The Fragility of Manhood
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HAWTHORNE, FREUD, AND THE POLITICS OF GENDER

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A young man stares into a pool and sees his own reflection. At first, his reflection appears to be another person, endowed with great beauty. Enflamed with desire, the young man reaches out to the image in the pool, which dissolves at his touch. Gradually, he comes to understand that this image is just that, an image, and moreover a reflection of himself. Recognition brings with it neither relief nor release; this self-encounter leads to frustration, sorrow, and, ultimately, death.

The myth of Narcissus has played a central role in understandings of the self, its predicaments and potential dangers, throughout the Western tradition. Despite the avid interest in classical myth exemplified by his two collections of Greek myths rewritten for children, Nathaniel Hawthorne never mentions Narcissus in print. Yet the figure of Narcissus and the thematic concerns of his myth suffuse Hawthorne’s writings. Belying the textual absence of his naming, the myth of Narcissus informs several Hawthorne works, sometimes fairly obviously, as in the tellingly titled “Monsieur du Miroir” (1837), but more often, and more subtly, in the stories that prominently feature a young man. What Hawthorne’s youthful male characters share with Narcissus is a male identity intricately, if not entirely, bound to the power and the demands of the eye. This relationship to vision is deeply conflictual, acts of seeing and responses to being seen fraught with anxiety, aggressivity, and even terror. The young man’s conflict over his own image is one of the most consistently developed themes in Hawthorne’s oeuvre. Young Goodman Brown, Minister Hooper, Robin Molineux, Giovanni
Guasconti, Arthur Dimmesdale, Holgrave, Coverdale, Donatello: all of these immediately recognizable male characters are, as I will show, depicted in ways that emphasize their relationship to vision, a relationship always rendered in highly ambivalent terms. Moreover, Hawthorne’s male characters are particularly provocative extensions of the symbolic meanings of the figure of Narcissus because, in addition to their conflict with their own image, they are at once physically beautiful and morally dubious.

A brief tour of the beautiful young men that recur in Hawthorne’s pages conveys his wide-ranging interests in this figure: following the trope of “handsome,” we find descriptions such as Coverdale’s of Westervelt in *The Blithedale Romance*: “He was still young, seemingly a little under thirty, of a tall and well-developed figure, and as handsome a man as ever I beheld” (3: 92); of Fanshawe, the protagonist of Hawthorne’s first novel, whose identity as a scholar is apparently augmented by his personal attractiveness: “The stranger could scarcely have attained his twentieth year, and was possessed of a face and form, such as Nature bestows on none but her favorites” (3: 346); of Donatello in *The Marble Faun* as being so “full of animal life as he was, so joyous in his deportment, so handsome, so physically well developed, he made no impression of incompleteness, of maimed or stinted nature” (4: 14); of the English soldier in Hawthorne’s late, unfinished masterpiece *Septimius Felton* as “A young officer, a petulant boy, extremely handsome, and of gay and buoyant deportment” (13: 21). What is especially noteworthy is the license this ostentatious male attractiveness gives women to wield the sexually appraising gaze. In the early story “David Swan,” a pretty young woman sees the titular young man, sleeping, like Narcissus’s double, Endymion, beneath her eyes: blushingly, she stole a glance at the youthful stranger, for whom she had been battling with a dragon in the air [a bee].

“He is handsome!” thought she, and blushed redder yet. (9: 187)

Many of Hawthorne’s men are “striking,” such as the guilt-wracked Dimmesdale, “a person of very striking aspect, with a white, lofty, and impending brow, large, brown, melancholy eyes”; that Dimmesdale’s mouth, “unless when he forcibly compressed it, was apt to be tremulous, expressing both nervous sensibility and a vast power of self-restraint,” tellingly reveals the emotional tensions that simmer beneath a striking aspect, and the authorial disposition toward these attributes (1: 66). Beneath Dimmesdale’s beauty, tormenting feelings of self-doubt and self-disdain seethe; his hypocrisy renders his outward beauty especially problematic, for it defies the Victorian
assumption that outer beauty reveals inner goodness. Most often in Hawthorne, the beauty of men masks an inner depravity, to the extent that this beauty seems the hallmark of this depravity rather than a contrast to it. Or male beauty causes great discomfort. Coverdale’s apprehension of Westervelt’s attractiveness seems only to deepen Coverdale’s distaste toward the mesmerist: “The style of his beauty, however, though a masculine style, did not at all commend itself to my taste. . . . he had no fineness of nature; there was in his eyes (although they might have artifice enough of another sort) the naked exposure of something that ought not to be left prominent” (3: 86). Though his face and form reveal him to be a favorite of Nature, Fanshawe is besieged by “a blight, of which his thin, pale cheek and the brightness of his eye were alike proofs, [and that] seemed to have come over him ere his maturity” (3: 346).

Hawthorne appears to have needed to put a beautiful man on the page. The question to which we will repeatedly return is why he took such a consistently skeptical view of this attractive figure. Beatrice Rappaccini, the victim of her scientist-father’s genetic experiments on her body, poses a question to the handsome and callow man who has voyeuristically spied on her as she tends to the poison plants whose DNA she shares. Her question to this young man, Giovanni Guasconti—“O, was there not, from the first, more poison in thy nature than in mine?” (10: 91)— can be restated this way: Having had a father who interfused my blood with that of his poisonous plants, I have a literal reason for the poison in my system. What accounts for the poison coursing through yours? His most consistent themes indicate that Hawthorne asks this question along with Beatrice.

Yet Hawthorne also views beautiful young men with empathy: he shares with them an empathetic fearfulness at the power of the gaze—not an avaricious desire to wield it but rather a desire to avoid falling under it. The theme of painful, violent, and violating looking informs Hawthorne’s work. The dubious desire to look and possess by looking in works such as “Wakefield,” “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” and The Blithedale Romance and the encounter with a troubling and even terrifying mirror image in stories such as “Feathertop” and longer works such as The Scarlet Letter together provide an apposite model for what Sándor Ferenczi diagnosed as “spectrophobia,” “the dread of catching sight of one’s own face in a mirror.”2 Hawthorne’s work plumbs spectrophobia for all of its ethical, aesthetic, and emotional depth, consistently thematizing traumatic seeing and being seen. It is little wonder that by his last complete novel, The Marble Faun, Hawthorne depicts a look that kills, Miriam’s blinding glare that impels Donatello to kill the Model.
HAWTHORNE, FREUD, AND LACAN

Freudian theory is the theoretical foundation of this study. Through Freud and his extraordinarily and enduringly provocative insights into the difficulties of gender and sexual identity, I make the case that Hawthorne’s representation of male subjectivity defies and even at times transcends the normative demands of hegemonic masculinity. As a methodology, however, Freudian theory must undergo stringent revision, given that many of Freud’s positions and conclusions are often in deep need of updating. Jacques Lacan’s reformulation of Freud’s theory of narcissism is especially helpful to one of our central themes, the relationship between gender and vision. Lacan’s theory of the mirror stage is very familiar by now, but it retains a revelatory power for Hawthorne’s work.3

Lacan theorized that there are three “orders” of existence (the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real).4 The mirror stage is the key component of the Imaginary order, in which the ego is formed through a narcissistic fascination with one’s own image. Before the mirror stage, the very young child is a body in pieces (le corps morcelé). One sense, the visual, is more advanced than any other. When the child stares at his image in the mirror, he mistakes the image of wholeness in the mirror for an actual, authentic wholeness. This profound misrecognition (méconnaissance) is the basis from which a self is formed. Our mesmerizing and seductive counterpart in the mirror, what Lacan calls the “small other,” seizes us (captation), holding us its captive always.

Lacan, intertextually competing with Freud, transforms the Narcissus myth into the narrative of subjectivity. He associates narcissism with the aggressivity, rivalry, strife, and even suicidal despair that all stem from this primary encounter with one’s own image. In that it is formed through identification with an image, the ego’s foundations are fragile and tenuous. That the ego emerges from the mirror stage and the Imaginary order is a crucial aspect of Lacanian theory, which opposes ego-psychology and its constitutive belief in the reconstruction of the “healthy” ego. In completely destabilizing the concept of the ego, Lacan renders any psychoanalytic effort to restore it inherently suspect.

Also of importance, the mirror stage incorporates the social and the gaze. The child, apprehending its own seemingly complete and mesmerizing image, turns around to look at its mother looking at the child as it looks at and “recognizes” itself. The formation of our own subjectivity depends on the mother’s approving, knowing nod of recognition. An awareness of and dependence on visual affirmation of one’s own existence—existence as a visual subject—is a fundamental aspect of the formation of subjectivity. As
I will be arguing, Hawthorne’s work elaborates endlessly on these dynamics, especially the implications of visuality’s centrality both for the subject and for all social relations, (relations between the mother and child, as I will show in chapter 2, being the template for these).

For Lacan, narcissism is pathological because it is a subjectivity based on a mirage. Yet, as Lacan lays out his theories, all subjectivity and libidinal attachments would appear to derive from the same evanescent sources. The Lacanian theorist Joan Copjec discusses Lacan’s understanding of narcissism within a larger discussion of Lacan’s theory. For Copjec, Lacan’s theory of the gaze differs both from Foucault’s theory of the panoptical gaze and from film theory’s uses of Lacan. For Foucault, power is invested in monitoring the subject, hence its deployment of a panoptical gaze and hence the feeling subjects unceasingly have that they are being watched, whether or not they are, indeed, being watched. For film theory, the gaze defines the spectator, which is presented as a stable heterosexual male subject. In Copjec’s view, Lacan’s theory of the gaze is distinct from these other theories because, for Lacan, the gaze does not define, and certainly does not monitor, the subject, but is, rather, quite indifferent to it. I will return to film theory’s treatment of Lacan in chapter 1. For now, I want to draw on Copjec’s reading of Lacan, in which she offers a particularly insightful summary of the Lacanian revision of Freud’s theories of narcissism, which will be considered at greater length in chapters 1 and 2. As Copjec puts it,

Narcissism, too, takes on a different meaning in Lacan, one more in accord with Freud’s own. Since something always appears to be missing from any representation, narcissism cannot consist in finding satisfaction in one’s own visual image. It must, rather, consist in the belief that one’s own being exceeds the imperfections of the image. Narcissism, then, seeks the self beyond the self-image, with which the subject constantly finds fault and in which it constantly fails to recognize itself. What one loves in one’s image is something more than the image (“in you more than you”). Thus is narcissism the source of the malevolence with which the subject regards its image, the aggressivity it unleashes on all its own representations. And thus does the subject come into being as a transgression of, rather than in conformity to, the law. It is not the law, but the fault in the law—the desire that the law cannot ultimately conceal—that is assumed by the subject as its own. The subject, in taking up the burden of the law’s guilt, goes beyond the law.5

In Copjec’s reading of Lacan, narcissism emerges as a kind of malevolent defensiveness against a simultaneously held and urgent set of disappoint-
ments and desires. One of the sources of the aggression within narcissism is a dissatisfaction with one’s visual image and the insistent corollary belief that one is more than this image, more resplendently beautiful and complete.

Hawthorne offers an analogous treatment of these themes. He is a Freudian-Lacanian theorist of the visual and its relationship to gender who sees gender as unintelligible without the visual, and both gender and the visual as fundamentally imbricated. The visual is also what constricts, wounds, and unceasingly antagonizes the gendered subject in his work. At the same time, Hawthorne, so obsessively an explorer of the guilty subject’s agonized relationship to the law, presages Foucault’s understanding of the panoptical gaze, as exemplified by Rappaccini’s invasive, controlling, and totalizing surveillance of the young lovers in one of Hawthorne’s greatest tales. Hawthorne, however, does not view, as Foucault does, the law as positive and nonrepressive, as inciting desire, but as the force that represses desire, and with dire consequences. Hawthorne’s psychoanalytic sensibility, therefore, emerges from his acute sense of profound discrepancies between a subject’s desires and the law’s dictates.

One of the means of registering these discrepancies is narcissism, which memorializes a subject’s state of oneness, however illusory and evanescent, before the inevitable process of socialization. It is within what Lacan describes as the Symbolic order, the domain of the father’s language and law, that this socialization occurs. Which is to say, we acquire and achieve subjectivity through a rebirth into language and the inscriptions of the law and the name of the father. Narcissism, imbued with plangent urgency and fueled by malevolent anger, memorializes the Imaginary and the mirror stage.

Narcissism can be understood as the subject’s experience of being unceasingly haunted by its own mesmerizing image before the onset of subjectivity. Narcissism memorializes what “belonged” to the subject before it became a Symbolic entity: its ties to nature and the Real, and the heady state of oneness and connection that Freud theorized as the “oceanic feeling,” a profound feeling of unity in which the infant’s and the mother’s bodies were indistinguishable. (The infant has no idea, for example, that the breast is the mother’s breast, a bodily zone separate from his own body.) A violent disruption of mother–child bonds links Freudian oedipal theory and Lacan’s theory of the passage from the Imaginary to the Symbolic order, both of which are narratives of identification with the “Father.” Narcissism memorializes not just the subject’s indescribable feeling of a prior oneness—for the subject is irreducibly a split subject after its formation through language—but also the connection to the mother, which must be forsaken for Symbolic social-
ization. Narcissism retains a power to resist and stall this socialization, even as it is incorporated into a “properly oedipalized,” male-dominated social order.

Little wonder, then, that the properly functioning subject—properly functioning because it believes itself to be a subject—is always already a haunted, wandering subject, forever estranged from itself. What I call Hawthorne’s “traumatic narcissism” relates to this haunted disposition: a sense of being fundamentally bereft while imagining a prior state of fulfillment and connection to which the subject can never return but that haunts and on some fundamental level continues to shape the present. Narcissism marks the points of disparity between one’s fantasies and experiential realities; it is precisely its ability to link and even to embody these gulfs that makes narcissism a useful, indeed provocatively vivid, index of anxieties, hostilities, and wishes.

Narcissism has profound implications for sexual as well as gendered identity. In his difficult, exasperating, and undeniably compelling No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive, Lee Edelman argues against the societal valuation of the Child, which he views as the linchpin of a heterosexist emphasis on reproductive futurity that queer sexuality not only nobly resists but must, self-consciously embodying the death drive, actively oppose. Edelman cites some of this same penetratingly insightful passage from his fellow Lacanian Copjec.6 I do not share Edelman’s philosophical positions, especially about queer sexuality’s proper value (as the apparently resistant embodiment of the death drive), and I therefore do not follow him in his subsequent conclusion that what Lacan and Copjec are theorizing is narcissism’s chief significance as a “life-denying economy.”7 But, as I will show in the first two chapters especially, the fates of narcissism and homosexuality have been intimately, if not inextricably, intertwined in psychoanalytic theory and also in popular receptions of it. Certainly, within this gay male imaginary, homosexuality is seen as life-denying, a quality linked to the perceived nullity of narcissism. As I will be attempting to show in my Janus-faced book—which has one eye on traditional close readings of a canonical author, the other on revising literary studies, psychoanalytic theory, and the related topic of Freud studies through queer theory—narcissism is a potentially resistant mode of affectional attachment and response. What Hawthorne, Freud, and Lacan evoke so movingly is the anguish within narcissism, its contested nature and the struggles it suggests over identity and self-knowledge, qualities that in their irreducibility to any one stagnant view pointedly deny life-denial.
NARCISSISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Apart from an excellent 1983 essay by Shernaz Mollinger and an expansive and thoughtful dissertation by MaryHelen Cleverley Harmon, the importance of narcissistic themes in Hawthorne has been largely overlooked. In an important essay, Joseph Adamson does discuss the subject, but places narcissism within the larger context of shame in Hawthorne's work, arguing that narcissism functions as a defense against shame. Christopher Castiglia also discusses the central role of shame in the “queer sociality” of Hawthorne's work, especially in *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), and makes quite bracingly novel uses of shame as a force that can trigger and undergird progressive new social arrangements. Shame is, as I will have frequent occasion to discuss, undoubtedly one of the chief affects in Hawthorne. But, following Andrew Morrison's theory of shame as the “underside” of narcissism, I argue that in Hawthorne's work shame proceeds from a larger framework of narcissism. In order to understand the full importance of Hawthorne's uses of the Narcissus myth, it will be helpful to this analysis to chart some of the trends in the myth's reception, which has been historically prohibitive and phobic.

In her feminist study *The American Narcissus*, Joyce W. Warren takes canonical American literature before the Civil War to the severest task, arguing that, in its focus on male individualism, it is narcissistic in the most pathological sense of the word. Emerson and Cooper come under particularly critical scrutiny. Interestingly enough, however, Hawthorne is spared the most stringent of Warren's analyses, emerging as an exception to the general narcissistic male rule. He escapes Warren's judgment precisely because, unlike his contemporaries, and “despite personal and cultural inhibitions,” Hawthorne “was acutely aware of the personhood of the female other and was able to create female characters who stand out in American literature as women of substance and individuality.” Though writing in 1984, Warren articulates a view with a sturdy provenance, the term “narcissistic” still able to cast its pejorative light on any subject. While I agree with Warren about the salutary qualities of Hawthorne's still controversial representation of women, I argue that Hawthorne's depictions of male sexuality are also a crucial aspect of the ways in which his work resists normative structures of gendered and sexual identities. Hawthorne's modulations of the myth of Narcissus throughout his work allowed him to develop a resistant attitude toward patriarchal constructions of masculinity, which in turn was an important dimension of his overall critique of gendered power in the United
States, a project that culminates in his extraordinary late, unfinished Septimius Felton/Norton manuscripts.

In order to make a case for the political value of the Narcissus theme in Hawthorne, it is necessary to establish the legitimacy of narcissism as an erotic and social economy. In most contexts, narcissism connotes a self-regard unseemly in its excessiveness, an egotism run amok; transatlantic Romanticism seems especially rife with such monstrous egotism. For Lillian R. Furst, the crux of the Romantic hero’s tragedy is that “his egotism is such as to pervert all his feelings inwards on to himself till everything and everyone is evaluated only in relationship to that precious self, the focus of his entire energy,” the result being that “no genuine, let alone altruistic love is possible.”

Furst’s view of the “blatant egotism” of the Romantic writer emblemizes the general view of Romantic male authorship. The “egotism” of which some critics accuse Hawthorne stems from this larger accusation of solipsism in transatlantic Romanticism. In addition to being framed as the bastion of white male privilege (Mulvey, Warren), narcissism has also been a pathological medical condition in several areas of psychoanalytic thought, including Freud’s, a problematic history which this study reexamines.

Perhaps a good place to start in our challenge to broad understandings of narcissism as pathological egotism is with the Romantics, whose work deeply influenced Hawthorne and other American writers of the nineteenth century. Percy Bysshe Shelley’s description of the titular phenomenon of his essay On Love goes directly to the heart of narcissistic self-representation:

Thou demandest what is Love. It is that powerful attraction towards all we conceive, or fear, or hope beyond ourselves. . . . If we reason, we would be understood; if we imagine, we would that the airy children of our brain were born anew within another’s; if we feel, we would that another’s nerves should vibrate to our own, that the beams of their eyes should kindle at once and mix and melt into our own; that lips of motionless ice should not reply to lips quivering and burning with the heart’s best blood. This is Love.

For Shelley, desire for another person is desire for self-likeness. While a long-standing tradition in the West has taken a similar view, it has done so in terms of the misogynistic construction of “woman” as the reflection of man, who sees in woman’s eyes the mirror image of his own beauty, physical and intellectual at once. Shelley, who was very much like the young Hawthorne a cynosure of the eye, was perhaps personally guilty of taking this view of
women in life. But in any event, in this essay his evocation of a desire for someone whose “nerves should vibrate to our own” resonantly evokes the intimacy of narcissism, or, more properly, the desire for intimacy of a particularly intense kind within narcissism. Moreover, it exposes the narcissistic core of desire, which, as Freud put it, has neither aim nor object, but, on the other hand, proceeds from the basis of a desire to replicate and rediscover the self. There is, too, an inherent vulnerability in narcissistic desire, a need for some kind of affirmation of one’s own worth on emotional and physical levels that is given through complementary resemblance. Male subjectivity is always figured as border-patrolled, as locked-down. Writers such as Shelley and Hawthorne suggest the porousness and fluidity of the male subject as well as the fragility of its constitution, the intense effort needed to maintain its surface logic of coherence and stability.

If psychoanalysis, as I will show, has no less consistently than the Western tradition put forth the view of narcissism as pathological, it can also be used provocatively to explore the centrality rather than the retrogressive role narcissism plays in desire. As psychoanalyst Wilhelm Stekel wrote:

Virtually every auto-erotic act is a manifestation of narcissism. For the pleasure is derived from one’s own body. Moreover, close psychologic scrutiny of human love relations discloses that every human being seeks his self, or his self-reflecting image, in others, and that every love, in a certain sense, is love of self. We but love ourselves in others and hate ourselves through our hatred of others.

Stekel provides a psychoanalytic version of Shelley’s desire for reassuring likeness. By adding the factor of autoeroticism, Stekel also reminds us of the sexual dimensions of self-fascination. I will discuss the distinctions between autoeroticism and narcissism in the first chapter, but let me establish here that, in Hawthorne’s own time, autoeroticism was a very troubling concept to many people. Broadly understood, it was, if anything, a more publicly denounced form of sexual expressiveness than homoeroticism. Autoeroticism was embodied negatively in the figure of the onanist, or masturbator. (From a psychoanalytic perspective, just as autoeroticism and narcissism are distinct from one another, autoeroticism cannot simply be reduced to onanistic practice; each has its own psychic characteristics.) The voluminous antebellum literature on the dangers of onanism, linked with same-sex sexual practices by such high-profile health reformers as John Todd, Sylvester Graham, and Mary Gove Nichols, classified autoerotic desire as no less pernicious than
same-sex desire, a bane to the emotional, spiritual, and physical integrity of the normative body. As Stephen Nissenbaum observed in his penetrating study of the Jacksonian era’s reformers, *Sex, Diet, and Debility*, Hawthorne’s work has much in common with themes in Graham’s tracts, especially.

Yet Hawthorne’s work also challenges the reformers’ uniformly phobic disdain for the autoerotic. He floods the concept of solitary pleasure with the free-floating urgency of phantasy. A prime example of his sensibility is the almost nakedly autobiographical story “The Haunted Mind” (1835), about the nighttime reveries of a young man on the verge of sleep (9: 304–9). As a phalanx of phantasms invade his drowsy mind, Hawthorne’s young man fitfully responds to each oneiric visitation, ranging from the intimidating, stern, masculine figure of “Fatality,” a demon that “touches” the “sore place” of the young man’s heart and embodies “Shame,” to a female presence whose “tenderer bosom” and softer breathing would be, the narrator “whispers,” such a pleasant addition to these “night solitudes.” By the last paragraph, the drowsy young man seems to achieve some form of climax: “the knell of a temporary death.” This work implies that the self is an ample and suitable site of erotic contemplation. Adding to this idea is Hawthorne’s rare use of the second person in the narrator’s description of these nighttime reveries. Addressing both his sleepy and contemplative protagonist and, implicitly, the reader as “You,” Hawthorne’s narrator maintains an emotional distance from both that is also redolent of spectatorial fascination. Mirror images, or more properly a chain of mirror images, narrator, protagonist, and reader reflect and double one another, simultaneously inciting desire, delaying climactic release, and then collectively experiencing this little death and its dreamlike, floating bodilessness.

Hawthorne’s work generally both supports and troubles the idea of solitary pleasure—supports by suggesting its possibility repeatedly, troubles by rendering the idea ominous. Giovanni Guasconti’s onanistic reveries in “Rappaccini’s Daughter” seem fueled as much by his own self-fixation as they do by the disturbing beauty of the story’s titular figure, but these reveries are harbingers of his own doom. Coverdale in *The Blithedale Romance* onanistically forereckons “the abundance of my vintage” high up in his inviolate bower, but he uses this vantage point to facilitate his obsessive voyeurism, as if to repudiate knowledge of his own onanistic desires. There is in Hawthorne a constant struggle between conflicted modes—empathy and scorn, desire and revulsion, respectful distance and invasive intrusion, and so on. Narcissism emerges as the chief site of these affectational and social struggles, their conductor and psychic source.
Before proceeding to a further clarification of my psychoanalytic method here, I want to establish my understanding of what makes Hawthorne, on balance, a radical writer—however many conservative tendencies inform his work at times—of the antebellum period. Critical treatments of Hawthorne, especially those written by prominent critics such as Sacvan Bercovitch, Jonathan Arac, and John Carlos Rowe, from the early 1990s to the present have framed him as a racist and a misogynistic writer, or, at best, a writer who failed to make his politics sufficiently active, decisive, visible, or resistant. Or, Hawthorne has been framed as a writer who couched his own quite adamant conservative politics in a coy rhetorical pose of political indifference. In my view, these critiques have at times misrepresented Hawthorne’s politics and art; more troublingly, they have stemmed from a larger critique of Hawthorne’s suspect “inaction” or passivity. While matters remain unsettled in terms of making sense of Hawthorne’s admittedly conflicted and often frustrating politics, Larry Reynolds in Devils and Rebels has done a salutary job of providing new cultural contexts for them. The themes of inaction and passivity, whatever they may have meant for Hawthorne as a member of his northern abolitionist community, emerge as central to his fiction. It is precisely in the strange passivity of Hawthorne’s men that the radicalism of his treatment of masculinity lies. Hawthorne evinces a career-long willingness to acknowledge the unspeakable and culturally silenced vulnerability in American manhood; moreover, he insists on viewing hegemonic masculinity from a skeptical perspective that emerges as a critique. Unsilencing the strictures of what T. Walter Herbert identifies as code masculinity, which demands a stoic reserve that kills off the range of human feeling in males, and offering a valuable, anguished, sometimes even angry critique of it, Hawthorne managed to resist the normative gendered standards of his era while also illuminating their pressures and effects. This book attempts to show just how illuminating Hawthorne’s work remains.

Building on the work of historians such as David G. Pugh, Michael Kimmel, E. Anthony Rotundo, and Andrew Burstein, I argued in my 2005 study Men Beyond Desire: Manhood, Sex, and Violation in American Literature that Jacksonian America produced a recognizably modern version of American manhood that privileged male competitiveness and physical strength and targeted nonnormative masculine behaviors—effeminacy, especially—as threats to the gendered stability of the nation. The diverse discursive forces at work in antebellum America, sometimes with wildly competing interests
and agendas—ideologies of self-made manhood and Jacksonian man-on-the-
make market competiveness; religious reformers and temperance advocates;
medical, health, and sexual reformers—united in the focus of their recon-
structive programs: the young white male and his often errant, volatile body
as well as spirit. Male sexuality—controlling, regulating, harnessing, and
properly directing it—emerged as the chief battleground of these ideologi-
cal battles. The particular form of male sexuality that emerged in antebellum
literature—the figure that I call *the inviolate male*—was a reaction not only
to the intensity of programs that sought to control male sexuality but also to
the sheer incommensurability of their competing demands.

Hawthorne’s work teems with emotionally, physically, and sexually invio-
late male figures who reject both female and male companionship, who are
in flight from marriage and other men. The formation of homosocial bonds,
or what I call compulsory fraternity, was (and, I would argue, remains) no
less a normative demand for the subject than marriage. At the same time, if
broadly speaking the gendered protocols of Jacksonian America demanded
phallic aggression and relentless ambition from its competitive, enterpris-
ing male subjects (and, from its female subjects, conformity to a new model
of female passionlessness and domesticity embodied by the emergent Cult
of True Womanhood), Hawthorne’s work abounds with men, particularly
young men, who eschew these market-driven models and attitudes. Haw-
thorne’s male characters retreat when they might be expected to drive ahead,
hide when others unceasingly seek. The passivity of Hawthorne’s males,
reflected in key patterns of his own life, especially in his politics, may reflect
an unwillingness to pursue proper (and prescribed) political values. But their
secretive, sensual slinking to the sidelines also refuses the gendered dictates
of Hawthorne’s own era, which, on so many levels, demanded maximal vis-
ibility from its male subjects.

Hawthorne, born in 1804, came of age in an America being shaped by
the masculinist and anti-European cult of Andrew Jackson. Though elected
in 1828 and re-elected four years later, Jackson had, in many ways, a three-
term presidency. Although John Quincy Adams, in what Richard Hof-
stadter, in his classic study *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, describes
as “a freakish four-way election,” defeated Jackson the first time he ran for
office in 1824, “Jackson was by far the more popular candidate.”22 The Battle
of New Orleans in 1815 was a decisive moment for both Jackson and the
nation’s self-definition. The famous battle—in which Jackson was celebrated
for having defeated the British, as if single-handedly—established him as a
military hero throughout the nation and solidified the American distrust
of and distaste for its own substantive European heritage. As an embodi-
ment of European values and valences, John Quincy Adams only managed to maintain a tenuous, unsteady hold on his own presidency. As Hofstadter describes,

Adams’s administration was the test case for the unsuitability of the intellectual temperament for political leadership in early nineteenth-century America. . . . Adams became the symbol of the old order and the chief victim of the reaction against the learned man. . . . As Adams embodied the old style, Andrew Jackson embodied the new. . . . In headlong rebellion against the European past, Americans thought of “decadent” Europe as more barbarous than “natural” America; they feared their own advancing civilization was “artificial” and might estrange them from Nature . . . [In Jackson] was a man of action, “educated in Nature’s schools,” who was “artificial in nothing” . . . Against a primitivist hero [like Jackson] . . . who brought wisdom straight out of the forest, Adams . . . seemed artificial . . . [When Jackson challenged Adams again in 1828], Adams was outdone in every section of the country but New England. 23

As Hofstadter put it, the terms of the election that resulted in Andrew Jackson’s 1828 presidency could be viewed as a battle between, in the words of a popular couplet of the time, “John Quincy Adams who can write / And Andrew Jackson who can fight” (159). 24

Rather than put up a fight, Hawthorne’s men forfeit their roles as social and sexual contenders and instead focus intensely on the self. This focus on the self was, in Hawthorne’s treatment, a parody of the cult of self-made manhood that ran the gamut from Jacksonian market-values to the loftier principles of Emerson-Thoreauvian Transcendentalism, with its focus on self-reliance and self-culture. Self-focus in Hawthorne promises subversively pleasurable possibilities while threatening to immure the subject in the narrow confines of solipsism. Passivity emerges as a strategy for allowing for these potential pleasures while staving off an impending obsolescence.

A great deal more work needs to be done on the schism between Hawthorne’s publicly avowed love not only for Jackson but for the very aggressive purposefulness he embodied, not just generally but in Hawthorne’s own view, and the thoroughgoing critique of masculinist power in Hawthorne’s work. Hawthorne offers scabrous critiques of men such as Judge Pyncheon in The House of the Seven Gables and Westervelt, Hollingsworth, Old Moodie, and even the narrator, Coverdale, in The Blithedale Romance, men who principally wield their power against those whose disadvantages leave them ill-equipped for a fight (the fragile elderly brother and sister Clifford
and Hepzibah in *Gables*; wan and withdrawn Priscilla as the Veiled Lady in *Blithedale*; that novel’s general populace subjected to Coverdale’s rapaciously voyeuristic gaze). While there are certainly masculinist attitudes in Hawthorne’s life and work, Hawthorne consistently strives to undermine the stability from which hegemonic masculinity proceeds to wield its various forms of power. As I will attempt to show in this book, Hawthorne was a resistant critic of the increasing masculinism of his culture in ways that have not always been apparent to his critics.

**THE PURPOSE OF PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM**

To return to the question of method: in speaking of psychoanalytic theory and of myth in relation to Hawthorne, I am both recalling earlier, no longer favored approaches to literary art and making a new, updated case for these approaches. While providing valuable insights distinctively its own, the historical approach to literature currently favored by Americanists cannot tell the full story of literature’s effects on readers nor of readers’ investments in literature. Though I believe that literary criticism must be sensitive to matters of history, I also believe that psychoanalytic theory is acutely adept at treating the affectional aspects of literary experience. One of my goals in this book is to make a case for the relevance, usefulness, and complementarity of psychoanalytic theory to historical studies of literature. I return to the question of the relationship between Americanist literary studies and psychoanalysis in chapter 3.

While I will have several occasions to establish, anew, why I feel that psychoanalytic theory is a useful means of studying Hawthorne’s work, I want to take a moment both to situate myself within a psychoanalytic literary studies framework and to explain why my approach also stands apart from this framework as well as from historical approaches to nineteenth-century literature. In his 1968 *The Dynamics of Literary Response*, once a well-known work, Norman N. Holland summarizes the elements of psychoanalytic literary criticism in chapters on fantasy, “form as defense,” displacement, character, affect, and related topics. Some of his comments in the 1975 edition seem to me enduringly apt:

> [As] readers, you and I bring certain characteristic expectations to a literary work and defend against or adapt the text to suit them. As I accept the text through my characteristic defenses, I project my preferred fantasies into it and transform those fantasies, using the text as absorbed, into a meaning
and coherence that matters to me. You do the same for you. The literary experience is the transformation described in *Dynamics*, but it takes place within each of us differently, because we each transform the resources the work offers us so as to express our different identity themes.26

Writing before identity politics, Holland presciently includes the idea of “identity themes.” While I am not writing from a standard identity-politics position, which focuses on positive images and an affirming group identity, my personal identity certainly shapes my politics and therefore my work. Writing as a multiracial gay man about a white and presumably heterosexual author, and writing very much from a presentist position while also striving to be historically scrupulous, I am quite self-consciously creating my own versions of Hawthorne and his work here which, while they may bear resemblances to the authentic manifestations of these, are very much shaped by my own sensibility. Certainly, I will concur with Holland that I am projecting my preferred fantasies into Hawthorne’s work and transforming those fantasies, using the text as absorbed, into a meaning and coherence that matters to me. (For Holland, “the reader introjects a process of psychological transformation [from unconscious fantasy toward conscious significance] that is embodied in the literary work.”) In so doing, I genuinely hope to speak to something that is authentically and independently alive and vital in Hawthorne’s work. But it is no more “explained” by psychoanalytic theory than it is by a scrupulous historical study—no more, that is, explained away by either. Because of Hawthorne’s genius as a thinker as well as prose stylist, his work not only withstands but also exceeds critical analysis. Yet critical analysis also has a life—a consecration, if you will—of its own, and its own meanings and reasons for existence. What I hope happens throughout this study is that my own identity themes and Hawthorne’s work as well as Freud’s can converge in ways that produce new meanings and readings of value.

As Stanley J. Coen writes in his fine study *Between Author and Reader*, psychoanalytic criticism is ill-advised to attempt to reconstruct the biographical author, as it did in the past (and as, it should be noted, many contemporary and decidedly nonpsychoanalytic approaches continue to do). “Beginning with a careful literary analysis, we must then demonstrate that a psychoanalytic perspective does indeed add something further to clarifying and enhancing multiple meanings and perspectives for enriching our reading experience of the text. Often the value in psychoanalytic literary criticism is not the psychoanalytic perspective or language but simply that it is good criticism.”27 I agree with Coen, and certainly hope to have produced good
criticism. But at the same time, psychoanalytic theory is not indistinguishable from other critical approaches. My commitment to it, which involves extensive revision of it from within, has a great deal to do with my political stances but also my own sensibility.

Psychoanalytic theory, to my mind, takes the best aspects of New Criticism—which, as has been amply shown, had many inherent flaws and ideological blindnesses—to a new level of theoretical sophistication, specifically in the belief in the importance and efficacy of close reading that both approaches share. But beyond this, psychoanalytic theory is particularly responsive, or at least can be made to be, to the emotional and other kinds of experiential aspects of gender and sexuality and also, though this area needs much more development within the discipline, racial identity. When informed by feminism, queer theory, and race theory, psychoanalysis can be a profoundly empathetic and suggestive means of developing enhanced, broad, and intimate understandings of identity and its implications.

For Hawthorne, writing in a literary era that placed severe restrictions on content, especially in matters of sexuality, and that, from the presidency of Andrew Jackson forward, set severe limits on gendered behavior for both men and women, literature was a means of expressing often taboo subjects in life as well as art. In my view, Hawthorne problematizes and even undermines normative gender and sexual roles (which is not to suggest that he does so with entire consistency or that a real conservatism in this and other regards is not also present in Hawthorne, only that it is not preponderant). But because Hawthorne does so, as he did just about everything, enigmatically, psychoanalytic theory, with its avowed interest in the unconscious and with parapraxis, slips of the tongue and other unintended revelations of unconscious thoughts and dynamics, becomes particularly useful for decoding his messages.

Hawthorne’s work remains deliberately, constitutionally enigmatic in ways that simultaneously resist and beckon interpretation. Psychoanalytic theory should be more than a figural attempt to pry open locked boxes with beguiling patterns on their surfaces. Instead, its own difficulties and its own biases as well as capacity for insight dynamically interact and intersect with the textual object to which the theoretical methodology is applied. My effort is not to apply psychoanalytic theory to Hawthorne’s work, but rather to compare both as modes of inquiry while letting each discover the other. What motivates me to study Hawthorne at length—beyond my belief that he is the greatest American writer of the nineteenth century—is that, in my view, Hawthorne is a radical theorist of gender, sexuality, and American masculinity. However many inherent and varied critical and literary dangers lurk
within such a treatment of an author, the allure of engagement and insight surpasses the fears they produce. In the end, any critical project is a work in progress to be, if not completed, at least extended and enlarged by the reader.

As Meredith Anne Skura writes in *The Literary Use of the Psychoanalytic Process*,

Using the psychoanalytic process as a model for literary texts does not imply that all conventions, all literal meanings, or all ordinary functions in a text are there only to be questioned. But it does provide a reminder that the questions are always there and that the uncertainty they produce is part of what the text conveys, even if this uncertainty is slight and finally resolved. Texts are more unstable than we might think; they are less fixed than simpler models that merely look for “hidden material” might indicate.28

Psychoanalytic theory is a complex model for the study of literature—complex both because it produces problems of its own that must be dealt with and because of the density and range of its invaluable insights. To use a Skura term, what psychoanalytic theory illuminates for us is “discrepancy”: the tension between what a work ostensibly strives to achieve and what it does achieve, the indications it gives that, on the way to its idiosyncratic achievement, the work has encountered numerous forks in the road, that numerous fissures have developed.

There are tantalizing discrepancies in Hawthorne’s work, ways in which he undermines the surface agendas of his narratives. Yet, at the same time, Hawthorne takes the very idea of narrative as an opportunity to subvert, to stage malevolent and upsetting fun and games. Moreover, as I have been suggesting, a genuine anguish courses through his witty menace. Psychoanalytic theory holds as a central premise that all is not what it seems, that all has not been made clear, in other words, that the unconscious has a powerful place in our lives that we struggle to understand. As I attempt to make use of it in this book, psychoanalytic theory can help us more fully and empathetically to understand the sources of Hawthorne’s anguish—in life, to a certain extent, but more importantly and expansively within the realms of his art. While my specific subject is the startling discrepancy between the nineteenth-century American model of hegemonic or code masculinity and Hawthorne’s representation of it, this focus leads to a broader set of reflections on the nature, or perhaps we should say the cultures, of gendered identity.
CHAPTER SUMMARIES

The book takes the following trajectory. In chapter 1, I discuss, in relation to Hawthorne’s work, both the Narcissus myth and the psychoanalytic treatment of narcissism as an early stage in human development that provokes a sense of “paradise lost” in the nostalgic adult subject. This nostalgia relates to the concept I develop of “traumatic narcissism.” I use this concept to interpret emotional patterns that recur in Hawthorne’s fiction—its deep senses of loss, anger, betrayal, cruelty, and sorrow. The discussion turns to the valences among narcissism and male homosexuality in Freud’s thought, the Ovidian version of the Narcissus myth, and Hawthorne’s particular uses of it. I then establish the terms whereby one of the most important areas of inquiry in the study—visuality and the sense of vision, related to shame and sadistic forms of looking such as voyeurism—will be discussed. Looking at Jacques Lacan’s and Laura Mulvey’s revisions of Freudian visual theory (the mirror stage and the gaze, and the male gaze, respectively), I discuss how their work helps us to understand the potential uses that can be made of Freud as well as certain pervasive themes in Hawthorne, in particular the confrontation with his own image on the part of the figure of the young man.

In chapter 2, I take these propositions further. I re-examine Freud’s often disputed if not altogether debunked theory of male homosexual psychosexual development, in which narcissism plays a central role, arguing that this theory, while not without some considerable difficulties, retains a value as an analysis of mother-identified male identity and the implications such an identity has for social relations. I reread Freud’s essay “On Narcissism: An Introduction” as an understanding of human subjectivity that provides a provocative alternative to the theory of the Oedipal complex. From the basis of this reading, I argue that Hawthorne explores same-sex love in his story “The Gentle Boy,” which I read as a complementary narrative to Freud’s theory of the male homosexual child’s psychosexual development, particularly in the centrality of the mother–son bond in both the tale and Freud’s theory. In this chapter, I begin to address the relationship between shame and narcissism in Hawthorne’s fiction as well as the relationship both thematics have to the equally substantial one in Hawthorne of vision and the gaze.

Chapter 3 discusses Frederick Crews’s Freudian interpretation of Hawthorne in his 1966 book The Sins of the Fathers and Crews’s later anti-Freudianism. From the 1980s to the present, Crews has emerged as one of Freud’s chief critics. In this chapter, I discuss Crews’s revisionist project, arguing that Crews’s early Freudian critique of Hawthorne was itself a misrepresentation of both Freud and Hawthorne. Challenging the emphasis that Crews
placed on the Oedipus complex in Hawthorne’s work, I explore the narcissistic themes at play within it, through close readings of the tales “Roger Malvin’s Burial” and “My Kinsman, Major Molineux.” In the reading of “Burial,” I develop the concept I call “murderous narcissism” as an alternative to the oedipal schema Crews sees at work in the story. In addition, I discuss the homoerotic significance of the classical allusions in the tale. With “Molineux,” I develop, from my readings of Freud, Lacan, and Mulvey, the concept of the “narcissistic gaze” in Hawthorne. The goal of this chapter is not to replace one powerful critical term with another—narcissism for the Oedipus complex—but, instead, to establish that a consideration of Hawthorne’s narcissistic themes allows us to shed new light on his interests in male sexuality, vision, and the gaze.

Chapter 4 refines the theoretical and thematic terms of the study as a whole. Here, I develop, through engagements with psychoanalytic and film theory, the ideas that Hawthorne’s narcissistic themes are informed by a career-long preoccupation with vision, especially in sadistic forms such as voyeurism, and with shame. I argue that, while an important theme in and of itself, shame proceeds from narcissism in Hawthorne’s work. Shame plays a key role in the “narcissistic crisis” that Hawthorne repeatedly stages. This chapter argues that Hawthorne’s critique of normative masculinity proceeds from his awareness of the potentialities of shame in narcissism and the relation both have to vision and masculinity. The particular, consistent ways in which Hawthorne conveys the affect of shame in his male characters are explored, as are the related experiences of gender alienation and heterosexual ambivalence. In this chapter, I introduce the concept of “self-overseeing.” Hawthorne foregrounds a heightened sense of panic within the male self’s encounter with the visual evidence of its existence. The moments in which male characters glimpse themselves, as if for the first time, are fraught with anxiety and even terror. Extending the themes of the Narcissus myth, with its ban on self-knowledge, these instances of self-overseeing reveal some core truth of the self, but this revelation fills the subject with dread and self-revulsion.

Chapter 5 builds on the previous chapter in its examination of the ethics of looking and the gaze. Through a close reading of The Blithedale Romance that draws on film theory as well as Freud and Lacan, I explore Hawthorne’s construction of a voyeuristic male subjectivity, unpacking psychoanalytic interpretations of voyeurism as a form of sadism, and the ways in which it is informed by both homoerotic desire and homophobic defenses. I treat voyeurism as an alternative form of narcissism while also considering the ways in which the novel thematizes the “pornographic gaze.” Miles Coverdale’s
ravenous desire to look at the other characters is read not as male mastery expressed through vision but, rather, as indicative of the essential fragility, as well as potential for cruelty and prejudice, in his persona. His own confrontation with images of normative, nonnormative, and even nonhuman masculinity provides some of the most dramatic moments in the novel. I examine these moments in terms of Hawthorne’s deconstruction of both the male gaze and the conventional male subject’s relationship to masculinity as a gendered standard. One of the main themes of the chapter is the propensity that the objects of Coverdale’s gaze have for returning the gaze and subjecting him to its own paralyzing effects. The chapter concludes with a comparison of the returned gaze in Hawthorne and Hitchcock.

In chapter 6, I switch gender lenses and focus instead on Hawthorne’s representation of femininity, arguing that, on balance, Hawthorne’s work is feminist in its identification with female figures and critical hostility toward masculinist power. This chapter compares Hawthorne’s tale “Rappaccini’s Daughter” to Freud’s essay “Medusa’s Head.” I discuss the myth figures of Medusa and Narcissus as complementary metaphors for the difficulties in gendered subjectivity. Male narcissism emerges here as a defense against female sexuality and homoerotic desire. I also insert the tale within the contexts of literary tradition and intertextuality that are, I feel, crucial to any understanding of Hawthorne. Among other intertexts, the Bible, Christianity, particularly the myth of the fortunate fall, and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* are discussed as source materials revised through Hawthorne’s particular interests in questions of gender, sexuality, and their psychological dimensions. Freud’s theory of male fetishism is discussed at length and used as a critical lens through which to analyze the deep structures of misogyny that Hawthorne, in my view, critiques in this work.

In chapter 7, I turn to a comparative discussion of Hawthorne and Melville that focuses on each writer’s reception of classical works of art, and classical male beauty in particular. Beginning with each writer’s impressions in his journals of the classical figure of Antinous, a legendary homoerotic icon, I explore the implications of Melville’s greater comfort with registering and recording homoerotic appreciation than that which Hawthorne exhibited. Considering his reconstructed late 1850s essay “Statues in Rome” and his *Billy Budd*, left in manuscript form and unpublished in his lifetime, I consider the ways in which Melville thematicizes what I call visual identity and its relationship to male sexuality. Hawthorne’s equally vivid and intensive thematicization of the concept occurs through means that are less explicit than Melville’s, but equally relevant to Hawthorne’s work. Between them, Melville and Hawthorne should be viewed as crucial contributors to what I term
transatlantic homoerotic visual culture. Considering each writer’s familiarity with the eighteenth-century German art historian Winckelmann’s theories of art, I argue that Melville and Hawthorne both take Winckelmann’s complex nonsensual homoeroticism to suggestive and provocative levels of engagement. Turning to Hawthorne’s 1860 novel *The Marble Faun*, I consider the significance of the titular figure to the narcissistic and homoerotic crisis Hawthorne thematizes in his work, and the ways in which the faun represents a kind of closure to this crisis.

In chapter 8, I turn my attention to matters of race, and the ways in which homoerotic narcissism intersects with race and gender. I argue for the aesthetic and political value of Hawthorne’s unfinished *Septimius Felton* and *Septimius Norton* manuscripts. First, I propose that Hawthorne’s late period deserves much more critical scrutiny and acknowledgment than it has been traditionally accorded. The “unfinished” nature of both of these texts may, I argue, be a strategic aspect of their political aims, or at least reflective of them on some level. Second, I discuss Hawthorne’s exploration of racial identity and the ways in which his narcissistic themes and interests in the gaze inform this exploration of race. I discuss the implications of Hawthorne’s “black” sensibility, as Melville put it, for his depiction of the multiracial Septimius Felton. Given the controversies that currently attend Hawthorne’s representation of race in the slavery era, my analysis makes the case that Hawthorne, in his late phase, much more thoughtfully engaged with matters of race and racism than he had in previous phases of his career. This argument seeks not to exculpate Hawthorne for his racism, but to provide a better context for it and also to enlarge the discussion of it. One way I do this here is to insert Hawthorne’s work within the growing field of “whiteness” studies. In psychoanalytic terms, I discuss the concepts of “ego ideal” and “ideal ego” in order to theorize the nature of Septimius’s desire, both for the Revolutionary War English soldier he kills and the mysterious woman (actually the soldier’s sister) with whom he develops a relationship.

In the epilogue, I discuss some fresh aspects of Hawthorne’s work that further illuminate its narcissistic thematic: his aesthetics and his representation of history as crisis for the individual subject. Revisiting Hawthorne’s elaboration of his aesthetic theory in “The Custom-House,” what I call his *textual narcissism*, I explore the ways in which Hawthorne represents art as a mirror in which the unconscious and matters of social reality have equal weight and can be brought into mutual dialogue. I insert Hawthorne’s aesthetics within philosophical treatments of narcissism’s relationship to language, considering the ways in which, first, the predicaments of the mythic Narcissus have been interpreted as indicative of the difficulties inherent in
writing and art generally, and, second, Hawthorne’s work illuminates and interacts with these philosophical questions. I then turn to Hawthorne’s idiosyncratic representation of history and its relationship to the individual subject in *The Marble Faun*. This discussion allows me to revisit the controversial issue of Hawthorne’s supposed ahistoricism. While critics such as Sacvan Bercovitch, Lauren Berlant, Eric Cheyfitz, and John Carlos Rowe have critiqued Hawthorne for his political conservatism and hypocritical poses of political naiveté, I argue here that Hawthorne offers a radical account of history as contingent upon individual experience and the question of desire. Hawthorne’s emphasis on the narcissistic dimensions of historical experience makes his interpretation of the historical no less challenging but also considerably more interesting than contemporary critical treatments have maintained.


The chief claim of this book is that Nathaniel Hawthorne’s work consistently evokes the core themes of the Narcissus myth: a beautiful young man whose beauty incites desire from both females and other males and whose cruel rejection of those in whom he has inflamed desire inflames a desire for vengeance in them; the staging of an encounter between a beautiful man and his reflection; the unattainability of this image of beauty, always tantalizingly out of reach; the often suppressed issue of same-sex desire that inheres within this myth that is essentially about a beautiful young man desiring another; and the intertwining of desire with death, as emblematized by the moment in which Narcissus stares at his image even in the River Styx on his way to the underworld in Ovid’s telling. The myth of Narcissus is also the myth of Echo, a powerful interpretation of women’s role in patriarchy. Echo is of great relevance to Hawthorne, whose work abounds with Echo figures struggling to make their voices heard even as they are denied a voice. In that all of these themes also preoccupy Freud, whose influence over my treatment of Hawthorne is considerable, the Narcissus myth looms above every aspect of the present study, from primary texts to a critical methodology itself under reconsideration.

The approach I take combines Freudian literary criticism with psycho-analytic queer theory. My view is that a comparative analysis of primary author and critical method yields a richer understanding of both. In comparing Hawthorne and Freud, reading them each through the other, I aim to develop a better understanding of the psychological and cultural components
of social constructions of normative male subjectivity and of literature’s role in both shaping and potentially undermining this subjectivity.

Both the Narcissus myth and the philosophical discussions it has engendered allow us to contemplate the essentially paradoxical nature of desire. The barriers to self-knowledge are many and formidable; we are strangers to ourselves. How much greater is the impasse between us and another. Is it really possible for us to connect to another person? For that matter, what, exactly, do we want to connect with in another person? Is it really possible for someone else to forge a connection with us? The Narcissus myth and its tradition provide a resonant treatment of such questions and opportunities for them to be raised anew. In Hawthorne’s evocation of the myth and Freud’s reimagining of it as a human being’s initial experience of the world, one he or she desperately attempts to regain, and in Lacan’s theory of the mirror stage, the child’s identification with and captivation by its own image, the Narcissus myth finds a potent new symbolic force. Hawthorne’s work demonstrates that narcissism can create discordant effects, register a wide range of erotic responses, and challenge hierarchies of gendered and sexual identity. Proceeding from the basis of the self allowed Hawthorne to write affectingly of the multifaceted complexity of human experience.

Given the deep controversies that attend all uses of Freudian theory, the first order of business for a study that calls for a return to Freud—albeit a most idiosyncratic one!—is to define the terms of my revision. I will be turning to Freud more directly in chapter 2; in this chapter, I provide a series of contexts for my specific uses of Freud’s concepts of narcissism, and especially for its centrality in his theory of male homosexuality. While many other Freudian concepts will be used in this study, the theory of male homosexual narcissism, which I argue can be used more generally as the model of mother-identified male psychology, is central to my analysis of Hawthorne’s work, its potential radicalism, and his treatment of male subjectivity. At the same time, by revisiting some of Freud’s most controversial and least critically supported arguments, I will attempt to demonstrate that they often retain a usefulness for questions of gender and sexuality. Before commencing psychoanalytic ventures into Hawthorne’s work, it will be helpful to revisit the Narcissus myth and its associations between same-sex desire and gendered anxieties.

A crucial thematic linking all of these concerns in the myth is the sense of vision. From Ovid to Hawthorne to Freud, vision is associated inextricably with masculinity and male sexual desire, whereas voice, or more properly voicelessness, as Echo’s role in the Narcissus myth achingly suggests, becomes symbolic of femininity and the female subject position in patriarchy. Freud’s theories of vision, particularly its relationship to shame and
sadistic forms of looking such as voyeurism, will be central to later chapters. In this chapter, I will turn to the two most important revisions of Freudian visual theory, Jacques Lacan’s theory of the mirror stage and the gaze and Laura Mulvey’s theory of the male gaze in the Hollywood cinema, both of which foreground narcissism and are crucial to the understanding of visual desire in Hawthorne’s depiction of masculinity. I outlined the Lacanian theory of the mirror stage in the introduction; here, my discussion of Lacan’s theory of the gaze allows me to establish my understanding of Hawthorne’s work as a scopic field in which the male subject is only one figure in a much broader visual expanse, which is to say, finds his own abilities to look and to wield power by looking entirely dwarfed by the larger scopic regime. Thinking about Hawthorne’s work in terms of the gaze makes it possible to think about its relevance to theories of film spectatorship such as Mulvey’s, and, more broadly, to think about literature’s relationship to visual art forms such as film. I discuss theoretical concepts such as narcissism, masochism, the mirror stage, the double, the male gaze, voyeurism, and fetishism in relation to Hawthorne’s work, not in order to “apply” psychoanalytic and film theory concepts to Hawthorne, but because I believe that, between Hawthorne and theory, a lively and affecting dialogue occurs about the constitutive psychological elements of gendered identity. In that Hawthorne troubles the meanings of these elements, his work is worth examining for its insights into the arbitrariness of their social standardization as gender-role norms.

OVID’S NARCISSUS

It will be helpful to this analysis to recall some of the particulars of the Ovidian version of the myth of Narcissus, which has been the most influential version of the myth by far in the Western tradition. Ovid makes it clear that Narcissus needs a comeuppance. Desired by both females and males, the beautiful Narcissus cruelly rejects his suitors of each sex, mocking “Hill-nymphs and water-nymphs and many a man” (The Metamorphoses, 3: 401). He is cursed by being forced to suffer the same fate to which he subjected all of his admirers, to love a beautiful boy who cannot return his love. The major interest in the myth isn’t Narcissus’s vanity and its rightful comeuppance, though, but rather his recognition of the pain his indifference to desire has caused his admirers. This recognition occurs only as the result of the curse. Maddened by the unending elusiveness of the boy he desires, Narcissus finally realizes that
Oh, I am he! Oh, now I know for sure
The image is my own; it’s for myself
I burn with love; I fan the flames I feel.
What now? Woo or be wooed? Why woo at all?
My love’s myself—my riches beggar me.
Would I might leave my body! I could wish
Strange lover’s wish!) my love were not so near! (3: 463–69)

Narcissus, the boy who mocked others’ desire, now burns with the same desire, forced to experience the same maddening longing he instigated in others. From Ovid forward, the myth has functioned as a cautionary tale on several levels, principally against pride and vanity; but it has also served as a template for normative desire, for desire itself as normative: Narcissus must learn how to desire. Paradoxically, in learning how to desire, Narcissus also learns how not to desire, and experiences the pain he caused others of having a desire that cannot be fulfilled.

Another important myth-figure is embedded within Ovid’s version of the Narcissus myth: Echo. Obsessed with Narcissus, Echo is constantly “following him,” as Robert Graves limns Ovid’s version of the myth, “through the pathless forest, longing to address him, but unable to speak first,” forever iterating her plea “Lie with me!” Narcissus’s harsh treatment of Echo as he adamantly dismisses her advances—“I will die before you ever lie with me!”—evince his cruelty.1 Yet Echo is cursed as a result of female rage against male power. A laughing, charming nymph, Echo distracted Juno while her spouse Zeus was off philandering with another nymph. Upon discovering Echo’s duplicity, Juno punishes her by denying her the ability to speak, rendering Echo capable only of repeating what someone else has said to her. One of the most poignant figures from classical myth, Echo can be used, in feminist terms, to represent women’s problematic role within patriarchy. If the position of Woman in the West, as Hélène Cixous argues, is one of decapitation—the denial of mind and voice—the myth of Echo encapsulates this position.2 If Narcissus, the beautiful man who falls in love with his own reflection, stands in for the conventional male protagonist, then Echo, the nymph denied her own voice, able only to echo the words spoken by others, provides the template for the traditional image of Woman, who can ostensibly only support, reflect—in a word, echo—narcissistic male leads.

“As Narcissus rejects Echo and the boys who want him,” Steven Bruhm describes, “he rejects not only the dictate to desire another (a socially prescribed and approved other), but also the drive to stabilize a range of binar-
isms upon which gender in Western culture is founded.” Bruhm lists some of the binarisms associated with the “problem of Narcissus” thusly: solipsism versus communality; surface versus depth; regression versus growth; madness versus sanity; self-obsession versus democracy; and sterility versus signification. Like Cooper’s Natty Bumppo, Stowe’s Uncle Tom, and Melville’s Billy Budd, Hawthorne’s male characters are often sexually inviolate, figures who reject both heterosexuality and compulsory homosociality in the form of the enforced fraternity of separate gendered, public/private spheres in Victorian America. (The figure of the sexually inviolate male is the central topic of my book *Men Beyond Desire*, in which I consider the development of the figure in works by Irving, Cooper, Poe, Melville, Stowe, Augusta Jane Evans, and, especially, Hawthorne.) In that Hawthorne’s sexually inviolate male characters reject both woman and man, they enact the Narcissus myth, as well as its terrible cautionary function: as Young Goodman Brown’s fate emblematizes, these young, rejecting men are themselves profoundly rejected by narrative itself, left to live and die alone.

**PARADISE LOST**

Before turning to Freud, I want to try to paint a psychoanalytic picture generally of how Freud’s theories of narcissism have contributed to our understanding of the subject’s relationship to his or her own subjectivity. Whereas Freud made an adamant and frequent case for the centrality of the Oedipus complex, which we will discuss in greater detail in the next chapter, others have amplified the importance of his theories of narcissism. Béla Grunberger, one of the finest psychoanalytic thinkers in the Freudian tradition, argues that narcissism plays a central role in the psychic life. Grunberger’s contribution is especially important because it implicitly challenges oedipal orthodoxy not only in Freud but also in psychoanalysis generally. The only normative oedipal outcome being properly achieved heterosexuality, any other kind of sexual orientation, such as homosexuality, will be seen as pathological and perverse. But this perspective overlooks and de-emphasizes not only the violence inherent within the *properly* resolved Oedipus complex but also the many deviations from it, the so-called negative Oedipus complexes that also account for a great deal of Freudian thought. Moreover, the focus on oedipal paradigms—emblematized, most significantly for this study, by Frederick Crews’s interpretation of Hawthorne’s work as principally a working out of the Oedipus complex—obscures the vital role that narcissism plays in the life of the body as well as the mind, when taken, as
Grunberger does, as an independent psychic agency. In chapter 2, I will demonstrate that narcissism provides a helpful alternative to the oedipal biases of Freudian theory.

“Narcissism should,” writes Grunberger, “be recognized as an autonomous factor within the framework of Freudian topography and be promoted to the rank of psychic agency along with the id, the ego, and the superego.” He argues that we should confer “on narcissism the rank of agency or motive force.”4 We long to return to an original, preverbal state of bliss, of “unrestricted autonomy and grandeur (the narcissist being one with the world, not delimited by the ego, which does not yet exist),” a state of well-being before trauma. We repress the “primal trauma” that shatters this once-experienced state of narcissistic bliss. “The repression remains superficial, however,” he continues, in regards to the individual, “and the memory of ‘paradise lost’ will never cease to haunt him throughout life, especially as the individual’s narcissism will always look on those ‘substitute’ pleasures with the scorn of the aristocrat for the rabble.”5

In chapter 3, I will engage with Frederick Crews’s work directly, but for now, let me note that it is difficult not to think here of his insightful description of “a certain impenetrable ceremoniousness that hints at aristocratic disdain for the coarse Jacksonian world” in Hawthorne’s sardonic prose.6 One thinks as well of the bitterness with which Hawthorne skewers those elderly Custom-House inspectors who dared to oust him from a job he hated. On some level, Hawthorne eulogizes a loss of something that he probably never possessed in life but may have had in phantasy (in psychoanalytic terminology, unconscious wishes). As Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis observe in their definitive The Language of Psycho-Analysis, “phantasy (or fantasy),” is an “imaginary scene in which the subject is a protagonist, representing the fulfillment of a wish (in the last analysis, an unconscious wish) in a manner that is distorted to a greater or lesser extent by defensive processes.”7 I would argue that the strange fascination with his Puritan forefathers that Hawthorne exhibits along with a revulsion toward them and their cruelly intolerant practices stems from his own narcissistic phantasy of having once possessed unlimited autonomy and control. Hawthorne’s elegiac oeuvre, suffused with an intertextual awareness of Milton’s poem about the Fall of Man (discussed at greater length in chapter 6), is haunted by a sense of paradise lost and unattainable. The vestiges of paradise that remain, such as the physical beauty of his Adamic characters, is a beauty tainted by postlapsarian blight, the shared trauma of human experience. Mark Edmunson helpfully reminds us that Paradise Lost was prominent among Freud’s favorite literary works.8 Both Hawthorne and Freud memorialize the moment in
childhood in which narcissism ceded to the oedipal social order, an order forever haunted by this lost narcissism.

If it is true of Hawthorne personally that, in his narcissistic self-representations, he may be said, in Freud’s language, to project before him as his ideal “the substitute for the lost narcissism of his childhood in which he was his own ideal,” Hawthorne does not present this ego ideal or ideal ego in wholly idealized terms. (I discuss these concepts, and the distinctions between them, more fully in the last chapter.) The ideal image of man in Hawthorne is also often a violated, blighted image of man. Awash in the revealed depravity of all the people he has reverenced throughout his life, Young Goodman Brown discovers himself to be the most horrifying sight in the Satanic nighttime forest; described as notably physically attractive, the young scholar Fanshawe nevertheless bears the mark of an incipient blight; Giovanni Guasconti, described as a Grecian beauty, discovers that Beatrice Rappaccini’s poison-plant blood now courses through his veins; beautiful young Donatello transforms into a haggard man over the course of The Marble Faun; and so forth.

Narcissism in Hawthorne carries with it an intense potential for dread; whatever form of self-investment manifests itself in his fiction is inextricably linked to pain, fear, and a predilection to aggressivity. Following Grunberger, we can understand that narcissism is above all else an agency that seeks a return to some mythic time—a paradise lost—before trauma. The fundamental trauma that shapes us, affects our individuation, and begins the process of our proper socialization is the separation from our mother’s body, an event that shatters the ideal state of oneness in which we knew no distinction between her body and our own. However pessimistic Hawthorne’s vision of the world, his pessimism flows out of a peculiarly ardent yearning for lost perfection, the idealized state of oneness in which child and mother’s body were, if only for a moment, indissolubly linked, a transition I discussed in a Lacanian vein in the introduction as the individuating subject’s passage into the Symbolic order. These themes are given their most acute treatment in “The Gentle Boy,” which, as I will argue, is a tale central to Hawthorne’s body of work. Within Hawthorne’s depiction of narcissism as linked to horrifying feelings of loss is some persistent, urgent belief in a recapturable state of perfection, a belief always conjoined to an equally powerful refusal of or resistance to the belief, not a surprising stance in an author so committed to his own skepticism. For these reasons, I argue that Hawthorne’s work foregrounds what I call a traumatic narcissism, a simultaneous nostalgia for a lost period of perfection and a bitter recognition of the impossibility of returning to this vanished, mythic state. If the Freudian concept of repetition-
compulsion has emerged as a key means of understanding the patterns of American masculinity from the early republic to the present. Hawthorne’s thematic of traumatic narcissism is a key aspect of what is politically resistant in his treatment of masculinity.9 The desire to return—or to repeat—is met with a stringent, self-critical self-awareness. Hawthorne promotes neither narcissistic nor compulsive longings to return or to repeat; indeed, he critiques the motivations for either. At the same time, he treats these motivations with a certain degree of empathy.

The young men who populate Hawthorne’s fictions reflect both nostalgia and a revulsion against it: nostalgia in that their state of physical perfection and ability to incite desire through the eye suggests an idealized representation of the self as youthful, desirable, and full of promise; revulsion in that their physical appeal jarringly contrasts with the inevitability of their ruin, on numerous levels. The loss and rage in Hawthorne parallel the psychoanalytic concept of grandiose narcissism, suffused with the pathological narcissist’s anger at the world’s failure to corroborate his own sense of his importance. Loss and rage also powerfully mock the promise of his comely male figures, making their pleasing outward show, paradoxically, the evidence of their doom and his despair. As I will further develop, male attractiveness appears to have provoked deep anxieties in Hawthorne, anxieties related to the cultural and social contexts of his own time, and to his personal experience of being a male in it. We will have several occasions throughout this study to revisit both these anxieties and their possible causes.

NARCISSISM AND THE PROBLEM OF HOMOSEXUALITY

Writers such as Ovid, Milton, Hawthorne, and Freud raise a question that will haunt the present study: To what extent is the narcissistic also the homoerotic? The episode in Book IV of Milton’s Paradise Lost in which the newly made Eve recounts her nativity is exemplary in this regard. Eve falls in love with her own reflection and must be led back into properly heterosexual love by God and Adam. At least insofar as traditional readings allow, her narcissism evinces her immaturity, the vanity that will make her susceptible to Satanic seduction; but one could also argue that her disrupted, abandoned narcissism was the original sexual desire forcibly denied her. Though there is indubitably considerable homoerotic potentiality within narcissism, the extent to which narcissistic desire can be deemed homoerotic remains a productively difficult question. And as the predicament of Eve’s desire more than suggests, female sexual desire, while linked in Milton to homoerotic
narcissism, poses its own set of equally urgent difficulties for patriarchy. Precisely these questions will be the focus of chapter 6.

While the question of same-sex desire in Hawthorne’s work looms large, the multivalent sexual registers of narcissism should not be ignored. I suggest that his narcissistic themes allowed Hawthorne to conduct a range of erotic energies; in making this suggestion, I aim to describe the capaciousness of narcissism as a textual experiment and an erotic sensibility. Given that my work represents a return to Freud from a queer theory perspective, it is important to acknowledge that the underpinnings of our current anti-narcissistic thought, enmeshed with homophobia, can be found in Freudian theory, albeit a Freudian theory, in my view, that has been distorted and misapplied.

In the life of the infant, narcissism is the stage between autoeroticism and object-love; Freud distinguished this “primary narcissism” from “secondary narcissism,” one of the many enigmatic and controversial aspects of his theory. I will explore Freud’s important 1914 essay “On Narcissism” in depth in the next chapter; for now, it will be helpful to consider some glosses of Freud’s thought. Explicating Freud’s 1914 essay, R. Horacio Etchegoyen importantly explains the difference between autoeroticism and narcissism:

Childhood sexuality is not unitary and is not directed toward an object: it is at first anarchic, its various components each seeking its own pleasure and finding satisfaction in the subject’s own body. Freud calls this stage “autoeroticism”; it precedes “alloeroticism,” in which the object appears. There is a stage between these two, in which the unified sexual instincts take as their object the individual’s own ego, which has been constituted at the same time. In this intermediate stage, called “narcissism,” the subject behaves as if he were in love with himself; his egoistic instincts cannot yet be separated from his libidinal wishes.

“It is worth emphasizing,” writes Etchegoyen, “that this condition is for Freud not only a stage in development but also a stable structure in the human being, who remains narcissistic even after finding an object.” As Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel notes, “Freud sees narcissism as not only one, or even several, stages of development, but as a permanent cathexis. It transforms the ego; as a result, objects can be cathected to different degrees, without the ego ever being able to give up entirely its libido in favour of its objects.”

Primary narcissism is the “original libidinal cathexis of the self”; in contrast, secondary narcissism, as Jeremy Holmes glosses Freud, is a regressive
state in which the libido “(here conceptualized as a kind of psychic fluid)” of narcissists is “withdrawn from the external world and reinvested in themselves and their own bodies.” As Holmes describes it, “Freud believed that people suffering from paranoia and schizophrenia, and to some extent hypochondriacal illnesses, regressed, often in the face of loss,” to this secondary narcissistic state, described by Ronald Britton as “libidinal narcissism.” In other words, secondary narcissism is a regressive resurgence of the libidinal investment in one’s own ego and body last experienced in infancy. Homosexuality has long been associated with this “regressive narcissism.”

One of the chief legacies of Freud is the view of narcissism and homosexuality as inextricably linked, the Siamese twins of psychoanalysis. Some scholars have sought to debunk entirely the relationship between homosexuality and narcissism, while others have reread the Freudian texts for precisely the value of the pairing. I am in this latter camp (in more ways than one!). It is important to remember that Freud himself universalizes narcissism within his discussion of the two types of infant sexual object-choice, which he distinguishes as the “anaclitic” and the narcissistic. Freud argues that narcissism bears a much greater significance than its prevalence among “perverts and homosexuals especially” would suggest, an observation that “provides us with our strongest motive for regarding the hypothesis of narcissism as a necessary one.” Though associated with the pathologization of homosexuality as narcissistic, Freud reveals narcissism, ostensibly the special penchant of perverts and homosexuals, as a universal sexual disposition: a primary narcissism exists in everyone (SE 14: 87–89). Certainly, as I discuss in chapter 2, Freud’s view of homosexual narcissism does indeed pose several great difficulties for queer theory, but I believe that it retains greater value than presently attributed to it.

A narcissistic sexual disposition is problematic for masculinity: on the one hand, narcissism is associated with homosexuality; on the other hand, it is associated with femininity. In Freud’s view, notes Etchegoyen, “only men are capable of attaining complete—that is, anaclitic—object love; women conform to the narcissistic type, loving themselves and needing to be loved before loving.” In chapter 6, I complicate the view of an essentially narcissistic female sexuality. Historically, psychoanalysis has viewed male sexuality as anaclitic, fully object-based; this is one of the psychoanalytic orthodoxies that I contest even as I employ the insights of psychoanalysis to think through Hawthorne, narcissism, and gender. Moreover, I will throughout this book challenge American psychiatry’s deployment of Freud to pathologize homosexuality as regressive narcissism, the specific subject of the next chapter.
HAWTHORNE AND LACAN
THE MIRROR STAGE AND THE GAZE

Hawthorne’s work, in its increasing preoccupation with vision and visual culture, prefigures the cinema. The relationship between language and vision, in either representation or psychoanalytic theory, is a complex, indeed quite a vexed one. Freud’s French interpreter Jacques Lacan’s is best-known for his influential theories of language and its crucial relationship to the formation of a subject. Leaving behind the pre-oedipal world of the mother, the subject becomes a subject by entering the father’s Symbolic order of language and law. If Lacan privileges the linguistic, his equally influential treatment of vision—exemplified in the mirror stage (which we outlined in the introduction) and the gaze—is well worth noting. Lacan’s theories of subjectivity foreground not only language but also vision, perception, image, and illusion as fundamental to the subject’s formation and lived experience.

In chapter 4, I will discuss Freud’s theories of vision; for now, let me establish that Lacan’s refinement of Freudian paradigms of vision into the theory of the gaze is crucial to our discussion. Lacan’s theory of the gaze emerges from his disagreement with Sartre. Lacan disputed Sartre’s conflation of the gaze and the act of looking. For Lacan, “the look” and “the gaze” are not the same thing. In Lacan’s theory, the gaze actually becomes the object of the act of looking. When the subject looks at an object, this object is already looking back at the subject. Yet the subject can never see the object looking back at it; the object looks back at the subject from a vantage point that the subject can never see. For Lacan, there is a paradoxical blindness at the heart of vision.

As Lacan explains in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, “From the outset, we see, in the dialectic of the eye and the gaze, that there is no coincidence, but, on the contrary, a lure. When, in love, I solicit a look, what is profoundly unsatisfying and always missing is that—*You never look at me from the place from which I see you.*” “Conversely,” Lacan adds, “*what I look at is never what I wish to see.*”17 What is poignant in Lacan’s discussion is that we are never able to see, certainly never able to see what we wish to see, never able really to see another, and never truly able to be seen by another. The emptiness and the disconnectivity of the gaze speak to narcissistic desire, a desire as unrealizable as it is maddening. In league with the Narcissus myth, psychoanalysis figures the relationships between the self and itself and between the self and the object of desire as equally and fundamentally impaired, the result of a profound, unbridgeable impasse. At the heart of the gaze is the plangency of narcissistic desire.
To explain the way that Lacan differentiates the eye or the “look” from the gaze, Kaja Silverman makes the analogy that the eye and the gaze are, in psychoanalytic theory, as distinct as penis and phallus. Whereas the penis is the male biological sexual organ, the phallus is the abstracted form of symbolic male power. (Indicative of our cultural misogyny, there is no correspondent abstract terminology for female sexuality. I would offer yonic as the female equivalent of phallic in terms of such symbolism.) Similarly, while the eye is the biological organ of sight, the gaze is the abstracted form of vision, far broader than any one individual’s act of looking. As Silverman continues, “Although the gaze might be said to be ‘the presence of others as such,’ it is by no means coterminous with any individual viewer, or group of viewers. It issues ‘from all sides,’ whereas the eye ‘[sees] only from one point.’”

As Lacan himself would have it, in an illustrative discussion of Sartre’s _Being and Nothingness_, “The gaze in question is certainly the presence of others as such. But does this mean that originally it is in the relation of subject to subject, in the function of the existence of others looking at me, that we apprehend what the gaze really is? Is it not clear,” Lacan presses, “that the gaze intervenes here only in as much as it is not the annihilating subject, correlative of the world of objectivity, who feels himself surprised, but the subject sustaining himself in a function of desire?” If the gaze’s chief usefulness is to the subject who wants to sustain his desire, the questions for our reading of Hawthorne works prominently include: What is the subject’s desire?

Hawthorne devises theories of vision that prefigure Freudian and Lacanian paradigms, evoking the tensions that undergird them. His work makes the fearful encounter with one’s own image and the subject’s entrapment within the logic of the visual chief concerns, affectingly rendered. Hawthorne may be said to make the fateful encounter with the specular self his great subject. But more broadly, the powerlessness of Hawthorne’s avid male lookers corresponds to the Lacanian understanding of the subject of the gaze as only one aspect of its larger scopic regime, engulfed within the overarching structures of vision in which subjects vie for illusory and impossible power. As I will show in chapter 5, _The Blithedale Romance_ exemplifies the Lacanian aspects of Hawthorne’s fictional staging of the gaze.

**HAWTHORNE AND MULVEY**

Narcissism in Hawthorne functions as an approach to masculinity that radically deceneters and reorganizes it; in Hawthorne, men do not occupy clear-cut roles of dominance and mastery, which typically endow them with the
power of the gaze, but instead come under visual scrutiny themselves as often as they subject others to it. In her famous 1975 essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” Laura Mulvey argued that the woman in classical Hollywood cinema connotes “to-be-looked-at-ness.” In their effort to see their own reflections, men use women as mirrors for male resplendence, rendering women visual helpmeets. Yet in Hawthorne, males also connote this quality. Moreover, it is their own image they seek to find, a quest with homoerotic implications as well misogynistic ones.

Mulvey influentially but also controversially argued that the classical Hollywood cinema, a key manifestation of attitudes of the dominant culture, is organized around the male gaze, presumably the white, heterosexual male gaze, which objectifies women, the to-be-looked-at sex, by turning them into visual spectacles. Devoid of any autonomous power, the women in film exist to mediate the protagonist’s own fears of castration. Todd McGowan has recently taken Mulvey to task for being insufficiently Lacanian in her theorization of the gaze, returning us to Lacan’s original paradigms. Yet we can say that Mulvey, drawing on Lacan, formulates her own theory of the gaze in relation to Lacan as well as Freud; her version of the gaze is more local, immediate, and direct, the force of one person’s eyes on another. The man’s eyes are powerful because the entire field of vision is structured around traditional masculinity and its demands, which include an incessant staving off of castration fears. As Mulvey theorizes it, the protagonist has recourse to two strategies for fending off these fears: voyeurism (investigating the woman, solving her mystery) and fetishism (focusing on certain parts of her body, such as the face or the breasts). I rehearse Mulvey’s views here, not to imply that I fully agree with them, either in terms of the classical Hollywood cinema or of Hawthorne’s work, but to establish that they continue to be relevant to any understanding of the role of vision within theoretical concepts of gendered identity, generally. I do not accept Mulvey’s view of the static and fixed nature of the male gaze in terms of identification and power; whereas Mulvey sees the spectator and the classical Hollywood protagonist sharing masculinist power, I see the process as much more unstable and much more fluid. There is nothing stable or coherent in the gendered gaze; moreover, the gaze itself is heterogeneous, multiple. Mulvey establishes a view of the Hollywood protagonist as well as the spectator as both male and stably heterosexual, which is clearly false on both counts. It should be added that Mulvey has simultaneously qualified her views over time and maintained her basic thesis. At the same time, I have yet to encounter any treatment of queer dimensions within the classical Hollywood cinema or in terms of the gaze in her work. This being said, though, my view of the gaze
is closer to Mulvey’s than it is to Lacan’s. Like her, I see the gaze as a field of vision in which looking has a real-life impact on those being looked at, and on the looker, whereas for Lacan the major emphasis is on the blindness at the heart of vision, the impossibility of seeing, and the gaze as a vast structure that is quite indifferent to the individual subject.

For Mulvey, narcissism is thoroughly the domain of male privilege: the shared gaze of the spectator, who is gendered male, and the male screen protagonist return both to a pre-oedipal state of narcissistic omnipotence. I respect her feminist perspective though I do not agree with her here. If we take Mulvey’s claims broadly as a problematic but nevertheless highly suggestive theory about the traditional, normative patterns of gendered vision in our culture, what is remarkable about Hawthorne’s work is the extent to which he refuses and overturns assumptions about gender and the gaze. (Though I am aware that in making this comparison my argument threatens to descend into anachronism, I treat Mulveyan theory as an articulation of long-standing patterns of gender and vision in the Western tradition; Mulvey herself frames her discussion in this manner.)

Repeatedly, Hawthorne’s male characters provoke and incite the gaze, becoming themselves entrapped within it; repeatedly, his male characters inspire the speculative sexual contemplation usually associated in narrative forms with desirable female figures. This is not to suggest that Hawthorne stints on depicting female beauty; far from it. Rather, as does Herman Melville, Hawthorne strives to give masculinity an equal claim to beauty. Very often, though, Hawthorne’s interest in the beauty of his male characters bafflingly exceeds the parameters of the work. In ways that are indubitably linked to this last point, Hawthorne figures shame and trauma as central components of narcissism, and narcissism as fundamentally related to the relationship between gender and vision. These consistent associations make his work relevant for queer theory as well as psychoanalysis, and both relevant for an interpretation of his work.

In chapters 4, 5, and 6, I will consider voyeurism as another dimension of Hawthorne’s narcissistic thematic. In the next chapter, I discuss Freud’s controversial theory of male homosexual narcissism—which many will with justification feel has already been quite thoroughly debunked, but which still retains, in my view, an eerie relevance—in relation to Hawthorne’s short story “The Gentle Boy.” This chapter will begin to develop the relationship between shame affect and narcissism in Hawthorne’s work. Before bringing this chapter to a close, I want to forecast a finding that I elaborate upon in chapter 7, which focuses on Hawthorne’s (and Melville’s) reception of classical male beauty.
Throughout his work, Hawthorne foregrounds a particular understanding of self, sexuality, and the body. His work thematizes what I call visual identity, the conceptualization of the self as a perceivable visual image, something extruded upon the surface of the world as a reflection of a private, interior self the existence of which can be affirmed only through this visualization. Which is to say, selves are only known or knowable through their outward manifestation in physical form. Visual identity is certainly not exclusive to males; indeed, the entire postclassical Western tradition has emphasized the visual aspects of beauty as a female domain. But what is of interest in Hawthorne is that the visual aspects of beauty are no less tangibly embodied in males than in females. Given the often idealizing tendencies of nineteenth-century American Romanticism, this might not be such a singular trait in an author’s work. One readily recalls descriptions of male beauty in Cooper (“comely” young Jasper in The Pathfinder), Poe (the eerie, ruined beauty of Roderick Usher), Stowe (the louche handsomeness of Augustine St. Clare, and the sturdy one of Tom), and especially Melville (Marnoo, his island Apollo in Typee; his charming Carlo, always displaying his “organ,” and vulnerable dandy Harry Bolton in Redburn; and his immortal Billy Budd). But what is resistant—and highly disturbing—in Hawthorne is how stringently he incorporates the male’s beauty not only into the networks of the desiring gaze, making men equal-opportunity objects before it, but also into his fiction’s moral schemes, in which beauty emerges as a troubling and troubled outgrowth of a view of the world as a visual regime. Melville, without question, may be said to be doing something quite similar, especially in Billy Budd. But the difference between both authors is that in Hawthorne, depictions of male and female beauty are equally weighted, whereas in Melville, beauty is disproportionately male. It would follow, then, that Melville is the “queerer” author, but such is not the case. Male beauty in Hawthorne emerges as a surprising disturbance within an exquisitely outlined and developed heterosexual economy of gender, difference, and desire, a self-undermining, inherent queerness within normative heterosexuality. To the extent that this is also true of Melville’s writing, his relative lack of interest in femininity (and I do mean relative, since it would be quite inaccurate to say that women are not present, sometimes crucially present, in Melville’s work) creates discrete, discordant effects. In short, Hawthorne and Melville are alike in their incorporation of queer themes, but each figures queerness in his own way.
The beauty of Hawthorne’s men heightens their susceptibility to moral corruption. Or, as in the case of his gentle boy, it signifies his predicament in a culture that emphasizes normative masculinity, which Hawthorne everywhere shows to be indistinguishable from an overarching cultural and social structure of brutality. Hawthorne’s work makes us consider anew the dynamics and the difficulties of a lived subjectivity that is inextricable from one’s outward manifestation of this subjectivity, which is to say, one’s visual identity.
INTRODUCTION

1. In contrast to Hawthorne, Herman Melville has the mythic figure of Narcissus making an explicit appearance in the first chapter of Moby-Dick, or The Whale. The main source text for the Narcissus myth is Ovid's The Metamorphoses, one of the key classical texts for the European-American literary tradition; Hawthorne was familiar with the 1717 translation of the Ovidian Narcissus myth by Joseph Addison. In addition to Ovid's, the volume of mythology that Hawthorne specifically cited as a source for his two children's books of classical Greek mythology, Anthon's Dictionary, was published in 1841 and went through several editions. "Not once, however, in either his fiction or journals or letters did he ever mention Narcissus specifically, as did Herman Melville, or others of his era. Yet the presence of the deluded beautiful youth seems to haunt the subconscious world of the New England writer, providing much of his narrative structure and his characterizations," an assessment with which I am in agreement. See MaryHelen Cleverly Harmon's dissertation The Mirror of Narcissus: Reflections and Refractions of the Classical Myth in the Short Fiction of Nathaniel Hawthorne (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1981), 27–28; 34; 37–38.


4. To offer an absurdly simplified summary: the other orders are the Symbolic and the Real. The Symbolic is associated with language, law, rationality, and is therefore the order of the father, whose name and law language enacts; it is through the symbolic that we are produced as “subjects.” The Real is the unrepresentable, that outside or prior to the
symbolic, sometimes referred to as “the impossible”; it is the material of life that cannot be incorporated into the forms of signification, such as language.


8. See chapter 7 of Castiglia’s *Interior States: Institutional Consciousness and the Inner Life of Democracy in the Antebellum United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008). This is a rich and provocative discussion of Hawthorne’s engagement with the disciplinary culture of interiority through which, in Castiglia’s view, the antebellum United States organized the emotional, somatic, legal, and criminal dimensions of its social order. Given that my work, rather than striving for a “post-interiority,” attempts to make sense of the lived experience of interiority that Castiglia critiques as a discursive phenomenon, I find his argument quite differently motivated from my own.


11. Ibid., 64.


14. In contrast to Freud in the pathologizing dimensions of his theory of narcissism and the trends of American psychiatry, Heinz Kohut, in *The Analysis of the Self* and other writings, offered a radically normalized view of narcissism, which he saw as linked to poor early attachment but also as a commonplace, nonpathological aspect of emotional and psychosexual life.


16. Wilhelm Stekel writes, “I consider auto-eroticism, the expression proposed by Have lock Ellis, preferable to the antiquated and abused term, onanism.” For Stekel, the psychic aspects of onanism are just as crucial an aspect as any other, hence his preference for “auto-erotic.” Ibid., 31.

17. Sylvester Graham’s writings are exemplary of these concerns. To his horror, as he wrote in *A Lecture to Young Men*, Graham discovered that public school boys who masturbated even engaged in “criminal,” “unnatural commerce with each other!” thus belying any critical notion that homosexual relations are never explicitly specified in nineteenth-century texts before the 1860s. Sylvester Graham, *A Lecture to Young Men* (1834; repr., New York: Arno, 1974), 43.


24. Ibid, 159.

25. Hawthorne joined in public celebrations of Jackson, much to the surprise of his sister Elizabeth. As Edwin Haviland Miller describes of Hawthorne, “One of his heroes was the greatest Democrat of his era, Andrew Jackson, who was scarcely tolerated or even mentioned in elite circles in Salem. Jackson, however, was in the tradition of the Hothornes: virile, energetic, and more than a little ruthless. When Jackson visited Salem in 1833 after his reelection Hawthorne walked to the outskirts of the town, in the words of his sister Elizabeth, ‘to meet him, not to speak of him, only to look at him; and found only a few men and boys collected, not enough, without the assistance that he rendered, to welcome the General with good cheer.’ Forty years later Elizabeth was still surprised: ‘It is hard to fancy him doing such a thing as shouting.’” As Miller further observes: “Hawthorne’s opinion remained fixed. In 1858 he insisted that Jackson ‘was the greatest man we ever had; and his native strength, as well of intellect as of character, compelled every man to be his tool that came within his reach; and the cunngier the individual might be, it served only to make him the sharper tool.’ He wished in a strange mismatching that ‘it had been possible for Raphael to paint General Jackson.’” Miller, *Salem Is My Dwelling Place* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991), 89.


Graves’s summary useful, but I should note that classicists have very little use for Graves’s work, which has been discredited within the field.


5. Ibid., 107–8.


13. It is worth considering here the unsettled nature of the question of the difference between primary and secondary narcissism; from my perspective, the more we understand how frustratingly inconclusive Freud’s essay on narcissism remains for many, the better, for it is precisely this inconclusiveness that makes fresh readings of the work possible and resists any normalizing, pathologizing application. As Ruth Leys puts it in her important study of trauma, Freud’s concept of primary narcissism is “notoriously problematic.” Discussing the incoherencies inherent in this concept, Leys discusses the preliminary definition of it offered by Laplanche and Pontalsis. They “describe primary narcissism as an ‘early state in which the child [or ego] cathects its own self with the whole of its libido.’ But as they make clear,” Leys continues, “precisely the status of the ego is problematic in such a formulation. On the one hand, as a state in which the ego takes itself as its love-object, primary narcissism corresponds to the first emergence of a unified subject or ego. On the other hand, Freud also conceptualized primary narcissism as a primitive state of the infant that occurs prior to the formation of an ego, a state epitomized by life in the womb.” In this view, primary narcissism is an “objectless state, implying no split between the subject and the external world. As Laplanche and Pontalsis comment . . . it is difficult to know just what is supposed to be cathected in primary narcissism thus conceived.” Jean Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Norton, 1974), quoted in Ruth Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 139.
14. Michael Warner offers a valuable critique of psychoanalytic denunciations of homosexuality as narcissistic, but to my mind his argument is deeply hampered by a reductionist view of Freud that does justice to his treatment neither of homosexuality nor of narcissism. The best overview I have found of the radicalism possible in psychoanalytic discussions of narcissism is Dean and Lane’s introductory essay to *Homosexuality and Psychoanalysis*. Andrew Morrison collects significant contributions from leading thinkers such as Freud, Heinz Kohut (whose efforts to depathologize narcissism are distinct from many of those of the twentieth century), Otto Kernberg (most notable for his theory of the grandiose self and narcissistic rage), and the overlooked but deeply insightful Annie Reich (wife of the more famous Wilhelm) in his *Essential Papers on Narcissism*. Notably absent from Morrison is Jacques Lacan, whose writing on narcissism is extensive. In his essay “Homosexuality and the Problem of Otherness,” Dean provides a helpful unpacking of Lacan’s views. While Lacan considers narcissism pathogenic, writes Dean, it is “as a consequence not of homosexuality but, more generally, of the ego’s delusional attachment to a mirage” (Tim Dean and Christopher Lane, eds., *Homosexuality and Psychoanalysis* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001], 127). See Bruhm and Kochhar-Lindgren for particularly interesting reinterpretations of narcissism: Bruhm calls attention to the homoeroticism of the myth, whereas Kochhar-Lindgren focuses on narcissism as an inability to recognize otherness.

15. All quotations from Freud will be taken from *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (SE) and will be noted parenthetically in the text.

16. Etchegoyen. 66.


CHAPTER 2

1. I want to thank Dr. David Diamond for kindly reading an early draft version of this chapter and generously sending me his responses, which I found to be valuable, challenging, and insightful. Dr. Diamond pointed out to me that Ilbrahim is keeping vigil at the scene of his father’s death at the start of the story, suggesting a strong oedipal-paternal identification. This is not a dynamic that I focus on here, but I believe it is one that is worthy of further consideration.

2. For his discussion of the historical emergence of homosexuality in the latter half of the nineteenth century, a theory that has sometimes had the effect of creating a view of homosexuality as an invention datable only from this period forward, see in particular Michel Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, trans. from the French by Robert Hurley (1988; New York: Vintage Books, 1990). A great deal of work done on both Foucault and the question of nineteenth-century sexual history over the past decade has significantly enlarged our understanding of the latter and usefully clarified the claims of the former.

4. Relevant for our study, Friedman and Downey do discuss the mother–child relationship to a certain degree.

5. It should be clearly stated that my project proceeds from the theoretical, rather than clinical, dimensions of psychoanalysis, and that any attempt to rethink narcissism has to take into account that pathological forms of it do indeed exist in severe mental illness, such as schizophrenia and other forms of psychosis. Less severely, but nevertheless painfully, the narcissism of intensely self-involved persons for whom an obsessive interest in the self damagingly limits their emotional lives and intersubjective relationships must be understood as problematic, as a barrier between satisfying relationships with self and other.


7. Ibid., 200.

8. Ibid., 202.

9. Ibid., 206.

10. Freud wrote *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* in 1905 but kept adding to it until 1924. This footnote was added by Freud in 1910.

11. Socarides was a pioneer in the movement to “cure” homosexuality through psychiatry. As Ronald Bayer discusses, Socarides was to become, “in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a leading and forceful proponent of the view that homosexuality represented a profound psychopathology.” In Socarides’ own words, “Homosexuality is based on fear of the mother, the aggressive attack against the father, and is filled with aggression, destruction and self-deceit. It is a masquerade of life in which certain psychic energies are neutralized and held in a somewhat quiescent state. However, the unconscious manifestations of hate, destructiveness, incest and fear are always threatening to break through.” See Ronald Bayer, *Homosexuality and American Psychiatry: The Politics of Diagnosis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 34–38. Socarides quoted in Bayer, 34.


13. Ibid., 181.

14. Freud’s difficult treatment of the Oedipal complex for girls remains deeply controversial. Without discounting the problems of Freud’s sexism, I would argue that we can say that he exposes the effects of misogyny at the same time as he constructs them. I discuss the uses that can be made of Freud’s theories of women at greater length in chapter 1 of my book *Representations of Femininity in American Genre Cinema: The Woman’s Film, Film Noir, and Modern Horror* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).


17. Freud often discusses the ways in which the Oedipus complex goes awry for those who emerge as heterosexually oriented. The masochistic male who emerges as heterosexual doubles the homosexual male in his complex maneuvers to reimagine, innovate, and thwart the normative course of the Oedipus complex; though a sustained discussion of this point exceeds the scope of this chapter, the valences that exist between male heterosexual masochism and male homosexual narcissism—both of which processes privilege the maternal rather than paternal role in the Oedipus complex—demand a thorough investigation. Indeed, one could make the case that it is Freud’s theory of heterosexual male masochism, which involves identification with the mother, that is even more germane to Hawthorne. Certainly, there are masochistic elements in Hawthorne’s representation of masculinity, but to my mind the thematization of narcissism in Freud’s theory of male homosexuality, when linked to identification with the mother, sheds more light on Hawthorne’s work. As Leland S. Person persuasively argues in his review essay “Middlesex: What Men Like in Men,” *American Literary History* 17, no. 4 (2005): 753–64, the varieties of male desire for other males, however we define this desire, is wide-ranging. The male-identified homoeroticism in Hawthorne’s work, suggested by his idolization of the rough-hewn President Andrew Jackson, would be a compelling subject for future study.


25. Ibid., 130.


27. Freud’s Wolf-Man case study, *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis*, was written in the year 1914, but did not appear in print until 1918.


29. Frederick Crews, *The Sins of the Fathers: Hawthorne’s Psychological Themes* (1966; repr., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 67–72. Masochism in Hawthorne is far from an unimportant issue, but Crews’s argument is characteristic of his frequently highly conventional uses of Freud, which at times blunts the effectiveness of his often insightful treatments of Hawthorne. A more thorough and complex treatment of Freud’s theory of
masochism would need to be undertaken for real clarity about the issue’s development in Hawthorne to be gained.

30. All quotes from Hawthorne are taken from the Centenary Edition of Hawthorne’s works, and all volume and page numbers will be noted parenthetically in the text.


32. Brenda Wineapple, Hawthorne, 16.

33. See, especially, Mitchell’s Siblings: Sex and Violence (Polity, 2004).


35. I discuss these issues at length in the introduction and in chapter 2, Men Beyond Desire, passim.


37. Wineapple, Hawthorne, 31; 15.


39. Lewes, Psychoanalytic, 84.


CHAPTER 3

1. My view of Freud has been influenced by Leo Bersani, one of Freud’s most radical and galvanizing interpreters, especially in a queer theory context. See especially Bersani’s The Freudian Body (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986). For a discussion in which I establish my disagreements with Bersani, particularly his views on queer masochism, see Greven, Manhood in Hollywood from Bush to Bush (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009).

2. There is much to admire in Berlant’s invaluable and still-provocative reading. I also feel that it is consistently a distortion of Hawthorne’s personal literary investments, especially in terms of his identification with Hester Prynne. See Lauren Berlant, The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).


8. Crews wrote disdainfully in 1966 of James K. Folsom’s book *Man’s Accidents and God’s Purposes: Multiplicity in Hawthorne’s Fiction* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1963): “concluding regretfully that Hawthorne considers Oneness inscrutable,” Folsom “claims that the concept of ‘multiplicity’ governs the tales and romances.” But Crews seems to share Folsom’s view even as he dismisses it: Hawthorne “was aware that in exposing our common nature he was drawing largely on his own nature”; “uneasy with the self-revelatory aspect of his work,” Hawthorne with “one arm strikes a pose of cold dignity and holds us at bay, but with the other beckons us forward into the cavern of his deepest soul.” Crews, *Sins*, 9; 11–12.

9. “Roger Malvin’s Burial” was first published separately in 1832 and was later included in the collection *Moses from an Old Manse* (1846).

10. One could make the case that the young man / old man split is also fundamental to Edgar Allan Poe’s work—one immediately thinks of tales such as “The Man of the Crowd,” in which the narrator insatiably follows around an old man with an insatiable desire for crowds, and of “The Tell-Tale Heart,” in which the narrator kills an old man whose titular heartbeat drives him mad. Homoeerotic valences charge these as well as other Poe works with a disturbing intensity, disturbing because the homoe eroticism is indistinguishable—indeed, constitutive of—a deep psychic dislocation. Herman Melville’s work is rife with split masculinities. His fictional worlds—especially in his sea fiction but not only there—are dominated by older men who prey on younger men, a form of dominance with often violent sexual implications, that is, implications of real sexual violence.

11. “She heard him not. With one wild shriek, that seemed to force its way from the sufferer’s inmost soul, she sank insensible by the side of her dead boy. At that moment, the withered topmost bough of the oak loosened itself, in the stillly air, and fell in soft, light fragments upon the rock, upon the leaves, upon Reuben, upon his wife and child, and upon Roger Malvin’s bones. Then Reuben’s heart was stricken, and the tears gushed out like water from a rock. The vow that wounded youth had made, the blighted man had come to redeem. His sin was expiated, the curse gone from him; and, in the hour, when he had shed blood dearer to him than his own, a prayer, the first for years, went up to Heaven from the lips of Reuben Bourne” (10: 360).


14. Fascinatingly, Cyrus’s own name-origins seem programmatic of his function in the story. As Herodotus tells Cyrus’s story, he is, like Oedipus, another one of those legendary royal children condemned to death who manage to survive (through the kindly inter vention of a nonnoble person, such as a shepherd, who rescues and adopts them) and later reclaim their noble ancestry. See Herodotus, Book 1 of *The Histories* (New York: Penguin, 1972), 85–90.

15. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 64. Though space limitations preclude a discussion of them here, several innovative projects on the intersections of melancholia, race, and queer desire have been undertaken in the wake of Butler’s retooled Freudian paradigms, and the fullest treatment of these themes in Hawthorne would have to take them into account. See note 16 of the previous chapter.

16. Bruhm treats Coleridge’s 1802 poem “The Picture; or The Lover’s Resolution” as a
prime example of Romantic narcissism. The speaker of this poem, Bruhm argues, “holds a desiring male imago as the central phantasm of the poem.” “As the speaker falls into the image of youth at the end of the poem, and the youth is absorbed by the speaker (and then, both collapse into the image of the boy in the picture, whose desire for the mother they imitate), we see the act of identity and identification that this poem is really about.” See Steven Bruhm, Reflecting Narcissus: A Queer Aesthetic (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 30–38; Bruhm references Butler’s Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex” (New York: Routledge, 1993).

17. Kochhar-Lindgren, Narcissus Transformed, 121. I admire this theorist’s formulations greatly, but I should add that he sometimes too uncritically pathologizes Narcissus for his homoerotic desire to reproduce a blissful heterosexuality within his self-desire.


19. Ibid., 153.


21. As Thompson writes, “The stranger is, not Hawthorne, but a symbolic figuration of, a substitute agent for, a Hawthorne: that is, an author figure, symbolically present in the narrative.” The transformation of self into figure has decisive repercussions for the narcissistic gaze, in which the various possibilities for seeing and being seen are constantly explored and negotiated. Turning oneself into a figure—especially here, the authorial figure of the stranger who can watch Robin, another version of the authorial self, being seen as he sees—is a strategy of control of the visual field. G. R. Thompson, The Art of Authorial Presence: Hawthorne’s Provincial Tales (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 156.


24. To be sure, vision is not the only sense thematized in the tale. The story’s concomitant obsession with the voice demands attention that I do not have the space to elaborate upon here. But to make a brief note of the point, the story is governed by images of the aural/oral, especially the riotous, sybaritic, barbaric laughter that frequently erupts, evoking the Bakhtinian theories of the carnivalesque and the grotesque. This raucous and derisive laughter anticipates the terrible, demonic laughter of the damned Ethan Brand. Slyly, smugly, and coyly, the stranger asks Robin if multiple voices can occur as well as faces (226). In this story, the voice shields the eye; or rather, the voice is the eye, coming at Robin from all sides and no less entrapping, enclosing, and imprisoning than the gaze.

Robin’s visual face-off with aggrieved Molineux perpetuates the pattern of seeing/being seen that structures the story: Molineux stares back at Robin staring at him, even as the “lantern-bearer” “drowsily” enjoys “the lad’s amazement” and that “saucy eye” again “meets his” (228). All the old gazers gather round, having never gone away—the innkeeper, the periwigged old citizen hemming and hawing, the derisive barbers, the guests of the inn, “and all who made sport of him that night,” all present, all watching Robin watch his kinsman writhe, all joining in with him, in a defensive denial of rapacious visual desire through raucous mass-laughter (228). I would argue that the shared laughter strategically distracts us from the profound desire to look that engulfs each figure in the story, and in which Robin engulfs his own desire to look.

CHAPTER 4

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 5–6.
6. The son’s rapt account of the father’s beauty alerts us to the narcissism inherent within oedipal relations. Julian becomes one of the men in Hawthorne’s fiction who contemplates the beauty of another man (Rappaccini and the younger Giovanni, Chillingworth and Dimmesdale)—albeit here, in life, it is the younger man who contemplates the older, indeed, the dead, man. But younger only in a relative sense—Julian, who was born in 1846, was thirty-eight years old when *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife* was published.
12. In psychoanalytic terms, Hawthorne’s depiction of male beauty could be called a compromise formation. A compromise formation occurs when the psychic agencies at our disposal, such as the id, ego, superego, confront a split or conflict between what we desire and what has been prohibited from us and work within the confines of reality to produce something like a workable fantasy that a conscious mind can tolerate. Male beauty in Hawthorne points to a desire for an image of male beauty—a desire that we can understand as autoerotic, homoerotic, or both—and a painful apprehension of the terrible repercussions of having this beauty perceived. He allows himself to inhabit this beauty while also registering its dangers and the phobic responses it generates.


16. Ibid., 161.

17. Though it is not my focus here, the issue of class in Hawthorne has been underexplored and would make for a resonant complement, I think, to this analysis.

18. Whereas Plato argues that the mutual gaze of lovers leads to self-knowledge, his “trio of eros, self-speculation, and philosophical self-knowledge becomes diluted in Seneca in particular. In Seneca’s work the erotic force of gazing at self provides an impediment to self-knowledge.” Bartsch, *Mirror of the Self*, 72. A fascinating discrete study could be done of the correspondences between Hawthorne and the ancient writings on these matters.


25. “As Hawthorne drew on his readings in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century American history, he developed the strong pacifism that served as the foundation of his political thought. Although this pacifism wavered at times . . . it nevertheless served as the basic and consistent principle by which he implicitly judged the actions of individuals and nations.” See Larry Reynolds, *Devils and Rebels: The Making of Hawthorne’s Damned Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 19.


27. As Charles J. Rzepka continues, for Romantic authors, “the self that is engaged in direct confrontation is, on the one hand, individuated and affirmed as real thereby, but
on the other is nearly always felt to be taken away from itself by the eye of the person confronted, especially if that person is unsympathetic or a stranger.” Hawthorne’s entire body of work thematizes these conflicts. See Rzepka, The Self as Mind: Vision and Identity in Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 27.


29. Attesting to the proliferation of studies of shame in recent years, Morrison wrote another (much more populist) book and edited a collection of essays on the subject, while Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick presented a new edition of Silvan Tompkins’s important theories of the concept. The most interesting aspect of the growth of shame studies is its implicit reversal of the emphasis on phallic aggression in earlier Freud-focused discussions. It should be noted as well that David Halperin and Valerie Traub have edited a collection called Gay Shame (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). The volume collects papers from the controversy-filled conference by that name that the editors organized at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor on March 27–29, 2003.

31. Ibid., 66.
32. Wurmser, Mask of Shame, 160.
33. Ibid., 161.
35. Ibid.
36. As Bridge notes, “Soon after graduation [from Bowdoin] we agreed to correspond regularly at stated periods, and we selected new signatures for our letters. Hawthorne chose that of ’Oberon,’” while Bridge (not being a Romantic artist, evidently) chose the more prosaic name “Edward” (55–56). Bridge debunks the idea that Oberon was Hawthorne’s college nickname or that “his beauty” had anything to do with the name: “In a letter of Miss Peabody, quoted by Mr. Conway, it is stated that ’his classmates called Hawthorne ’Oberon the Fairy’ on account of his beauty, and because he improvised tales.’ It seems a pity to spoil so poetic a fancy; but, if truthful narrative is required, the cold facts are these,” i.e., that Oberon was a post-college signature (55). Bridge does not, however, dispute the idea that the real-life Hawthorne was beautiful.
38. Ibid., 124.
39. “The narrator of ’The Minister’s Black Veil,’” writes Richard Millington, “notes that Hooper’s sartorial orientalism makes him a peculiarly effective clergyman: ’Strangers came long distances to attend service at his church, with the mere idle purpose of gazing at his figure, because it was forbidden them to behold his face’ (9: 49). Hooper’s strategy has been to make himself a piece of art, a ’figure’ instead of a ’face.’” Millington notes that this strategy’s one obvious benefit is that it does wonders for Hooper’s career. Another obvious benefit is that it allows Hooper (and Hawthorne) to maintain some degree of control over the visual field in which Hooper is an object. Richard H. Millington, Practicing Romance: Narrative Form and Cultural Engagement in Hawthorne’s Fiction (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 30.
40. For Michael T. Gilmore, the title of whose book *Surface and Depth: The Quest for Legibility in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) bespeaks its relevance to a study of narcissism, *The Scarlet Letter* is a key text in the American quest for legibility, which Hawthorne treats with appositely contradictory impulses because he “at once shares and recoils from the [American] demand for openness” (80). Hawthorne can barely hide his revulsion against the stocks, “a penal technology that immobilizes the culprit before ‘the public gaze’ and forbids him ‘to hide his face for shame.’” (81). Hawthorne “craves truthfulness without” this “pitiless exposure”; he wants “the balm of self-disclosure in a context secure from the ‘public gaze.’” (83). Gilmore reads Dimmesdale’s ultimate “self-erasure” as an attempt to convert “abasement into narcissistic falsehood” (85). I would place a somewhat different emphasis on what Hawthorne creates here—not narcissism as flight from shame but, instead, an atmosphere of shame in a state of shockingly public exposure that is itself a mediation of essentially narcissistic desire to see the self and control the ways in which the self is seen by others—the shame is the symptom of a fatally conflicted narcissism.

41. As Colacurcio writes, “On this point Jonathan Edwards and Edgar Poe would be in perfect agreement: the appropriate result of a truthful look might be fairly described as ‘horror’; the blackness within the self would correspond much more nearly to the darkness outside the wedding into which Hooper rushes (‘For the Earth, too, had on her Black Veil’) rather than the cheery light inside the [wedding] hall.” Michael J. Colacurcio, *The Province of Piety: Moral History in Hawthorne’s Early Tales* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 340.

42. Noting that Hooper spills his wine at the wedding, Colacurcio reads this moment as an allegorical evocation of the dread antebellum figure of the onanist. Frederick Crews reads “sexual ambivalence” in figures such as Hooper and Young Goodman Brown: “It is possible that Hooper, who like Goodman Brown is obliged to confront the sexual aspects of womanhood, shares Brown’s fears and has hit upon a means of forestalling their realization in marriage. His literal wearing of a veil, like Brown’s figurative removal of it to leer at the horrid sexuality underneath, acts as a defense against normal adult love.” Immediately upon making these suggestive though heterosexist observations, Crews retreats from their implications (“I do not care to lay very much stress on indications of sexual squeamishness in Hooper”) yet also rightly observes that the rumors of a sexual scandal involving Hooper and the young dead woman who is said to shudder when he peers at her corpse are just that, rumors, started by the townspeople and, in a review of *Twice-Told Tales*, Edgar Allan Poe, wearing his critic’s hardhat. Crews, *The Sins of the Fathers: Hawthorne’s Psychological Themes* (1966; repr., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 109–10.


44. See Greven, *Men Beyond Desire*, chapter 2, for a discussion of male blight in *Fannishaw*.


I do not mean to denigrate Mulvey's bold and revolutionary work; as much as anything, I am critiquing its continued hold on critical accounts of the gaze. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" was a very early Mulvey article, and her own views have evolved over time, though this evolution has not resolved their controversial nature. For a discussion of feminism's shifting responses to Mulvey, see Susan White's excellent essay "Vertigo and Problems of Knowledge in Feminist Film Theory," in *Alfred Hitchcock: Centenary Essays*, ed. Richard Allen and S. Ichii-Gonzales (London: BFI, 1999), 278–98. I discuss the shifts in Mulvey's thinking and in critical responses to her in chapter 1 of my book *Manhood in Hollywood from Bush to Bush*.

4. "Although the gaze might be said to be the presence of others as such," it is by no means coterminous with any individual viewer, or group of viewers. It issues 'from all sides,' whereas the eye '[sees] only from one point.'" In her delineation of Lacan's theory of the gaze, Kaja Silverman differentiates the eye or the "look" from the gaze, making the analogy that the eye and the gaze are, in psychoanalytic theory, as distinct as penis and phal- rus. Drawing from Lacan, Silverman elaborates that, far from lending an air of mastery to the subject, voyeurism renders the looking subject "subordinated to the gaze," disturbed and overwhelmed, and overcome by shame. In Lacanian gaze theory, "the possibility of separating vision from the image" is called "radically into question," and along with it the presumed "position of detached mastery" of the voyeuristic subject. This clarification of Lacanian gaze theory has bold implications for feminist film theory, whose proper interrogation of the male look has not, at times, "always been pushed far enough. We have at times assumed that dominant cinema's scopic regime could be overturned by 'giving' women the gaze, rather than by exposing the impossibility of anyone ever owning that visual agency, or of him or herself escaping specularity." See Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 130; 146; 152. This view of the voyeuristic subject not as victim but as vulnerable and fragile insofar as he can never achieve the sense of mastery that fantastically impels his very voyeuristic project informs my reading of *The Blithedale Romance*.

5. See Suzanne R. Stewart, *Sublime Surrender: Male Masochism at the Fin-de-Siècle* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 10. In this study, Stewart discusses the discourse of the masochistic male in the German-speaking world between 1870 and 1940. Male masochism, she suggests, was a rhetorical strategy through which men asserted their cultural and political authority paradoxically by embracing the notion that they were (and always had been) wounded and suffering.

6. Baym specifically refers to the work of critics such as Robert K. Martin, Scott Derrick, David Leverenz, and Karen L. Kilcup. See her chapter "Revisiting Hawthorne's Femi-
nism,” in *Hawthorne and the Real: Bicentennial Essays*, ed. Millicent Bell (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2005), 111.


8. The bachelor has been established as a highly interesting figure in contemporary critical work. In her excellent study *Bachelors, Manhood, and the Novel, 1850–1925*, Katherine V. Snyder writes, “I like to think of the bachelor as the figure who stands in the doorway, looking in from the outside and also looking out from within” (17). Examining first-person bachelor narrators, Snyder argues that “bachelor trouble was gender trouble. While they were often seen as violating gender norms, bachelors were sometimes contradictorily thought to incarnate the desires and identifications of hegemonic bourgeois manhood” (3–4). Bachelors have a “wide variety and sheer intensity” of “erotic and identificatory energies” (5). As Snyder writes in her discussion of the “third man” who observes male–male–female triangles, this “bachelor onlooker is a figure of surplus value, one who is apparently in excess of the requirements of a homosocial market in Oedipalized desire.” It is remarkable that Pearl describes Dimmesdale, interrupting her forest fun with her mother Hester, as “the third man” (10). See Katherine V. Snyder, *Bachelors, Manhood, and the Novel, 1850–1925* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).


10. As the online journal *Encyclopedia Mythica* reports: “Endymion was a handsome shepherd boy of Asia Minor, the mortal lover of the moon goddess Selene. Each night he was kissed to sleep by her. She begged Zeus to grant him eternal life so she might be able to embrace him forever. Zeus complied, putting Endymion into eternal sleep and each night Selene visits him on Mt. Latmus, near Milete, in Asia Minor. The ancient Greeks believed that his grave was situated on this mountain. Selene and Endymion have fifty daughters” [!]. Micha F. Lindemans, “Endymion,” *Encyclopedia Mythica*, http://www.pantheon.org/articles/e/endymion.html.

11. In classically Hellenizing fashion, the walls of the Hawthornes’ West Newton home, which Nathaniel rechristened “The Wayside,” “were adorned by a bust of Apollo” and “Mrs. Hawthorne’s drawing of Endymion.” No more perfect emblems of Hawthorne’s own enigmatic beauty and personality could have existed, and it is little surprise that they adorned their home, or that Sophia drew the figure so often present—in my view—in her husband’s fiction. See Randall Stewart, *Nathaniel Hawthorne* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1948), 124.


14. In calling Coverdale the self-as-panopticon, I attempt to evoke Jeremy Bentham’s original design for supervision of prison inmates and the now conventional Foucauldian ominousness of social surveillance, but I do not mean to offer a Foucauldian argument in this chapter. Coverdale’s panoptical selfhood explodes the idea of a functioning means of surveillance that can in any way control or shape or manipulate what it sees. Along these
lines, see E. Shaskan Bumas’s essay “Fictions of the Panopticon: Utopia and the Out-Penitent in the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne,” *American Literature* 73, no. 1 (March 2001): 121–45, which provides insights into early prison reform. Bumas contends that “in *Blithedale*,” Hawthorne “shows the virtually historiographic power of a narrator over narrated events and people, and he judges this power as barren but not much different from other forms of power. In Coverdale, the spy, the voyeur, and the observer overlap” (133). I would add that Hawthorne actively critiques and destabilizes Coverdale’s narrative subject position of power and mastery.


17. For a sustained discussion of inviolate manhood and the antebellum threat of onanism as represented in Hawthorne’s first novel, the 1828 *Fanshawe*, see my book *Men Beyond Desire*, chapter 2.


19. Many discussions of the “tourist gaze” exist, most notably in recent examinations of Jewett’s 1893 novel *The Country of the Pointed Firs*. For our discussion, I find Katherine Frank’s examination of it in *G-Strings and Sympathy*, a theoretical deconstruction of her own experiences as a stripper, particularly interesting (though far too brief). Drawing on the work of sociologist John Urry, Frank discusses the “collective gaze”—in which multiple tourists lend glamour to their surroundings—and the “romantic gaze”—which emphasizes solitude and privacy; obviously, Coverdale embodies the latter, but one could argue that Blithedale as a whole constitutes a collective gaze. See Katherine Frank, *G-Strings and Sympathy: Strip-Club Regulars and Male Desire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 28–29.


23. Ibid, 113. Samuels reads this desire to see not the presence of the object but its absence as a desire on the part of the [male] subject to dominate the object by pushing it to “the limits of the visible and the sayable,” an especially relevant goal for the misogynistic subject.


25. Like the uncanny apparitional Green Knight of the great medieval poem *Sir Gawain*
and the Green Knight, the pigs have “red eyes,” an odd parallel, to be sure, but, for me, one 
that corroborates the uncanny quality of these highly odd pigs. Like the Green Knight—
who carries a bunch of holly in one hand, an axe in another—the pigs signify gendered 
anxiety and threat, and much less merrily than the Green Knight.
27. For Freud, the head of the Medusa suggests part of the terror of accidentally view-
ing the primal scene that Freud located in the iconography of the Medusa, which he saw 
as a representation of the male child's attendant revulsion—the writhing snakes being re-
presentations of pubic hair and also compensatory substitutions for the castrated penis. The 
1922 essay “Medusa’s Head” (SE 18: 273–74) was unpublished in Freud’s lifetime.
28. As Marjorie Garber writes in her marvelous chapter on the gender indetermina-
cy of *Macbeth*, the Male Medusa, “the foliate head or leaf mask which gained enormous 
popularity in England and throughout western Europe during the Romanesque and me-
dieval periods . . . with leaves sprouting from [its face] . . . [is] often sinister and frighten-
ing. . . . [This] Green Man . . . embodies a warning against the dark side of man's nature, the 
devil within” (101–3). It is interesting that this sinister figure represents the union between 
brutal masculinist power and generative female nature. See Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare's 
Ghost Writers: Literature as Uncanny Causality* (New York: Methuen, 1987).
30. See chapter 2, “Veiled Ladies: Toward a History of Antebellum Entertainment,” in 
Brodhead’s *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America* 
31. For an excellent discussion of the implications of the veil for female sexuality, see 
the discussion of *The Blithedale Romance* in chapter 4 of Roberta Weldon’s *Hawthorne, Gen-
32. Benjamin Scott Grossberg, “‘The Tender Passion Was Very Rife Among Us’: Cover-
dale’s Queer Utopia and *The Blithedale Romance,*” *Studies in American Fiction* 28, no. 1 
to Coverdale’s queer sexuality verges on a celebratory quality and eschews its problematic, 
chilling complexities.
33. Jacksonian America was growing increasingly aware of, and hostile to, the image of 
the European dandy, as historian David G. Pugh points out: “[Jackson could] speak from 
experience . . . [since he] brought earthy wisdom to Washington rather than esoteric knowl-
dge. . . . Their independence from Europe secure, Americans turned upon themselves and 
found on their own eastern doorstep the cultivated, effeminate enemy of the true demo-
34. “Hawthorne’s great friend Horatio Bridge wrote that [the author] was invariably 
cheerful with his chosen friends.” But then Hawthorne could relax with companions such 
as Bridge; with literary celebrities and rival authors he seldom opened up. See James R. Mel-
28.
35. Ibid., 195.
36. See Renée Bergland’s chapter on the sexual and national politics of Hawthorne and 
Emerson’s relationship, “The Puritan Eyeball, or, Sexing the Transcendent,” in *The Puritan 
ed. Tracy Fessenden et al. (New York: Routledge, 2001), 93–108. In terms of Hawthorne’s 
marriage and the political and historical significance of the Old Manse, Bergland provides
interesting contributions; especially useful are her sympathetic insights into the often misunderstood Sophia Peabody Hawthorne, her own writing, and how the pain she suffered from a miscarriage affected it.


38. See Herbert, Dearest Beloved, 140, for a discussion of the Peabodys’ opinion of Hawthorne’s “suspiciously feminine” manhood. Sophia chided her family for failing to recognize that her husband possessed a “divine poetic manhood, into which feminine qualities are incorporated,” as Herbert puts it. They needed, felt Sophia, to better comprehend Hawthorne’s androgynous Apollonian qualities as such.

39. In the early republic, “European immigrants . . . were increasingly regarded with suspicion, as sources of contamination to the ‘democratic’ spirit, a suspicion made lawful in the Alien and Sedition Acts.” See Dana Nelson’s National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 38. This anti-European and newly nativist sensibility seeped into manhood as a social category, increasingly reimagined as a decisive break with European decadence.

40. It is of course impossible to discuss the issue of homoeroticism in Hawthorne without mentioning the issue of Hawthorne’s relationship with his uncle, Robert Manning. Hawthorne shared an adolescent bed with his uncle after an accident that left the young Hawthorne unable to use one of his legs for several months. See Mellow, Hawthorne, 610, n66, for a very interesting discussion of Hawthorne’s “animus” toward his uncle. Mellow makes the interesting point that this animus appears to translate itself into the association with horticulture on the part of Hawthorne villains such as Rappaccini, Chillingworth, and Judge Pyncheon: Uncle Robert Manning was also a horticulturist. Whatever their relationship, a wounded quality seems to permeate Hawthorne’s depiction of young men, who often flinch against the threat of an older and more powerful male (“Young Goodman Brown,” “The Gentle Boy,” “The Artist of the Beautiful,” “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” The Scarlet Letter). Mellow suggests that this theme may be attributable to a childhood sexual trauma that Hawthorne, who once noted that “an uncle is a very dangerous thing,” may have experienced at the hands of his uncle. Though there is, undeniably, a considerable amount of suggestive evidence in Hawthorne’s work for Mellow’s theory, there is also nothing in the way of concrete evidence for it. I would point out that by placing this information in a footnote, Mellow both makes sure to include it—give it voice—and keep it discrete, if not discreet. I would add that works such as the tale “The Gentle Boy” could be justifiably read as an allegory of childhood sexual trauma.

see a problematic, unsettling homoerotic desire as a factor in the anxiety of Coverdale and other Hawthorne males. I think a revulsion against male intimacy—exemplified by Hawthorne’s experience at the Shaker community (see n46)—needs to be considered not only as a panicked cover for an actual desire for other men but also as a chafing against compulsory American homosociality.

42. “Fourier’s plan for a social system was embedded in a broad philosophical program. Rejecting contemporary individualistic and competitive society, which he called Civiliza-
tion, Fourier projected a future ideal state of Harmony based on cooperation. He imagined a system of communities, what he termed phalanxes or phalansteries, in which all adults would engage in productive work determined by their interests and be rewarded by a com-
plex scheme of remuneration for both labor and capital.” The American Albert Brisbane, who studied in Europe and worked with Fourier before his death in 1837, transmogrified the French philosopher’s ideas into an American version that de-emphasized Fourierian ir-

43. Engaged in a passionate discussion with her mother about Fourier, Sophia reported finding Fourier’s views “abominable”; she noted that while she read a small part, “My hus-
band read the whole volume and was thoroughly disgusted.” Sophia slightly exculpated Fourier by noting to her mother that his having written after the French Revolution “ac-
counts somewhat for the monstrous system” Fourier proposes. Mother Peabody responded by saying that the French “have been and are still corrupt.” See Mellow, *Hawthorne*, 248–
49.

44. “It was not a translation of Fourier that I read,” wrote Sophia. “It was the original text.” She then passed it onto her husband, who read the whole volume. Ibid., 249.


46. See Mellow, *Hawthorne*, 378–79. Touring a Shaker village with Melville, interestingly enough, Hawthorne, observing quarters in which men slept in the same beds with other men, called the Shakers “filthy.” His hostility toward the Shakers seems only to have deepened over time.

teenth century, American men, obsessed with men’s bodies, even more obsessed with their own, “treated physical strength and strength of character” as one and the same.


49. Ibid., 14.

50. Ibid., 17.

51. Drawing on Kristeva’s theory of the “chora,” a womb/receptacle, Dixon argues that the camera is the dark womb, the chora, of film, the birthplace of imagery. Ibid., 81–82.

52. Drawing on the work of sex researcher Theodor Reik, Silverman argues that “the male masochist,” unlike the female, “leaves his social identity completely behind—actually abandons his ‘self’—and passes over into the ‘enemy terrain’ of femininity.” Male masoch-
ism can be “disruptive,” “shattering.” See Silverman, *Male Subjectivity*, 190. Though highly unpleasant for him, Coverdale’s masochism does allow him to be critical of the masculine subject position as a whole and to empathize with women and female desire, as his empathy for Zenobia in the face of misogynistic Hollingsworth’s freezing idealism evinces. It does
not, however, enlarge his capacity to see dandified Westervelt in anything but phobic terms, though it must be insisted upon that this phobia is indistinguishable from the critique of masculine power and capacity for cruelty that makes Coverdale such an unflinching critic of manhood in the first place. The pig-passage, as I elaborate upon, functions as Hawthorne’s authorial critique of the illusion of mastery that Coverdale fantasmatically believes he gains from his phobic calumination of Westervelt, who is, after all, not essentially read inaccurately by Coverdale, given Westervelt’s showman’s knack for domination and cruelty. We can further interpret Coverdale’s apprehensiveness around Old Moody, revealed to be the father who abandoned Zenobia, as further evidence of his skill for discerning questionable manhood.


57. “Pig” is a common epithet for police officers; pigs are also the animals who betray their beastly brethren in Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, finally indistinguishable from the “men” to whom they sell out their ideals.

58. Barbara Creed—drawing, like Dixon, on the work of Julia Kristeva— theorizes that traditional narrative film thematizes the figure of what Creed calls “The Monstrous-Feminine.” As discussed by Creed, this figure evokes “the dread of the generative mother seen only in the abyss, the monstrous vagina, the origin of all life threatening to reabsorb what it once birthed” (54). See Barbara Creed’s book *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1993), particularly the chapter on *Alien*, 16–31, in which Creed unpacks Kristeva’s theory of abjection for feminist readings of the horror film, focusing on the figure of the archaic mother; or her chapter “Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection,” in *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 35–65. If the monstrous-feminine represents the primal, archaic mother who threatens to devour, to re-engulf, the subject, the pigs in Hawthorne represent a primal, archaic father, animal and barbaric masculinity unvarnished by language, rationality, culture, the embodiment of a bestial irrational gendered knowledge a return to which is too terrifying to contemplate. One thinks of Cronos, madly and with an unappeasable appetite, devouring his children in Goya’s famous painting. Perversely, the pigs can suggest such a bestial gendered state of origins while being themselves fattened up for the slaughter.

fascination with the malformed Richard III to his ambivalent feelings about his maternal Manning family and Uncle Richard in particular.

60. Monika Mueller sums up the Hollingsworth–Coverdale relationship this way: “In *The Blithedale Romance*, homoeroticism is finally abandoned in favor of ‘frosty bachelorhood’ on the part of one character involved in the relationship and a heterosexual marriage, clouded by the outcome of the homosocial exchange of women, on the part of the other” (71–72). See Monika Mueller, *This Infinite Fraternity of Feeling: Gender, Genre, and Homoerotic Crisis in Hawthorne’s “The Blithedale Romance” and Melville’s “Pierre”* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996). Overall, Mueller’s approach is too simplistic. Some critics, such as biographers James R. Mellow and Edwin Havillard Miller, Robert K. Martin, and Mueller, argue that Hawthorne and Melville both worked out in literature—*The Blithedale Romance* and *Pierre*, specifically—the tortured feelings each eventually developed within the course of their famous friendship. If, as these critics contend, Hawthorne transmuted his fraught friendship with Melville into art with *The Blithedale Romance*, we can look upon Hollingsworth as the Melville figure, brimming with blustery brio, offering his hand to Hawthorne in deep longing promise of friendship, and Coverdale as the Hawthorne figure, cryptic and unresponsive, but secretly filled with unresolved longings. Yet I would argue that Hollingsworth is also an Emersonian figure, in that he represents a social-program-obsessed visionary with huge philanthropic ideals but a lack of interest in the individual human soul. Hawthorne “took aim at his public-spirited neighbors,” such as Emerson, when he lived in Concord, surrounded by “poets, reformers, and wooly transcendentalists of the sanguine persuasion.” Hawthorne saw Emerson as “pretentious and spoiled,” and had little use for his lofty transcendentalist ideals and programs. See Wineapple, *Hawthorne*, 171–72. But I also think Wineapple’s wonderfully compelling biography is too dismissive of Hawthorne’s own feelings toward Melville. She discusses the famous first meeting between Hawthorne and Melville as “a good story” (222) and focuses primarily on Melville’s overheated passion for Hawthorne, never fully exploring Hawthorne’s own potential desires for the younger, initially idolatrous author. Wineapple offers a much more considered account in her essay “Hawthorne and Melville: Or, the Ambiguities,” *Hawthorne and Melville: Writing a Relationship*, ed. Jana L. Argersinger and Leland S. Person, 51–70 (University of Georgia Press, 2008). See also Robert Milder, “The Ugly Socrates: Melville, Hawthorne, and the Varieties of Homoerotic Experience,” *Hawthorne and Melville: Writing a Relationship*, ed. Jana L. Argersinger and Leland S. Person (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 71–97.

61. At the start of Marlowe’s *Edward II*, the King’s lover Gaveston, who has just been recalled from exile, describes the erotic entertainments he wants to stage for Edward:

I must haue wanton Poets, pleasant wits,
Musicians, that with touching of a string
May draw the pliant king which way I please:
Musicke and poetrie is his delight,
herefore ile haue Italian maskes by night,
Sweete speeches, comedies, and pleasing showes,
And in the day when he shall walke abroad,
Like Silvian Nimphes my pages shall be clad,
My men like Satyres grazing on the lawnes,
Shall with their Goate feete daunce an antick hay,
Sometime a louelie boye in Dians shape,
With haires that gilds the water as it glides,  
Crownets of pearle about his naked armes,  
And in his sportful hands an Oliue tree,  
To hide those parts which men delight to see,  
Shall bathe him in a spring, and there hard by,  
One like Actæon peeping through the groue,  
Shall by the angrie goddesse be transformde,  
And running in the likenes of an Hart,  
By yelping hounds puld downe, and seeme to die,  
Such things as these best please his maiestie. (1.1. 51 forward)

Not only does this homoerotic revision of the Diana-Actaeon myth correspond to Hawthorne’s masculinization of the Odysseus-Circe-male pigs episode from *The Odyssey*, but it also influences our reading of Hawthorne’s own version of the Diana-Actaeon myth in *The Blithedale Romance*. In this manner, Coverdale reproduces or is forced to relive his confrontation with the peeping pigs when he spies on the Comus-like masque of revelers in the forest. I thank Alan T. Bradford for reminding me of the Marlowe passage.

62. In his revolutionary 1972 study *Homosexual Desire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), Guy Hocquenghem discusses homosexual desire as “an arbitrarily frozen frame in an unbroken and polyvocal flux” (50). Hocquenghem’s refusal to distinguish homosexual from any other form of desire—which is to say that desire has multiple forms, and cannot be subdivided into homosexuality or heterosexuality, that is, imitative and prior forms—matches, in my view, the polyamorous appreciation of male and female beauty in Hawthorne’s work. Significantly for the pig-passage and its breakdown of normative forms of identity, as well as for Coverdale’s inability to distinguish Westervelt from man or machine, Hocquenghem writes, “Homosexuality exists and does not exist, at one and the same time: indeed, its very mode of existence questions again and again the certainty of existence” (53). The animal–male references—their interspecies blurriness—contribute to the overall sense of splintering, shaken order, dissolving reality.

63. Surprisingly, Thorwald’s returned gaze is not discussed in Dixon’s *It Looks at You*, not only because it’s a great moment for his thesis but because surely Thorwald stares just as harrowingly at us as he does at Jeff.

64. Precisely because Hawthorne’s greatest political accomplishment is his consistent and consistently unflinching critique of conventional, compulsory forms of manhood and masculinity, which has implications not only for heteromanhood but for queer manhood as well, I find the strain of masculinism in treatments of Hawthorne’s politics vaguely humorous and largely unsettling. Since the 1980s, in a critical movement spearheaded by Jonathan Arac and Sacvan Bercovitch, a broad critique of Hawthorne’s ambiguity—seen as, among other dubious things, an aesthetic maneuver for expressing by camouflaging ambivalence over the slavery issue or for providing a seeming array of possibilities to us as desiring subjects while actually depriving us of all choice, making us complicit with our own deadening socialization—has denatured Hawthorne’s aesthetics by seeing it in strictly political terms. The issues in this critique, which extends into the present, as many chapters in the Millicent Bell–edited collection *Hawthorne and the Real* evince, are painfully, pressingly important, but, as I argue at length in chapter 1, the critique in its Arac–Bercovitch cast suffers from an inability to see aesthetics in anything other than ideological terms.

I am left largely mystified by Michael J. Colacurcio’s provocative, at times revealingly well-observed, but ultimately quite confused reading of the novel in “Nobody’s Pro-
test Novel,” *The Nathaniel Hawthorne Review* 34 (2008): 1–39. While this essay deserves a much more elaborate response than I can provide here, I find his thesis—that Coverdale actually murders Zenobia—wildly improbable, especially given the passivity and fragility that defines Hawthorne’s sympathetically drawn males even at their most scornful. In other words, I find it vexing that Colacurcio ignores Hollingsworth’s declaration of his willingness to beat women into submission—literally, through physical violence—and focuses on Coverdale as a would-be lover so jealous that he’s driven to kill the woman his love for whom he cannot explicitly express. Not only does Colacurcio fairly thoroughly heterosexualize Coverdale—in that he is read as a character motivated by sexual passion for a woman he cannot possess—but he also blunts Hawthorne’s tragic feminist point: Zenobia’s suicide is her only means of real resistance in the novel, at least in her own view.

CHAPTER 6


3. See especially the chapter “The Ambiguity of Beatrice” in Roy R. Male, *Hawthorne’s Tragic Vision* (New York: Norton, 1957) and chapter 2 of Ullén, *The Half-Vanished Structure: Hawthorne’s Allegorical Dialectics* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004). These are both superb studies, but their insistence on seeing “woman” as the embodiment of man’s sinfulness rather than as a thoughtful, resistant agent of her own desires in Hawthorne’s work is, in my view, a limitation.


5. The Italian poet Dante, whose works define the early Renaissance, evoked the character of Beatrice in his *La Vita Nuova and Paradiso*, the third book of *The Divine Comedy*, in which the figure of Beatrice, embodying the divine grace of womanhood, leads Dante to Heaven. (Figured as one of Heaven’s great women, Beatrice takes over the role of Dante’s guide from Virgil, author of *The Aeneid*. The Latin poet, because pagan and therefore fallen, cannot lead Dante into paradise.) A significant intertextual overlap for Hawthorne’s work generally is the figure of “The Lady of the Screen” in *La Vita Nuova*. Dante anticipates modern theories of the gendered gaze in his thematization of The Lady of the Screen, the woman that Dante used as a substitute object of veneration so that he would not embarrass the real-life object of his desires, Beatrice Portinari, with his unceasing gaze. One also inevitably thinks of the historical Beatrice Cenci, executed for having murdered her powerful, cruel father but venerated as a victim who fought back (her father forced her to have sexual relations with him), a tender soul plunged into a miasmic world of sin who yet managed to retain her poignant, delicate humanity. She became a prominent figure of sympathy in the Romantic era, as evinced by Percy Bysshe Shelley’s drama *The Cenci*; Hawthorne centrally evokes her in *The Marble Faun*.

7. For a discussion of the diabolical horticulturist, which she ties to the avuncular figures in Hawthorne's life and fiction, see chapter 4 in Gloria Erlich's *Family Themes and Hawthorne's Fiction: The Tenacious Web* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1984).


9. This is a structuring theme that is not unique to Hawthorne, and nor are its homoerotic as well as homophobic implications. Poe’s stories ranging from “The Man of the Crowd” to “The Tell-Tale Heart” also contrast a young man against a frightening older man, although the sources of this fear appear to lie in the younger man’s own conflictual feelings. Similarly, Melville frequently contrasts endangered younger men against alternately predatory and brutal older men, while consistently thematizing that the younger man is sexually endangered, if not actively violated, within this intergenerational conflict.

10. As Carol Marie Bensick explains, Hawthorne draws on the poison damsel tradition. This tradition was widely circulated in the sixteenth century. The tradition of the poison damsel had entered Europe from the East via the two pseudo-Aristotelian miscellanies, the *Gesta Romanorum*, from which Baglioni’s version comes, and the *Secreta Secretorum*. In the legends, the poison damsel tended to be associated with India, as in Baglioni’s rendering. Variants included the presence of a characteristic “flowering creeper”; subtraditions dealt specifically with “Poisonous Breath” and “Poison by Intercourse.” An especially famous version form the Neapolitan chronicler Costanzo told the story of King Ladislaus of Naples, a retelling of which by Montaigne Hawthorne transcribed in his notebook. In Costanzo’s original version the father of the poisonous bride is “a certain unscrupulous doctor of Perugia”—the citadel, we may recall, of the historic Balioni. One version of the Alexander legend was circulated in the sixteenth century under the title of “La Pucelle venimeuse”; this title seems close to Aubépine’s supposed original title for “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” “La belle empoisonneuse.” Even earlier, a variant of the legend was circulated by Dante Alighieri’s teacher and later fictional inhabitant of the circle of Inferno reserved for sins related to sex, Brunetto Latini.


11. See chapter 1 of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), in which she influentially describes, building on the theories of René Girard, the theory of triangulated desire, the ways that males exchange and circulate their own desires through the traffic in women.


16. Ibid., 112.
18. Robert Daly mentions Vertumnus in his review of various intertextual valences in the story; his conclusion, that Hawthorne's tale is primarily about a broad battle, one going beyond Christian philosophy, between *fideism* (faith as the ultimate knowledge) and empiricism seems to me to miss out entirely on the provocatively sexually charged nature of Hawthorne's themes. See Daly, “Fideism and the Allusive Mode in ‘Rappaccini’s Daughter,’” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 28, no. 1 (June 1973): 25–37.
19. Vertumnus is a related, complementary figure to Narcissus, not his opposite. If we consider the reference to Vertumnus as Hawthorne’s means of exploring his unacknowledgable interests in the figure of Narcissus, the Freudian concept of *reaction-formation* illuminates this device. In Freud’s theorization, a reaction-formation is the psychic defense whereby a desire or image one cannot acknowledge and or wishes to repudiate is replaced by its opposite quality. While Hawthorne’s use of Vertumnus is not precisely representative of this Freudian concept, the concept sheds light on Hawthorne’s usage of one classical figure to evoke another, at least insofar as I interpret Hawthorne’s work. The explicit reference to Vertumnus exposes the absence of a textually named Narcissus as it nods to Ovid.
21. Though I have not found a discussion of it in print, in a conference paper, T. Walter Herbert made the allusion to the Dimmesdale-exposed-chest scene as a scene reminiscent of the nineteenth-century bodice-ripper.
22. For a discussion of the “debility” caused by onanism, the finest study of sexual reform in the antebellum United States remains Stephen Nissenbaum’s *Sex, Diet, and Debility in Jacksonian America: Sylvester Graham and Health Reform* (1980; repr., Chicago: Dorsey, 1988). His primary focus is Sylvester Graham, and there is also a notable chapter on Thomas and Mary Gove Nichols. Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz’s *Rereading Sex* is an important new interpretation of sexual morality and its mavens in nineteenth-century America.
24. Oscar Wilde called his beloved “Bosie,” Lord Alfred Douglas, “Narcissus” among other classical names. “[T]he notion of the male lover as ethical mirror,” writes Dowling of the Platonic discourse of same-sex desire in the nineteenth century, “would come to be represented by the figure of Narcissus, a symbol that, emptied of its classical ethical context, would in turn come to represent male love—Wilde and [W. H.] Mallock . . . both deploy it this way.” Ibid., 145, 147.
25. Of “Medusa’s Head,” Freud’s standard translator James Strachey writes that “it appears to be a sketch for a more extensive work” (SE 18: 273n1).
26. Freud cited Sándor Ferenczi’s discussion of the myth as a goad to his own theorization of the Medusa. Ruth Leys offers an excellent discussion of Ferenczi’s views of Medusa (in his *Clinical Diary*) in her book *Trauma: A Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 134–38. As Leys observes, Ferenczi gets the details of the myth wrong but comes up, nevertheless, with a fascinating reading of Medusa’s hideousness as a mirror for that of her raging, animalistic killer, whom Ferenczi fails to identify as Perseus.
28. Ibid., 54.

29. Jonte-Pace notes that Freud remarked on this theme in print, in a footnote to the published paper “Infantile Genital Organization.” As Freud put it, “Athene, who carried Medusa’s head on her armor, becomes, in consequence, the unapproachable woman, the sight of whom extinguishes all thought of sexual approach” (SE 19: 144n3).

30. The relationship between Athena and Medusa was certainly well known in the antebellum context. As S. G. Goodrich, who was the editor from 1828 to 1842 of the illustrated annual The Token, which published the younger Hawthorne, wrote in his book of mythological stories retold for children, “The countenance of Minerva was generally more expressive of masculine firmness than of grace or softness. She was clothed in complete armour, with a golden helmet, a glittering crest, and nodding plume. She has a golden breast-plate. In her right hand she holds a lance, and in her left, a shield, on which was the painted the dying head of Medusa, with serpents writhing around it.” See Goodrich, A Book of Mythology for Youth: containing descriptions of the deities, temples sacrifices and superstitions of the ancient Greeks and Romans: adapted to the use of schools (Boston: Richardson, Lord and Holbrook, 1832), 37.


33. Ibid., 44.

34. Ibid., 57.

35. Ibid., 65.

36. Ibid., 85–86.


38. Ibid., 185.


40. For a fine discussion—and one of the first to make the point—of the overlaps between Hawthorne’s tale and Paradise Lost, see Liebman, who argues interestingly, especially given that the essay dates from 1968, that Hawthorne figures Beatrice as the New Adam, and Giovanni as the New Eve. Hawthorne inverts the Paradise Lost myth, since it portrays “the second fall, the fall from the promised paradise rather than from paradise itself.” Liebman reads Baglioni as Satan to Rappaccini’s God, and therefore argues that Giovanni is the Eve figure seduced by Satan-Baglioni, whereas the “New Adam”-Beatrice is “fallen but pure.” See Sheldon W. Liebman, “Hawthorne and Milton: The Second Fall in ‘Rappaccini’s Daughter,’” The New England Quarterly 41, no. 4 (1968): 521–35; quote from p. 534.


42. Ibid., 130.

43. Ibid., 117.

44. Ibid., 120.


46. Georgiana’s character is a related but distinct one from Beatrice, I think. She seems much more complicit in her own death than Beatrice, although that story is as much a critique of misogyny as “Rappaccini’s Daughter.” Surely we are never asked to sympathize with
Aylmer’s quest to rid Georgiana of the birthmark, and her capitulation to her husband’s de-ranged quest indicates an internalization of his misogyny as well as that of the social order.


48. Milton’s Eve has many magnificent moments, but the one moment in which she rebukes masculinist authority occurs not only after she has fallen but also in the speech in which she incoherently and vituperatively accuses Adam of not having exerted his masculinist will more forcibly upon her: “Being as I am, why didst not thou the head / Command me absolutely not to go / Going into such danger as thou sadist?” (9: 1155–57). Eve, who so stirringly had explained to Adam why they should divide up their labors in the Garden and work independently, now condemns Adam—who is, of course, condemning her for having been tempted and tempting him in turn—for having treated her with too much respect, for having recognized her self-sufficiency and fortitude.

CHAPTER 7


2. Samuel G. Goodrich, A Book of Mythology for Youth: containing descriptions of the deities, temples sacrifices and superstitions of the ancient Greeks and Romans: adapted to the use of schools (Boston: Richardson, Lord and Holbrook, 1832), 40.

3. Ibid, 45.

4. Ibid, 103.


7. As Laura Laffrado rightly reminds us, in Hawthorne’s version of the Demeter and Persephone myth, sexuality has “not been sanitized; instead, it has gone underground. The sexual innuendo in the pomegranate scene is coded sexuality located in little red caves and significant seeds. Sexuality is hidden, not eliminated. . . . [This] is a movement toward denial, not purification. The strategy to desexualize the myth by reducing Proserpina’s age fails. The denial of overt sexuality and the lack of a pure world for children remain.” See Laffrado, Hawthorne’s Literature for Children (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 122.

8. As Foucault quite influentially wrote, in 1870 homosexuality emerged as a psychological, psychiatric, and medical category, as “a certain way of inverting the masculine and feminine in one self. Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy to a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphrodism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species.” See Foucault, The History of Sexuality, vol. 1, trans. from the French by Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1988–90), 43.

9. “The word ‘homosexuality’ was not invented until 1869 (by the Hungarian, Benkert von Kertbeny) and did not enter English usage until the 1880s and 1890s, and then largely as a result of the work of Havelock Ellis.” Jeffrey Weeks, Against Nature: Essays on History, Sexuality and Identity (London: Rivers Oram, 1991), 16.
10. Critics such as Graham Robb, George E. Haggerty, William Benemann, Judith Halberstam, Christopher Castiglia, Christopher Looby, Peter Coviello, Richard Godbeer, Heather Love, Regina Kunzel, Valerie Rohy, and Axel Nissen, and others already mentioned, with their attention to historical specificity as well as a new openness, have been opening up the sexual terrain, allowing for fresh connections to be made.


13. Ibid., 107.


17. See Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500–1900* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), 146. The authors specifically note Hawthorne’s dissent from what had become Winckelmann’s “ clichéd” view.


19. For discussions of literary male viewing of visual art representations of male beauty as mediated by Winckelmann, see excellent discussions in Brown of Percy Bysshe Shelley’s appraisal of male sculpture in classical art, especially chapter 1, and Crompton; and of Henry James’s encounter with homoerotic imagery in France in Michael Moon, *A Small Boy and Others: Imitation and Initiation in American Culture from Henry James to Andy Warhol* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998).


21. I gratefully thank Tom Rice as well as several on the C-19 e-mail discussion list, especially Robert Wallace and John L. Bryant, for their feedback on the question of the publication of lectures in the nineteenth century and of Melville’s lectures in his lifetime.

22. “A number of Goethean references to the writings of Winckelmann were marked, showing an interest that seems confirmed by Melville’s reading of Winckelmann’s *History of Ancient Art* in 1852.” See Douglas Robillard, *Melville and the Visual Arts: Ionian Form, Venetian Tint* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1997), 35. Given the growing importance of Goethe to the emergent homoerotic aesthetic culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, further analysis of the overlaps among the German writers and Melville’s and Hawthorne’s work should prove quite fruitful.

24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 403.
27. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, in his famous 1766 *Laocoon: An Essay Upon the Limits of Poetry and Painting*, disputes Winckelmann’s view of the serenity of this sculpture, although the chief issue for Lessing is one of genre and its inherent constraints. For example, sculpture should not attempt to reproduce literary narrative (such as the action of *The Aeneid*) but should, instead, capture iconic moments. As Deanna Fernie notes in her 2011 book on Hawthorne and sculpture, “Modern works of sculpture failed, in Lessing’s view, because they attempted to incorporate narrative, which sculpture, as a spatially determined form, should not.” Where writing builds an impression by word, sculpture presents in material form a complete entity. The sculptural Laocoön succeeds for Lessing because it does not attempt everything that the myth’s literary renditions achieve. Although Laocoön’s mouth is open, he appears to be withholding or at least subduing utterance rather than shrieking (as he does in Virgil).” In other words, Laocoön’s open mouth is *iconic* of suffering rather than a representation of an action in Virgil’s poem; it is not an attempt to reproduce Virgil’s epic narrative in sculpture. See Fernie, *Hawthorne, Sculpture, and the Question of American Art* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 32–33. My thanks to Brian Glavey for his feedback on the question of Lessing’s relationship to Winckelmann.
30. Ibid.; emphases in the original.
32. Ibid., 753.
34. Melville, *Billy Budd: The Genetic Text*, ed. Harrison Hayford and Merton M. Seals (1978; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). All citations from *Billy Budd* will be from this edition and are documented parenthetically within the main text.
35. Here is Walters’s description in fuller form, which I include here because of its dexterity and relevance:

The great marble David, carved when Michelangelo was not yet thirty, is not just a symbol of Florentine liberty, but the sculptor’s idealized self-image. The obscure and youthful shepherd goes out alone to prove himself to his doubting family and countrymen and to carve his place in history: the personal implications for Michelangelo are obvious. David is at once classically ideal, and far more particularized than any ancient hero. The boy has been turned into a giant, but he is as gawky as an adolescent. The enlarged hands, with their swollen veins and muscles, belong to a laborer, or a stoneworker. . . . But despite David’s size and his defiant nudity—he is stripped for action, and his nakedness is the sign that he is God’s warrior—he is not altogether confident. From the front, he looks proudly relaxed; from any other angle, his pose seems more uncertain. The head turning over the shoulder disturbs David’s poise, and his frowning face is both angry and anxious. The hero is shown, not in his moment of triumph, as is more common, but tensed before the fight. His energy remains petrified, forever unreleased and unrealized.


37. Winckelmann’s writings on Antinous were available within the second volume, which was the first to be published in the United States, in 1849. As Alex Potts puts it in his introduction to Winckelmann’s *History of the Art of Antiquity*, published in a new translation in 2006,

The publication history of this translation by G. Henry Lodge, titled *The History of Ancient Art*, is strangely erratic: Volume 1 (Boston: Little, Brown) came out in 1856, volume 2 (Boston: J. Munroe) in 1849 (reprinted with volume 1 in 1856 by Little, Brown), and volumes 3 and 4 (Boston: J. R. Osgood) in 1872–73. The complete four volumes were reissued in Boston in 1880, in London in 1881.[1]

See Potts, introduction to *History of the Art of Antiquity*, by Alex Potts and Johann Joachim Winckelmann (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2006), 38n5.

38. Ibid., 80, 144.


Milder is very interesting on the eye pains that Melville experienced while gazing at the “stunning” art works in Italy. Unlike Hawthorne, Milder observes, “Melville typically viewed statuary and painting with an eye less to character than to history and the progress (or regress) of civilization. What impressed him most about Rome—ancient Rome—was the [“massive,” “majestic,” “colossal,” et al.] scale of life it evinced.” See Milder, “The Connecting Link of the Centuries,” 218. It would have been interesting to hear Milder’s speculations on what role Melville’s distinct view of historical scale played in his appraisal/reception of Antinous.

Person’s view of the significance of the faun differs from my own. “Working strenuously . . . to portray the Faun as another ‘neutral territory,’ Hawthorne’s best effort produces a male body that reflects an uneasy truce between desire and its expression—a prison house of desire, sportive and frisky, that threatens to burst forth a monster.” See Person, “Falling into Heterosexuality,” 116. As I will be suggesting through my comparison of Hawthorne’s view of the faun as art object with Freud’s discussion of the homosexual artist Leonardo, Hawthorne does not come down on the side of seeing the faun as monster. Rather, Hawthorne frames the faun as representative of the freedom that is made possible only through the aesthetic—a freedom both from sex and from sexual restraint.

40. “Immediately after General Pierce’s election to the Presidency, in 1852, he offered Hawthorne the Liverpool consulate, an office then considered the most lucrative of all the


42. Ibid., 165–66.

43. Ibid., 167.


49. Considering the productively maddening “perplexity” of the faun, Emily Budick argues that the faun is both childlike and presexual, and also postsexual, signifying the erosion of art and eros. See Budick, “Perplexity, Sympathy, and the Question of the Human: A Reading of *The Marble Faun,*” in *The Cambridge Companion to Nathaniel Hawthorne,* ed. Richard Millington (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 241–42. I am not in agreement with Budick here—in my view, the faun represents a sexual tease very much of the present as well. Nevertheless, I think she offers a brilliant reading of the novel. For Budick, the novel is ultimately a critique of Protestantism, “more ignorant in its sternness, more in flight from the realities of human being” than the moral worlds of Judaism and Roman Catholicism, to which the novel offers, in her view, a surprisingly sympathetic response (249).

50. In *Caravaggio’s Secrets* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), Leo Bersani and Ulysse Dutoit discuss masochistic narcissism in the context of Freud’s 1915 essay, “Instincts and their Vicissitudes” (SE 14: 109–40), an essay “concerning the fundamental antagonism between the ego and the external world. . . . Within the Freudian scheme . . . the ego’s profound mistrust of the world can be ‘overcome’ only by a narcissistic identification with the hated object, one that masochistically introjects that object. This masochistic narcissism sexualizes our relation to the world at the same time that it eliminates the difference between the world and the ego” (40–41). In less cosmic terms, Hawthorne suffuses narcissistic desire with an awareness of the painfulness of looking relations fully enmeshed with their pleasure. The theme of masochistic looking has most thoroughly been explored in feminist film theory; see in particular Tania Modleski’s discussion of masochistic female viewing in Alfred Hitchcock’s film *Notorious* in her study *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1988).
51. This is the thesis of my book *Men Beyond Desire: Manhood, Sex, and Violation in American Literature*.

CHAPTER 8


2. While noting that Hawthorne did not condone slavery even “for a minute,” Brenda Wineapple in her biography of Hawthorne notes—and it is difficult to disagree—that it is “strange and disappointing” that Hawthorne completely lacked “empathy for the slave. His conscious sympathies lay with the laboring white man who would certainly lose his job to an emancipated black man. And doubtless Hawthorne identified with the southern white slaveholder to the extent that he romanticized an agrarian planter class as more cultured and genteel than its busy Yankee counterpart . . . Yet like most people, Hawthorne regarded himself as well-intentioned and fair-minded, a neo-Jeffersonian patriot” devoted to the preservation of the Union, seen as crucial not just to the American future but to that of humanity itself (264). See Wineapple, *Hawthorne: A Life* (New York: Knopf, 2003), 269. Perhaps *Septimius Felton* allows us to see that Hawthorne’s unconscious feelings about the slave—or, at least, about the differently raced—were more inclined toward empathy.

3. Seshadri-Crooks seeks to challenge the view, especially prevalent, for her, in psychoanalytic feminism, that “sexual identity precedes racial identity,” which she critiques for its dependence on the “feminist axiom that sexual identity is both private and public, while race and class, insofar as they invoke a group or collectivity, belong only to the public domain.” Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, “Psychoanalysis and the Conceit of Whiteness,” in *The Psychoanalysis of Race*, ed. Christopher Lane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 356–57.


5. Charles Swann was one of the first recent critics to take Hawthorne’s late work seriously in his excellent study *Nathaniel Hawthorne: Tradition and Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). In the potent collection *Hawthorne and the Real: Bicentennial Essays*, edited by Millicent Bell (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2005), several essays, notably by Larry J. Reynolds, Rita Gollin, and Brenda Wineapple, touch on Hawthorne’s late work; Gollin’s essay “Estranged Allegiances in Hawthorne’s Unfinished Romances,” 159–81, makes the late work its specific focus.


8. Ibid., 91.

9. On Sunday, April 13, 1856, Nathaniel Hawthorne attended a banquet in London at the Mansion House, to which he was invited by David Salomons, the Lord Mayor of London. Salomons was honoring Hawthorne in his capacity as U.S. Consul in Liverpool. Salomons was a pioneering activist for Jewish rights. The U.S. President Franklin Pierce,
for whom Hawthorne had written a campaign biography, had appointed Hawthorne, one of his best friends since their days as college classmates at Bowdoin College, to this position in 1853. The description he provides in The English Notebooks of Mr. Salomons’s brother Philip and of his wife, Emma Abigail Montefiore Salomons, is fascinating on many levels, revealing, as it does, both his deep-seated anti-Semitism and his intense fascination with the figure of the “Jewess” (21: 481–82). Why can so many qualities about the Jewish woman strike Hawthorne as aesthetically and sensually pleasurable, even as he registers the inescapable “repugnance” he feels toward her, while his feelings toward the Jewish man are unremittingly negative? The gendered imbalance in Hawthorne’s phobic disposition toward the Jew—the bifurcation of the figure of the Jew into the beautiful, if also disturbing, Jewess, and the wholly displeasing Jewish male—also raises the often unexplored question of the intersection between racist and anti-Semitic attitudes and anxieties over gender and sexuality.


17. The differences between the Septimius Felton and Norton manuscripts are striking, and they demand thorough textual analysis. My present focus on a certain constellation of thematic and ideological issues in Septimius Felton is not in any way a foreclosure of the necessary scholarly work that needs to be done on both texts, and I do mean both texts; though there are obvious and significant overlaps, the Felton and Norton manuscripts should be considered not homogenous but actually quite distinct works.
20. For a discussion of Hawthorne’s sympathy for the Southern soldier during the Civil War, and Hawthorne’s overall opposition to violence and to the demonization of those on opposing sides of debates even as vexatious as those about slavery during the antebellum era, see Larry Reynolds’s brilliant essay “‘Strangely Ajar with the Human Race’: Hawthorne, Slavery, and the Question of Moral Responsibility,” in Bell’s Hawthorne and the Real, as well as his Devils and Rebels.
22. For a discussion of antebellum health and sexual reformers and their relevance for literary output in the era, see David Greven, _Men Beyond Desire: Manhood, Sex, and Violation in American Literature_.

23. Coleridge wrote, on September 1, 1832, that “I have known strong minds with imposing, undoubting, Cobbett-like manners, but I have never met a great mind of this sort. And of the former, they are at least as often wrong as right. The truth is, a great mind must be androgynous. Great minds—Swedenborg’s for instance—are never wrong but in consequence of being in the right, but imperfectly.” See _Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge_ (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1884), 173.

24. In her discussion of _Tristram Shandy_, Harries explains that Laurence Sterne should be seen as a writer who deliberately and self-consciously “produces fragments, works that have not become incomplete but have been planned and executed as incomplete.” See Harries, _The Unfinished Manner: Essays on the Fragment in the Later Eighteenth Century_ (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 43.


26. Ibid., 10.

27. To elucidate the rationale for this view, Stokes quotes from the 1980 version of the American Psychiatric Association’s _Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders_ entry on narcissism: “A grandiose sense of self-importance or uniqueness; preoccupation with fantasies of unlimited success; exhibitionistic need for constant attention and admiration; characteristic responses to threats of self-esteem; and characteristic disturbances in interpersonal relations, such as feelings of entitlement, interpersonal exploitativeness, relationships that alternate between the extremes of overidealization and devaluation, and lack of empathy,” Mason Stokes, _The Color of Sex: Whiteness, Heterosexuality, and the Fictions of White Supremacy_ (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 72–73.


29. Ibid., 181.


32. For a discussion of Johnson and the gendering of the literary mulatto, see Rafia Zafar’s section, titled “Fictions of the Harlem Renaissance,” in _The Cambridge History of American Literature_, vol. 6, _Prose Writing 1910–1950_, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); specific reference to the mulatto as usually female can be found on page 299.


40. See especially Chodorow's *Femininities, Masculinities, Sexualities: Freud and Beyond (The Blazer Lectures)* (University Press of Kentucky, 1990).


42. In his extraordinary 1925 essay “Some Psychological Consequences of Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes,” Freud explores masculine and feminine identities within patriarchy. Writing of penis-envy—a theory that can only be recuperated as “desire for power in our culture,” as Freud’s French reinterpreter Jacques Lacan did—Freud remarks that one of its consequences “seems to be a loosening of the girl’s relation with her mother as a love-object” (1993, 19: 254). In the tragic terms that Freud lays out, the development of femininity derives in the girl from her narcissistic sense of humiliation which is bound up with penis-envy, the reminder that after all this is a point on which she cannot compete with boys and that it would therefore be best for her to give up the idea of doing so. Thus the little girl’s recognition of the anatomical distinction between the sexes forces her away from masculinity and masculine masturbation on to new lines which lead to the development of femininity. [The thus far unseen manifestation of the Oedipus complex now occurs when] . . . the girl’s libido slips into a new position along the line—there is no other way of putting it—of the equation “penis = child.” She gives up her wish for a penis and puts in place of it a wish for a child: and with that purpose in view she takes her father as a love-object. Her mother becomes the object of her jealousy. The girl has turned into a little woman. (SE: 19: 256)

Reading Freud against the blindness’s of his own argument, we can posit that he theorizes the emotional and social consequences of the construction of femininity within patriarchy, the enforced separation between mothers and daughters (which also must occur, with equally traumatic but differently registered resonances, between sons and mothers).


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4. Ibid., 9.

5. Ibid., 6–7.


7. A proper comparative discussion of Hawthorne and Freud and their views far exceeds the scope of this epilogue, of course. A disquisition on the valences between The Marble Faun and Freud’s enduringly provocative 1929 work Civilization and Its Discontents could easily be the central focus of a book-length work. My focus here is on the Hawthorne side of things, but it should be noted that Freud uses, as does Hawthorne in this novel, Rome as a metaphor for the human mind and for the individual’s endlessly vexed relationship to history.


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