 143.

15. NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, *The English Notebooks*, ed., RANDALL STEWART, *MLAA* (New York, 1941), p. 91. [Henceforth referred to as *EN*].

16. Randall Stewart sees in this attitude of Hawthorne's a proof of his patriotism and lifelong active participation in American social and political affairs. According to Mr. Stewart, this attitude is the result of that ultra-nationalistic pride that « expressed itself in judgments which are often biased, always unimpeachably patriotic, and sometimes even chauvinistic ». See « Hawthorne in England: The Patriotic Motive in the Notebooks », *The New England Quarterly*, VIII (March, 1953), 3-13.

17. TICKNOR, *op. cit.*, pp. 143; 155; *EN*, 91.

18. James is specifically concerned with what seemed to him an open hostility against English social and political customs as Hawthorne represents them in *Our Old Home*, the collection of English sketches that he published in 1862 in the *Atlantic Monthly*. For James, Hawthorne is « an outsider . . . a stranger . . . a man who remains to the end a mere spectator (something less even than an observer) . . . » in *Hawthorne*, Ithaca, 1956: 120.

Looking at this estate, it seemed very possible for those who and inherit [it], and the many in England similar to it, to lead noble beautiful lives, quietly doing good and lovely things, and deeds of simple greatness, should circumstances require such. Why should not the ideal of humanity grow up, like ideal trees, amid such soil and culture. (*JN*, 136).

This appreciation of the past for the power it has to beautify the present and to elevate the future is tinged now with admiration and now with an uncontrollable feeling of frustration arising from his own conviction of « not belonging ». This is one of the most interesting aspects of Hawthorne's attitude towards England and Europe in general. We can find many instances of it in the *English Notebooks* wherein it becomes clear that Hawthorne did recognize and appreciate the advantages of the English conservative attitude towards life, and especially their belief in the continuous presence of the past, of tradition, in all the things of the present, and their feeling of *belonging*, through the continuity of the past, to some trustful and valuable human achievements. At the same time, Hawthorne was not able to accept that way of life for himself, especially because of his deeply rooted democratic convictions and his beliefs in progress and evolution, as well as in an active way of life. His romantic longings for the dreamy and peaceful atmosphere of the old country, full of mysterious fascination, were in shrill contrast to his clear recognition of the advantages that a democratic republic like America could offer in social matters¹⁹.

19. Lawrence Hall conveniently summarizes Hawthorne's attitude in this respect: « On the one hand there was England, standing for the security of traditions; and on the other, facing into the future toward an ideal state of society, was young America. Unlike Henry James, Hawthorne could not set his seal upon the former, and lacking the glandular mysticism of the irrepressible Whitman, he was unable to rejoice unreservedly in the latter). . . On the basis of a hereditary attachment and historical divergence, he was tempted to visualize, through a grafting of the traditionalism of England to the progressiveness of America, something like a better social arrangement for mankind insofar as it was practicable on earth ». *Hawthorne, Critic of Society*, New Haven, 1944: 85-86. See also the revaluation of this very problem in HAROLD MACCARTHY, *op. cit.*, 100-103.

In Hawthorne's reaction to England, therefore, we are confronted with an uneasy feeling of attraction-repulsion, motivated on the one hand by an intense desire for belongingness, for the past, and on the other by an unrestrainable democratic belief in evolution, in the future. In the meantime, Hawthorne's attitude toward English life and culture, his pointing out both positive and negative qualities, his enthusiasm followed by severe outbursts of criticism, suggest also that pervasive quality of his skeptical mind which brings him to approach and discuss from a dialectical point of view every aspect of life or art he comes in contact with. Such a form of approach is that of scientific speculation, applied in Hawthorne's case to psychological and moral problems. It provides the most active ingredients for intellectual awareness, but it requires in its turn a sound clarity of vision in order to keep complexity from becoming confusion.

In his two unfinished romances, *The Ancestral Footstep* and *Dr. Grimshawe's Secret*, Hawthorne tried to use the same method of dialectical procedure in order to transform into literary achievements his emotional and intellectual experiences in England. In both works he tried helplessly to give expression to the American longings for a connective link between past and present. The protagonists — Middleton of *The Ancestral Footstep* and Etheredge of *Dr. Grimshawe's Secret* — are two abstract impersonifications of the same character of the young American who goes back to England, the home of his ancestors, to claim his rights to the old family's title and inheritance. The same legends (like that of the bloody footprint that the author himself saw in Smithell Hall), the same characters (the Italianate villain, the New England girl, and the autobiographical *dramatis persona* of the protagonist of the story), and the same places (such as the Hamilston Hospital) recur in both works, of which one was jotted down in about six weeks while Hawthorne was in Italy in April 1858, and the other elaborated at different periods of time in 1860-61, when he was back in the Wayside at Concord.

From Edward H. Davidson's study of the seven drafts

of *Dr. Grimsbawe's Secret*²⁰ it is possible to realize that the main problem Hawthorne had to face and try to solve was to conciliate the elements present in the two different backgrounds of the story, the English and the American; the former representing the past, alias the English tradition, the latter the present, alias the American progressivism. As an artistic experience, this contrast was never resolved.

From Hawthorne's former production, we know in fact that his creative faculties had always worked at their best through an artistically balanced dialectic of opposites, whereby images and symbols would assume different meanings and implications, thus enriching the narrative texture of the stories. The black veil of a minister, for instance, could symbolize the hopeless Puritan belief in an unmerciful God, as well as the sin of pride which isolates the individual from the society of men²¹. The midnight walk of Young Goodman Brown, on the other hand, might foreshadow an alliance with evil²², while inferring at the same time an ambiguous journey undertaken by mankind through the darkness of evil in a helpless search for regeneration²³. In *Rappaccini's Daughter*, then it is the ambivalent irony developing out of the interrelationship between the dialectical forces of good and evil, innocence and temptation, benevolence and pride, that creates the powerful thematic ambiguity of characters, background, and plot²⁴. Hawthorne's technique, in brief, consists mainly of

20. DAVIDSON, *op. cit.*, Chps. II & III.

21. See especially PAUL GOODMAN, «The Minister's Black Veil», in *The Structure of Literature*, Chicago University Press, 1954, (253-257) and GILBERT VOIGT, «The Meaning of 'The Minister's Black Veil'», *CE*, XIII (Mar. 1952), 337-338; GUIDI, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

22. PAUL J. HURLEY, «Young Goodman's Brown's Heart of Darkness», *AL*, XXXVII (Jan, 1966), 410-419; BARBARA MELCHIORI, «Scenografie di Hawthorne e il dilemma dell'artista», *Studi Americani*, II, 67-81.

23. See WILFRED L. GUFRIN, EARLE G. LABOR, LEE MORGAN, JOHN R. WILLINGHAM, *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, New York, 1966; 35-44; 57-65; 100-104; 139-141; 163-172.

24. See, among many, the following specific discussions of this short story: JOHN F. ADAMS, «Hawthorne's Symbolic Gardens» *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, V (Summer, 1963), 242-254; CHARLES BOEWE,

a complex dialectic of suggestions about life in general and the moral and aesthetic problems in particular, and it is often based on the device of multiple choice by which Hawthorne intensifies the dramatic irony of his writing.

This narrative technique — the spontaneous outcome of Hawthorne's intellectual and psychological complexity — has always offered the advantage of increasing the internal dynamism of his stories and providing them with a depth of perspective. It presupposes, however, a clear vision of the overall picture and of the interrelationships among all the elements contributing to the complex texture of the narrative. Without such a clarity of perspective, the writer will fail to achieve that artistic reconciliation of opposites which is essential to any work of art. In Hawthorne's last works, and especially in *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne lacks this overall clarity of perspective, namely because of the new experiences of life which constitute the fictional backgrounds of his works.

After he left England, Hawthorne took up the role of a tourist diligently engaged in appreciating the natural and artistic beauties of Europe, and especially of Italy. The Italian episode in Hawthorne's life has often been considered an uneventful experience of secondary importance in his artistic development. Julian Hawthorne probably helped to diffuse this impression when he suggested that his father did not care at all for a civilization and a way of life so completely different

«Rappaccini's Garden», *AL*, XXX (Mar. 1958), 37-49; OLIVER EVANS, «Allegory and Incest in 'Rappaccini's Daughter'», *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, XIX (Sept. 1964), 185-195; BERNARD MCCABE, «Narrative Technique in 'Rappaccini's Daughter'», *MLN*, LXXIV (Mar. 1959), 213-218; EDWARD H. ROSENBERG, «Hawthorne's Allegory of Science: 'Rappaccini's Daughter'», *AL*, XXXII (Mar. 1960), 39-46. More general studies of Hawthorne's art and technique may be found in: RICHARD H. FOGLE, *Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and the Dark*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1964; ROY MALE, *Hawthorne's Tragic Vision*, University of Texas Press, 1957; GIORGIO MELCHIONI, «Tradizione Americana e Romanzo Inglese», *Studi Americani*, I, 55-71; ROY HARVEY PEARCE, *Hawthorne Centenary Essays*, Ohio State University Press, 1964; HYATT WAGGONER, *Hawthorne: A Critical Study*, Harvard University Press, 1963. See also the discussion in ROBERT L. WHITE, «Rappaccini's Daughter, the Cenci, and the Cenci Legend», *Studi Americani*, XIV, 63-86.

from his own New England background, deeply rooted in a Puritan tradition directly transplanted from Old England²⁵. Hawthorne himself in a few passages of his *Italian Notebooks*²⁶ expresses his preference for English and American civilization, art, customs and even nature, in many of the comparisons he draws between Latin and Anglo-Saxon culture and life. But, as noticed in the *English Notebooks*, Hawthor-

25. JULIAN HAWTHORNE, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*, Houghton, Mifflin, and Co., (New York, 1984), II, 170.

26. NORMAN HOLMES PEARSON, «The *Italian Notebooks* of Nathaniel Hawthorne», unpublished Doctoral Dissertation at Yale University, 1942. (Henceforth the *Italian Notebooks* will be referred to as *IN*). The *IN* were first transcribed for publication by Mrs. Hawthorne in 1870-71, and republished by her son-in-law, George P. Lathrop in 1889 for the Riverside Edition with the title *Passages from the French and Italian Notebooks*. Both publications being incomplete, the only unabridged presentation of the Italian journals can be found in Mr. Pearson's doctoral dissertation. If one compares the latter work with the Riverside edition, one realizes to what extent the editor's hand had polished the writer's notes with the evident intention of giving an image of the romancer suitable to the taste of the editor herself and of the 19th century readers. We find, for instance, that the moralistic tendency of Mrs. Hawthorne encouraged her to omit words and sentences which seemed a little too strong for the squeamish mentality of her century, or to substitute milder expressions for them. As is the case in: Mr. Bryant's «animal and emotional nature» (*IN*, 370) is refined to «His emotional nature» (Lathrop, 297); Mrs. Browning's «pipe» becomes «voice» and the remark about her way of speaking, «It is as if a grasshopper should speak» (*IN*, 358) is omitted (Lathrop, 295); and so is Hawthorne's remark about Titian's Magdalen ready to «offer her nude front to the next comer» (*IN*, 410) (Lathrop, 331). When Hawthorne comments on Mr. Kirkup's appearance, the adjective «unclean» (*IN*, 485) did not seem too respectful and is changed to «untidy» (Lathrop, 386) and his remark about the old man being «as deaf as a post» (*IN*, 485) is refined to «Finally, he is very deaf». (Lathrop, 387). Sometimes observations about family life are omitted, which are probably innocent instances of some natural feelings of momentary boredom on Hawthorne's part (as in *IN*, 466; omitted in Lathrop, 334; or in *IN*, 594; Lathrop, 467). Other times, some of Hawthorne's unorthodox comments on art are omitted (*IN*, 443; Lathrop, 356) as well as some of his half gloomy, half ironical allusions to death (*IN*, 574; Lathrop, 433). Another group of comments omitted by Mrs. Hawthorne, deals with the fictional elements which were to find a definite place in *The Marble Faun*, such as the references to the Carnival in Rome, the Faun in the Capitol Museum, the tower of the villa of Montauto, descriptions of villages, city gates, statues, paintings, and so on.

ne's statements are often contradictory, being the offspring of a skeptical mind continuously projecting different views and interpretations of the same problem. We will recognize that the same thing is true for the *Italian Notebooks* ²⁷.

What strikes a modern reader while skimming the *IN*, is that Hawthorne's attitude toward the economical and historical situation of the Italy of his times was that of a completely passive spectator. Except for the few entries in his journals relating to the excessive dirtiness, beggary and poverty in Rome and everywhere in the country, and his few comments on the presence of French soldiers in Rome, one cannot find even a slight allusion to the most significant phase of modern Italian history, the *Risorgimento*, which took place in the 19th century. In the same years of Hawthorne's residence in Rome and Florence, the northern forces of the country were trying to snatch Tuscany away from the Bourbons and Rome away from the French troops of Napoleon III, whose protection had been requested by the Pope himself. Such interference by the Pope in political matters ought to have offered a very good point of attack to Hawthorne's anticlericalism. And yet he missed it or made no comments on it. From the correspondence of Miss Shepard, the American governess of Hawthorne's children, it has been learned on the other hand that the news of the war around the city was known to the family and discussed at mealtime, especially toward the end of their stay in Rome. (*IN*, Appendix B) The family was therefore acquainted with what was happening in the country at that time. The lack of interest, however, for the internal calamities of a country whose main attraction to the foreigner seems to lie even now in its past, may be partly ascribed to Hawthorne's inability to communicate with people interested in such matters due to his limited know-

27. See JAMES D. HART, «Hawthorne's Italian Diary», *AI*, XXXIV (Jan. 1963), 562-567 where enlightening information is given on Hawthorne's «Little Italian Diary». The same point is stressed also by EDWARD CIFELLI, in «Hawthorne and the Italian», *Studi Americani*, XIV, 87-96; 89-90.

ledge of the Italian language. He did not make any Italian acquaintances — besides maids, *vetturini*, hotel managers and beggars and he was apparently unacquainted with any of the Italian men of letters of his day. Hawthorne's appreciation of Italian writers and artists, in fact, does not go beyond the Renaissance period with some sporadic, unfavorable comments on sculptors like Canova and Bernini, and when in Santa Croce in Florence, a very casual allusion to the tomb of Vittorio Alfieri, who as early as the eighteenth century had enthusiastically praised the newly born American Republic, as he compared it to the tyrannical European monarchies.

It is important to realize, however, that if in our times this attitude of Hawthorne's toward a foreign country is easily condemned, in the XIXth century the romantic tradition of the pilgrimage to Italy as the « country of the soul » as Byron called it, was still so strong as to shadow the reality of a gloomy present in the reflected glory of an illustrious past. The many books written on the subject testify to such a taste and to such a vogue of the cultural journey to Italy. Looked at not as a modern country fighting for a righteous position of equality among the other European countries, but as an admired relic of a reverential past, Italy was to be discovered in museums and galleries, places and ruins, with a Murray's guidebook under the traveler's arm. Hawthorne was a man of his times and followed the path traced by his predecessors, accepting what his precious Murray suggested and what his enthusiastic wife never tired of practicing, giving vent now and then to a few rebellious remonstrances against the excessive quantity of statues, pictures and ruins daily forced upon him by the Italian scenery.

At a first look the seven manuscript volumes of the *Italian Notebooks* seem nearly all dedicated to descriptions of sight-seeing, visits to museums or to studios of modern painters and sculptors, discussions about art and similar subjects. No wonder if a more sophisticated and Europeanized American like Henry James commented on the Hawthorne of the *Italian Journals* as « the primitive type of man of letters ».

Once more, however, it is necessary to point out that a more discriminating approach to Hawthorne's work would recognize, under an apparent simplicity of expression, the complexity of his understanding and perceptions.

Let us accept the suggestion that Hawthorne went to Italy to satisfy the demands of a fashionable cultural mode which required a sentimental journey through the shadows of a splendid past as the indispensable medium of refinement for an artistic sensibility. What we have to add is that, in the specific case of Hawthorne, this Italian experience did a little more than refine his taste for paintings and sculptures. It touched the most vital part of his creative faculties, put them into motion after a long period of inactivity, and stimulated them to give birth to a romance, the *Romance of Monte Beni*, which is the only complete work of the last period of his life. The background of *The Marble Faun*, *The Romance of Monte Beni*, is built up on Hawthorne's direct experience in Rome and Tuscany and plays such an important part in the book that the reader is inclined to question the statement that makes of Hawthorne simply an old-fashioned American engaged in the Grand Tour of Europe.

Even his previous European experience must have taught Hawthorne very little about how to approach a foreign country, since England was rather a second home to him, and France, where he spent no longer than three weeks on his way to Italy, did not provide him with much material for meditating on the complexity of human relations.

Italy became, therefore, the most stimulating of experiences for Hawthorne the writer, a country where Roman ruins were still powerfully blended into the living atmosphere of the present time, where the Catholic faith in its religious rites and ceremonials still conserved century-old traditions, and where past and present, tradition and modernity, religious bigotry and indifference, poverty and wealth, generosity and egoism, were so intrinsically intermingled as to excite his deepest interest.

While in England, as the consular representative of the

American government, Hawthorne developed an interest for social and political matters; but it was in Italy, as a private man enjoying the freedom of being himself again, that his attitude returned to that of a writer, and specifically of a writer of romances.

Before undertaking a critical discussion of *The Marble Faun*, we will briefly consider the central themes and ideas developed in the *IN*, so to see their relationship with the fictional material of the romance.

There are two main themes in the *Italian Notebooks*, interwoven with a few less important ones: (1) the figurative arts and (2) religion.

The objects that mostly attracted Hawthorne's attention in Italy were the artistic productions of the old Italian masters and of the modern American painters and sculptors, who at that time had made Rome their adopted home. The daily contact with what Rome, Florence and Siena had to offer him in the artistic field intensified Hawthorne's concern for the present-past relationship, which involved in its turn questions about life and art, moral and art, and artistic criticism in general.

The many remarks about his own weariness and dullness in front of a long line of pictures repeating over and over the same subjects of the nativity, crucifixion, martyrdom or mythological scenes are often taken as an example of Hawthorne's unrefined taste in art, which he himself did not deny:

My receptive faculty is very limited; and when the utmost of its small capacity is full, I become perfectly miserable, and the more so, the better worth seeing are the things I am forced to reject. (*IN*, 61; Rome, January 24th, 1858).

However, through a slow process of refinement, that «very sturdy Goth» (*IN*, 191; Rome, April 14th, 1858) came to enjoy and appreciate what at a first approach had seemed to him simply unbearable, and his improvement in artistic appreciation is clearly traced in the many entries of the *Italian Notebooks*, when one compares the standardized

and hurried judgments of the first Roman period with the thoughtful reflections of his later Florentine experiences. As an instance, we will quote the few words of comment Hawthorne had to say in front of Michelangelo's *Pietà* in St. Peter's in Rome, one of the most dramatic expressions of tragic nobility in sorrow. « Here I looked at Michael Angelo's *Pietà*, a representation of the dead Christ, naked on his mother's lap ». (*IN*, 116; Rome, February 20th, 1858). A few months later, when he is confronted with another work by the same artist, the statue of Giuliano de Medici in the New Sacristy of the Church of San Lorenzo in Florence, a nearly completely new sensibility seems to have dictated a more deeply felt comment:

It is all a miracle; the deep repose, and the deep life within it; it is as much a miracle to have achieved this as to make a statue that would rise and walk . . . This statue is one of the things that I look at with highest enjoyment but also with grief and impatience, because I feel that I do not come at all [to that] which it involves, and that by-and-by I must go away and leave it forever. How wonderful. To take a block of marble and convert it wholly into thought . . . (*IN*, 402; Florence, June 19th, 1858).

After many hours of trial, failure and success spent in museums, galleries, and old palaces at direct contact with innumerable works of art, Hawthorne came to the conclusion that « as regards the interpretation of . . . any . . . profound pictures there are likely to be as many interpretations as there are spectators ». (*IN*, 411; Florence, June 21st, 1858). So every work of the figurative arts for him « like all works of the highest excellence . . . suggests far more than it shows ». (*IN*, 129; Rome, February 23rd, 1858).

This belief in the infinity of suggestions and meanings that one can find in a work of art, brings Hawthorne to express a critical statement which reflects the basic pattern of his creative faculties. A work of art is for him « a great symbol, proceeding out of a great mind; but if it means one thing, it seems to mean a thousand and often opposite things ». (*IN*,

412; Florence, June 21st, 1858). That was the case of the symbolic meaning of the letter *A* on the bosom of Hester Prynne, the purple shrub in Dr. Rappaccini's garden, the stone heart of Ethan Brand and the artificial butterfly of the *Artist of the Beautiful*. Hawthorne used those symbols and others to give expression to the dramatic complexity he experienced in himself and in the world outside. The works of art of the past made him aware of the presence of the same element in the productions of other artists and widened his vision of life, intensifying his concern for an adequate way of expressing the irreconcilability of opposites with an artistic medium, which alone would give it a universality of meaning through a symbolical representation and synthesis of its different elements. He says of Michelangelo:

The conceptions of this great sculptor were so godlike that he seems to have been discontented at not likewise possessing the godlike attitude of creating and embodying them with an instantaneous thought, and therefore we often find sculptures from his hand left at the critical point of their struggle to get out of the marble. (IN, 461; Florence, July 13, 1858).

The same thing might have happened to Hawthorne in his unhappy struggles for giving expression to ideas in embryo during the last years of his life, and *The Marble Faun* itself presents a great variety of ideas-symbols which have not found an artistic synthesis in their creator's mind, although their representation in terms of fictional technique is extremely accurate. This accuracy of description, that had been before one of Hawthorne's stylistic devices in order to give a realistic representation of the psychological processes of human attitudes, is evident in *The Marble Faun*, where most of the often lengthy entries of the *Italian Notebooks* are inserted without discriminating selection. This last romance seems thus to be the result of a widening of artistic horizons in Hawthorne, acquired, however, through a dangerous weakening of powers of synthesis. Hawthorne succeeded in doing what he most admired in Gothic architecture and in

Dutch and Flemish paintings, that is, the detailed reproduction of a faithful image of life; but he missed that grand power of synthesis that he appreciated in the Raphael of the *Transfiguration* or in the Michelangelo of the statue of Giovanni de Medici.

In order to realize fully the extent of the influence of the *Italian Notebooks* on the romance, let us attempt a detailed analysis of the passages dealing with the figurative arts present both in the *Italian Notebooks* and in *The Marble Faun*. The appreciation of the statue of Giovanni de Medici introduces an instance of Hawthorne's criticism of the nude in sculpture, based on his conviction that art has to « be used for idealizing the man of the day to himself ». (IN, 247; Florence, May 9th, 1858). Hawthorne is convinced that, since « man's no longer a naked animal . . . sculpture has no more rights to undress him than to flay him ». (IN, 205; Rome, April 22nd, 1858). Unlike Mark Twain, Hawthorne never approved of nudes²⁸ and the position he took in the problem of the nude in sculpture has often been considered as a proof of the influence exercised by a Puritanistic morality on the writer: it is possible, instead, to suggest from the many entries on the subject that Hawthorne looked at it as a violation of the truthfulness to reality required in a work of art, more than as an offensive violation of rigidly moralistic rules. This conviction finds a voice in *The Marble Faun* in Miriam's critical remarks to Kenyon:

Every young sculptor seems to think that he must give the world some specimen of indecorous womanhood and call it Eve, Venus, a Nymph, or any name that may apologize for a lack of decent clothing. I am weary, even more than ashamed, of seeing such things. Nowadays people are as good as born in their clothes,

28. This attitude has been imputed to Hawthorne's provincial and even parochial » culture « fed on the skim milk of a theological rather than humanistic tradition » by ROGER ASSELINEAU, in « Hawthorne abroad », in *Hawthorne Centenary Essays*, op. cit., pp. 367-385; p. 370.

and there is practically not a nude human being in existence. (*TMF*, p. 208).

There are a few paintings and sculptures that particularly impressed Hawthorne and which he uses in the romance either as topics of critical discussion or as suggestive symbols. The statue of the *Dying Gladiator*, always in the same act of dying (*IN*, 91), brings forth Kenyon's questioning and critical explanation.

« If he is so terribly hurt, why does he not sink down and die without further ado? Flitting moments . . . ought not to be incrustated with the eternal repose of marble; in any sculptural subject, there should be a moral stand-still, since there must be of necessity a physical one ». (*TMF*, 31).

William Story's statue of *Cleopatra* that Hawthorne greatly admired (*IN*, 91) and which becomes Kenyon's creation in the romance, is carefully described as diffusing a sense of repose

as complete as if she were never to stir hand or foot again; and yet, such was the creature's latent energy and fierceness, she might spring upon you like a tigress, and stop the very breath that you were now drawing midway in your throat. (*TMF*, 152).

Guido Reni's painting of Beatrice Cenci²⁹ (*IN*, 116) with her enigmatic look that might suggest either sorrow or guilt, becomes an interesting symbolic element in the narrative in relation both to Miriam and to Hilda. When Miriam sees Hilda's perfect copy of the painting she perceives only sorrow, not guilt, in Beatrice's look.

Beatrice's sin may not have been so great; perhaps it was no sin at all, but the best virtue possible in the circumstances. If she viewed it as a sin, it may have been because her nature was too feeble for the fate imposed upon her. (*TMF*, 85).

29. For a historical study of the whole Cenci problem, legends and facts, see CORRADO RICCI, *Beatrice Cenci*, (New York, 1925), 2 vols.

With these words Miriam seems to hint at her own fate too, suggesting a parallel between Beatrice's and her own mysterious past. This possible but vague relationship between the painting and Miriam has been developed by Mr. Haselmayer, who sees in Beatrice's portrait « a kind of leit-motif throughout the novel . . . curiously associated with the past life of Miriam and her sense of guilt for her own sin »³⁰. The portrait's function, however, has a wider range, since later in the book Hawthorne suggests the same connection between Beatrice and Hilda, after the young girl has been the involuntary witness of Donatello's and Miriam's crime. Hilda, looking at herself in a mirror, « fancied . . . that Beatrice's expression, seen aside and vanishing in a moment, had been depicted in her own face likewise, and flitted from it timorously ». (*TMF*, 239). The portrait of Beatrice with her mysterious look becomes, therefore, a symbolic allusion to sin. Miriam has experienced sin, knows of its existence in human life, and accepts its consequences. Hilda has simply witnessed an act of sin and is momentarily shocked by the recognition of its existence which she had never been able to accept. Her innocence, however, protects her from any further knowledge of it, and Beatrice's expression does not last long on her face. This portrait, together with the statue of the Faun (*IN*, 207-8), of which Donatello is the living image in the romance, are two of the most vivid symbols in *The Marble Faun*.

Besides these, many are the passages in the romance dealing with architectural structures which are taken nearly word by word from the *Italian Notebooks*, such as the two towers, one in Rome (*IN*, 256-7), and the other in the villa of Montauto (*IN*, 471), which become respectively Hilda's tower (*TMF*, 68-9) and Donatello's tower at Monte Beni (*TMF*, 377); and the statue of Pope Julius III in Perugia (*IN*, 312-14), which is used as symbol of the divine approval

30. LOUIS A. HASELMAYER, « Hawthorne and the Cenci », *Neophilologus*, XXVII (1941), pp. 59-65; p. 63. Also Harry Levin has discussed this point of the enigmatic smile of Beatrice Cenci's portrait in *op. cit.*, 201-4.

of the reunion of Donatello and Miriam. (*TMF*, 357; 371).

Confronted with sacred scenes painted by the old Italian painters, Hawthorne often wondered about the influence that paintings and sculptures had had in the past over the devotional part of our nature and made comparisons with the present decayed condition of works of art and of religious feelings as well in modern men. The problem of the relationship between morality and art introduces the other main element of interest for Hawthorne, expressed both in the *Italian Notebooks* and in the romance, that is, the Catholic religion. During his sight-seeing tours of Italy, he had often the chance to visit Catholic churches and to observe the rituals and forms of devotion proper to the Catholic faith. The mode of devotion of the Italians offered him a good topic for amused comments on their way of shouting implorations to a beloved saint from one corner of the church to the other, or on their sudden transformation from fervent devotees into insistent beggars. In general, however, he seems to have appreciated their humility in asking the mediation of a saint instead of addressing God directly in their prayers, and what he most liked was their habit of frequent visits to churches and especially their individuality in making their devotions.

Everybody seemed so devout, and in frame of mind so suited to the day and place, that it really made me feel a little awkward not to be able to kneel down along with them. Unlike the worshippers in our churches, each individual here seems to do his own individual acts of worship, and I cannot but think it better so than to make a joint-stock concern of it, as we do. (*IN*, 123-24; Rome; February 1st, 1958).

Hawthorne's interest in Catholicism has produced a tendency to overestimate his response to it. He was said to have been converted to it as his daughter Rose was, later in her life. The opposite theory saw in his reaction only the scorn and indignation that a true Puritan should feel at the direct contact with the corruption of the Church of Rome. Neither of these two different points of view is correct, and we should

remember that neither faith, the Catholic or the Protestant, is spared by Hawthorne, whose distaste for any form of orthodox cult is clearly manifested in his whole work and actions.

Hawthorne's ironic comments on Catholicism deal especially with superstitious practices, like the kissing of the foot of the statue of St. Peter, or of the cross in the Coliseum, for the hope of having remitted a few years of purgatorial punishment as a reward for such a reverential act. Even the Pope does not escape Hawthorne's attacks, full of irony and humour in the matter of the *malocchio*, or Evil Eye.

Pio Nono (perhaps as being the chief of all monks and other religious people) is supposed to have an Evil Eye of tenfold malignity; and its effects have been seen in the ruin of all schemes for the public good, so soon as they are favored by him... A little while ago, there was a Lord Clifford, an English Catholic nobleman, residing in Italy; and happening to come to Rome, he sent his compliment to Pio Nono, and requested the favour of an interview. The Pope... could not see his lordship, but very kindly sent him his blessing... Sure enough, the very next day, poor old Clifford was dead. His Holiness had better construe the scriptural injunction literally, and take to blessing his enemies. (*IN*, 481; Florence, August 3rd, 1858).

Hawthorne's attitude towards Catholic priests is similar to the anticlericalism that is shared by many Catholics who realize the unworthiness of those divine ministers, who, as Hawthorne puts it, « should be more than human in order to keep alive the holy flame of religion in their devotees and in themselves ». (*IN*, 114). The need for a more than human attitude in priests is strictly connected with the sacrament of Confession, which is considered by Hawthorne as one of the greatest advantages of Catholicism, inasmuch as it offers the opportunity of lightening one's soul from the burden of sin and regaining a pure conscience.

If I had a murder on my conscience or any other great sin, I think I should have been inclined to kneel down there and pour

it into the safe secrecy of the confessional. What an institution that is. Man needs it so, that it seems as if God must have ordained it. (IN, 73-4; Rome, February 7th, 1858).

Hawthorne is conscious, however, of the weariness and boredom connected with the ritual of Confession. « It must be very tedious to listen, day after day, to the minute and commonplace iniquities of the multitude of penitents, and it cannot be often that these are redeemed by the treasure-trove of a great sin ». (IN, 573; Siena, October 9th, 1858).

Gilbert P. Voigt summarizes Hawthorne's attitude toward Catholicism as follows:

Hawthorne's attitude towards Catholicism... was not the bitter tolerance of Kenyon, nor was the complete conversion of his daughter Rose, who became an avowed Roman Catholic. Rather was it Hilda's grateful appreciation of certain features of Mother Church, an appreciation by no means strong enough, however, to become allegiance to the Catholic credo and code of ethics³¹.

In *The Marble Faun* the advantages offered by the Catholic faith are largely exploited in Hilda's quest for her peace of mind, troubled by the knowledge of Miriam and Donatello's crime. Hilda feels that the Catholics

« can always find, ready for their need, a cool, quiet, beautiful place of worship. They may enter its sacred precincts at any hour... And, most precious privilege of all, whatever perplexity, sorrow, guilt, may weigh upon their souls, they can fling down the darken burden at the foot of the cross and go forth... to live again in the freshness and elasticity of innocence ». (TMF, 404).

The theme of confession is fully developed in Chapter XXXIX, where the anguish and later relief of Hilda are described.

The many opportunities a Catholic can find to come into

31. GILBERT P. VOIGT, « Hawthorne and the Roman Catholic Church », *New England Quarterly*, XIX (Sept. 1946), 394-7; 397.

contact with his God and saints are suggested in the description of the many shrines that Hawthorne found on his way to Florence (*IN*, 291), as Donatello and Kenyon on their way to Perugia (*TMF*, 342). Sometimes Hawthorne sees Catholicism as the religion of the past, well expressed by the old frescoes in churches, which « might be looked upon as the symbol of the living spirit that made Catholicism a true religion, and glorified it so long as it did live; now the glory and beauty have departed from one and the other ». (*IN*, 302; Perugia, May 28th, 1858). Such a position toward Catholicism is the same that Hawthorne takes in *The Marble Faun* in the character of Kenyon. The conviction that the present has to deal with new forms of art and religion suggests implicitly Hawthorne's idea of evolution in life that he had expressed in the *English Notebooks*, in relation to political and social matters, and that he now sees materialized in art and religion.

In painting, as in literature, I suspect, there is something in the productions of the day that takes the fancy more than the works of any past age; —not greater merit, not nearly so great, perhaps, as former artists and writers have professed, but better suited to this very present time. (*IN*, 162a; Rome, March 11th, 1858).

Also his appreciation of democracy was based on the same belief of its greater suitability to the way of life of the present times.

Beside these two main themes of the figurative arts and of religion, there are a few other elements that Hawthorne took from his *Italian Notebooks* to insert in his romance. The church of St. Peter in Rome, for instance, (*IN*, 67; 73; 74-8; 114; 125-26; 162-574) occupies a great number of pages of description in *The Marble Faun*, for the attention paid either to its outside (*TMF*, 397-98), or to its inside (*TMF*, 405), or to its spiritual importance as the world's cathedral (*TMF*, 403-20). The Roman Carnival (*IN*, 84-8 626-29) occupies a large section in the last part of the book (*TMF*, 497; 503-04), as well as the description of Italian towns and villages that Haw-

thorne visited during his stay in Italy (*IN*, 304), descriptions which are reported in *The Marble Faun* nearly word by word (*TMF*, 346-48; 337-29). For Kenyon's studio (*TMF*, 139), Hawthorne has used his notes on Miss Lander's studio, a student of the English sculptor John Gibson who was working with him in Rome. The scene of the dead monk, alias Miriam's persecutor, in the Church of the Capuchins in Rome (*TMF*, 213-14) is taken from a similar experience Hawthorne and his wife had in the same church, during one of their sight-seeing tours of the city (*IN*, 99-101). A party Hawthorne attended at the home of the American sculptor Launt Thompson (*IN*, 162a-c) gives him the idea for Chapter XV, where he describes the life of Anglo-Saxon artists in Rome and discusses also the reason for their preference for that city (*IN*, 98).

One of the chiefest causes that made Rome the favorite residence of artists . . . is, doubtless, that they there find themselves in force, and are numerous enough to create a congenial atmosphere. In every other climate, they are isolated strangers; in this land of art, they are free citizens. (*TMF*, 158-59).

A moonlight walk with his wife through Rome (*IN*, 209-12) is used by Hawthorne for Chapter XVI « A Moonlight Ramble » (*TMF*, 170-84), and his trip from Rome to Florence (*IN*, 277-347) becomes Donatello and Kenyon's ramblings from Monte Beni to Perugia (*TMF*, 332-62).

As evidenced by this short outline of the motifs repeated in *The Marble Faun*, the *Italian Notebooks* can easily be considered the point of departure for the romance, Hawthorne's last finished work. The method the writer used to work out an idea in his journals was to hint at many possible representations and interpretations of it, so that he would have been able later on to choose the one he felt could easily be transformed into a symbiosis of all.

Unfortunately the same technique of scattering loose fragments of ideas here and there, without drawing them to a final resolution, appears also in *The Marble Faun*, with the

result that the work is reduced to an interesting, but loose agglomeration of realistic details, symbolic allusions and romantic episodes, each of them often vividly impressive by itself, but unable to reach a harmonious balance with the whole.

The first idea of a story centered around a creature like a Faun, embodying both human and animal characteristics, came to Hawthorne while visiting the art gallery of the Capitol in Rome as early as April 1858. He wrote in his *Italian Notebooks*:

It seems to me that a story, with all sorts of fun and pathos in it, might be contrived on the idea of their species become intermingled with the human race; a family with the faun-blood in them having prolonged itself from the classic era till our own days. The tail might have disappeared by dint of constant intermarriages with ordinary mortals; but the pretty hairy ears should occasionally reappear in members of the family; and the moral instincts and intellectual characteristics of the faun might be most picturesquely brought out, without detriment to the human interest of the story. Fancy this combination in the person of a young lady. (IN, 207-8; Rome, April 22, 1858).

In the romance this combination materialized into the person of a young man, Donatello, the Count of Monte Beni.

In the previous pages the suggestions has often been made that *The Marble Faun* is an unsatisfactory production, in which Hawthorne seems at a loss when trying to combine in a harmonious whole a variety of suggestions and attitudes gathered during his Italian experience. We are compelled, in fact, to suspect that this time we are not facing « intentional ambiguity so much as unintentional confusion », as Mr. Waggoner has happily put it³². In Hawthorne's best works, the organic structure of the story helps to develop a concentrated unit, whose nucleus is a central theme strictly related to the other secondary motifs of the plot so as to create a connective

32. HYATT H. WAGGONER, *Hawthorne, A New Reevaluation*, Harvard University Press (Cambridge, Mass., 1955), p. 200.

tissue on which they grow and logically develop into one another. *The Marble Faun*, instead, presents a great fragmentation of action, originated by the episodic structure of the story, where single chapters either stand by themselves or are connected with few others so as to form larger groups, which in their turn stand by themselves in the context of the plot³³.

In a general outline of the book, three large groups of chapters work nearly independently of each other, each centering on one specific theme and its variations³⁴. One group, composed of Chapters I, II, V, VII, XIII, XIV, XV, deals with the subject of the figurative arts and artists. The larger and central group, composed of Chapters III, IV, VIII-XII, XVI-XXXV, is concerned with the Faun's innocence, crime, and spiritual enlightenment through his sense of guilt and repentance. The third group, composed of Chapters XXXVI-L, exploits the theme of Catholicism and provides a conclusive settlement of the affairs of the four characters of the story. Art, the Faun's transformation and Catholic religion seem, therefore, to be the three points of interest from which Hawthorne moves in the manipulation of his story. We have seen that at least two of these themes took up a large portion in the *Italian Notebooks*, and their presence in *The Marble Faun* confirms our suggestion that Hawthorne's concern for them was also a literary one. A particular description of the organization of the book will help to see how Hawthorne handled his subject matter.

The first two chapters introduce the four characters of the story, three of them artists, two painters (Miriam and Hilda)

33. According to Merle R. Brown, instead, *The Marble Faun* is Hawthorne's best endeavor to represent man in his victorious efforts to conquer «the curse of solitude imposed upon his imagination» because «only here he appears released to create mature human beings living virtuously in the world instead of apart from it». In «The Structure of *The Marble Faun*», *AL* XXVIII (Nov. 1956), 302-313; 313.

34. Consult CHARLES R. SMITH JR., «The Structural Principle of *The Marble Faun*» *Thoth* III (W 1962), 32-38, for a different subdivision of the narrative structure of the romance.

and one sculptor (Kenyon), while they are discussing in the art gallery of the Capitol in Rome the likeness between Donatello, the Count of Monte Beni, and the Faun of Praxiteles. Chapters III and IV present Miriam's model and persecutor, while Chapter V deals with Miriam and her studio, and Chapters VI and VII with Hilda and her studio. Then we have a group of four Chapters, VIII, IX, X, and XI, the idyllic interlude in the Villa Borghese, the famous public park in Rome, for which Chapter XII offers a commentary. We find a description of another studio, Kenyon's, in Chapters XIII and XIV, while Chapter XV is a digression about the life of artists in Rome. These are followed by the central group dealing with Miriam and Donatello's crime and its immediate consequences for the lovers and Hilda. These chapters are strictly connected with those describing Donatello's penitent life in Monte Beni, as witnessed by Kenyon, and his final reunion with Miriam. After this central group of chapters (XVI-XXXV), Hilda's moral bewilderment is presented in Chapters XXXVI-XL, together with the exploitation of the spiritual advantages of Catholicism. The next two chapters deal with Kenyon's renewed friendship with Hilda, while Chapters XLIII, XLIV, and XLV deal with Hilda's disappearance and Kenyon's quest for her, which brings him first to the « Campagna » (XLVI, XLVII) and then to the « Corso » during the Roman Carnival (XLVIII, XLIX). Chapter L concludes the book, suggesting Hilda and Kenyon's marriage and Miriam's and Donatello's expiation of their crime.

The first and third parts of the romance are rather loosely built, as if Hawthorne were indulging in personal, fragmentary recollections of his past experience not necessary to the development of the story. The first chapters abound in references to statues and paintings previously discussed in the *Italian Notebooks* (IN, 205 - TMF, 152; IN, 289-90 - TMF, 60-1; IN, 653 - TMF, 77-8); or to artists and copyists (IN, 162 a-c - TMF, Chapter XV; IN, 373-4 - TMF, 82-4); or to Roman buildings (IN, 624-5 - TMF, 68). The third part, however, is the one that presents a more serious deficiency in the

structural compactness of the story. When Hilda has regained her peace of mind and innocence of heart, Hawthorne has to find a way to soften her virgin frigidity in order to have her accept Kenyon's proposal of marriage. Therefore, he has her kidnapped and mysteriously kept out of Kenyon's and the reader's sight, while Donatello and Miriam reappear in disguise to whisper eigmatic riddles into the bewildered sculptor's ears. All this suggests an atmosphere of secret espionage, typical of a detective story of our own time, accentuated by the discovery of the disappearance of Hilda's writing-desk, by the anonymous messages received by Kenyon, and by his strange meeting with the priest who had heard Hilda's confession in St. Peter's, and who, one discovers at the end, was her custodian during her seclusion.

The chapter in the *Campagna* is an example of those digressions that Hawthorne allowed himself in order to deal with some interesting passages of his notebooks that he had not the heart to leave out. During his stay in Rome, there had been a great deal of talk about the discovery of a statue of Venus, which was supposed to be the original of the « Venus de Medici » in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. In Chapter XLVI, Hawthorne used his own descriptions of the statue (IN, 647-9) for Kenyon's discovery of an old marble figure in the middle of the *Campagna*, while waiting for Miriam and Donatello.

In the last chapters, too, the *Italian Notebooks* came again in support of the imagination of our writer, who seemed to feel the necessity to interpolate some more descriptions of the Roman atmosphere into the theme already exploited of the Faun's fall and redemption³⁵. We have, therefore, a long digression dealing with the Roman Carnival, its liveliness and merriment, and a detailed description of the many

35. For a discussion of *The Marble Faun* as a modern retelling of the Genesis story, see SIDNEY P. MOSS, « The Problem of Theme in *The Marble Faun* », *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, XVIII (March, 1964), pp. 393-399.

masks parading along the *Corso*, the main street of Rome. Among them Donatello and Miriam, dressed as the *contadini* of the Roman *Campagna*, give a rather unexpected performance parading up and down under the bewildered eyes of their friend Kenyon. If we confront the scene of their reunion in Perugia (Chapter XXXV), where their dignified acceptance of their doom had elevated them to a dramatic role, with their parading, arm in arm, through the ridiculous jollities of the Carnival, it becomes evident that Hawthorne's creative faculties had exhausted themselves before the end of the book. He lingered on for the sake of writing, filling the last chapters with unnecessary elements, capable only of weakening both characters and plot.

The episodic structure of the story and Hawthorne's uncontrolled acceptance of his material are two important determinants of the structural weakness of *The Marble Faun*. It has to be pointed out, however, that, especially in the first part of the book, Hawthorne was aware of this problem and tried to develop a connective interplay of motives and situations, introducing, for instance, the Italian character of Donatello, or presenting his four main characters, usually with a background of famous churches, museums and palaces, or having them discuss for him his own ideas on art, religion and Italian customs. The effect he succeeds in giving, however, is not one of unity and harmony, since the different themes tend to be treated in isolated chapters, as it appears evident in the description offered in the previous pages. We often have the impression of dealing with a fragmentary juxtaposition of heterogeneous elements without unity or direction.

Another important reason for this lack of unity in the book is to be found in the style, which tries to express two different levels of experience: the every-day, realistic experience that finds an immediate expression in the journalistic style; and the psychological and intellectual experience elaborated through a literary style full of symbolic elements. This lack of unity becomes even more evident when the same juxtaposition of styles is carried on in the conversation of the

different characters of the story, with the result that their individuality is often reduced to a shadowy embodiment of Hawthorne's ideas. The long speech of Miriam, opening Chapter XIV (*TMF*, 123-4), restates Hawthorne's distaste for nudes and for colored marble, previously expressed in the *Italian Notebooks* (*IN*, 182; 205); Miriam is therefore transformed into a cold critic of art, just at a time when her whole being, tormented by the persecution of her model, is longing for a friendly word of sympathetic understanding that might heal her anguish for a while. In this case the individual personality of Miriam is put aside, so that the intellectualized attitude that she displays breaks the logical development of her character and destroys the atmosphere of dramatic suspense that could have been accentuated by the open confession of her fears and torments.

In the same way, another climactic moment, that of the meeting between Miriam and Donatello after a long period of remorseful isolation, risks being weakened by Kenyon's lecturing speech on the influence of Medieval sculpture on modern art (*TMF*, 359). And the remarks about the want of painted windows in St. Peter's sound quite out of place in the conversation between a gloomy Kenyon and an exhilarated Hilda (*TMF*, 416), on Kenyon's return to Rome after his long sojourn at Monte Beni as Donatello's guest. It is evident that Hawthorne's interest in the artistic environments of the story often draws him to neglect the structural balance of the parts, the internal development of the characters and the dramatic effect of the episodes. This statement is supported by the fact that some of the best episodes of the book are almost completely devoid of art references and discussions. No references to art, for example, appear in the second group of chapters that form the best part of the book. Here there is a compact unity in the narrative, an organic structure taking the place of an episodic one, while symbols with a rich variety of suggestions are used in place of journalistic descriptions.

The characters also reflect this conflict. It may be seen that the two most successful characters of the romance are

Miriam and Donatello, the passionate, intellectual, mysterious woman of the world, and the pure, instinctive, simple son of nature. The radiant splendor of Donatello's innocent happiness makes of Miriam an enthusiastic Nymph of the woods in the short idyllic interlude in the gardens of the Villa Borghese, but the mysteriously evil quality of her nature, in its turn, draws Donatello to crime. In the idyllic descriptions in Chapters VIII, IX, X, and XI, the beauty and simplicity of nature is observed with a joyous bewilderment as something just discovered and therefore new and exciting. This arcadian charm offers the most suitable background for the character of Donatello, the Faun, the creature of natural instincts and simplicity, whose « kindred instincts linked him so strongly ... to the genial earth » (*TMF*, 94), and whom the bright birds « recognized as something akin to themselves, or else they fancied that he was rooted and grew there » (*TMF*, 94). Hawthorne seems to suggest that Donatello's whole being is made up of all the elements of nature³⁶.

The flicker of the sunshine, the sparkle of the fountain's gush, the dance of the leaf upon the bough, the woodland fragrance, the green freshness, the old sylvan peace and freedom, were all intermingled in those long breaths which he drew. (*TMF*, 93).

Donatello is the natural being, the « wild, gentle, beautiful creature » (*TMF*, 102) for whom past and future alike live in the present, in that short hour of happiness with his Nymph which is to last « forever, forever, forever ». (*TMF*, 102). Donatello and Miriam in the incanting atmosphere of a symbolic recreation of the « Golden Age, before mankind was burdened by sin and sorrow » (*TMF*, 104), reach, through a ritual of dance and song³⁷, their moment of innocent happiness, which, like the Golden Age, is to be followed by the

36. See W. R. IRWIN, « The Survival of Pan », *PMLA*, LXXVI (June 1961), pp. 159-167.

37. JOSEPH SCHWARTZ, « Myth and Ritual in *The Marble Faun* », *ESQ*, XXV (1961), pp. 26-29.

shadows of moral iniquity and confusion. The apparition of Miriam's model and persecutor in the middle of the dance puts an end to that idyllic interlude and is in itself a premonition of calamity. The Faun's loss of innocence will be the natural result of the ending of the Golden Age.

Donatello's crime is perpetrated among those Roman ruins that stand, images of decay and destruction, as a symbolical counterpart to the innocence and happiness of the idyllic interlude. The pages of the description of Rome by night, which precede the murder, create an atmosphere of approaching catastrophe, suggested by the vast basin of the Fountain of Trevi that « must needs be stained black or sanguine » (*TMF*, 176); by the ruins of the Trajan Forum, which seems to be « the surface of what once was Rome » and represents « the effort of time to bury up the ancient city, as if it were a corpse, and he the sexton ». (*TMF*, 178); by the black cross in the Coliseum, which « marks one of the special blood-spots of the earth » (*TMF*, 183); and still further, by the chasm in the Forum, which symbolizes for Miriam « merely one of the orifices of that pit of blackness which lies beneath us, every where ». (*TMF*, 191). When Miriam finds herself alone with Donatello on the Tarpeian Rock, on the edge of the Traitor's Leap, she tragically perceives that « they have been left hanging over the brow of the ominous precipice » (*TMF*, 201), a precipice both real and symbolical. The atmosphere of dramatic suspense is perfectly created, and the murder and its moral consequences are still further prepared by the insistence with which the Tarpeian Rock is minutely described as a narrow place closed on one side by the

great height of the palace [the Capitol] . . . showing all the windows barren and shuttered [and on the other side by the] parapet . . . built right on the edge of a steep precipice, [over which were flung] men that cumbered the world . . . men whose lives were the bane of their fellow-creatures. Men who poisoned the air . . . (*TMF*, 201).

Here the elements of a sinful soul's isolation, suggested

by the « windows barren and shuttered », and of moral and death, suggested by the « precipice », are concretely dramatized and work in unison with the premonition of calamity in Miriam's mind. We have, in this case, an artistic control that selects realistic details which, while providing the concrete elements of dramatization, suggest also the symbolic connection with the psychological attitudes of the characters.

After the murder of the model, to which Hilda becomes an unseen witness, an exalted mood takes possession of Donatello and Miriam, and they proclaim the indissolubility of their blood-stained union, in an open challenge against the whole world. But the realization of the sinfulness of their union, that makes them « members of an innumerable confraternity of guilty ones, all shuddering at each other » (*TMF*, 200), soon destroys « the solemn madness of the occasion » (*TMF*, 207) and compels them to part. His crime has deprived Donatello of every contact with the natural world which was once the most suitable element of his character: among all animals, only lizards and owls now respond to « the young Count's efforts to renew his intercourse with the lower orders of Nature » (*TMF*, 287), and in his anguish he cries: « All nature shrinks from me and shudders at me. No innocent thing can come near me ». (*TMF*, 288). The loss of innocence³⁸, however, has brought with it a new element of more human quality, a « perception of deep truths », which suggests to Kenyon that « a soul and an intellect . . . have been inspired into him ». (*TMF*, 326).

At this point of the story, Hawthorne found himself on familiar ground, with the dilemma represented by innocence without the enlightenment of spiritual and intellectual powers, and guiltiness, whose result is alienation from the natural element of life, compensated, however, by a wider understanding of human condition. « Did Adam fall, that we might ultimately rise to a far loftier paradise than this? »

38. For a discussion of Donatello's innocence, see JOSEPH PATTISON, « The Guilt of the Innocent Donatello », *ESQ*, XXXI (1963), pp. 66-68.

(*TMF*, 519) is the question that Kenyon poses to Hilda. And it is also the question that Hawthorne poses to his readers in showing various stages of the Faun's transformation from a happy, simple, innocent creature, to a guilty, but dignified and thoughtful human being, ready to accept the consequences of his crime and the sufferings of his expiation³⁹.

When in the tower⁴⁰ of Monte Beni, where Donatello has made his home, the only companions of the young Count's solitary days appear to be « a pair of owls » (*TMF*, 297), symbolical animals related to darkness and therefore to guilt, the ambiguity of Donatello's position seems still accentuated.

In fact, while darkness is their element, the owls possess the sharpest sight to look through it, just as Donatello, with his new « perception of deep truths » can look through the darkness of his sin and perceive the right way to expiate it. When he meets Miriam again under the statue of Pope Julius III in the main square of Perugia, Donatello is ready to accept his guilt as a part of the burden that associates him with the whole of mankind, and is conscious of his own responsibilities and duties toward himself, Miriam, and the world.

His aspect unconsciously assumed a dignity, which, elevating his former beauty, accorded with the change that long been taking place in his interior self. He was a man, revolving grave and deep thoughts in his breast. He still held Miriam's hand; and there they stood, the beautiful man, the beautiful woman, united forever, as they felt, in the presence of those thousand witnesses, who gazed so curiously at the unintelligible scene. (*TMF*, 370).

This scene recalls another famous one, the third of the scaffold scenes in *The Scarlet Letter*, when Dimmesdale, Hester and little Pearl confront the Puritan crowd for the last

39. For a discussion of Hawthorne's vision of sin as educative and humanizing, see ALFRED REID, « The Role of Transformation in Hawthorne's Tragic Vision », *FS*, (NS), VI, (Fall, 1968), pp. 9-20.

40. On the imagery of the tower in relation to the four characters of *The Marble Faun*, see GENE A. BARNETT, « Hawthorne's Italian Towers », *Studies in Romanticism*, III, (1964), pp. 252-256.

time, before Dimmesdale's death. Although in both we see a guilty man whose crime originated in love, in Donatello we observe a process of redemption resulting from his dignified acceptance of a public expiation of his crime, while in Dimmesdale we witness a process of self-destruction resulting from his sinful isolation. Mr. Hall sees this difference of attitude in *The Marble Faun* and in *The Scarlet Letter* as further proof of Hawthorne's widened vision of man and society in general, due to his European experience, and he notices that

the latter contains the study of man, outwardly accepting social taboos, sinning against them, and then shunning judgment according to them. The former is the story of a man untrained in social decorums, sinning against them, and then, actuated by conscience to accept them and their judgment as the way of growth and salvation⁴¹.

Such a point of view is very suggestive and may be regarded as a possible afterthought of Hawthorne's, when he had already devised his story of the Faun's transformation, in order to make his character more complex by endowing him with a social conscience. A similar suggestion can be advanced for what concerns his religious attitude. Hawthorne has made Donatello the only Italian character of the story, and therefore a Catholic, whose faith induced him to believe that a true repentance of his sins would have found a friendly patronage in the mediation and protection of all the martyrs and saints to whom he devoted his supplications. Donatello may easily be the youth that Hilda notices in St. Peter's who « stood before a shrine, writhing, wringing his hands, contorting his whole frame in an agony of remorseful recollection, but finally knelt down to weep and pray ». (*TMF*, 395). Dimmesdale instead was still the « protestant [who] kept all the torture pent up in his heart, and let it burn there ». (*TMF*, 395).

41. LAWRENCE H. HALL, « Hawthorne, Critic of Society », *SRL*, XXVI (May 22, 1943), p. 28, 30, 32.

As we have seen in the *Italian Notebooks*, Catholicism is for Hawthorne a helpful device that offers an opportunity of lightening one's heart from the burden of sin or of a painful secret, as in Hilda's case. In confessing her knowledge of Donatello's crime, she does not ask for forgiveness of her own sins, since she can receive God's forgiveness « only by sincere repentance of whatever wrong I may have done, and by my own best efforts toward a higher life ». (*TMF*, 408). Donatello, therefore, has to find in his soul the desire for expiation and redemption in the solitude of his tower, before coming to pray for protection at the shrines of saints and Madonnas. Hawthorne's concern for the weaknesses and sufferings of mankind allowed him to accept the therapeutic aspect of Catholicism, which in our century he would have found on the couch of a psychoanalyst, while his skeptical mind worked on, in the opposite direction, to show its incapacity to satisfy, like any other orthodox religion, the spiritual needs of the soul.

It has already been mentioned that Hawthorne's wider range of interest is visible in the structure of the romance: the problems of art and of Catholicism have in part demonstrated it. The same is true also in relation to the chief characters themselves, whom he derived both from his American background and from his European experience. Kenyon and Hilda are two New England artists who came to Rome, the paradise of all arts, to exercise their creative talents. Donatello, as we have seen, is a Count from the North of Italy, and Miriam a noblewoman of English-Jewish-South Italian descent.

The mystery that envelops Miriam's past has originated a curious interest in the sources that Hawthorne used in order to create her as a fictional character. We have already hinted at the supposed connection between Beatrice Cenci and her, as presented by Mr. Haselmayer. Another critic, Nathalia Wright, has tried to prove through an accurate accumulation of dates and newspaper publications, that Hawthorne was influenced by the character of Mlle. Deluzy, for whose sake the

Duc de Preslin seemed to have murdered his wife and committed suicide⁴². It is difficult to try to give an explanation of a riddle that the author himself added to the conclusion of the second edition of *The Marble Faun*. This conclusion does not offer any clue whatsoever about her name and rank, for the only words we have are Kenyon's bewildered questions: « Is it possible that you need an answer to those questions? . . . Have you not even surmised Miriam's name? Think awhile, and you will assuredly remember it ». (*TMF*, 526). It is probable, however, that Hawthorne, though not concerned with any public character of his times, used an extension of a description from his *English Notebooks* for his portrait of Miriam. It is a description of a young lady whom he had noticed at a dinner given by the Lord Mayor during his consulship in Liverpool (*EN*, 231). Both women have a particular white complexion « without shade of color in it » (*EN*, 231), wonderful « jewish hair » (*TMF*, 65), and both remind him of what Rachel might have been « when Jacob deemed her worth wooing seven years and seven more » (*EN*, 231; *TMF*, 65). The words used in both descriptions are nearly the same and convey the same idea of great beauty, strength and nobility of heart. Whether this is true or not, Miriam's passionate nature, ready to accept both sin and sorrow, compels her to dedicate herself completely to Donatello once she has seen him invested with the tragic role of a man who has become a criminal for love. Because she feels that their crime was justified, her anguish is not one of remorse, but rather of fear of Donatello's hatred.

« I . . . feel neither regret nor penitence on my own behalf. But what benumbs me, what robs me of all power . . . is the certainty that I am, and must ever be, an object of horror in Donatello's sight ». (*TMF*, 323).

42. NATHALIA WRIGHT, « Hawthorne and the Preslin Murder », *New England Quarterly* XV (March, 1942), p. 5-14.

When she realizes, instead, that Donatello still loves her, all her strength and courage return to her, and she becomes the worthy companion of Donatello's fate. Miriam's character, if we overlook her last appearance with Donatello in the Carnival frolic, is, in its impact of sinfulness, mystery and passion, a very powerful creation⁴³.

Miriam comes to life as a fictional character only when the ghost of a guilty past comes to haunt her, so that her previous personality, as we see it in the first two chapters of the books as a rather petulant and rude young woman, gives way to a more humanized, sensitive and reflective human being. The strange personage that persecutes her is physically real enough to be thrown by Donatello from the Tarpeian Rock, but often suggests a strict relation to those imaginary creations projected into the outside world by a guilty mind haunted by torturing dreams of a sinful past. The presence of this character does not produce a dramatic climax, probably because Hawthorne, in order to develop his theme of the enlightenment of the Faun through crime and penitence, tries too hard to make of him a physically perceivable being, while it is clear that his right element would be in a middle stage between reality and obsessive fantasy. On his first appearance to the four friends in the Catacomb of St. Calixtus, he is described as dressed like a peasant from the Roman *Campagna* and looking like an antique Satyr, while, when he puts his hand on Kenyon's arm, his physical substance is proved too. In the idyllic interlude, his appearance in the middle of the dance as a « strange figure that shook its fantastic garments in the air, and pranced . . . on its tiptoes, almost vying with the agility of Donatello himself » (*TMF*, 110), might still have been a hallucination of Miriam's mind, always ready to see any premonition of calamity personified in him. But when Miriam

43. Miriam belongs to the type of Hawthorne's female characters which are classified as « dark » by HUGO MCPHERSON in « Hawthorne's Mythology: A Mirror for Puritans », *University of Toronto Quarterly*, XXVIII (1958-59), pp. 267-278. See also FOGLE, *op. cit.*

talks to him, imploring him to set her free, he answers that they « are bound together, and can never part again » (*TMF*, 118). The physical reality of the ghost is asserted again and a confusion arises from the efforts to keep on a physical level of experience a character that could only be convincing on an imaginative one. Once the murder is committed, the strange personage who was a ghost, a Satyr, a peasant from the *Campagna* and Miriam's model, becomes also Father Antonio, the dead monk lying in the center of the Church of the Capuccini, who had finished his life « in the odor of sanctity » (*TMF*, 218). The recognition of the features of their victim in the face of the dead Capuchin might have reached a dramatic climax, had it only been suggested as a possible hallucination of Donatello and Miriam. Instead, Hawthorne insists on the identification of the two persons, the model and the monk, and makes Kenyon observe the likeness too. Miriam then comes back a second time to ascertain it. The improbability of the story is therefore accentuated when the reader confusingly realizes that Donatello is expiating the crime of having murdered somebody who turned out to be a monk who died in the odor of sanctity. This is another instance of Hawthorne's lack of control of his material, as when he describes Hilda as « brown haired » (*TMF*, 21) and a little later on as « fair-haired » (*TMF*, 73), or Donatello and Miriam's participation in the frolic of the Carnival.

The character of Hilda is the least convincing of all, notwithstanding Hawthorne's efforts to create a perfect representation of feminine innocence and righteousness. Numerous are the allusions to Hilda as a dove or as a sister to her doves, or as dwelling in a dove-cote. The word *angel* in reference to her is repeated four times in two pages (*TMF*, 71-2) and her innocence is « like a sharp steele sword ». (*TMF*, 85). Miriam, when rejected by her after the night of murder on the Tarpeian Rock, bitterly remarks that « as an angel . . . [she is] not amiss, but as a human being and a woman among worthy men and women . . . [she] need[s] a sin to soften [her] ». (*TMF*, 243). Hilda, however, was not born to sin

and not even to show mercy; so she does not hesitate in accusing Miriam of staining her innocence by the mere presence of her guilty person in that pure dove-cote. « While there is a single guilty creature in the universe, each innocent must feel his innocence tortured by that guilt ». (*TMF*, 247). These are Hilda's words in front of a suffering friend who had gone to ask her for understanding and for moral help. It is the open profession of her innocence to be found in each of her speeches, that makes her a rather priggish figure of a woman, mainly concerned with the whiteness of her own soul and refusing any contact which could even slightly shadow the immaculate purity of her heart. After unburdening her soul of the ominous secret that was haunting her conscience, she admits that she will be able now to understand why « the saints above » although « touched by the sorrows of distressed people on earth . . . are never made wretched by them » (*TMF*, 414), giving, therefore, the reader a hint of which would be the right place where to put her. This relation between Hilda and the Saints in heaven is stressed furthermore at the end of the book, when, by accepting Kenyon as her husband, she will leave « her old tower, to be herself enshrined and worshipped as a household saint, in the light of her husband's fireside ». (*TMF*, 521). As a household saint, therefore, she will be protected forever against any interference from the outside world and the evil in it, so that she will preserve her innocence forever, but with the question unanswered as to whether innocence without understanding and love has any reason to exist in this world. Mr. Fogle, suggesting that Hilda is the « emblem of heaven » adds that « her limitation hints faintly at a higher simplicity that embraces all humanity, instead of, like her, rejecting much of life »⁴⁴.

In Hilda's refusal to come in touch with the sinful part of mankind, pride and egoism are involved, the two sins that Hawthorne had always considered the most abominable. Is Hawthorne trying to find an excuse for them in Hilda's in-

44. FOGLE, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

nocence and inexperience? Or is he simply unable to realize the weakness of her character? The latter suggestion seems more acceptable at this point, after we have noticed other instances of a loose conception of scenes, situations, characters and even of the structure of the book.

When we come to examine the character of Kenyon, we realize that he lives only in relation with the other *dramatis personae* of the story. Through him we witness Donatello's transformation in the solitude of his tower in Monte Beni and Miriam's painful expectation for a sign of forgiveness from her lover. He works as a *deus-ex-machina* in their reunion and acts as the questioning counterpart of Hilda's adamantine intransigence which destroys with its uncompromising righteousness any shy attempts on his part of thinking and judging by himself. In fact, whenever she does not agree with him in his unorthodox queries, he is far too ready to confess that what he had said was « a foolish thing, indeed » (*TMF*, 129) and that it « was doubtless a mistake » (*TMF*, 132) on his part to think in that way, and that he « will doubtless do so no more ». (*TMF*, 132). When she reproaches him for the boldness of his suggestion that the fall of man might have been necessary for a higher resurrection of all human beings, he takes everything back, apologizing: « Forgive me, Hilda, I never did believe it . . . » (*TMF*, 520). However, though a poor personality, the character of Kenyon has a consistency of his own. He is kept in the limits of the probable until the end of the book, and his role of confidant to both Donatello and Miriam is acceptable as a fictional device.

At this point a conclusion should be sought. In the examination of *The Marble Faun* we have found that its structure is based on an episodic technique in the first and third parts of the story, where the fragmentariness of the whole is accentuated by Hawthorne's use of material not necessary to the plot itself. We have noticed, in fact, that Hawthorne had developed in Europe, and especially in Italy, new interests about art and life in general. These new interests are widely represented in the book and, not being perfectly assimilated

with the other basic elements of his writing, produce fragmentariness in the narrative structure. What we noticed especially in the third part of the romance, that is, the author lingering on for the sake of putting down personal experiences unnecessary to the unity of the story, may be due to the often unexplainable weakening of the creative faculties. But in Hawthorne's case, this weakening seems due to the fact that his mind was distracted by the novelty of all those exciting experiences he had had during his stay in Italy. He was sure that the readers, too, would have been interested in what he had to say about Rome, Florence, the Italian way of devotion, and the beauty and richness of Italian art treasures. The book, in fact, became the most popular of all his romances, and it owed its popularity in a large extent to its quality as a guide-book for tourists.

The fragmentariness of the structure is further increased by the style which varies according to the different subjects it deals with. It becomes a cold enumeration of statements on art and religion, or a realistic description of things and places, whenever Hawthorne decides to pick up some interesting passages out of his notebooks in order to insert them in the romance. On the other hand, especially in the central part of the book, the fascinating symbolic style of his best stories is still visible in the introduction of the main theme of the Faun's transformation. The juxtaposition of these two different styles, the journalistic and the symbolical, is often evident also in the speeches of the characters themselves and brings as a result a weakening of their consistency as fictional characters. They are Hawthorne's ideas about the figurative arts that we find in Miriam and Kenyon's discussion upon the statue of Cleopatra, or the Dying Gladiator, or the problem of the nude in sculpture, or, still further, about the place of contemporary art in the history of art. It is his view of the Catholic religion that Hilda expresses in her quest for peace of mind, using the same words and expressions of the Hawthorne of the *Notebooks*. The ideas jotted down in the *Italian Notebooks* have not been elaborated in order to be tran-

sformed into an objective fictional style which could have helped in organizing the romance into a harmonic whole instead of accentuating the dissociation of its three different parts. Of these, the central part, as we have seen, is the best, since it is the only one based on an organic structure, where style and matter blend together in a fascinating pattern of symbols and imagery. The two characters of Donatello and Miriam, associated with this part of the romance, are also the most successful; whereas Hilda is a confused, allegorical representation of innocence, and Kenyon a fictional device for the development of the plot.

The fragmentariness of the structure and style of *The Marble Faun* is imputable, therefore, to the influence, both of conception and of the *Italian Notebooks*. The wider range of interests that Hawthorne displayed during his European residence seems to have prevented him from exercising an artistic, selective choice of the material of his notebooks. The novelty of his experiences abroad, interfering with the concentrated efforts for artistic expression, undermined his power of creation and weakened his ability of narrative organization. The inconsistency of situations and characters are evidences of such general lessening of creative power and are the causes of the lack of unity in the structure and style and of the failure of *The Marble Faun* both as a work of fiction and as an artistic achievement in Hawthorne's career as a romancer.

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