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Lessons of the Masters: Social Tension as a Creative Necessity in the Fiction of Hawthorne, James, and Joyce.

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Lessons of the masters: Social tension as a creative necessity in the fiction of Hawthorne, James, and Joyce

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Lessons of the Masters:
Social Tension as a Creative Necessity
in the Fiction of
Hawthorne, James, and Joyce

A Dissertation

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ABSTRACT: A study of talented characters reveals that three of the most influential novelists in English dealt with the often disabling image of the artist they had inherited from their Romantic forebears by insisting on dialectical tension between the artist and society as essential to the creation of literary art. The various talented characters in Hawthorne's short fiction, such as Aylmer, Rappaccini, Oberon, the Canterbury poet, the portrait painter of "The Prophetic Pictures," the woodcarver Drowne, and Owen Warland, fail to create art unless they retain certain links with their societies of origin. This tension between artist and society appears as an extended allegory in The Scarlet Letter, in which Roger Chillingworth represents the talented individual severed from his society, Arthur Dimmesdale represents the talented individual immersed in his society, and Hester Prynne represents Hawthorne's ideal artist. The same dialectic operates in Henry James's shorter works, such as "The Lesson of the Master," "The Author of Beltraffio," and "The Next Time," as well as in two of James's novels, Roderick Hudson, and The Tragic Muse. In James Joyce's two most widely read novels, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses, Stephen Dedalus's systematic rejection of family, country, and church marks him as the sterile "artist" who has severed his connections with his society of origin, and Leopold Bloom's economic concerns mark him as the talented individual immersed in his society and rendered sterile by that immersion. The artistic failure of characters who are either isolated from society or immersed in it, along with the success of characters who can strike a balance between isolation and immersion, indicates that all three of these writers consistently rejected the various stereotypes of the isolated artist which were the legacy of the Romantics.
Introduction

In the modern West the literary artist is often thought of as one who stands apart from society, and a great many thinkers—philosophers, poets, novelists, and psychologists—have written a great many words on the apparent separation of the artist from the social mainstream. Plato would have banned poets from his ideal state, which, as Maurice Beebe reminds us, he probably would not have done "if by his time the poet had not already established himself as an antisocial type inimical to accepted authority," and poets from Blake through Pound to Ginsberg have rejected—often vehemently—the socio-political structures of their times.¹ The Künstlerroman, often a description of the process the artist must pass through in order to reject society, to free the imagination from the potentially crippling effects of socialization, has become an important fictional genre since its emergence in late eighteenth century Germany.

The image of the literary artist as inevitably existing outside the mainstream of society is so firmly entrenched in modern thought that we can easily forget that the image itself, despite Beebe's reading of Plato, has not always been in fashion. Before the Romantic
movement the writer often held a public position, either official or unofficial. Few of us would categorize a courtier such as Chaucer, for example, as a man turning away from the world, nor would we suggest that Shakespeare, who wrote—very quickly, with no waiting around for the muse—for the popular stage, whose works give few clues to his personal philosophy, who engaged frequently in lawsuits, and who, like Henry James's Henry St. George, retired when he had enough money, was in any way removed from the social and economic concerns of his day. Sir Philip Sidney, the embodiment of the masculine ideal of the English Renaissance, and Sir John Suckling, a caricature of it, had little trouble fitting poetry into full social, political and military lives. Dryden functioned as an occasional poet, writing tributes to both Cromwell and Charles II, and serving as both poet laureate and historiographer royal. His contemporary, Milton, actively promoted and defended the Puritan revolution with his pen, while in America Puritan poets such as Michael Wigglesworth and Anne Bradstreet continued to expand and embellish the ideology of the New Jerusalem. In the eighteenth century, such writers as Defoe, Swift, Pope, and Addison and Steele fought public battles of wits in print, often with political ends, and across the Atlantic Benjamin Franklin, one of the most active political figures of
his day, secularized Puritan mores with his Autobiography. Neither these writers nor their audiences considered them creatures alien to their societies, but rather integral parts of them. In the twentieth century, Wallace Stevens spent his entire working life as an insurance executive, and William Carlos Williams worked tirelessly as a physician, jotting down notes and lines of poetry in the brief intervals between patients. Though all of these writers used their art to reconcile their own creative drives with the world as they found it, though all in effect stepped onstage through the act of writing and thereby assumed a new position relative to their societies, none of them wanted to separate himself from the social mainstream, nor was any one of them perceived as an exile by his contemporaries.

Freud and others have postulated that artistic genius springs from mental illness (an extreme form of alienation), hardly a new idea because poets throughout history have often been considered mad. But Lionel Trilling wrote in 1950 that the development, in the early nineteenth century, of a "more elaborate psychology and a stricter and more literal view of mental and emotional normality" led to a narrower, more literal view of the poet as mad. Charles Lamb refuted this misconception in "The Sanity of True Genius" when he asserted that at its root lies the inability of ordinary
men to see what the poet sees: "men, finding in the raptures of the higher poetry a condition of exaltation, to which they have no parallel in their own experience, besides the spurious resemblance of it in dreams and fevers, impute a state of dreaminess and fever to the poet. But the true poet dreams being awake."³ And eighty years later, George Bernard Shaw added his refutation in his review of Nordauer's *Degeneration*. Nevertheless, "the idea that the exercise of the imagination was a kind of insanity" gained currency until it was co-opted by such avid partisans of art as Zola, Baudelaire (who often began his day by praying at his own personal shrine to Edgar Allan Poe), Rimbaud, Verlaine, Auden, and Edmund Wilson, who "willingly and even eagerly accept the idea that the artist is mentally ill and go on to make his illness a condition of his power to tell the truth."⁴ Wilson expressed the neurotic artist's relation to society through the myth of Philoctetes, the Greek warrior who lived apart because of the odor of a suppurating wound but who was sought out by his countrymen because he owned a magic, unerring bow.⁵ But the proliferation of psychotherapists in modern life should teach us that neurotics are far more common than literary artists; Freud's startling inductive leap to the conclusion that we are all ill (which he later revised by suggesting that treatment
depends not on the presence of neurosis but on the
degree to which our neuroses control our lives) might
not be far from the truth. All writers may be neurotic,
but not all neurotics are writers. Neurosis may be a
component of the artist’s persona, but it is also a com-
ponent of the butcher’s, the baker’s, and the candle-
stick maker’s.

Yet literature of the nineteenth century and the
early twentieth glorifies the alienated artist.
Romanticism, beginning with Wordsworth and Coleridge’s
Lyrical Ballads, appeared to complete the shift from the
mirror to the lamp, from the conception of poetry as a
reflection of reality to the view of poetry as a
revelation of the poet—in Wordsworth’s famous phrase,
the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. With
this perceived shift came a change in emphasis from
audience to writer and a corresponding dislocation of
the creative artist, begun by Blake and Burns and
perhaps by Samuel Johnson in his long poem, "London,"
and certainly in his novel, Rasselas, which began to
separate the writer from his society. "London" de-
scribes the departure from that city of a poet whose
honesty and idealism have ruined his chances for social
and political advancement amid the corruption of the
capital, and Rasselas, as Beebe noted, contains not only
"one of the first alienated artists in prose fiction in
the poet Imlac," but also an artist who plans to "build a flying machine that he might become a 'pendent spectator' of the life beneath him," a detached observer with a revealing, elevated vantage point. ⁷

The image of the isolated artist persists. Usually harmless, occasionally dangerous, even more occasionally useful, the literary artist in current fiction, films, and television, frequently appears as an outsider, a mysterious, bohemian, and sometimes mystic character who has separated himself from the concerns of the world by choice or who has been separated from those concerns by his nature, a private figure, devoted to art alone, who relies chiefly on the intervention of a personified divinity—once named as a muse, but now, as a result of the decline of "classical" education, called simply "inspiration"—for both the ability and the motivation to create.

The odd popular conception of the artist as a person apart perhaps results in part from carrying a superficial understanding of Romanticism to its logical absurdity. As with many other literary movements and schools of criticism, Romanticism had its advocates and critics who insisted on simplifying a complex phenomenon by adopting tendencies as absolutes and by accepting half-truths as truth. The movement seemed to have found its ideal "natural" genius in Robert Burns (a role Burns
himself apparently enjoyed playing), but in fact he was only self-educated, a deliberate craftsman whose freshness sprang less from instinct or inspiration than from his rejection of the dying English tradition of neoclassicism and his use of a Scottish literary tradition unknown to many of his readers. Burns's genius seems "natural" only in the sense that it developed outside the university; rather than relying on teachers to interpret his culture, Burns in his reading went straight to the sources of that culture, thereby running afoul of the British bias that a genius must either be educated by God or the university, the same bias that has led to rival claims on Chaucer by partisans of both Oxford and Cambridge and the insistence by some scholars that Shakespeare, because he was an "uneducated" peasant, could not possibly have written his own plays. We would be more accurate if we referred to such "uneducated" or "natural" geniuses as Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Burns as "self-taught" or "lacking diploma."

The Romantics' preference for the natural over the artificial and for the individual over society led frequently to such comforting oversimplifications. Wordsworth's "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" sometimes appeared in the form of the carefully crafted and revised long poem, a form seemingly incompatible with spontaneity simply because of the time required to
write at length, and surviving notes and manuscripts show that the Romantics as a group worked and re-worked their material as painstakingly as any group had before. Coleridge, "who believed that truth lies in a union of opposites, came closer to the facts of Romantic practice when he claimed that the act of composing poetry involves the psychological contraries 'of passion and of will, of spontaneous impulse and of voluntary purpose.'" Coleridge's suggested dialectic, which sets in tension the poet's emotions and his inevitably socialized will, has broad implications not only for Romantic art but for art in general. Viewed in this light, Wordsworth's adored nature becomes a more apt metaphor than perhaps even Wordsworth realized. Analogous to the case of Robert Burns, whose "natural" talent was shaped by his reading, Wordsworth's nature, as Matthew Arnold pointed out, had been groomed, cultivated, and otherwise shaped by the hand of man for hundreds of years; man had, insofar as he was able, controlled the impulses of nature for social and economic purposes, leaving the civilized world with the illusion of a "natural" landscape which was actually the result of a dialectic between the natural and the artificial. The nineteenth century's new-found fascination with nature, analogous to the Romantics' fascination with "Nature," expressed itself through a change in gardening fashions from the
precisely groomed symmetry of the eighteenth-century formal garden to the wilder, more "natural" nineteenth-century garden, in which the hand of man appeared to have no part. The later garden is no less cultivated than the earlier; it only seems so. Romantic literature is no less crafted than neoclassical; it only seems so.

The dialectic between the natural and the social, or the expressive and the communicative, operates though pains have been taken to conceal it.

This necessarily reductive statement of the opposition between the Neoclassical and Romantic periods, of course, will not withstand a close reading. Literary labels and categories, after all, exist as mere conveniences for critic, teacher, and student and break down readily under analysis. We can establish no date at which one "period" in the history of art ends and another begins because change is gradual and these "periods" flow one into another, yet we cheerfully tell ourselves and our students that in English literature the eighteenth century, a period characterized by bawdy satire and rowdy politics which has inexplicably come to be known as "The Age of Reason," really began forty years early with the restoration of Charles II and ended two years before time with the publication of Lyrical Ballads. Once we were content to accept a clear separation between objective and subjective language,
between expository and creative writing, between the factual and the figurative, but now, with the realization that language in its smallest units is figurative, that distinction no longer applies, and its loss forces sweeping changes in the way we evaluate different genres because now all writing is creative. Hagiography, for example, long recognized as more than casually fictional in its sectarian didacticism, becomes in essence indistinguishable from biography when we realize that both are fictions resulting from the dialectical tension between the objective reality of the subject and the subjective perception of the biographer. Just as in reading Eadmer we meet not St. Anselm but a larger than life St. Anselm created by Eadmer, so in reading Boswell do we meet not Samuel Johnson but a larger than life Samuel Johnson created by Boswell. The difference between the two genres, insofar as it exists at all, is one of degree, i.e., the balance between expression and representation, or between the lamp and the mirror as defined by Abrams. History too becomes essentially fictional when we realize that the historian, like the novelist, presents not history but his own perception of history; though in choosing that genre the historian accepts the necessity of working with real people and events, material perhaps less malleable than the purely imaginary, he chooses the people, places, and events
that appear in his work as well as those that are omitted and determines the emphasis to be placed on each just as the novelist, though he might like Joyce try to absent himself from his work by eschewing--or pretending to eschew--traditional authorial exposition, must nevertheless choose his characters, settings, and plots.

In this light, the rhetoric of history bears a strong resemblance to the rhetoric of fiction.\textsuperscript{10} And twentieth-century metafiction, as exemplified by Barthelme and Barth, seems only an extension of eighteenth and nineteenth-century narrative omniscience as practiced by Sterne, Fielding and Charlotte Brontë. Barth's protagonist/writer/narrator speaks directly to the reader in "Lost in the Funhouse," but so do Tristram Shandy, the narrator of Tom Jones, and the adult Jane Eyre, each of whom breaks the strictures of formal realism while seeming to enforce those strictures.

All of these conveniences break down because they are attempts to reduce to singularities complex relationships which can only be properly expressed as dualities. As these conveniences break down, so too do our categorizations of literary methods. Because language is always both a means of self-expression and of communication, it embodies a dialectic between self and audience and between the individual and society, a dialectic which demands that literary art, no matter how
egocentric or didactic it seems, must, as Abrams suggests, always be some combination of the expressive and the representational. Because even the most objective writing (or any form of art) involves some degree of subjectivity and the most subjective involves some reference to external reality, a shift from the mirror to the lamp is impossible; the shift can only be from the proximity of the mirror toward the lamp. The shift toward the lamp inevitably creates a perceived opposition between the artist and society because social, economic, and religious constraints act as shades upon the lamp, sometimes focusing, sometimes diffusing its beam, and sometimes directing it away from corners which, in the view of mainstream society, are better left dark. If the emphasis of literary expression had remained on its religious and/or social functions for its audience, then the artist would perhaps, like the authors of such works as "The Song of Roland," Everyman, "Pearl," and Gorboduc, consider himself a social functionary. The artist's job would still be to support the social ideology by which he and his contemporaries live, and he would identify himself as an artist in part by accepting the shade with which his society fitted him. But the shift of emphasis away from the mirror and toward the lamp demands that the artist, in order to identify himself as an artist, must
try to expand the beam of his lamp beyond the confines of the shade.

Jung wrote that "every creative person is a duality or a synthesis of contradictory attitudes. On the one side he is a human being with a personal life, while on the other side he is an impersonal, creative process." The duality of the creative artist mirrors the essential duality of language. Beebe echoes Jung when he discusses the "concept of the artist as a divided self," then delineates two separate traditions in a genre which he identifies as the portrait-of-the-artist novel: "the equation of art with experience, and the conflicting ideal of detachment." Beebe identifies both experience (the Sacred Fount) and detachment (the Ivory Tower) as the sources of art, and asserts that Goethe, in composing The Sorrows of Young Werther and Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship, "which between them established the portrait-of-the-artist genre, [created] complementary studies in failure: Werther fails because he cannot accept the external world; Wilhelm gives up all pretensions to art when he becomes dominated by that world." Werther asphyxiates in the thin air of the Tower, while Wilhelm drowns in the Fount.11

Dialectical models for the creative process are perhaps as old as written language. In attempting to sort out the origins of the earth and the seas and the
heavens, the author of Genesis chose to include two quite different stories of the creation. The first features the power of the Word: to create light, and the heavens, and the oceans, and vegetation, and the sun and the moon, and the fish, and the birds, and animals, and finally—and simultaneously—Adam and Eve, God simply speaks. The second shows an immanent God, who uses his hands to create, who forms a man "from the dust of the ground and breathe[s] into his nostrils the breath of life" and who "form[s] out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of heaven," and who "put[s] the man into a trance, and . . . [takes] one of his ribs . . . then [builds] up the rib . . . into a woman."12 Because these two versions of the creation contradict each other, the effect of their juxtaposition is to express the unfathomable mystery of creation by establishing a dialectic between the God of the Word and the immanent God, thereby implying that neither version by itself is correct but that God probably exists as some indeterminable synthesis of the two and that the universe was created by forces and processes beyond the understanding of man.

Like the dialectic in Genesis, Beebe's formulations go a long way toward defining the duality and the dilemma of the creative artist, who must, after all, live in the world of experience while maintaining the
detachment that allows him the freedom to create. Beebe postulates that the finest fiction reconciles the Ivory Tower and the Sacred Fount traditions, but such a formulation seems problematic for two reasons: which fiction is the "finest" and how it is balanced are determined by the perceptions and biases of the audience, and all fiction, because it consists of language and therefore must mirror the duality of the artist, reconciles the two traditions in varying measures. A Ph.D. in Anglo-Irish literature, his perceptions honed by years of study, might well see in Ulysses a fine piece of fiction which displays a happy reconciliation between Beebe's two traditions and an ideal balance between the expressive and the representational, while even an ambitious college sophomore, lacking the literary "experience" necessary to grasp the complexities of Joyce's suggestive/allusive prose, would probably push the book away in bewilderment after stumbling through the "Proteus" episode, completely unaware that Stephen Dedalus has, somewhere on the strand, either urinated or masturbated.

A further problem with Beebe's thesis is its failure to distinguish between experience, a rubric which can include nearly everything that happens to everyone, and social relations. If we define "society" as that group from which an individual springs, then
even immersion in experience can constitute a withdrawal from one's society because experience and society are not synonymous. When Washington Irving sails the Atlantic to experience England, he exiles himself, both physically and spiritually, from his own America. Whether Byron plays at war or debauchery, he flings himself into a new experience which, because it is foreign to the society from which he sprang and because it places him outside the mainstream, separates him from that society. And, if we accept Freud's discovery that imaginary experiences can seem more real than real experiences, a discovery that effectively erased the dividing line between imagination and memory, then even detachment involves experience because the detached artist lives in, or experiences, his imagination. When Hawthorne secludes himself in his ivory tower at the Old Manse or at Brook Farm in order to experience detachment, he accomplishes essentially the same dislocation that Melville accomplishes when he separates himself from Albany society and goes a-whaling, jumping ship and living among the cannibals of the South Pacific. Each of these writers—Irving, Byron, Hawthorne, and Melville—once he has reached his new, marginal position, then uses his art to open a dialogue with the society from which he appears to have withdrawn. Failed artists—and here we must leap into fiction for want of
real-life examples--such as Stephen Dedalus, do not communicate. Just before his departure for Paris at the end of Joyce's *Portrait*, Stephen writes in his journal:

"Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race." One wonders what sort of experience Stephen can have in Paris that he has not already had in Dublin: he has seen his mother die a painful death, lived through the deterioration of his relation with his unpredictable, drunken father, known both comparative financial comfort and abject poverty, won prizes at school and pawned them, and battled with priests and fornicated with prostitutes. If experience is the raw material of art, Stephen certainly has enough to make a start. Perhaps searching for that unknown place where a green rose might bloom, Stephen rejects the "reality" of Irish experience in order to embrace the "reality" of Parisian experience. Despite his avowed intention, his search for experience is actually a withdrawal from his society, but Stephen never uses his art to communicate with the society from which he has withdrawn, though he assumes the marginal position of the creative artist and though the other characters in *Portrait* and *Ulysses* accord him both the respect and mockery due the creative artist. Joyce himself seems to have withdrawn from
Irish society, but he never rejected it as completely as Stephen does: all of his fiction, work which contains loving portraits of both the admirable and the hateful, is set in Dublin. His art, though its ultimate source is his inexplicable talent, derives from dialectical tension between his drive for separation (a result of the shift in artistic emphasis from the mirror toward the lamp) and his emotional ties with the society he has left behind.

The dialectic sometimes appears in an unusual form. Keats, writing to his brother, revealed that he staved off depression by washing and dressing himself as if he were going out before sitting down to write. He claimed that he never "wrote a line with public intention, and yet when he wishes to summon up his most private faculties and bring them to high pitch, he does so by preparing himself as if for company." Whether or not the writer openly admits a relation to society, that relation bears on his work. Because the tension of the dialectic keeps the artist in contact with society, his position outside society frequently becomes his position in society. P. M. Pasinetti begins to debunk the myth of the isolated artist when he suggests that the alienation of the artist might actually constitute the installation of the artist in his right and proper position. The artist, at least since the Romantic age,
specializes in a mode of life characterized by intensity of feeling; he offers himself . . . as the 'public man of feeling,' the established 'sufferer.' His 'difference' may often be a difference in intensity and articulateness. And the well-known notions of the artist's alienation from society should be partially revised in this light; actually, the eccentric, 'special' position of the artist establishes him in society with a new sort of authority and creates between him and his audiences a new, probably more intense and certainly more conscious form of intimacy. 17

When the artist is alienated, shifted from the mainstream into a marginal position, he, like Arthur Dimmesdale in the final scaffold scene of The Scarlet Letter, steps onto a raised dais from which he can address the crowd. The same feelings that separate him from the mob often grant him a moral or esthetic authority over it; the artist's intensity of 'feeling,' his capacity for 'suffering,' and his ability to express his feeling and suffering establish him as both a superior man to whom we would do well to listen and a lunatic whom we may freely ignore.

The artist's marginality often results from a drive toward isolation which, if the artist is to be an artist rather than an esthete like James's Gabriel Nash or a hermit like Shakespeare's Timon, must fail. No matter how great the differences in intelligence, insight, sensitivity, morality, or esthetic sensibility he may
perceive between himself and his society, no matter how wide the chasm between artist and audience, there must always be a bridge across that chasm. Pasinetti, reading Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" allegorically in order to illustrate the artist's drive and the strange relation of the artist to society, points out that "the liberation in the work is only a temporary one; the Mariner's urge to tell his tale is periodical:

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns;
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me;
To him my tale I teach.

The tale, the confession, is directed toward someone; an act cannot be performed in vacuo.18 The need to tell his tale recurs (Pasinetti perhaps understates when he refers to the Mariner's agony and burning heart as an "urge"), and the ability to tell the tale seems a
mysterious power from an unknown source, but the Mariner must find an audience, must perform in a social context; he cannot speak merely to the empty air or to his mirror, but must buttonhole an appropriate listener, whom he then instructs with his story. Note also the Mariner's position as a perhaps unbalanced outsider: clearly not invited to the wedding, an institutionalized celebration of life, the Mariner arrests his listener, who sees him as a "graybeard loon," and holds him first with "his skinny hand" and then with his "glittering eye"; though the Wedding Guest beats his breast in frustration because he longs to join the party within, "he cannot choose but hear." The Mariner's apparent "madness," or merely his "otherness," gives him a power over his audience, an authority that compels the Wedding Guest to listen. The Mariner's "otherness" results from the self-expression of killing the albatross which, though not an artistic act, functions on an allegorical level as a reaction to social strictures and leads to the adventure he reports to the Wedding Guest. The maritime adventure leads to a powerful esthetic adventure, a moment of insight, as Harold Bloom reminds us, perhaps "unique, even in Romantic poetry." The moment of insight is the object of the tale:

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes;
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

O happy living things! No tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

The self-same moment I could pray,
And from my neck so free
The albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

The falling away of the albatross signifies nature's
sanction of the Mariner's new awareness; his need to
tell the tale, to report that esthetic adventure,
signifies the artist's dependence on society.

Real isolation from society is, of course, an
impossibility; even those alienated "artist" characters
who appear to separate themselves from their societies,
be they allegorical avatars such as Arthur Dimmesdale or
ostensible artists such as Gabriel Nash or Stephen
Dedalus, continue in social intercourse. That intercourse seems largely devoid of meaningful social contact because all three are mere role-players: Dimmesdale plays out his role as the pious young pastor, wishing he could live that role, and Nash and Dedalus, as stereotypes of the Paterian esthete, play the novelist and the poet, apparently believing that they are living their roles; Dimmesdale continues to preach, Nash appears, posturing, at luncheons, recitals, and teas, and Stephen Dedalus teaches (although he decides to quit that job near the end of Bloomsday), lectures friends and acquaintances at the National Library, and squanders his money on drinks for Mulligan and the others. But esthetic isolation is not impossible. Dimmesdale can conceal his true nature while pretending to reveal it, and Nash and Dedalus can console themselves with their disdain for society's view of art, but in all three cases, esthetic isolation leads to the failure of art. If a writer—or any other artist—chooses to eschew all forms of involvement with society's notions of art, creative sterility is the result.

The dialectic operating between the individual artist and the social context in which he is expected to function may be illuminated by a comparison to the Bakhtinian view of language:
A unitary language is not something that is given [dan], but is in its very essence something that must be posited [zadan]—at every moment in the life of a language it opposes the realities of heteroglossia [raznorecie], but at the same time the [sophisticated] ideal [or primitive delusion] of a single, holistic language makes the actuality of its presence felt as a force resisting an absolute heteroglot state; it posits definite boundaries for limiting the potential chaos of variety, thus guaranteeing a more or less maximal mutual understanding.

Similarly, a unitary society, or the vague cultural norm we refer to as the mainstream, is also not a given reality but a posited abstraction, at the same time a sophisticated ideal and a primitive delusion that exerts its power by resisting esthetic heteroglossia; it posits definite boundaries for limiting the potential chaos of self-expression by providing a socio-economic context for art. If no individualized creativity exists, then the esthetic life of a society can be truly unitary; if all creative efforts are utterly expressionistic, then the esthetic life of the society is chaotic. Neither condition is possible; all art arises from the tension between the ideal of utterly free expression and the ideal of unitarian order, or the dialogue between the individual and society.

The dialogue is sometimes friendly and sometimes hostile. Chaucer used humor to chide his readers, supporting the social ideology of medieval England while
exposing social corruption. Though he created such "established sufferers" as the tearful narrator of "Troylus and Criseyde" and the bereaved dreamer of "Parlement of Foules," Chaucer's own suffering has gone unrecorded, which perhaps indicates that what sets the artist apart is not merely his capacity for suffering, as Pasinetti suggests, but his capacity for perceiving and empathizing with the suffering of others, along with his ability to express what he perceives. Because we know so little of Chaucer aside from what we can infer from his works (as we know so little of other medieval poets and of Renaissance figures such as Shakespeare), we can only speculate as to how heavily he may have drawn on his own suffering, but other writers contrast with Chaucer, casting doubt on the assumption that empathy is necessary to art. (Stephen Dedalus's Shakespeare, of course, relied exclusively on his own suffering, even when re-creating famous historical characters.) In creating such characters as Paul Morel, D. H. Lawrence drew heavily on his own suffering and his own feelings of alienation, which he expressed through a disdainful, perhaps even contemptuous attitude toward the moralistic, utilitarian society that had spawned him, yet he also drew sympathetic portraits of such characters as Constance Chatterley and the Brangwen sisters. Chaucer's works embrace the ideology of his
society and Lawrence's reject the ideology of his, yet both are great artists, and despite his avowed impatience with the restraints society places on the individual's imagination and libido, Lawrence's fiction deals almost exclusively with the individual's attempt to reconcile his own drives with the strictures of his society. Isolation, then, cannot be essential to art.

The primary intent of this dissertation is to examine the myth of the isolated artist through the study of characters created by prototypical writers from the Romantic, Realist, and Modernist schools. Despite the alienation evident in Hawthorne's detestation of politics, economics, and popular literature, despite the oft-repeated contention of Jamesians that to James the artist is not "a man all the same," and despite the "moral courage" (an unshakeable egotism learned at the knee of his beloved profligate father) that allowed James Joyce virtually to ignore worldly concerns while pursuing the composition of difficult and largely inaccessible masterpieces, from Hawthorne through James to Joyce, there appears a surprising consistency in the characterization of artists which reveals a fundamentally unchanging symbiosis between artist and society. The characters studied, if they be artists as determined by the simple formula that artists create art, walk a fine line between egotism and self-denial; they balance
their own creative drives against the social and economic restraints that work continually to hold creativity in check. In the real world these restraints take a variety of forms, from generic expectations to commercial necessities. In fiction the artist character must more often work against social and religious constraints. Arthur Dimmesdale, for example, who in the allegory of The Scarlet Letter functions as an avatar of the failed artist, represses, after the single creative slip that results in the birth of Pearl, both his own creativity and honesty in order to retain his high position and to continue to support the tenets of his religious faith. Though his religion structures his life, it is a religion so bound up with middle-class materialism and social status that we might fairly say that Dimmesdale's denial of Pearl's paternity (allegorically his one act of genuine self-expression) constitutes a denial of self, a diffusion of creative impulses to worldly uses. Roger Chillingworth, who also functions allegorically as a failed artist, perverts his hard-won knowledge to the service of vengeance.

The focus of this dissertation obviates the need to establish an all-inclusive definition of art, which would in any case be a fruitless task. Though the argument contains brief analyses of creative efforts by certain characters under study, such as the commentary
on Stephen Dedalus's villanelle, I do not attempt to evaluate the relative quality of the literary creations of the characters. Art, as Henry James put it, consists of the reporting of a genuine esthetic adventure. A genuine adventure must of course be experienced first-hand, whether it be the scaling of a peak in the real world or a moment of insight in a writer's study. It must also be reported. The adventurer must return with the requisite notes and photographs; if he fails to document his travels, then in the eyes of his society he may as well have not made the trip. As the adventurer must report, so the painter must paint, the sculptor must sculpt, and the writer must write. The artist characters in the texts create art; artistically talented characters who do not create art are the failures and the esthetes.

Difficulty naturally arises when we try to evaluate the "genuineness" of the esthetic adventure. There seems little doubt, for example, that Stephen Dedalus, though he distorts the reality of life as part of his process of perception, experiences his own genuine esthetic adventures, as in his epiphanic encounter with the bird-girl on the beach in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, and little doubt as well that James's painter, Theobald, also experiences a genuine esthetic adventure in "The Madonna of the Future," though he
comically tries to serialize it. The adventures of other fictional artists are more problematic. Paul Overt questions the value of Henry St. George’s art because he distrusts St. George’s motives, which Paul perceives as middle class; Roderick Hudson denigrates Gloriani largely because of Gloriani’s commercial success. Neither St. George nor Gloriani, each of whom has mastered the art of reporting his adventures, appears to the other characters to have suffered enough to be a "real" artist.

An interesting analogy suggests itself in light of James’s use of the term "adventure." In both art and exploration, perceived suffering seems to lend status. Like artists, explorers who suffer are often better remembered than are those who, like St. George and Gloriani, merely succeed. The South Pole, for example, was first reached by the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen, whose thorough planning and confident leadership took himself and his men to the Pole (and safely home again, without incident) a month ahead of a British party led by Royal Navy Captain Robert Falcon Scott. Scott’s poor planning and inept leadership led to the deaths, from the preventable disease of scurvy, of all five Britons who reached the pole. Amundsen reported his adventure in person, while Scott reported his posthumously through his copious journals. Both
Amundsen and Scott faced the same enormous difficulties: Amundsen overcame them handily and was relegated to a footnote in history; Scott died and was glorified into the status of a legend. Henry St. George supports a comfortable upper middle-class lifestyle, replete with family and country house, while Paul Overt sacrifices at the "altar of literature" his own chance of starting a family. As sculptors, Gloriani and Roderick Hudson face the same challenge, which Gloriani meets while Roderick allows himself to be consumed; yet Gloriani (though in *Roderick Hudson* the derogatory comments on his work and character are filtered through the rather naive consciousness of either Rowland Mallet or Hudson himself instead of a more authoritative narrative voice) is remembered as a charlatan, whereas Roderick, who dies because he foolishly insists on seeing art and Christina Light as socially and economically detached ideals, has become a grand, tragic figure. In art as in adventure, suffering seems to validate the report.

We can quantify neither the artist's suffering nor the authenticity of his esthetic adventure, but we can to some extent quantify his reporting. Because Stephen Dedalus never writes and Theobald never paints, each fails to report. What differentiates between Stephen Dedalus and Henry St. George, then, and identifies Dedalus as a failure and St. George as an artist, is not
the relative esthetic value of their work—as determined by the genuineness of their adventures or the finish of their reports—but the quantity; Dedalus produces a single mature poem, while St. George manages forty volumes of prose. Though I would not attempt to quantify artistic merit on a purely mathematical basis by suggesting that a writer with forty volumes to his name surpasses a writer with thirty-nine or twenty-eight or seventeen, it seems both fair and consistent to consider productivity as the primary criterion in establishing a character as an artist. Henry St. George, who writes each morning between ten and one, blooms with regularity; Stephen Dedalus, who puts pen to paper but three times in his entire fictional life, forever buds. Nick Dormer paints; Theobald plans to paint. Gloriani sculpts, Roderick Hudson sculpts only when he feels the presence of the muse—only when sculpting is easy.

Another difficulty lies in determining the honesty of the artist's report. No matter how genuine the esthetic adventure may be, if the artist falsifies the report then the integrity of the art may be damaged. But in examining fictional characters we seldom have any way of determining the integrity of their art without falling into the same fallacies that delude Paul Overt and Roderick Hudson, that the intensity of an artist's
suffering somehow validates the art and that quantity inevitably ruins quality. Many of the characters under study here suffer, yet not all these sufferers are artists. Stephen Dedalus suffers, and though his single complete and readable report, the Villanelle of the Temptress, seems an astonishing distortion of the girl who inspired it, it also seems an honest expression of Stephen's perceptions, colored as they are by his penchant for literary fantasy. Stephen fails because he so seldom reports. Leopold Bloom, as a Jew wandering in Dublin, also suffers, and his suffering seems all the more poignant because, unlike Stephen's, Bloom's alienation results less from his own nature or will than from the misperceptions of others. Unlike Stephen, who has consciously and publicly rejected Irish religious, social, and political life, Bloom tries tactfully to integrate himself into Irish society by charitably allowing the Irish their illusions and keeping his analyses of Irish foibles to himself. But Bloom, despite his artistic nature, also fails as an artist because he never reports.

Other characters both experience genuine esthetic adventures and, as far as we can tell from the texts, strive to report them honestly. Like Robert Browning, whose bourgeois appearance so surprised Henry James in the winter of 1878-79, Henry St. George and Mark Ambient
both function as artists while appearing utterly conventional in their personal lives and while undergoing a minimum of suffering. St. George himself calls his own artistic integrity into question through his confession to Paul Overt, but as we shall see in chapter two, the confession itself is suspect, so we cannot accurately evaluate the honesty of St. George's forty volumes' worth of reports which, after all, we cannot read. Mark Ambient's honesty seems beyond question. Gloriani's honesty, viewed through the eyes of Rowland Mallet and Roderick Hudson, seems suspect simply because Gloriani has accepted the compromise with perfection, which Roderick doggedly refuses, that allows him to make a living as an artist by filing the necessary reports. How seriously that compromise compromises Gloriani's art, if it does so at all, will also be discussed in chapter two.

The character who perhaps poses the sharpest problem is Hawthorne's Arthur Dimmesdale, who in the allegory of The Scarlet Letter functions as an avatar of the failed artist. Dimmesdale undoubtedly experiences a genuine esthetic adventure in his liason with Hester Prynne and, in his position as the rising young star in the clergy of the Boston colony, is seen by his flock as particularly devout in part because he suffers so deeply. (Like adventurers and artists, clergymen must
also be seen to suffer.) And Dimmesdale, though his role as Pearl’s father remains hidden from his peers and his parishioners, continually reports that adventure in his confessions from the pulpit, but his confessions, though literally true, are outright lies because his rhetorical skill enables him to mislead his audience. Dimmesdale experiences the necessarily genuine adventure and files the necessary reports, but he fails as an artist because those reports, as we know from the comments of Hawthorne’s narrator, are literally true but, because of Dimmesdale’s skill in reading his familiar audience, essentially dishonest in intent.

The portrayals of the characters listed above, along with others from the work of Hawthorne, James, and Joyce, reveal a consistent theme which, because it surfaces in the fiction of all three, demonstrates, in the best writing of leading novelists of the Romantic, Realist, and Modernist schools, a dialectical tension between the artist’s drive toward isolation (all but forced upon him by the shift from the mirror toward the lamp) and the posited abstraction of the unitary cultural mainstream. Clear esthetic differences among the three schools indicate that the dialectic is a necessary component of the genre of the novel, and clear national differences among the three novelists (in this sense James, who was born an American and died a Briton,
functions as a bridge between the American Hawthorne and the Irish Joyce) suggest that the dialectic functions on both sides of the Atlantic. The dialectic can never safely be resolved; devoting oneself either wholly to ideal art or wholly to society leads to creative sterility.
I

The Allegory of Art in The Scarlet Letter

In Hawthorne's short fiction certain themes appear and re-appear like the elements of a fugue. The more persistent of these themes involve the nature of artistic ability, the internal struggle of the artist, and the artist's relation to the society in which he lives. These problems were of great concern to Hawthorne because he was a gifted artist who sometimes revered and sometimes distrusted his gift, who struggled to keep that reverence and distrust in balance, and who sought a place in society even as his nature and talent drew him apart from it.

Few writers have written about art as often as Hawthorne did, and Hawthorne's artists are often embroiled in an emotional dialectic with the forces of convention as they try to secede from a society which Hawthorne views as repressively conventional and scornfully philistine. Such attempts at secession nearly always fail. For example, "Passages From a Relinquished Work," first published in 1834, tells of a young man who leaves the home of his guardian, Parson Thumpcushion, determined on a career as a peripatetic
story-teller. His defiant motives are clearly stated: Parson Thumpcushion "would sooner have laid me in my father's tomb, than seen me either a novelist or an actor; two characters which I thus hit upon a method of uniting." Following his vocation to spite his repressive Puritan heritage, the young man demonstrates the adversarial relation of writer and society characteristic of literature since the shift from the mirror toward the lamp. He identifies himself as an artist primarily in order to separate himself from his society (i.e., the particular social group from which he sprang); his creative endeavors are thus generated not only by his talent but also by his anger toward that society as it is represented by the hidebound Parson Thumpcushion and the itinerant preacher, Eliahim Abbott, who becomes the narrator's traveling companion and tries, as they wander, "to convince [him] of the guilt and madness of [his] life" (10:421). The narrator's "otherness," held in check by the posited abstraction that constitutes the mainstream as perceived by Parson Thumpcushion, produces a ceaseless tension between the creative urge and the repressive imperatives of socio-religious conformity; art arises from that tension. The story has an obvious biographical parallel in the career of the youthful Hawthorne, who rejected his community to become a writer, only to find that his
heritage had supplied him with a conscience as its able representative.

From "Passages From a Relinquished Work" to "The Artist of the Beautiful," published ten years later, we see a quantum leap not only in Hawthorne's skill but also in the complexity of his view of the artist's conflict with society. The wandering story-teller's youthful confidence has given way to Owen Warland's alternate moods of obsession and exhaustion, the resolution of which is rewarded by only a brief moment of purely internal triumph. We might conclude that youthful confidence has sustained Hawthorne's ideal artist as reflected in Owen's struggles and that Hawthorne himself has somehow managed, through faith in his artistic gift, to persevere and triumph. But the biographical parallel is far from exact. Owen's triumph is hardly conclusive, and between "Passages From a Relinquished Work" and "The Artist of the Beautiful" Hawthorne published "The Village Uncle," with a protagonist who casts off his artistic pretensions to become a simple fisherman, relegating story-telling to the status of a hobby; "The Devil in Manuscript," in which the protagonist, Oberon, castigates himself for becoming "ambitious of a bubble, and careless of solid reputation" (11:172), and then burns his manuscripts, which he considers fiend-inspired; and "The Prophetic
Pictures," the story of a portrait-painter who disregards the welfare of his subjects in his pursuit of artistic truth. There is no orderly progression from the youthful rebel to the mature artist because Hawthorne's view of the problem of the artist was constantly changing as he himself wrestled with the marginality forced upon him by his artistic nature. In the words of Rudolph von Abele, "the role of neurosis in the artist's fate cannot be generalized . . . to some it is a goddess, to some a demon. And to Hawthorne . . . it was by and large a demon."²

Hawthorne's short fiction is filled with gifted men. Many of them--the poets, the painters, the story-tellers--can quickly be classified as artists, but the scientists, such as Aylmer and Rappaccini, should not be ignored because they too strive to create esthetic perfection. All of these characters are set apart from society by their talent; they are all problematic individuals, though not in an economic sense. Some of them, like the village uncle, engage in a conventional lifestyle while relegating their talent to an ancillary role. Some struggle with their gifts as with demons. These demons, as Von Abele has pointed out, appear with remarkable consistency in Hawthorne's fiction, though they sometimes pass unrecognized. In "The Prophetic Pictures," Walter Ludlow calls the
painter's talent "an awful gift" (9:167) as he teases his fiancee, Elinor, with hints of the artist's ability to paint the "mind and heart" (9:167) as well as the features. The painter's egotism and curiosity lead him to exercise his awful gift on by depicting his subjects, which he chooses deliberately because they are unsound, with chilling realism. Though he occasionally regrets his own artistic ruthlessness, he does nothing to soften his vision. His egotism nearly allows his talent to separate him from society: "Like all the other men around whom an engrossing purpose wreathes itself, he was insulated from the mass of human kind. He had no aim--no pleasure--no sympathies--but what were ultimately connected with his art. Though gentle in manner, and upright in intent and action, he did not possess kindly feelings; his heart was cold; no living creature could be brought near enough to keep him warm" (9:178). Here we see the self-ordained worshipper, the prophet of art so enraptured by his own skill that when he returns to the city after a sojourn in the wilderness, he pays a visit not to Walter and Elinor, but to their portraits. And he seems unaware of the perversity of a system of values that elevates art above people. Like Joyce's Stephen Dedalus, who in condemning his father for having become a praiser of his own past fails to realize that he himself exists as a praiser of his
own future, Hawthorne's painter, "reading other bosoms, with an acuteness almost preternatural . . . failed to see the disorder of his own" (9:180). He wages no struggle with a demon because he is not aware of being possessed. Having unwittingly insulated himself from social concerns by devoting himself to art and eschewing normal social relations, the painter has nearly lost all compassion; but he is still dependent on society for his flawed subjects. His art is the result of the interaction between the drive for separation inherent in his devotion to art and the social curiosity inherent in his choice of the medium of portraiture. Even so cold a figure as the prophetic painter, possessed by the demon of art, cannot wholly free himself from society.

Other Hawthorne protagonists struggle to free themselves from the demon of art. Oberon, in "The Devil in Manuscript," speaks openly of the devil which he believes has led him into an awful solitude. In a scene perhaps reminiscent of Hawthorne's destruction of his own novel, Fanshawe, Oberon repudiates the "fiend" by burning his own work, even though he thinks the fiend's power unshakable. The poet of "The Canterbury Pilgrims," his creative ambitions thwarted by an unreceptive world, tries to deny his artistic self by retreating into a Shaker community where the title "poet" is "a designation seldom heard" (9:123). But he cannot
leave his muse behind so easily; he continues to write even after joining the Shaker colony, haunted by his demon even in his tranquil retreat.

Oberon and the Canterbury poet, though gripped by demons, are not as far along the road to perdition as are Aylmer, Rappaccini, and Ethan Brand. Millicent Bell observes that "Hawthorne’s most persistent single theme is the peril of egotism" and that Hawthorne’s "personal experience enforced upon him the lesson that loneliness . . . was somehow a natural destiny, an inevitable consequence of the artist’s choice of role." The peril of egotism and the loneliness of the artist also beset characters who are not artists but who nonetheless share, because of their superior talents and their interests in ends other than the worldly, the artist’s otherness. In "The Birth-Mark," Aylmer, driven deep into his scientific studies by his obsession with a tiny imperfection on the cheek of Georgiana, his wife, concocts a remedy which will remove the mark. Because his obsession has taught her to loathe her own supposed imperfection, Georgiana trusts herself willingly to her husband’s science. But the birth-mark is not merely a flaw in Georgiana’s complexion; it reaches all the way to the heart. Richly symbolic, the flaw represents the inevitable imperfection that defines her humanity, and its removal results
in Georgiana's death. Aylmer possesses the sharp vision he needs to discern so tiny a flaw and the technical skill to remove it, but not the simple human compassion to accept it. Hawthorne's stance on Aylmer's tragic obsession seems clear enough from the devastating irony in the description of the birth-mark's disappearance: "Watch the stain of the rainbow fading out of the sky; and you will know how that mysterious symbol passed away" (10:54). Aylmer's egotism allows him to see not the fading rainbow, but only his own success. Unlike Hawthorne's artists, Aylmer and the other scientists destroy rather than create; their movement toward separation lacks the restraint of social tension.

Like Aylmer, Rappaccini of "Rappaccini's Daughter" ignores the needs of the human heart in his quest for perfection. Though not an artist, Rappaccini is linked to the world of art through Hawthorne's prose: "the pale man of science seemed to gaze with a triumphant expression at the beautiful youth [Giovanni, Beatrice's suitor] and maiden, as might an artist who should spend his life in achieving a picture or a group of statuary, and finally be satisfied with his success" (10:126). His deep knowledge of science has enabled Rappaccini to render his beautiful daughter invulnerable. But poor Beatrice is also unapproachable. Her very breath, like the aroma of the blossoms which are her father's
creation and the source of her invulnerability, is death. She, more than the blossoms, is the bloody flower which, as Von Abele writes, "might well serve, with the Scarlet Letter, as an overmastering symbol of art." To her father, Beatrice is perfect, but to herself she is loathsome. Her father's revisions in effect have separated her from society.

Neither Aylmer nor Rappaccini, though each is linked with art, is an artist; neither creates, both destroy. Aylmer, through his quest for inhuman perfection, destroys his wife, and Rappaccini, in his quest for inhuman invulnerability, destroys his daughter's humanity. Ethan Brand and Richard Digby are neither artists nor scientists, but their tales illuminate Hawthorne's view of the artist by defining the concepts of sin and isolation which are such powerful temptations to the artistic temperament. As Hawthorne saw it, susceptibility to the sin of egotism was a consequence of isolation rather than of talent alone. Richard Digby, "The Man of Adamant," might be the worst sinner ever to drip from Hawthorne's pen. Once a persuasive preacher, Digby yielded to his own intellectual pride, becoming a rigid bigot. His spiritual withdrawal from the community of mankind is emphasized by his physical withdrawal to a dark cave, where he drinks the mineral-heavy water dripping from the ceiling rather than
step outside to find fresh water. Sitting in his cave, Digby becomes a man of stone in both a figurative and a literal sense. Unmoving and immovable, he misinterprets the Bible, "converting all that was gracious and merciful, to denunciations of vengeance and woe, on every created being but himself" (11:166). As his mind and heart harden, his body, nourished by the mineral-heavy water of the cave, solidifies as well.

"The Man of Adamant" contains one of Hawthorne's harshest indictments of the egotist. But Hawthorne states his position even more clearly in "Ethan Brand," labelling egotism the "unpardonable sin," and adding a few words from the lips of a knowing and unrepentant sinner. Egotism, Ethan Brand explains with relish, is "the sin of an intellect that triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man, and reverence for God, and sacrificed everything to its own mighty claims. The only sin that deserves a recompense of mortal agony!" (11:190).

Because they are so deeply entombed in their own egos that they have disengaged themselves utterly from society, neither Richard Digby nor Ethan Brand creates anything. Hawthorne's artists, those who do create, suffer the temptations of egotism but do not succumb. For Hawthorne the position of the artist is a perilous one. The artist receives unsought a talent which is
more often an affliction rather than a gift; this talent tempts him toward isolation; and isolation makes him vulnerable to egotism, the worst possible sin. For the artist to cultivate his talent, to hold the mirror up to nature (and to light it with his lamp), he must distance himself from society, stepping back far enough so that society's reflected image can be made to fit in the glass, but not so far that the image is dwarfed by the mirror itself. Immersion in community too often distorts or limits the artist's vision, and complete acceptance of society's values demands that the artist deny, or at least sharply limit, his talent. As Hawthorne saw it, on one side loomed the peril of egotism, and on the other, the peril of self-denial. To complicate matters, the artist is often drawn toward egotism by a genuine belief in his own intellectual superiority, and toward self-denial by a deep-seated need for approval and companionship. The artist, like Owen Warland, "simultaneously aims for the sublime and skirts the abyss of destruction."\(^5\) In his state of unavoidable marginality he must create, but because he is a product of his society and can never fully escape it, his creations must speak to his fellows. In Hawthorne's own words, his tales "are not the talk of a secluded man with his own mind and heart . . . but his attempts . . . to open an intercourse with the world"
(9:6). These attempts were often unsuccessful in Hawthorne's own day; failure to communicate was a fate he shared with his fictional artists.

One such failed fictional artist is the aforementioned poet of "The Canterbury Pilgrims." Along with Oberon, he shows clearly the effect of society's snubs on the artistic ego. In calling him a "varse-maker," the Shaker boy, Josiah, who must for his own understanding convert the abstract epithet "poet" to a more practical term, unwittingly rakes an exposed nerve. "How many a pang it has cost me," the poet laments, "this same insensibility to the ethereal essence of poetry" (11:124). His talent, the power of which he calls Fate, has been his ruin, for "what is the voice of song, when the world lacks the ear of taste?" (11:124). In this brief passage lies the essence of "the paradox from which Hawthorne did not cease attempting to free himself." Fate, talent, egotism, and failure are juxtaposed on a single page. Cursed by fate with talent, the poet passes judgment on society to explain his failure, but we can never be sure whether the artist's perception correctly condemns his society's plebian tastes, or if the artist's egotism perhaps incorrectly celebrates his own "otherness." The "Canterbury" poet in one sense withdraws from society because it has rejected him as an artist, but in another
sense he tries to rejoin the brotherhood of man by immersing himself in a wholly practical society, an attempt which fails because he cannot free himself of his talent, which demands that he continue to write even after joining the Shaker colony. Neither the marginality of the artist nor social approval, by itself, can satisfy him; while he has one, he longs for the other. He will ever vacillate between the two.

Oberon, of "The Devil in Manuscript," reveals another facet of the artist's relation to society. Far more extreme than the "Canterbury" poet's, Oberon's egotism is in fact the devil that haunts his manuscripts. His intense self-criticism seems to reveal a depth of self-knowledge unusual in Hawthorne's tortured artists, but this "revelation" is disproved by Oberon himself. He feels sharply the artist's isolation:

I have become ambitious of a bubble, and careless of solid reputation. I am surrounding myself with shadows, which bewilder, by aping the realities of life. They have drawn me aside from the beaten path of the world, and led me into a strange sort of solitude—a solitude in the midst of men—where nobody wishes for what I do, nor thinks nor feels as I do. The tales have done all this (11:172).

Oberon perhaps expresses the anguish of isolation better than any of Hawthorne's artists, but he seems less perceptive of his own ambition. The tales are not the
cause of his withdrawal but the products of it, and the devil lurks not in their pages but in himself. The bubble of which he has become ambitious cannot be the tales themselves; he has succeeded in the process of creation and so should be, at least to some small extent, satisfied. What he lacks—and craves—is not creative skill, but recognition, as shown by his vilification of the seventeen booksellers who have rejected his work. Rejection torments him, and he fails to see that it is false logic that blames books and booksellers for the anguish of thwarted ambition. His own egotism tortures him, and even the burning of his precious tales cannot exorcise that demon. As the burning manuscripts dwindle down to cinders, cries of "Fire!" in the streets send Oberon's imagination into fiendish flight. In his excitement he enumerates the harsh conditions (the gale-force winds that will spread the flames and the cold that has frozen the firemen's pumps) which can make a fire in winter a major catastrophe. His realization that sparks from the burning manuscripts have started the blaze brings not guilt and remorse, but joy and exultation. "Here I stand," he cheers, "a triumphant author . . . my brain has set the town on fire" (11:178). The flames in the wintry night sky are extensions of the flames in Oberon's cold, dark heart, and they exact revenge for his rejection. But
the tales themselves, Oberon's art, resulted not only from the talent or self expression that drew him into seclusion, but also from his need for recognition.

Demonic possession of the artist is a theme that appears frequently in Hawthorne's short fiction, and occasionally the author takes a lighter view of it. Though he often used Gothic elements in his work, Hawthorne also liked to poke fun at the seemingly inexplicable supernatural simply by explaining it, as in "The Vision of the Fountain." In "Drowne's Wooden Image," Hawthorne created a wood-carver who for a time transcends the limits of his skill to produce an oaken image of a woman so beautiful, so lifelike, that it excites the wonder and admiration of all who see it. The pragmatic Captain Hunnewell, who ordered the carving as a figurehead, admires Drowne's work but appreciates it as an ornament for a ship rather than as a work of art. The famous portrait artist Copley, who is a commercial painter as Drowne is a commercial carver, sees the carving as a rare work of art and urges Drowne to sell it abroad at a great profit. Drowne refuses; he has not executed the carving for money. The anomaly of a Yankee not interested in money baffles Copley, but he quickly solves the puzzle: Drowne "has gone mad; and thence has come this gleam of genius" (10:315). The townspeople regard the wondrous image in a different
light: some think that an evil spirit has entered its form to lure Drowne to his own destruction, and when Captain Hunnewell appears on the street with a beautiful woman on his arm, they assume that Drowne's wooden image has somehow come to life. An old-fashioned Puritan mutters that Drowne has made a pact with the Devil. The truth is less mysterious: Drowne has fallen in love with a young Portuguese woman under Hunnewell's protection and has used her as a model for his carving. "To our friend Drowne," the narrator tells us, "there came a brief season of excitement, kindled by love" (10:320). Drowne's prolonged act of creation was motivated by love. Yet to the onlookers (as to many others who have theorized on the sources of art), madness and demonism seemed more plausible explanations.

Much of Hawthorne's own work was motivated by love. Richard J. Jacobson's assertion that to Hawthorne "the ideal of fellowship [was] present in all true art" seems borne out by Hawthorne's short fiction. Many of Hawthorne's characters withdraw—Goodman Brown rejects humanity as surely as do Ethan Brand and Richard Digby—but many also reach out. The authorial voice in "The New Adam and Eve" attempts to instruct: "It is only through the medium of the imagination that we can loosen [our] iron fetters, which we call truth and reality, and make ourselves even partially sensible what
prisoners we are" (10:247). Not all of us have an imagination capable of such escape-artistry, so it becomes the author's task to share his ability, which Hawthorne does here by describing a modern world suddenly shorn of its inhabitants. Into this setting step a new Adam and Eve, who wander through an empty town, idly examining what the vanished race has left behind. To them, the clothing in the finest shops seems unnecessary, the most exquisite jewelry pales next to nature's blossoms, gold coins are mere sparkles to scatter in the air, and books are unintelligible. Perhaps the moment in the tale which best illustrates how far, how very far we have strayed from the Garden is the scene in which Adam and Eve wander into a fine house where a banquet has been laid. They find nothing— not the finest foods, not the best champagne— that they recognize as food save the fruit set out for dessert. Though there are no artists in "The New Adam and Eve," the tale neatly summarizes the position of the artist. Without his imagination, the author could not have conceived such a tale; without the artist's requisite egotism, he would not have presumed to instruct his audience; without love, he would not have risked our rejection.

Such attempts to instruct often fail. "Main Street" features a showman who, using a mechanism of his
own invention, unveils images of the past which trace the history of New England for an unappreciative audience, thereby revealing literary art as an interaction between artist and audience. One watcher, adamantly refusing to suspend his disbelief and interact with the performance, complains that the figures on the machine's stage are merely stiff, awkward cut-outs. Another argues that the showman has muddled history and genealogy. Hawthorne himself probably heard both of these criticisms. His penchant for quasi-allegorical symbolism brought many two-dimensional characters into print, and in his short fiction he often demanded that the participation of the audience in expecting the reader's imagination fill out both character and plot. And, because he is only part historian, the artist often subordinates fact to theme in his search for what he perceives as truth.

The showman of "Main-Street," who doggedly continues his performance even in the face of continual rejection by his audience, seems to have struck a balance between self and society, a balance which a character such as Oberon could not maintain. In "P's Correspondence" we see the result of the artist's self-denial. "P," who travels in his imagination and writes letters home, meets on one of his trips several Romantic writers, including two--Shelley and Byron--who
died young and still rebellious. In P's fantasy the two have survived into middle age and have made their peace with society. Byron's state sets the pattern of the story: he has gotten fat, adopted conventional morals, reconciled with his wife, and become both a political conservative and a rigid churchman. He has been co-opted into respectable society. P finds Byron, the man who embodied the dark side of Romanticism, busily revising his poems, which are now "carefully corrected, expurgated and amended, in accordance with his present creed of taste, morals, politics and religion" (10:365), effectively excising the fiery self expression that had originally set Byron's poetry at odds with prevailing social ideology. It seems significant that this new Byron, whose drive toward separation has been replaced by a determination to integrate himself wholly into the society he once preferred to shock with his profligate behavior, writes no new poems but merely revises the old; like Hathorne's scientists, he cannot create but must destroy. P samples the new "Don Juan" and finds it "a very sad affair indeed" (10:366). Childe Harold grown up is rather a dull boy.

The tamed Lord Byron of "P's Correspondence" represents the problematic individual lost in the comforts of society; Aylmer and Rappaccini represent the problematic individual lost in self-exaltation.
Vacillating between the two extremes is Owen Warland, Hawthorne's artist of the beautiful. His story aptly illustrates Ronald T. Curran's assertion that "in his best work, Hawthorne wrote from both sides of his nature," for in Owen we see both the solitary artist and the social man as egotism and self-denial assert themselves, fade, and reappear like the contrapuntal themes of a fugue. Owen is surely the most complex problematic individual in Hawthorne's short fiction, and the chronicle of his career is one of Hawthorne's most sensitive and thorough explorations of the artist's quandary.

Owen leads a life like an emotional roller coaster. A watchmaker temperamentally unsuited to his profession despite his extraordinary manual skills, Owen allows his business to suffer while he devotes himself to a single-minded pursuit of the Beautiful. When he accidentally destroys his work-in-progress, he lapses into despair, then applies himself to his business with revived energies, his artistic ambitions seemingly laid to rest. But his talent soon re-asserts itself. Owen returns to his quest, wasting the daylight hours in observing the flight of butterflies and sneaking into his shop after dark to labor over his own perfect butterfly, an exquisite mechanism into which he hopes he can breathe life. His creation is destroyed again when
he shows it to Annie Hovenden, daughter of Owen's former master, and the woman Owen loves. But even Annie's gentle touch is too rough for the art represented by the delicate butterfly. After this second setback, Owen again abandons his project, this time settling into the amiable life of the drunkard. Roused from his alcoholic reverie by a real butterfly flying through a tavern window, Owen returns to his art, but his butterfly is destroyed once more when Owen himself, on learning of Annie's betrothal to another man, smashes it in frustration. Despite this failure, Owen at last succeeds in creating his perfect butterfly, which he solemnly presents to Annie as a very late bridal gift. It is crushed by Annie's young son. Owen's years of labor have come to nothing.

Like many of Hawthorne's artists, Owen Warland faces the problem of "how to rise above humanity without losing his humaneness." His pursuit of the beautiful spiritually lifts him above the inanity of the mainstream middle-class lifestyle of his friends and neighbors, but it also draws him away from the warmth of the community. Hunched over his workbench, he idealizes Annie Hovenden, a flesh and blood woman who can never live up to Owen's fantasies. Owen himself cannot communicate with the real Annie; at least in part because of his silence she marries a man whose brute
strength and simple practicality are perfectly anti-
thetical to Owen's delicate touch and spirituality and in perfect accord with the abstraction that is the mainstream.

Owen's spirituality perplexes friends and neighbors alike. Peter Hovenden, his former master, sharply disapproves of Owen's artistic drive. "A plague on such ingenuity," he cries. "All the effect that ever I knew of it, was to spoil the accuracy of some of the best watches in my shop" (10:448). Hovenden's practical concerns are the concerns of the community, and Owen's angry reaction to Hovenden's censure includes society as a whole: "You are my evil spirit," he tells Hovenden. "You and the hard, coarse world!" (10:457). Stung by such attacks and racked by self-doubt, Owen nearly gives up his pursuit. But his talent endures.

In the story's closing scene, Owen's perfect butterfly is crushed by a mere child. Owen accepts the destruction of the butterfly calmly because he has learned that the success of the artist lies neither in the finished work nor in society's acceptance of that work. None of the other characters can appreciate his creation, but Owen knows that "the world . . . could never say the fitting word, or feel the fitting sentiment" (10:472). His resignation seems a re-statement of Oberon's bitterness. In visiting the Danforth house-
hold, Owen has returned to his community, but he remains in spiritual isolation. Not even a sigh escapes him as the labor of five years is pulverized by an infant. This apparent serenity is what Ronald T. Curran refers to when he says that Hawthorne allowed his "artist a cold, personal triumph in his individual success." His triumph is cold and personal because it cannot be shared. But Curran also suggests that the scene results in a dual triumph because Owen's audience, though momentarily titillated by the bright butterfly, is not moved by it. The community's faith in practicality remains unshaken; its view of art as a petty curiosity remains unchanged. Owen himself has managed to achieve the sublime while avoiding the chasms of egotism and self-denial flanking his path, and by succumbing neither to self or society he has created art. He has won perhaps all the artist can win. But because the artist cannot exist wholly outside his social context, he must offer up his delicate creation to the rough hands of society and suffer the consequences.

In light of Hawthorne's preoccupation with the artist's love-hate relation with society as it appears in his short fiction, it seems reasonable to re-examine his masterpiece, The Scarlet Letter. The novel has lent itself readily to diverse interpretations. Charles Child Walcutt has neatly categorized the more popular
readings: the Puritan reading, which sees the "central motive of the book in the idea that sin is permanently warping"; variations of the Puritan reading, which consider sin liberating and enlightening rather than warping; the Romantic reading, which indicts Puritan society for its sinfully harsh treatment of the two lovers; the Relativistic, which deals with the "psychological implications of the sense of guilt"; and the Transcendental, which pronounces Dimmesdale and Hester "guilty of not being true to themselves." Each of these readings explores a theme clearly present in the text, but none adequately interprets the entire work.11

Unless we accept seventeenth century Puritan mores as our framework for interpreting the novel, the orthodox Puritan reading applies chiefly to Hester's estranged husband, Roger Chillingworth. Even Arthur Dimmesdale, operating within the Puritan moral code, recognizes the severity of Chillingworth's sin: "We are not, Hester, the worst sinners in the world. There is one worst than even the polluted priest! That old man's revenge has been blacker than my sin. He has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart" (1:195). In placing himself above law and morality, Chillingworth exhibits the same egotism that dams Ethan Brand and Richard Digby. There can be no doubt that Chillingworth has been warped by his hatred for the man
who unwittingly cuckolded him and by his prolonged vengeance. Chillingworth himself realizes that he has been transformed from "a man thoughtful for others, craving little for himself,—kind, true, just, and of constant, if not warm affections" into "a fiend for [Dimmesdale's] especial torment" (1:172). Chillingworth serves as "striking evidence of man's faculty of transforming himself into a devil, if he will only, for a reasonable space of time, undertake a devil's office" (1:170). Perversely, the devil's office which Chillingworth undertakes is the zealous prolonging of life: he keeps Dimmesdale alive in order to prolong the minister's mental and emotional anguish. But focusing on Chillingworth's fall into depravity as the central motive of the novel relegates Hester and Pearl to the status of minor characters. If the conflict between Chillingworth and Dimmesdale is to take center stage, then Hester and Pearl, once they have served their collective dramatic purpose by establishing the fact of Chillingworth's cuckolding, may as well wait in the wings.

The most popular variation of the Puritan reading demands that we shift the burden of sin from Chillingworth to Hester and Dimmesdale. In order to perceive sin as a liberating power, we must connect sin to characters who achieve some sort of liberation during
the course of the novel. Clearly, Chillingworth does not. His relentless pursuit of vengeance leads him only to a loss of humanity, the separation of the intellect from the heart that can enable one human being to pry into and tamper with the soul of another. The worst sinner in the novel reaches no liberation, but merely withers away into death when the object of his hatred dies.

Hester achieves a spiritual liberation. Her estrangement from Puritan society, as painful as it is, forces upon Hester the strength of character she needs to endure social isolation and to serve, as an angel of mercy, the society that ostracizes her. But outside the context of seventeenth-century Puritan self-righteousness, Hester's "sin" becomes problematic. Dimmesdale, with his final acknowledgement of little Pearl and his repudiation of Chillingworth, frees himself more dramatically and completely than does Hester. His sin, the single act of adultery in which he and Hester created Pearl, is compounded by years of cowardice and hypocrisy, but unless we take a dogmatic Puritan view, we cannot judge the polluted priest as harshly as we judge the perverted physician.

The Romantic reading, which condemns Puritan society for its harsh treatment of the two young sinners, can be applied to Hester, but not to her
lover. Hester alone suffers a sinfully harsh official punishment. Dimmesdale’s punishment, though it is intensified by Roger Chillingworth, is entirely self-inflicted. One could argue that Dimmesdale punishes himself because the institutions of Puritan society have so warped his understanding of human nature that he must destroy himself, but then Chillingworth and Hester become problematic. As a product of the same society, how can Chillingworth, who by ministering to Dimmesdale and by wallowing in vengeance sins continually for seven years, escape the ravages of guilt? And how can Hester, as thoroughly indoctrinated in Puritan guilt as Dimmesdale, learn to separate the judgment of God from the judgment of man and find a consecration in adultery? The same difficulty invalidates the Relativistic reading because the novel suggests no conclusions about the effects of guilt except that different characters respond to guilt in different ways.

The Transcendental interpretation, which accuses the two lovers of not being true to themselves, leads back to Dimmesdale. Only he, by his silent denial of his true relationship to Hester and Pearl, lives the lie that allows him to retain his lofty position. Hester accepts her punishment with dignity, keeping Pearl, the living symbol of her shame, always with her and arguing with desperate vehemence when the good clerics of
Boston try to take the child away. She refuses to divulge the name of Pearl's father, yet she stays in Boston—though she could easily leave—to be near him. Hester's conduct in no way constitutes self-betrayal.

Each of Walcutt's readings can be supported from the text of The Scarlet Letter, and some (notably the orthodox Puritan and the Transcendental) by Hawthorne's journals. But any explication which fails, as all of the above do, to accommodate all the major characters, must be considered unsatisfactory. Further, all these readings share a glaring common fault: all can be thoroughly argued with no mention of "The Custom-House."

"The Custom-House," which has been called Hawthorne's revenge on his Whig co-workers, has a larger role in the novel than that of a long-winded, humorous introduction. Though Hawthorne originally intended the sketch as an introduction to a volume of several tales and in fact never managed to edit out a reference to "Main Street" as a sketch included in the collection, he did in fact publish in the first edition only "The Custom-House" and The Scarlet Letter. Hawthorne's insistence on including "The Custom-House" in later editions of the novel—after his thirst for revenge might have been satisfied—and his refusal to revise it in order to spare the feelings of his former Whig associates in the real Custom-house at Salem argue
strongly for considering "The Custom-House" an integral part of The Scarlet Letter. In his preface to the second edition, Hawthorne suggests that the offending sketch "might, perhaps, have been wholly omitted, without loss to the public, or detriment to the book" (1:1). But this suggestion seems ironic, aimed at a reading public naive enough to believe that the amputation of thirty pages would in no way harm the text. Sam S. Baskett argues for inclusion of "The Custom-House" on a thematic basis because the sketch explores "the relation of the past and the present," the relation of the individual to society, and the relation of the writer to his audience. Marshall Van Deusen suggests that the sketch, in addition to introducing the themes of the novel, "introduces also the character and voice of the narrator, that is of the 'DECAPITATED SURVEYOR.' And it is the echoing of that voice, sometimes querulous, sometimes self-doubting, throughout The Scarlet Letter that binds the two parts of the book into an indissoluble whole." And the author himself places the novel in the tradition of "found" papers: "It will be seen, likewise, that this Custom-House sketch has a certain propriety, of a kind always recognized in literature, as explaining how a large portion of the following pages came into my possession, and as offering proofs of the authenticity of a narrative therein
contained" (1:4). The "narrative therein contained" is of course The Scarlet Letter; the narrator claims to discover the source for the novel, Hester Prynne's story, in an upstairs chamber of the custom-house. The propriety "always recognized in literature" is one of an array of authorial devices that gives the appearance of fact to the truth-telling lie we call "fiction."

Experienced readers immediately recognize the device of the "found" papers as a device; rather than authenticating a narrative, it clearly labels that narrative as fiction. Even though it seems to comprise a factual frame separate from the narrative which follows, like many other framing devices it is actually an integral part of the narrative, a truth-telling lie in its own right, and a carefully constructed bridge from the quotidian to the imaginary. Separating "The Custom-House" from The Scarlet Letter would be like separating "A Letter from Capt. Gulliver to his Cousin Sympson" from Gulliver's Travels or eliminating Diedrich Knickerbocker from the writings of Washington Irving.

Hawthorne has constructed his bridge so skillfully that the reader as he crosses fails to notice that he has crossed at all. There are two introductions to The Scarlet Letter. The first two paragraphs introduce "The Custom-House," which in turn introduces the novel. In the first two paragraphs the author characterizes
himself as "editor, or very little more, of the most prolix among the tales that make up my volume" (1:4), but by the end of the sketch, through moving upward to the unfinished "airy hall ... over the Collector's apartments," which to many readers symbolizes the realm of fancy above—and superior to—the realm of business, he has become an author, who contends only for "the authenticity of the outline" (1:33). But as Baskett and Van Deusen contend, he has also become a character.

I wish to argue that *The Scarlet Letter* is an allegorical statement about the nature of art and about the role of the artist. Eschewing traditional allegorical techniques, Hawthorne achieves an allegorical effect by presenting avatars of the three types of problematic individuals—gifted men and women—that populate his short fiction. Two gifted individuals, one the ideal artist who can both extend the boundaries of art while retaining contact with society through art and one the frustrated artist who lacks the moral courage necessary to accept the artist's marginality, create a priceless work of art, a child named Pearl, outside socially acceptable creative channels. Mainstream society, its moral sensibility outraged and its system of values threatened, tries to punish the two artists. A third gifted individual, cut off from normal human concerns by his own egocentricity, turns his art to destructive
rather than creative purposes. One "artist," Hester Prynne, stands staunchly by her creation, accepting with dignity both ostracism and the stigma with which society brands her. The second "artist," Arthur Dimmesdale, seeks refuge in his privileged social position, but finds himself haunted by guilt over both his social transgression and his abandonment of his co-artist and their creation, and eventually destroys himself by denying his artistic nature. The third "artist," Roger Chillingworth, misuses his abilities, continually violating the sanctity of another heart for a period of seven years. The child, Pearl, like all true works of art, is neither fully understood nor controlled, not even by the artists. Society follows the same course it always follows when confronted with a new aesthetic movement: it first reviles the new marginal art, then tries to draw proper socio-religious lessons from it (an attempt that the new art stubbornly resists), and eventually co-opts and institutionalizes it as both art and priceless commodity. True art eventually finds its place, as Pearl does in the final chapters of the novel.

Reading the scarlet "A" for art is hardly a new idea. Charles R. O'Donnell, in his study of the relation between Hawthorne-the-narrator and Dimmesdale, suggests that both Dimmesdale and Hester are torn between isolation from society and integration into it
and insists that Hawthorne-the-writer "had the artist in mind when he created Dimmesdale." But O'Donnell posits a comparison between the narrator and the minister; the allegory reveals a synthesis of narrator, minister, and "scarlet" woman. Rosemary Stephens reads the novel as a revelation of the differences between European and American attitudes toward art. And Nina Baym points out: "A number of critics have suggested that the letter means art . . . as 'the wrapper' for the surveyor's manuscript, the letter conceptualizes art as a finished product." But the surveyor's manuscript, which the narrator claims to have found in a second-floor room of the custom-house, is not a work of art: "I must not be understood by affirming, that, in the dressing up of the tale, and imagining the motives and modes of passion that influenced the characters who figure in it, I have invariably confined myself with the limits of the old Surveyor's half a dozen sheets of foolscap. On the contrary; I have allowed myself, as to such points, nearly or altogether as much license as if the facts had been entirely of my own invention" (1:33).

The manuscript merely provides the raw material, the outline, from which the narrator creates The Scarlet Letter. As a wrapper, the "found" letter contains only the essence of Hester Prynne's life. The narrator's treatment transforms the manuscript into art. In a
similar sense, the abstract letter (Hester apparently creates the cloth letter she wears rather than merely decorating one that the Puritan authorities give her) intended as Hester's punishment refers to Hester herself rather than to her story. The Puritans could not sew cloth emblems on either the concept or the act of adultery; they labelled its practitioners. The "A" does not "stand for" art; through the magic of Hester's skill with her needle, it becomes art. As Hester's creation and as a work of art, the letter clearly labels Hester an artist. This label, damning in the eyes of Hester's Puritan judges, is symbolically shared by Hester, Arthur Dimmesdale, and the narrator of the story. Hester wears the cloth scarlet A and Dimmesdale carves its mate into his own flesh. The narrator feels the burning of the scarlet letter although, like Dimmesdale, he is locked into a position that he cannot easily relinquish.  

The letter and Pearl are the keys to the allegory. The letter begins as a simple label which Hester is ordered to wear, but in embracing both her guilt and her role, Hester skillfully decorates that label. For Hester, art serves as therapy: "Women derive a pleasure, incomprehensible to the other sex, from the delicate toil of the needle. To Hester Prynne it might have been a mode of expressing, and therefore soothing, the passion of her life" (1:83-84). The letter, "a
specimen of her delicate and imaginative skill" (1:81), serves as advertising for Hester's work. Banished by a repressive moral code to a life on the fringes of society, Hester ekes out a living through her art. Her skill with her needle earns Hester a marginal place: "By degrees, nor very slowly, her handiwork became what would now be termed the fashion" (p. 1:82). Even in the somber New England of Hawthorne's tale, artists were needed to help glorify men of state and to help mark life's milestones. Hester becomes an occasional artist, the unofficial seamstress laureate of the young colony:

Vanity, it may be, chose to mortify itself, by putting on, for ceremonial of pomp and state, the garments that had been wrought by her sinful hands. Her needlework was seen on the ruff of the governor; military men wore it on their scarfs, and the minister on his band; it decked the little baby's cap; it was shut up, to be mildewed and moulder away, in the coffins of the dead. (1:82-83)

Hawthorne's powerful irony nearly obscures the facts of Hester's position, but all three estates— the civil, the military, and the religious—are consumers of Hester's art. Birth is celebrated and death lamented at least in part through Hester's needle.

In the deftly managed evolution of a literary symbol, the letter itself, through the changing attitudes of those who view it, develops throughout the novel.
Hester's judges consider the letter a punishment, but Hester herself cannot accept a wholly orthodox view of her own fall. She must add to the plain cloth of her sentence the irrepressible embellishments of the creative artist by surrounding the letter "with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread . . . so artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy, that it had all the effect of a last and fitting decoration to the apparel which she wore" (1:53). Her embellishments point out a clear linguistic conflict between herself and her judges: the godly Puritan magistrates force Hester to wear the simple label of the convicted sinner, but Hester instead chooses art, the mark of the artist. Even though she has not completely freed herself from the mores of her neighbors, Hester has embraced her role as an artist by choosing the figurative over the literal. And because the letter is so perfectly integrated into Hester's appearance, it seems an integral part of Hester's identity. Only a few pages later, Hester confirms that the letter is a part of her: "It is too deeply branded," she cries, "ye cannot take it off" (1:68). And little Pearl fixes—or imprints—so steadfastly on the letter as a sign of her mother's identity that when Hester tries to discard the letter, Pearl refuses to recognize Hester as her
The evolution of the letter, which began offstage as soon as Hester began to embroider it, continues through the novel. The narrator mistakes it for an "ornamental article of dress" (1:31). The less refined among the Puritans see it as "red-hot with infernal fire" (1:87). Governor Bellingham's servant mistakes the "glittering symbol in [Hester's] bosom" as a sign that "she [is] a great lady in the land" (1:104), and the convex mirror in Governor Bellingham's hall exaggerates the letter's proportions, transforming it into "the most prominent feature of [Hester's] appearance" (1:106). But the settlement as a whole comes to know the letter, through Hester's nursing, "as the taper of the sick-chamber . . . the symbol of [Hester's] calling" as a "self-ordained . . . Sister of Mercy" (1:161), and even the authorities begin to regard the letter with benevolence. The townspeople soon consider the letter as "the token, not of that one sin, for which she had borne so long and dreary a penance, but of her many good deeds since" (1:162). And the letter acquires the power of a religious talisman, like
the cross on a nun’s bosom . . . [imparting] to the wearer a kind of sacredness, which enabled her to walk securely amid all peril . . . it was reported, and believed by many, that an Indian had drawn his arrow against the badge, and that the missile struck it, but fell harmless to the ground. (1:163)

To Hester, the work of art that is the letter becomes a passport into the realm of free thinking, a realm which none of the Elect would have been allowed to enter. But as Michael Davitt Bell suggests, her sentence forces Hester into a duplicitous relation with the Puritan colony; in private a free thinker, in public she fulfills her role as a "living sermon against sin" (1:63). "The scarlet letter," the narrator points out, "had not done its office" (1:166). Rather than forcing Hester into submission, the letter has driven her into a silent rebellion. Pearl, though she professes not to understand the meaning of the letter, seems to see it as a natural part of growing up: "Will not it come of its own accord," she asks her mother, "when I am a woman grown?" (1:183). When Hester and Pearl leave the colony, the letter assumes legendary proportions, and when Hester returns to take it up again, "the scarlet letter [ceases] to be a stigma which [attracts] the world’s scorn and bitterness, and [becomes] a type of something to be sorrowed over, and looked upon with
awe, yet with reverence too" (1:263). And at the very end of the novel, the letter takes the form of a heraldic shield: "On a field, sable, the letter A, gules" (1:264). The evolution of the letter as a literary symbol is complete: it has passed from a simple mark of shame to a sign of hope and love to a symbol of rank. The shield on the tombstone represents the institutionalization of the scarlet letter.

The evolution of the letter occurs because public attitudes toward it change during the course of the novel. Like many forms of art, the letter passes through a period of public scandal before it is co-opted and eventually institutionalized. But Hawthorne emphasizes the equation of the letter with art--specifically, literary art--in another striking way. The Puritans, as mentioned above, intend the scarlet letter to be a mark of shame which can be interpreted in only one way, a literal, objective device that means "adulteress" and only "adulteress," a label that will make of Hester a living sermon. (Historical Puritans would more likely have used "AD," the initials of Arthur Dimmesdale, as a sign of adultery.) When Hester first appears, a woman in the crowd offers "a rag of [her] own rheumatic flannel to make a fitter" (1:54) label, thereby voicing her preference for unadorned language. Such a naively utilitarian--and typically Puritan--use
of language, which presupposes a classical correspondence between words and nature rather than a Lockean relation, is doomed to failure because language, even in its smallest units, is inherently figurative. Millicent Bell, hypothesizing that Hawthorne's novel "is as much as any work of fiction can be, an essay in semiology" with its theme "the obliquity or indeterminacy of signs," points out that the scarlet "A," stands for "no more than a speech sound," but it actually signifies several different speech sounds because vowels in English, as well as certain consonants, receive different pronunciations according to the context in which they are placed. Even this simplest representation seems indeterminate, a warning that the signs in the novel will soon increase their complexity. That single red letter, which the Puritans intend as an emblem, becomes a symbol as soon as an artist such as Hester Prynne takes it in her hands. And Hester herself loses control of the symbol; whatever the scarlet letter means to Hester, it often has quite a different meaning for those who see it. As authority loses control of language, so the artist loses control of art. Ironically, the multiplicity of interpretations that surround the various forms of the scarlet letter (including the A that appears in the sky during Dimmesdale's midnight "confession" on the scaffold--which he reads as a sign
of his own guilt but which his Puritan neighbors
interpret as a sign of Governor Winthrop's passing—and
including the mark, which Hawthorne's narrator refuses
to confirm, on Dimmesdale's chest at the end of the
novel) serve to tighten the focus of a complex symbol by
identifying it as a work of art so that it can function
allegorically in the novel. As a work of art, the
letter identifies the artist.

Clearly, Hester Prynne is an artist in Hawthorne's
best sense of the word. From our first view of her to
our last, she wears the scarlet A, a label which, like
the epithet "storyteller" that appears in Hawthorne's
short fiction and in "The Custom-House," is bestowed as
a badge of shame but which the wearer and time transform
into a mark of honor. Hester creates not only the non-
traditional art, Pearl, on which she lavishes all her
skill, but also through her needlework she opens a
commercial intercourse with the world. And though her
marginality allows her a freedom of speculation that
loosens the bonds of dogmatic Puritan morality, Hester,
through her presence in the sickrooms of the colony,
ministers to those still bound by that narrow morality.
And she is blessed with the artist's strength: "It is
requisite for the ideal artist," Hawthorne wrote in "The
Artist of the Beautiful," "to possess a force of
character that seems hardly compatible with its delica-
cy; he must keep his faith in himself, while the incredulous world assails him with its utter disbelief; he must stand up against mankind and be his own sole disciple" (10:454). The world unsuccessfully assails Hester, demanding first the name of her collaborator and then custody of their creation, Pearl. Despite the stings of public shame, Hester continues as the true artist, standing "apart from mortal interests, yet close beside them" (1:84), living on the fringes of society while remaining firmly in contact with it.

Like the scarlet letter and like art, Pearl eludes not only the control of her society but also the control of the artist. "The child could not be made amenable to rules" (1:91), and though Hester "early sought to impose a tender, but strict, control . . . the task was beyond her skill" (1:91-92). To no avail, Hester urges Pearl to answer pastor Wilson, and also to no avail, she studies her elfish creation to ascertain its meaning. One moment, the child is Hester's own little Pearl, the next she seems possessed, an "imp, whose next freak might be to fly up the chimney" (1:98). Hester, wrestling with a loss of faith pressed upon her by the loneliness of her forced isolation, cannot herself be certain of the child's origins. "Thy Heavenly Father sent thee!" (1:98), she tells Pearl, but Pearl catches the hesitation in her mother's voice and fingers the
scarlet letter, insisting positively that she has no heavenly father. Hester presses the point without conviction because she herself is in doubt. Her uncertainty recalls both Owen Warland's vacillation and Rudolph Von Abele's assertion that art was to Hawthorne sometimes a blessing and sometimes a curse. And Hester has heard "the talk of the neighboring townspeople; who, seeking vainly elsewhere for the child's paternity . . . had given out that poor little Pearl was a demon offspring" (1:99). Like Drowne's wooden image, and like the scarlet letter, Pearl is clearly the result of an act of love, an act which Hester insists "had a consecration of its own" (1:195). (Hester's banishment results from the hermeneutic problem that arises because the Puritans view Pearl as a sign of sin rather than of love.) Also like Drowne's wooden image and the letter, Pearl is perceived by her society as the result of demonic possession.

Like all ideal art, Pearl seeks the truth without regard for propriety. (In contrast, Dimmesdale's rhetorical art conceals the truth.) When, during his midnight vigil, the minister impulsively invites Hester and Pearl to join him on the scaffold, he fails to reckon with the child's piercing innocence. "Wilt thou stand here with mother and me, tomorrow noontide?" (1:153) Pearl asks. Dimmesdale demurs, and Pearl pulls
away; neither art nor truth will be had without sacrifice. Later, in the forest, she shocks her mother by suggesting that Hester wears the scarlet letter "for the same reason that the minister keeps his hand over his heart" (1:179) and suggests that Hester ask Chillingworth, who has unbeknownst to Pearl already learned Dimmesdale’s secret, for an explanation of the relation between Dimmesdale and the letter. Seeing Dimmesdale in the forest, Pearl unwittingly reveals a truth that none save Dimmesdale and Chillingworth can know: "He has his hand over his heart! Is it because, when the minister wrote his name in the book, the Black Man set his mark in that place? But why does he not wear it outside his bosom?" (1:187). Throughout the novel, Pearl’s intuitive knowledge is both piercing and correct.

Pearl’s growth parallels the evolution of the letter and of art itself. Like art that appears outside the pale of social values and like the scarlet letter, the child faces vilification at first, but is later co-opted—at least into the fringes—by society and eventually institutionalized. As Hester’s chief creation, the "unpremeditated offshoot of a passionate moment" (1:101), little Pearl is a true work of art; her growth in the novel follows a pattern often repeated in the strained relations between art and the public.
Pearl is of course closely linked with the letter from birth; like the scarlet letter, Pearl is the "emblem and product of sin" (1:93), the visible mark of her mother's shame. Hester carries the infant against the emblem on her bosom as she enters the market-place and, like the letter, Pearl becomes her mother's constant companion, "the scarlet letter in another form; the scarlet letter endowed with life" (1:102). Like the scarlet letter, Pearl cannot be controlled by society. "A born outcast of the infantile world" (1:93), she strongly resists integration into the social scheme of the Puritan colony, eschewing alliances with the Puritan children, refusing also a passive role as scapegoat (a role which Hester has outwardly accepted), growing "positively terrible in her puny wrath, snatching up stones to fling at them" (1:94) when the children gather around her, and fighting back instead of serving as a passive target when the children throw mud at her mother and herself. Pearl also refuses to take part in pastor Wilson's examination, answering the old minister either with silence or with mischief, though she has been well schooled by her mother and knows perfectly well the correct responses to Wilson's questions. In short, Pearl rejects all the uses the Puritans try to make of her; as a representation of art in the allegory of The Scarlet Letter, Pearl cannot be made to fit in society's
Procrustean bed.

As Pearl grows, the Puritan authorities come to accept both her existence and her role. Governor Bellingham and pastor Wilson are content to leave Pearl with her mother rather than placing her in a more respectable home because Dimmesdale has convinced them that Pearl is God's gift to Hester, "meant for a blessing; for the one blessing of her life! It was meant, doubtless... as a retribution too; a torture... to keep the mother's soul alive" (1:114), an instrument through which Hester might be saved.18 Hawthorne's prose—if we consider Pearl the allegorical representation of art—recalls the blessing/curse duality of the artist's gift, and the event itself signals the co-opting of art created outside acceptable channels into the fringes of Puritan society. The Puritans cannot control Pearl and cannot bend her to their own uses, but they can find a use for which she is already suited. In much the same way that they came to view the scarlet letter with benevolence, they arrive at a new, more tolerant view of Pearl. And the townspeople allow Pearl to entertain them as they await the Election Day sermon: "She made the sombre crowd cheerful by her erratic and glistening ray; even as a bird of bright plumage illuminates a whole tree of dusky foliage by darting to and fro, half seen and half concealed, amid
the twilight of the clustering leaves" (1:244). They
cannot completely forget her "demonic" paternity, of
which her "indescribable charm of beauty and eccen-
tricity" (1:244) reminds them, but they nevertheless
permit her to play among the crowd, even on so sacred a
day.

In the end, Pearl becomes acceptable to the very
center of Puritan society. Roger Chillingworth, her
late father's persecutor, leaves her property on both
sides of the Atlantic, which bequest "wrought a very
material change in the public estimation . . . [so
that] had the mother and child remained here, little
Pearl, at a marriageable period of life, might have
mingled her wild blood with the lineage of the devoutest
Puritan among them all" (1:261). Cash--the acceptance
or patronage of the rich--renders Pearl acceptable even
as it renders formerly unacceptable art acceptable.
Pearl eventually marries into a high social position, as
evidenced by the letters "with armorial seals upon
them" (1:262) that arrive at Hester's cottage after her
return to Boston. Like the scarlet letter as it later
appears on her mother's tombstone, Pearl has been
institutionalized; from revilement to provisional
acceptance to co-optation to institutionalization, she
has followed the paradigm of art.

Both the scarlet letter and Pearl, the living
embodiment of the scarlet letter whose development so closely parallels the evolution of the letter, are works of art. As works of art—manifestations of the creative impulse—they identify Hester Prynne as an artist. Though the letter is entirely Hester's creation, Pearl is a collaborative effort on the part of Hester and Dimmesdale. If Pearl serves to identify her mother as an artist, then she must also identify her father as an artist. Hawthorne leaves no doubt that Pearl serves as the link between the declared artist, Hester Prynne, and the closet artist, Arthur Dimmesdale. Standing between her mother and father during the midnight scene on the scaffold, Pearl becomes "a symbol . . . the connecting link" (1:154) between Hester and Dimmesdale. Hawthorne later reinforces the link when minister and scarlet woman meet in the forest and plan their escape:

In [Pearl] was visible the tie that united them. She had been offered to the world, these seven years past, as the living hieroglyphic, in which was revealed the secret they so darkly sought to hide,—all written in this symbol,—all plainly manifest,—had there been a prophet or magician skilled to read the character of flame! And Pearl was the oneness of their being. Be the foregone evil what it might, how could they doubt that their earthly lives and future destinies were conjoined, when they beheld at once the material union, and the spiritual idea, in whom they met, and were to dwell immortally together? (1:206-7)

More than a mere child and a physical manifestation of a
brief sexual conjoining, Pearl stands as a "living hieroglyphic," a message encoded in a language clear to the artists who created her but hidden to the Puritan public, who cannot comprehend the multiplicity of meanings inherent in language. Pearl’s symbolic meanings render her a mystery to the Puritans because they perceive language as emblematic. As both the physical manifestation of their sin and the spiritual idea that binds Hester and Dimmesdale together, Pearl has the same resonance as the scarlet letter—and the same tightly focused allegorical meaning. Neither Hester nor Dimmesdale can control her, though both try, Hester with her commands and the minister with his kiss on the child’s brow.

Dimmesdale’s role in the creation of Pearl labels him as an artist as surely as the scarlet letter so labels Hester. But Dimmesdale is an artist in a literary sense as well. As a minister of "brilliant popularity in his sacred office" (1:141), Dimmesdale must produce endless reams of sermons, a didactic form of literary art readily consumed by Puritan society. According to Hawthorne, Dimmesdale’s sin—with all its metaphorical implications as a form of creative expression—improves his effectiveness as a preacher: "This very burden it was, that gave him sympathies so intimate with the sinful brotherhood of mankind, so that his
heart vibrated in unison with theirs, and received their pain into itself, and sent its own throb of pain through a thousand other hearts, in gushes of sad, persuasive eloquence... the people knew not the power that moved them thus. They deemed the young clergyman a miracle of holiness" (1:142). Dimmesdale's own passion, from which sprang both his sin and the work of art known as Pearl, is also the source of his empathy with his parishioners and the source of his eloquence. The artist's duality grips Dimmesdale as firmly as it does Hester. Hester's sin and banishment allow her to step far enough back from Puritan society to see its narrowness; because Dimmesdale's sin goes undetected, he can try to remain within Puritan society, which forces him to remain within narrow Puritan limits of creative expression. Hester can both adorn Pearl, lavishing her greatest skills and dearest materials on the child, and sew for births, deaths, and state occasions as well. Dimmesdale can only preach church dogma.

Michael Davitt Bell, pointing out that "when we first see Dimmesdale, he is openly exhorting Hester to name her child's father while, secretly of course, urging her to do just the opposite," identifies Dimmesdale as a "master of doublespeak." But the minister's duplicity arises from his weakness rather than from any evil inherent in his character: "He loved the truth,
and loathed the lie, as few men ever did" (1:144). In the pursuit of his profession, the minister has learned that meaning often depends on context and audience more than on authorial intention. His first words to Hester (the exhortation on the scaffold in Chapter III) could hardly be more truthful or direct: "I charge thee to speak out the name of thy fellow-sinner and fellow-sufferer! Be not silent from any mistaken pity and tenderness for him; for, believe me, Hester, though he were to step down from a high place, and stand there beside thee, on thy pedestal of shame, yet better were it so, than to hide a guilty heart through life" (1:67). The Puritan audience, mindful of Dimmesdale’s "accountability" as Hester’s pastor, doubtless hears these words as a pious appeal to Hester to expose a sinner. Hester, mindful of Dimmesdale’s "accountability" as her "fellow-sinner," hears them as an earnest plea to keep silent.

Dimmesdale longs to confess his sins from his pulpit, and "more than once—nay, more than a hundred times" he actually does "confess": "He had told his hearers that he was altogether vile, a viler companion of the vilest, the worst of sinners, an abomination, a thing of unimaginable iniquity; and that the only wonder was, that they did not see his wretched body shrivelled up before their eyes, by the burning wrath of
the Almighty!" (1:143-44). Every word is, of course, true. But though the meaning of this passage is clear enough to both Dimmesdale and the reader, context and audience again frustrate authorial intention. Dimmesdale's Puritan audience, gazing up at an earthly saint in his pulpit, can interpret that saint's confession only as further proof of his sanctification. As a literary artist well aware of the bias of his audience, Dimmesdale knows that he must lose control of his own rhetoric just as the Puritan magistrates lose control of the label with which they seek to brand Hester. No matter what his vague "confessions" might mean to himself, his Puritan audience will interpret them in light of its own preconceptions: "The minister well knew—subtle, but remorseful hypocrite that he was!—the light in which his vague confession would be viewed" (1:144). His creative urge, which drew him into his fateful liaison with Hester Prynne, remains concealed behind a curtain of rhetoric.

Bell insists that both Hester and Dimmesdale lead double lives, that both wear a pious face in public to hide their private shame. Certainly Dimmesdale keeps hidden his relation to Hester and Pearl so that he can continue to function as a minister, and certainly Hester never reveals "the freedom of speculation . . . which our forefathers, had they known of it, would have held
to be a deadlier crime than that stigmatized by the scarlet letter" (1:164), thereby fulfilling her public role as the object of scorn and the text of countless sermons. But the novel contains a third deceiver in the perverted physician, Roger Chillingworth.

Chillingworth's duplicity is his most prominent characteristic. Though we cannot, perhaps, fault him for resolving "not to be pilloried beside [Hester] on her pedestal of shame" (1:118), we can recognize that duplicity, even without external stimuli, is part of Chillingworth's nature. When he first arrives in Boston, though he has not yet learned of his wife's disgrace and so has no need to conceal his identity, he has already tried to hide the physical defect that identifies him to Hester "by a seemingly careless arrangement of his heterogeneous garb" (1:60). Not only must he conceal the fact that one of his shoulders is higher than the other, he must seem not to be concealing anything. Because he has just emerged from the wilderness and does not yet know of Hester's shame, such concealment serves no purpose other than to make Chillingworth seem whole and straight rather than bent and misshapen.

And Chillingworth is a master at concealing his feelings. Despite the shock of seeing his wife, "in whom he hoped to find embodied the warmth and cheerful-
ness of home, set up as a type of sin before the people" (1:118), Chillingworth so quickly controls his emotions "that, save at a single moment, [his] expression might have passed for calmness. After a brief space, the convulsion grew almost imperceptible, and finally subsided into the depths of his nature" (1:61). A revelation which to most men would be shattering produces only a ripple in Chillingworth's composure. Chillingworth then acts out an elaborate and extemporaneous charade—in which he serves briefly as a Jamesian ficelle—in order to learn from a townsman the name of the man who has debauched Hester. A short time later, he appears in Hester's jail cell, already impersonating a physician, and already acting "with the characteristic quietude of the profession to which he announced himself as belonging" (1:71). In the space of a few hours, the misshapen scholar has not only chosen a new role in which he can conceal his relation to Hester, but he has assimilated the nuances of deportment of the character he will play. Later, in convincing Dimmesdale to accept medical care, he speaks with a "quietness which, whether imposed or natural, marked all his deportment" (1:122). Either a superb actor or an emotional chameleon, Chillingworth continues deceiving the Puritan colony throughout the novel. All three characters in Hawthorne's eternal triangle deceive the
Puritans of Boston, but Roger Chillingworth, unlike Hester and Dimmesdale, practices his deception not only to protect himself (he wishes to avoid association with Hester’s shame), but also in order to inflict pain on another human being.

As Hester and Dimmesdale are problematic individuals, so is Roger Chillingworth. If in Hawthorne’s neatly finished trinity of art Hester represents the ideal artist and Dimmesdale the artist lost to conformity, then Chillingworth, like Ethan Brand, Richard Digby, Aylmer, and Rappaccini, represents the gifted man lost to egotism. As both the best of civilized man (the scholar) and the worst (the knowing sinner), Chillingworth first appears "clad in a strange disarray of civilized and savage costume" (1:60) and acts, throughout the novel, as both healer and destroyer. Led into realms of deep knowledge and art outside narrow Puritan limits by his superior talents (he has, after all, acquired his renowned medical skills as a mere by-product of his other, unspecified, studies), Chillingworth loses contact with humanity, so he is unable first to foresee the dangers of his May-December marriage to Hester and later to understand the severity of his own sin against the heart and soul of Arthur Dimmesdale. Men such as Chillingworth, the narrator tells us, "in their researches into the human frame . . . lost the
spiritual view of existence amid the intricacies of that wondrous mechanism, which seemed to involve art enough to comprise all life within itself" (1:119). And Chillingworth himself, in his wonder at Dimmesdale's "strange sympathy betwixt soul and body" exclaims that "were it only for the art's sake, [he] must search [the] matter to the bottom!" (1:137-38). Hawthorne's diction (he avoids referring to the leech's trade as a science) shows us a man who, like Oberon and the painter of "The Prophetic Pictures," is completely engrossed by art. The goal of a scholar should be not only the pursuit of knowledge but the sharing of it; the goal of a physician should be not only the study of the human body but the curing of it. Caught up in his art, Chillingworth loses sight of both the scholar's and the physician's raison d'être. Unlike Hester Prynne, whose mind also wanders freely through the realms beyond dogma, Chillingworth does not reach back to his fellows with the hand of compassion, even before the great revelation that Dimmesdale is in fact the man he seeks. After the revelation Chillingworth goes a step farther, using his knowledge of physic to keep Dimmesdale alive and using his knowledge of psychology to keep the minister in torment, an utter perversion of learning.

Chillingworth is the third problematic individual in the story of Hester Prynne. In the allegory of art
that is *The Scarlet Letter*, these three problematic individuals—along with their prototypes in Hawthorne’s short fiction—represent the three options open to the creative artist: isolation from society, immersion in society, and the uneasy tension resulting from an aborted drive toward isolation. The egocentric Chillingworth separates himself utterly from the human community, bending all his will and effort toward self-gratification through torture of the man who has wronged him. Despite his great intellect and talent, Chillingworth creates nothing because intelligence and ability do not necessarily result in art. Arthur Dimmesdale commits a single act of passion which results in the creation of Pearl, who as we have seen is—along with the scarlet letter—the allegorical representation of art. When he retreats into the security of his position in the Puritan hierarchy, he can no longer produce true art, but only didactic rhetoric, pulp for the masses. Denial of passion produces sterility. Hester Prynne, Dimmesdale’s partner in that act of passion, exists on the fringes of Puritan society but through her acts of compassion retains contact with those who make up the mainstream. Unlike Dimmesdale, she does not try to scourge the passion from her flesh, but instead insists that passion has its own consecration in love. Because her drive toward separation is balanced by her drive
toward community, Hester can continue to refine, nurture, and develop the true art (that Pearl of great price) that is the result of the passion she shared with Dimmesdale. As the only character in the novel who lives in that state of tension (Dimmesdale's agon pits self against self rather than self against society), Hester alone, as she lavishes all her skill and the finest materials on her daughter while still furnishing the colony with fine needlework, can continue her work with non-sanctioned art (Pearl) while she earns her living with sanctioned art (the needlework consumed by the Puritans); in order to do so, she must keep alienation and community in balance. Pearl's life reveals that art, in order to be real and valuable, must be beyond society's control. These four characters (egotist, frustrated creative artist, creative artist, and artist's creation) combine with the fifth major character (the narrator) to define the meaning of *The Scarlet Letter*. To uncover that meaning we must return to "The Custom-House" because there the narrator describes his own relation to society and tradition as well as his relation to art, and links himself to both Dimmesdale and Hester while separating himself from Roger Chillingworth.

Dimmesdale and the narrator are strikingly similar. Each is employed by his society's governing body,
and each finds that employment suffocating. As a minister, Dimmesdale functions as a surveyor of sorts, a weigher and measurer of spiritual matters. As surveyor of the Salem Custom-House, the narrator functions as a weigher and measurer of commerce. Similar imperatives keep each in his place. Dimmesdale, bound by his religious beliefs and by his faith in Puritan society, continues to fulfill his duties. The narrator, whose financial difficulties have forced him into an uneasy conformity as a government official, is "as good a Surveyor as need be," (1:26). Each in his own way hopes for a deliverance that he is unable to obtain for himself. Dimmesdale pleads publicly with Hester to expose him: "Take heed how thou deniest to him--who, perchance, hath not the courage to grasp it for himself--the bitter, but wholesome cup that is now presented to thy lips" (1:67). And the narrator, though he fears the loss of integrity inherent in the comfort of a government sinecure, does not resign his post, but loses it, like Melville's Bartleby, due to a change in the administration: "My fortune somewhat resembled that of a person who should entertain an idea of committing suicide, and, altogether beyond his hopes, meet with the good hap to be murdered" (1:42). (Hester's silence denies Dimmesdale that same good hap, and he must work up the courage for his figurative suicide.) Both men
are frustrated artists. Dimmesdale has secretly sired one lovely work of art; he can sire no more while he remains a public servant. The narrator, though he says nothing about his writing to his co-workers in the Custom-House, has published at least one book, but he will publish no others while in the employ of the government. Pearl, the minister's creation, mocks him with her unerring childish inquisitions, as though she understands that her father denies her in order to retain his position. The characters the narrator would create regard him "with a fixed and ghastly grin of contemptuous defiance" (1:34). He has denied them and his own artistry, which he has "bartered . . . for a pittance of the public gold" (1:34), gold acquired at the expense of the creative spirit. Both the minister and the narrator are problematic individuals immersed in society and so rendered artistically sterile.

The narrator belabors his own artistic sterility: "A gift, a faculty," he muses, "if it had not departed, was suspended and inanimate within me" (1:26), "my imagination was a tarnished mirror" (1:34). And, following the famous—and magical—passage on moonlight and firelight, he admits: "During the whole of my Custom-House experience, moonlight and sunshine, and the glow of the fire-light, were just alike in my regard; and neither of them was of one whit more avail than the
twinkle of a tallow-candle. An entire class of susceptibilities, and a gift connected with them . . . was gone from me" (1:36). Such admissions lead "to conclusions in reference to the effect of public office on the character, not very favorable to the mode of life in question;" these conclusions lead to a promise: "in some other form, perhaps, I may hereafter develop these effects" (1:38). Public office creates hypocrites like the narrator and Arthur Dimmesdale, and the narrator explores these effects in The Scarlet Letter.

The narrator's connection to Hester is often documented. Like Hester, the narrator suffers— at least in his imagination— the low esteem of the Puritan community. "'What is he?' murmurs one gray shadow of my forefathers to the other. 'A writer of story books . . . why the degenerate fellow might as well have been a fiddler!''" (1:10). The term "degenerate" links literary creativity with sin, and identifies the narrator as a sinner. The scarlet letter itself strengthens his identification with Hester. The letter, according to Nina Baym, represents "the idea of the artist as a branded man, and the idea that art, when it is the expression of the artist's private fantasies . . . represents an act of civil disobedience which will, if its nature is recognized, be condemned by authority." 20 In a key scene,
the narrator tests the letter against his own breast and experiences "a sensation not altogether physical, yet almost so, as of burning heat" (1:32), like the "burning" shame Hester had felt. In the chapter entitled "Hester at her Needle," the letter throbs in recognition of the other sinners Hester encounters. The throbbing of the letter identifies the narrator as one of Hester's fellow sinners, i.e., a potential creative artist. But perhaps an equally important key to their relation is the parallel between Hester's compassion and the narrator's.

Hester's passion leads her into marginality, but she balances passion with compassion, ministering selflessly to the individual members of a society that has cast her out. That society has little to recommend it: dogmatic, stern, intolerant, self-righteous, and unforgiving, the Puritans of Boston punish Hester for the heinous crime of falling in love. Attachment to such a society seems irrational, but the narrator explains that irrationality in "The Custom-House" by describing his own attachment to Salem: "This old town . . . possesses, or did possess, a hold on my affections, the force of which I have never realized during my seasons of actual residence here. Indeed, so far as its physical aspect is concerned . . . it would be quite as reasonable to form a sentimental attachment to a
disarranged checkerboard. And yet, though invariably happiest elsewhere, there is within me a feeling for old Salem, which, in lack of a better phrase, I must be content to call affection" (1:8). The narrator's affection for Salem and Hester's compassion for a society that spurns her are equally irrational. Both Hester and the narrator are free thinkers who cannot accept the narrow spiritual values of their societies; Hester claims a "consecration" for her affair with Dimmesdale and later assumes "a freedom of speculation" (1:164) outside the pale of Puritan dogma, and the narrator, as he leaves the Custom-House, becomes "a citizen of somewhere else" (1:44). Hester's compassion towards the Puritan colony flourishes when she must live apart from it, and the narrator's affection for Salem seems more powerful when he takes up his residence elsewhere. Both these free thinkers depart and return, Hester as a nurse, the narrator as a storyteller, whose writing functions in the same way as Hester's nursing.

While he connects himself with both Hester and Dimmesdale, the narrator in "The Custom-House" separates himself from Roger Chillingworth by separating himself from several Chillingworth avatars. The ancestors from whom his literary concerns divide him include "a bitter persecutor" (1:9) of Quakers and an equally stern judge of "witches." A perhaps less forbidding avatar is the
old Inspector who illuminates Chillingworth's character in much the same way that the porter at Inverness illuminates Macbeth's and provides similar comic relief. Like Chillingworth (and like the porter's farmer, equivocator, and tailor, as well as Macbeth), the Inspector values self-gratification over people; though he has married and buried three wives and fathered twenty children, most of whom are dead, what lives in the Inspector's memory are not these once living people but a pantheon of dead animals with which he has satisfied his olfactory nerves and taste buds. A passive rather than an active sinner, the Inspector nonetheless violates the same principle that Chillingworth transgresses in avenging himself on the young clergyman.

By distancing himself from the Chillingworth avatars (the representations of the gifted man lost to egotism), and by leaving the job as Surveyor, which links him with Arthur Dimmesdale (the gifted man lost to self-denial), the narrator begins a movement away from problematic individuals who are lost and toward Hester Prynne, who in the allegory of art in The Scarlet Letter stands as Hawthorne's ideal artist, the problematic individual in her proper place. What identifies Hester as the ideal artist and distinguishes her character from that of Chillingworth and Dimmesdale is
the balance or tension in which she lives. She has no more talent than Chillingworth, the scholar/physician, and no more than Dimmesdale, the scholar/minister. But Chillingworth, in his relentless pursuit of vengeance, devotes his life to self-gratification, and Dimmesdale, in his equally relentless pursuit of absolution, devotes his life to self-denial. At the end of the novel Chillingworth, his passion finally thwarted by Dimmesdale's escape, dies because he no longer has any reason to live, and Dimmesdale, in a last, desperate act of self-denial (his judgment is so harsh and unbending that he cannot see that his lifetime of devotion, like Hester's nursing, might have expiated his single sin) dies because he cannot live with his own imperfection.

Hester Prynne, the ideal artist, has both the strength and passion she needs to live on the fringes of her society as well as the gentleness and compassion to extend her hands and heart toward her fellow humans. The dialectic between strength and gentleness, passion and compassion, isolation and community, allows Hester both to create and to communicate. For Hawthorne, without the tension of the dialectic, there can be no art.
Henry James and the Vanishing Esthete

Like Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James wrote often of the struggle of the artist to express his artistic identity against the backdrop of a too often philistine society. Annettte K. Baxter wrote over thirty years ago that James himself may have become the ideal artist described in Hawthorne's "The Artist of the Beautiful," and that while Hawthorne portrayed the artist as "in a special way threatened by the specter of isolation," James often pitted his artists against the temptations of worldliness. The distinction seems acceptable enough—Hawthorne is often seen as reclusive, given, as are many of his characters, to long, solitary walks, and James, though he never married and maintained his intellectual and emotional autonomy throughout his career, is known to have dined out one hundred forty times in the London season of 1878-79. But perhaps a more significant shift from Hawthorne to James—and a bridge to Joyce—is a more obvious ridicule of the esthete, the pseudo-artist who in his devotion to Art
Oberon and the portraitist of "The Prophetic Pictures," who tried to isolate themselves in pursuit of artistic perfection, but such characters in Hawthorne typically—with the obvious exception of the Canterbury poet—exhibit a coldness toward their fellows that often hides the pathos of their condition. Few readers will feel much sympathy for the alienated Oberon as he exults over his burning city, or for the solitary portraitist as he visits his paintings rather than the people who sat for them, yet each of these egotists exists in a near-vacuum of loneliness. James's esthetes, with such exceptions as the Machiavellian dilettante, Gilbert Osmond, are usually either harmless or misguided rather than vindictive; they injure themselves more often than they injure others, and they frequently admire people. Theobald worships art so ardently that he cannot paint for fear that he should "manifest [himself] by imperfection," and points to his singularly unproductive career as proof of his devotion to art. In Jamesian terms, wasting his entire career in planning a single perfect portrait is clearly misguided because Theobald, though he may have had a genuine esthetic adventure in conceiving his Madonna, fails to report that adventure. But Theobald harms only himself and in fact benefits his model, whom he believes he admires, though in fact he admires what he imagines her to be. His belief in her
ideal beauty, like Roderick Hudson's belief in the beauty of Christina Light, is so unshakeable that he cannot see what the narrator sees: that the beautiful Serafina, though the "poise and carriage of [her] head [are] admirably free and noble" (13:466), is "growing stout" and that she is "thick and coarse" (13:467). The narrator of "The Author of Beltraffio," in his misguided attempt to reconcile artist and wife, intends no harm toward either Dolcino or Beatrice Ambient, and nearly worships Mark Ambient, though like Theobald he really admires a self-created version of his idol. And Paul Overt, whose characterization seems to blur the boundary between esthete and artist, so values the approval of Henry St. George that he absents himself from the woman he loves in order to win that approval.

Yet James's characters face a dilemma similar to that of Hawthorne's. In the Jamesian world, art demands, as Henry St. George tells Paul Overt, not only independence, but concentration and finish; independence allows the artist to concentrate on the necessary finish. As sharply as James felt the artist's need to remain independent, and as deeply as he loathed the controlling egotism illustrated by such characters as Hawthorne's Rappaccini and his own Gilbert Osmond, James disliked also the egotism inherent in the esthetic stereotype of the artist as standing aloof, so secure in
his own esthetic superiority that he need never engage in creative effort. Such esthetes appear frequently in James's fiction, functioning as red herrings, diverting us from James's quite realistic view of the mature artist as a man protecting his independence while he engages in a dialogue with society.

In "The Next Time," a story written in 1895, James develops Hawthorne's conception of the alienated artist "chosen" by his artistic gift and debunks the popular image of the alienated "literary" writer standing aloof from society as he pursues "higher" goals. Neither the unnamed narrator of the story nor its central character, Ralph Limbert, exerts the slightest control over his talent, develops any sense of audience, or evaluates his own work with any accuracy. Ralph Limbert repeatedly tries to please a popular audience, but his sensibility differs so greatly from the common that no matter how diligently he tries to write vulgar books that will sell, he can only, according to the narrator, produce unmarketable works of great beauty. In one sense the story exploits the irony inherent in the widely accepted antipathy between art and commerce, as exemplified in this exchange between the narrator and Limbert's sister-in-law, a financially successful novelist, on the publication of a new Limbert novel:
"It won't move one, as they say in Fleet Street. The book has extraordinary beauty."
"Poor duck—after trying so hard!" Jane Highmore sighed with real tenderness. "What will become of them?" (15:202).

For Ralph Limbert, the attainment of beauty is an economic misfortune.

But in opposition to the absurdity of the great writer who cannot make money because he is simply too good, "The Next Time" exposes another absurdity, that of "literary" writers who assume their own superiority and try to become popular by writing badly. To succeed in editing Mr. Bousefield's journal, Limbert believes that he needs to print "not literature but only what Mr. Bousefield would take for it" (15:186), and the narrator, trying in his letters for Bousefield's journal to find the "golden mean," the compromise between art and audience that might please both reader and writer, displays his conception of that golden mean "month after month in the form of a monstrous levity, only praying heaven that my editor might now not tell me, as he had so often told me, that my result was awfully good" (15:192). He writes as badly as he dares, fearing that it might be too good! Such conceit must undermine our faith in the narrator's perception of the story and of his own and Limbert's talent. Both the narrator and Limbert deliberately write and publish bad writing, yet
both are shocked when others, such as the angry Mr. Bousefield whose journal Limbert has run into the ground, criticize their work. It never for a moment occurs to them that their bad work, which they feared might yet be too good, might instead be simply terrible. Of course, none of us can read either Limbert's or the narrator's work, so we cannot judge it with any degree of confidence, but we should not too readily accept their critical opinions because to do so might be to embrace the popular stereotype of the alienated artist forced to exist among the Philistines, which the story exposes on one level while it indicts the Philistines on another.

But while "The Next Time" illuminates—with typical Jamesian ambiguity—the conflict between the fine artist and his perhaps vulgar audience, it also illuminates the relation of the artist to his society. Jane Highmore and Ray Limbert both write for two important reasons. The first is to make money and the second is to win approval. Neither of these writers stands aloof from society, but instead tries as hard as possible to deepen his involvement in society, yet each believes in the fundamental opposition between the artist and society. Jane Highmore achieves both popularity and financial success and so seeks critical success, aspiring to the esthetic beauty she finds in the work of Ralph Limbert;
she writes for the social purpose of supporting her family, but her artist's ego drives her to seek the alienation which in her view of art falls naturally to the creator of such beauty. Ralph Limbert achieves critical success, but aspires to the popularity and financial success Jane Highmore already enjoys. Before he can get married, Limbert must win the approval of Mrs. Stannace by making enough money through writing to support her daughter, Maud, as his wife. To do so, he believes he must rein in his talent, thereby denying the unfettered expression of his creative impulses. Ralph Limbert writes for love, hardly the action of a man aloof from society, and still manages to produce a creditable body of work. For both Jane Highmore and Ralph Limbert, art results from the tension between the drive toward individual expression and social responsibility.

In "The Author of Beltraffio," James portrays an artist who must cope with a world that insists on misunderstanding both him and his work. Mark Ambient's wife, his sister Gwendolyn, and the unnamed American narrator all construct their own versions of the great man. His wife sees him as a pagan, and his sister and the narrator make of him a romantic representation of the artist as the artist is often understood by esthetes (a representation not unlike that which Stephen Dedalus
will make of himself). Ambient himself is both artist and English gentleman, a writer who can create art and live a social life. He characterizes his adversarial relation to his wife as "the opposition between two distinct ways of looking at the world, which have never succeeded in getting on together, or in making any kind of common household, since the beginning of time," adding: "I care for seeing things as they are; but you must n't talk to Mrs. Ambient about things as they are. She has a moral dread of things as they are" (16:46). The opposition seems clear enough: artist versus society. But Ambient's marginality is not that simple; though he searches for truth through art, though he believes that in society "there's a hatred of art" (16:47), Ambient cares enough about society, as represented by his wife, son, sister, and house guest, to reduce "the importance of [the irreconcilable difference between himself and his wife] in the common concerns of life," a compromise to which Mrs. Ambient, who after all is fed and clothed by her husband's creative industry, lends herself "with a very good grace" (16:48). This uneasy but largely peaceful coexistence bears a surprising resemblance to the relation between Hester Prynne and the Puritan colony at Boston, in which the ideal artist and a narrow society enter into an uneasy symbiosis.
The real conflict in "The Author of Beltraffio" takes place between the repressive moral forces of society, as represented by Mrs. Ambient, which (as the Puritan magistrates did in The Scarlet Letter) subordinate the needs of people to a moral fiction, and the egotistical esthetes, as represented by the narrator and Miss Ambient, who (as Roger Chillingwort did) divorce art from community by perverting art and who (as Stephen Dedalus will do later) divorce art from life by unconsciously transforming life into art.

The narrator, whom Donald H. Reiman has characterized as "a victim of an overworked aesthetic sensibility," transforms all he sees into art. This practice at first appears innocuous enough, as when the narrator sees Ambient’s house as an appropriate esthetic setting, a place of genius, a copy "of something that existed primarily in art and literature. It was not the picture, the poem, the fictive page, that seemed to me a copy; these things were the originals, and the life of happy and distinguished people was fashioned in their image. Mark Ambient called his house a cottage, and I saw afterwards he was right; for if it hadn’t been a cottage it must have been a villa, and a villa, in England at least, was not a place in which one could fancy him at home" (16:8). What seems to be harmless hero worship actually constitutes the distortion of art,
life, and language. Art becomes the model for life, life a copy that must live up to the demands of esthetics, and language is redefined to suit the narrator's view of Mark Ambient. Later, the narrator makes of Dolcino a representation of art, a vision "with the face of an angel . . . the more than mortal bloom . . . too fine and pure for the breath of this world" (16:12), thereby placing the burden of literary symbolism on a frail little boy.

The narrator's wild projections are sometimes comical: "Miss Ambient's perpetual gaze seemed to put to me: 'Do you perceive how artistic, how very strange and interesting, we are? Frankly now is it possible to be more artistic, more strange and interesting, than this? You surely won't deny that we're remarkable.' I was irritated by her use of the plural pronoun, for she had no right to pair herself with her brother" (16:28-29). But she, of course, does not use the plural pronoun, nor does she "pair" herself with Mark Ambient; the narrator has done both for her. And, having put words into Gwendolyn Ambient's mouth based on his own projection of meaning onto her gaze, he finds those words irritating, apparently having forgotten—or never realized—their source. Such humorous moments seem to identify the narrator as a comic character.

But through most of the story, the narrator's
misperceptions reveal an alarming inability to distinguish between art and life, an inability that proves fatal to Dolcino. Apparently in the hope that life will, like art, "unfold in aesthetically satisfying symmetry," the narrator urges Mrs. Ambient, whom he well knows has neither the power nor the inclination to appreciate her husband's work, to read the proof-sheets of Ambient's new novel. In trying to engineer a reconciliation between Ambient and his wife by means of Ambient's writing, the narrator demonstrates the naive conceit and egotism of the esthete, who would mold life into a pale imitation of art. By setting in motion the events that result in Dolcino's death, the narrator, albeit unwittingly, sacrifices the boy not only to Mrs. Ambient's moral ideology but to his own esthetic ideology.

Modifying Reiman's stance, Viola Hopkins Winner, though she considers Ambient "a true artist [who] . . . virtually expresses the central precepts of 'The Art of Fiction,'" assigns Ambient part of the blame for his son's death when she asserts that "the narrator at the time of the visit is even more deeply initiated into the mysteries of aestheticism by Ambient" because Ambient insists on truth to life, another tenet of esthetic doctrine. But this "deeper initiation" fails; tenet or not, truth to life is clearly an ideal that Ambient and
his guest do not share because the narrator has failed to keep pace with his host's artistic growth. James dramatizes the esthetic difference between host and guest through the example Ambient uses in discussing with the narrator the faults of his earlier work: "The reconciliation of the two women in 'Natalina,' for instance, which could never really have taken place" (16:42). Shortly after this conversation, the narrator tries, by means of the proof-sheets, to effect just such an impossible reconciliation, which Ambient has already said can never take place. The egotism of the confirmed esthete leads him to believe that he can mold life to fit his conception of art; he does not share Mark Ambient's sense of responsibility toward life as it is, and risks destroying Ambient's son and marriage for the sake of esthetic symmetry. There can be no doubt that the narrator has but imperfectly apprehended Ambient's esthetic creed.

The narrator's attempt to mold real life into an imitation of art does not stop with Dolcino's passing; he clings to esthetic ideals even after the tragedy, finding Dolcino "more exquisitely beautiful in death than he had been in life" (16:73), a sentiment which perhaps presages Stephen Dedalus's desire for the stasis of tragedy, and imagining, in order to diminish his own guilt, that the child's demise had accomplished the
reconciliation that Ambient's writing had failed to bring about. But it seems clear enough that Mrs. Ambient's own death results not from the loss of Dolcino but from her reading of her husband's books. She did not fail "rapidly after losing her son," as the narrator claims, but lived long enough to read her husband's "long delayed" (emphasis mine) new novel, which reading was so traumatic that it left her only a few weeks of life in which to dip into "the black 'Beltraffio'" (16:73). Mrs. Ambient, perhaps punishing herself for her role in her son's death, perhaps emotionally unable to continue living without Dolcino, chooses to live no longer; she commits suicide by reading.

The narrator's estheticism conflicts sharply and immediately with Mrs. Ambient's morality. On hearing from the narrator that her house has Ambient's tone, Mrs. Ambient quickly takes up the gauntlet: "I don't in the least consider that I'm living in one of his books at all. I shouldn't care for that in the least" (16:17). Mrs. Abient wants the creative life of the artist to imitate her own moral view of the world, a fiction which she of course perceives as the truth; the narrator wants life to imitate his own esthetic view of the world, a fiction which he perceives as the truth. As Hana Wirth-Nesher has written, "the paradigm that equates aestheticism with a total subordination of life
to form, and moralism with a reverence for life over art, cannot hold. It is Beatrice, at the end, who sacrifices life to preserve form—that of the perfect innocence of childhood."7 But Dolcino’s childhood innocence is not at stake; not even Ambients wants his son to read his books until the boy is mature enough to understand them. In Beatrice’s view, Dolcino will never be safe, not even as adult; her husband’s work too powerfully threatens the truth of her moral ideology. The form Beatrice preserves, to which the innocence of a child seems incidental, is a moral version of reality opposed to the narrator’s esthetic version. Mrs. Ambient’s morality denies artistic expression while the narrator’s estheticism exalts it. There seems little to choose between these two fictions; neither can accommodate the truth, and neither results in art.

The conflict in "The Author of Beltraffio," then, does not insist on a basic opposition between the artist and society but between the esthete and the moralist, each of whom subscribes to a fictitious view of life in which life imitates a palatable form. The artist, that is the mature artist-in-search-of-the-truth as represented by Mark Ambient, may disapprove of society and its moral vision, but not so strongly that he eschews the benefits and responsibilities of social intercourse; he can still write, even though domestic squabbles distract
him. He can still see people for what they are and appreciate their virtues, as evidenced by his characterization of his wife, whose esthetic judgments so rankle him, as "a very nice woman, extraordinarily well-behaved, upright and clever and with a tremendous lot of good sense about a good many matters" (16:47). His esthetic sense may lead him to want people to be better than they are and life to be neater than it is, and occasionally that esthetic sense may get the better of him (as with the aforementioned impossible reconciliation in "Natalina"), but his responsibility to the truth denies his esthetic desires their fullest expression. Along with his social concerns he has the moral courage the artist need to create in the face of criticism. Ambient has married, fathered a child, and lost that child, yet he continues to write and to support himself through writing. Despite the artist’s perhaps inevitable marginality in a society in which there exists a hatred of art, Ambient is still connected to that society, still concerned for its people. It is he, not the great moralist or the avowed esthete, who fetches the doctor; it is he, not the others, who cares for both his art and for Dolcino. And it is he, not the others, who produces rather than imagines art. Though as an artist he seems alienated from society, he actually exists in tension with it, drawn apart by his
creative drive but held back by his concern for people. The real isolates in the story are the moralist and the esthete, who sacrifice a child to their beliefs.

A similar treatment of the artist's dilemma appears in "The Lesson of the Master," in which Henry St. George plays on the readiness of the public and of many artists to accept the esthetically satisfying image of the alienated artist as he manipulates the people around him in order to satisfy his own needs. As a re-telling of the legend of St. George, the tale can be read either as the subjugation of Henry St. George to his dragon of a wife or as his ultimate sacrifice to a more vulgar dragon, Marian Fancourt, from whom St. George rescues the promising young novelist, Paul Overt. Either reading seems to support the notion that the tale is a statement of James's own belief in the writer's need to hold himself aloof from life—particularly marriage—in order to devote himself to art. But St. George in fact courts his metaphorical dragons with a cunning duplicity unworthy of any saint; if has "mastered" an art, it is the art of manipulation. The theme of "The Lesson of the Master" is not intellectual versus personal passion, but the relation of the artist to society, and that the dragon in the tale is neither Mrs. St. George nor Marian Fancourt, but the bewildered Paul Overt, who is so soundly thrashed by James's perverse St. George that he
remains unaware, even after St. George has claimed the fruits of victory, that any combat has taken place.

James’s distrust of marriage as a form of emotional tyranny in which one individual must inevitably sacrifice his own autonomy to the will of another has been thoroughly documented by readers of his fiction, his criticism, and his notes, as well as from the example of his own celibacy, but the critical commonplace that James considered marriage particularly hazardous to the creative artist seems at best problematic. Critics such as Charles R. Smith place perhaps more weight than it can bear on a famous passage from James’s notebooks:

Another [idea] came to me last night as I was talking with Theodore Child about the effect of marriage on the artist, the man of letters, etc. He mentioned the cases he had seen in Paris in which this effect had been fatal to the quality of the work, etc.—through overproduction, need to meet expenses, make a figure, etc. And I mentioned certain cases here . . . So it occurred to me that a very interesting situation would be that of an elder artist or writer, who has been ruined (in his own sight) by his marriage and its forcing him to produce promiscuously and cheaply—his position in regard to a younger confrere whom he sees on the brink of the same disaster and whom he endeavours to save, to rescue, by some act of bold interference—breaking off the marriage, annihilating the wife, making trouble between the parties.

This note from January 5th, 1888, seems a clear state-
ment of James's theme in "The Lesson of the Master," which first appeared in the Universal Review only a few months later, but discrepancies between note and story undermine the authority of the note and suggest that in reflecting further on his new idea, James saw complexities and ambiguities which do not appear in the note and which he decided to incorporate in his fiction. St. George's "bold action" consists of a two-pronged attack in which he denigrates marriage for Paul's benefit while wooing Marian Fancourt himself. He begins his attack on marriage and family in the smoking room at Summersoft before Paul's intentions toward Marian are clear (Paul has so far said only that he likes Marian), and he begins courting Marian before he has met Paul—and while his own wife still lives—and continues for nearly two years after Paul has left London to work on his new novel in seclusion, so neither action can be motivated by an altruistic concern for Paul's art. And James's parenthetical phrase "in his own sight," because it introduces the subjectivity of perception, raises the possibility that either St. George only imagines that he has been ruined or that something other than marriage may have caused his ruination.

Critics find another prop for such straightforward readings of "The Lesson of the Master" in James's review of George Eliot's Middlemarch:
The most perfectly successful passages in the book are perhaps those painful fireside scenes between Lydgate and his miserable little wife. . . . There is nothing more powerfully real than these scenes in all English fiction, and nothing certainly more intelligent. . . . The author. . . . has given us a powerful version of that typical human drama, the struggles of an ambitious soul with sordid disappointments and vulgar embarrassments. As to his catastrophe we hesitate to pronounce (for Lydgate’s ultimate assent to his wife’s worldly programme is nothing less than a catastrophe).

The review does not indict marriage in general, but the yoking of noble ambition to vulgar conventionality; the tragedy of Tertius Lydgate is not his marriage to Rosamond Vincy but his acceptance of her bourgeois ambitions. As James was certainly aware, Eliot herself wrote Middlemarch during her twenty-six-year cohabitation with G. H. Lewes, who by all accounts helped rather than hindered her career, and neither party in the match assented to a "worldly programme." (Eliot and Lewes never married because English law prevented him from obtaining a divorce from his wife, Agnes, but their relation, though perhaps non-traditional in the degree of freedom and autonomy each willingly allowed the other, was a marriage in all aspects save the legal.) And marriage seems to have had little effect on the art of Jamesian characters other than Henry St. George: Ralph Limbert of "The Next Time," for example, tries to
prostitute his art in order to support his family but simply cannot manage it; he turns out, if we can accept the judgment of Jane Highmore and the narrator of the story, one beauty after another. And in "The Author of Beltraffio," Mark Ambient resists his wife's worldly program, continuing to write despite her opposition and their running battle for control of their son. Submission to conventionality, not marriage, is the enemy of the creative artist.

In her thoughtful 1975 article, Adeline Tintner, whose reading of the story underscores James's note quoted above, asserts that "in order to understand 'The Lesson of the Master' one must see it as Henry James's saint's legend—his version of the legend of St. George and the dragon—profaned, burlesqued and converted into a narrative analogue." One can hardly quibble with Tintner's opening sally; certainly a knowledge of The Golden Legend seems essential to an appreciation of James's story, and other explicators have noted the parallels between story and legend in order to illuminate James's views on the incompatibility of art and marriage. Tintner, focusing sharply on iconic details embedded in James's text, reaches the final conclusion that St. George, having been freed from one dragon by the death of Mrs. St. George, sacrifices himself to another dragon, Marian Fancourt, in order to preserve
the sainted Paul "for the glory of England as the patron saint of England should." Building on Paul's remark to Marian that the anecdote of the burned book suggests St. George and the Dragon, which she insists alerts the reader that James intends to use *The Golden Legend* as a vehicle for his fiction, Tintner mobilizes an army of evidence: as "the story's obvious dragon, Mrs. St. George" wears a red Parisian dress, walks with Paul along the red wall skirting the park at Summersoft and, because she is a fire-breathing dragon, does not allow her husband to infringe on her authority by smoking. Marian Fancourt, who is described by both Paul and St. George as "angelic" early in the story and who is linked with Christian society by her attendance at a church service that Mrs. St. George skips, seems a deliberate contrast to Mrs. St. George, but the two, Tintner points out, are closely linked. Both women, who share an interest in social functions, country houses, famous people, and current fashion, worship the false gods which have destroyed St. George. According to Tintner, Marian is the greater dragon: she has come from non-Christian Asia, like the dragon of legend she has insatiable appetites, she has red hair, and "whereas the . . . only acknowledged dragon, Mrs. St. George, only wears red, Marian lives in a red environment." Such iconic details are persuasive, but by no means
conclusive. Mrs. St. George is "acknowledged" as a dragon only by Paul Overt. In a bon mot to Marian, Paul recalls The Golden Legend after telling her that Mrs. St. George has caused her husband to burn one of his books. Marian does not hear the joke, and Paul notices that she is still smiling at St. George, "the dragon's adversary" (15:27), a description which, because it seems filtered, like the rest of the story, through Paul's consciousness, lacks narrative authority. Paul has also come from foreign lands and skipped church. He smokes, and he does so faithlessly, which seems a stronger clue than Mrs. St. George's "aspirations," a word on which Tintner leans. When he suggests in St. George's study that he might "keep up" his art for an audience of one if St. George were the one, St. George responds: "Don't say that; I don't deserve it; it scorches me" (15:66, emphasis mine). Paul, as well as Mrs. St. George and Marian, is associated with dragons by textual details.

The chief difficulty with Tintner's admittedly thought-provoking analysis of James's text is that it focuses so sharply on selected suggestive details that it ignores the striking differences between the story and the legend. In Tintner's reading, a depleted St. George fights not one but two female dragons, and bows to the will of each; in The Golden Legend, the skillful,
robust warrior, St. George, rescues a maiden, [whom he subsequently marries,] by killing a male dragon. In "The Lesson of the Master," a skillful wordsmith, Henry St. George, wins Marian Fancourt by killing Paul Overt's interest in personal passion.

James alerts the reader to the combat in the smoking room at Summersoft, where St. George and Paul discuss the virtues of Marian Fancourt. Paul expects that Marian is "not for a dingy little man of letters; she's for the world, the bright rich world of bribes and rewards. And the world will . . . carry her away." St. George, testing the courage of his dragon, replies that the world "will try--but it's just a case in which there may be a fight. It would be worth fighting, for a man who had it in him, with youth and talent on his side" (15:41). Paul's failure to respond tells St. George that he himself may win the combat. And he does so, as befits a master of words, through textual means.

Paul even sees St. George in textual terms: as a writer describing another writer, Paul "saw more in St. George's face, which he liked the better for its not having told its whole story in the first three minutes. That story came out as one read, in short instalments . . . and the text was a style considerably involved, a language not easy to translate at sight. There were shades of meaning in it and a vague perspective of
history which receded as you advanced" (15:17-18). With this description, James instructs his readers to examine the text of Henry St. George carefully because it contains clues to the meaning of James's text, clues that escape Paul Overt, who as his name suggests sees only the obvious.

As a skilled writer himself, St. George manipulates both maiden and dragon with ridiculous ease by producing, in his conversation, textual versions of himself which exploit the expectations of his audience. He makes confidants of Marian and Paul by playing the role of the fallen artist. To both he professes dissatisfaction with his recent books, knowing that both, because they admire him, because they have literary aspirations of their own, and because they are still in the grip of a youthful idealism which prevents them from seeing the complex relation of art and society, will accept and empathize with the image of the artist constantly striving for perfection and continually foiled by the necessity of reconciling art and commerce in order to make a living. And he plays the role to the hilt, separating, for Paul and Marian, his creative life from his upper middle class lifestyle. At a private art viewing, he tells Marian that people send him more invitations than he wants to such affairs. Yet the decision to accept the invitations is St. George's
alone. James himself, similarly flooded with invitations, maintained his creative discipline by accepting only evening engagements; what James can do, St. George, if he is the great writer that Paul and Marian take him to be, can also do. During the viewing, St. George invites Marian to the park, but since he cannot let slip a simple desire to enjoy so common a diversion, he tells the girl, who breathlessly relays the news to Paul, that they are going merely "to look at the people, to look at types . . . we shall sit under the trees; we shall walk by the Row" (15:49). And overhearing Paul's surprise at the idea of the great writer enjoying the park like an ordinary citizen, St. George claims that he goes there "once a year, on business" (15:49). As a conscientious realist, James himself was a meticulous observer and note-taker, but unlike St. George, James seems to have been able to conduct his research wherever he happened to be and without making a show of it for pretty young women. The "types" St. George intends to observe in the park could probably be observed just as well in the gallery or in the streets. Both Marian and Paul, one a naive fan, the other an allegedly gifted writer, accept without question St. George's explanation. Paul, as he returns home alone, envies not only St. George, who is enjoying Marian's company, but also Marian, who is enjoying St. George's.
Both Marian and Paul are esthetically immature. Marian has tried to write a novel and considers art "the only [life]--everything else is so clumsy!" (15:22). She eagerly laps up every drop of "wisdom" that spills from St. George's lips, and as she fawns over St. George, she also fawns over Paul. Her conversation ranges from the sophomoric to the insipid, showing but a shallow understanding of either life or art; that Paul falls in love with a woman as shallow as Marian perhaps indicates a corresponding shallowness in Paul. Though as a writer himself he should be less susceptible to the pose of the misunderstood author, Paul is nearly as naive as Marian. He seems to believe, for example, that he could, at least in other countries, recognize "the artist and the man of letters by his personal 'type,' the mould of his face, the character of his head, the expression of his figure and even the indications of his dress" (15:13). According to Edel, James himself once held this belief and, upon meeting Robert Browning at the London home of newspaperman G. W. Smalley in the winter of 1878-79, ten years before writing "The Lesson of the Master," found a puzzling paradox in the great poet's middle-class conventionality, which contrasted sharply with the bohemian lifestyles of writers he had met on the Continent. But James reconciled the paradox; he did not confuse Browning's appearance with his art,
nor did he blame Browning's conventionality on his deceased wife. Paul, noticing Mrs. St. George's apparent serenity as she gazes on her husband in the garden at Summersoft, displays his penchant for judging books by their covers when he thinks: "That was the way she wanted him to be—she liked his conventional uniform" (15:15). And James did not share either St. George's affected or Paul's perhaps real distrust of social conformity: he had once responded to American diplomat Ehrman Syme Nadal's criticism of other Americans for their failed attempts at social climbing that "a position in society is a legitimate object of ambition". 15

Paul, of course, occasionally shows a depth which Marian lacks, a depth which allows him to question, though only briefly, St. George's motives. When Marian explains that St. George cancelled his scheduled Sunday visit in fairness to Paul, who thus has Marian to himself, Paul at first wonders "whether [St. George] had actually stayed away from the force of that idea" (15:56) of fairness, but quickly forgets his doubts upon seeing St. George alight from a cab at Marian's house moments after he himself has left her. Paul, rather than becoming suspicious at such an unlikely coincidence, feels "glad that St. George hadn't renounced his visit altogether", decides on the spot that "the world
[is] magnanimous", and "mentally congratulate[s] his successor on having an hour still to sit in Miss Fancourt's drawing-room" (15:57). Such naiveté, which clearly establishes an ironic distance between the forty-five year old Henry James who wrote "The Lesson of the Master" and the young Paul Overt, can only lead a young man to grief.

St. George plays Paul's naiveté as Heifitz played his Stradivarius. During their conversation in the smoking room at Summersoft, St. George flatters Paul incessantly, complimenting Paul on his "very distinguished book," Ginistrella, which he claims is "in the air . . . in the papers . . . everywhere" while he insists that Paul himself is "on all men's lips and, what's better, on all women's." Rather than analyzing St. George's words and perhaps seeing in them a clue that the great man might be a womanizer, Paul projects meaning onto St. George's tone, which seems to him "the very rustle of the laurel" (15:33). St. George claims to have spent fifteen minutes reading Ginistrella, but Paul, who has been occupied by the same social forms that have claimed St. George's time, cannot figure where St. George found even those fifteen free minutes. St. George artfully deflects Paul's doubts by flattering Paul with the news that Marian travels with her copy of Ginistrella, a tidbit rendered doubtful by the fact that
the gushing Miss Fancourt failed to mention it to Paul earlier in the day, though she did compliment him on his novel. Further, St. George claims that he can see proof of Paul's promise in only twenty quickly read pages. (Fifteen minutes for twenty pages allows only forty-five seconds per page.) Such a claim seems entirely unrealistic except as mere courtesy, yet Paul accepts it at face value as he accepts all St. George's flattery. Whether or not the great man actually read even a paragraph of Ginistrella is impossible to determine, but, given the vagueness of his comments, it seems likely that all he knows of Paul's novel he has learned at dinner from Marian Fancourt. He makes no specific reference to the text, and only seems to know that the novel is set abroad, a fact he could easily have acquired in casual conversation. Yet Paul fails to notice—as he had failed to notice in Marian—the utter vapidity of the commentary.

Because Paul, like Marian Fancourt and the narrator of James's "The Author of Beltraffio," never perceives life as it is but instead transforms it immediately into art, he provides St. George with a well-tuned instrument on which to perform. Before meeting either Marian Fancourt or Henry St. George, Paul has already constructed a version of the great man's personal life that satisfies Paul's own esthetic needs. Largely because
of her Parisian dress, Paul sees Mrs. St. George as an unlikely wife for a writer, but rather than modify his idea of what a "writer's wife" should be according to the living example before him, he instead rejects Mrs. St. George because she does not fit the idea. When in response to a gentleman's jocose accusation that she had sent her husband to church Mrs. St. George declares that she "never made him do anything in [her] life but once--when [she] made him burn up a bad book" (15:11), Paul, already biased against her simply because she is too well dressed to fit his preconceived idea, immediately assumes that the destroyed book "would have been one of her husband's finest things" (15:11), though he has absolutely no reason to think so save his own desire to change life into a more esthetically interesting form. During this episode, Mrs. St. George exerts no influence whatever on her husband, though he spends his time, in the words of General Fancourt, "making up to" (15:13) Marian. She remains unruffled by her husband's flirtations, but rather than imagining that her apparent serenity might indicate how much freedom she allows St. George, Paul sees that serenity as satisfaction with St. George's "conventional uniform" (15:15). All these details Paul interprets as support for his preconceived idea of St. George and his bias against Mrs. St. George. The episode ends with Paul
"longing" to know more about the burned book.

Because the immature Paul embraces the esthete's belief in the incompatibility of love and art and in the danger literary quantity poses to literary quality, he readily accepts Mrs. St. George as the cause of St. George's alleged decline. Paul's own view that "admirably as Henry St. George wrote, he had written for the last ten years, and especially for the last five, only too much" (15:12) seems to support Mrs. St. George's culpability, but as Peter Barry reminds us, St. George "has been married for more than twenty years, so that the fact of his marriage alone cannot be sufficient an explanation of the decline," if in fact there has been a decline, but Barry fails to mention that St. George admits his own commercialism to Paul when he describes "the mercenary muse whom [he] led to the altar of literature" (15:67). And St. George stops writing altogether before his marriage to Miss Fancourt in the expectation of living on her money. Unlike Tertius Lydgate, he assents not to his wife's "worldly programme," but to his own.

Barry does not take his re-interpretation of the tale far enough; his attempt to be fair to Mrs. St. George stops short of indicting St. George himself. But in fending off a strong rival for the affections of the beautiful but vapid Marian Fancourt, St. George creates
two different textual versions of his wife, one a paragon of virtue who has made him a success, the other a parasite who has sabotaged his artistic integrity. The first he displays for Marian, the second he holds up as a warning to Paul. To Marian he describes his wife as "the making of him" (15:26), to which assessment, when Marian repeats it, Paul replies that the great man is often obscure. Marian cannot catch his meaning because St. George has not told her of the book burning; he has not told her because the impropriety of denigrating his wife to a young woman would diminish in Miss Fancourt's eyes both his own gallantry and the luster of the position of "author's wife," a position for which St. George may already be grooming Miss Fancourt. While he praises his wife to Marian, St. George never misses a chance to criticize her to Paul. His wife, he tells Paul, doesn't allow him to smoke or drink, and has designed a "cage" in which she locks her husband up with his work every morning. Yet with the exception of the book-burning, nowhere in the story does Mrs. St. George exert any behavioral control over her husband save in the words of St. George to Paul, not even when he ignores her in order to flirt openly with Marian Fancourt at Summersoft. And the "cage," despite St. George's incessant complaining, seems not such a harsh prison: "Lord, what good things I should do if I had
such a charming place as this to do them in!" Paul exclaims to himself (15:64). Along with most critics, Paul swallows whole the notion that Mrs. St. George acts as the great man's jailer. But we have only St. George's word on that point, and because he equivocates so freely elsewhere in the story, particularly in describing his wife, we must question his honesty. It seems unlikely that the mercenary female Philistine St. George has created for Paul would, if she forced St. George to work, force him for only three hours a day. (In the smoking room at Summersoft, St. George claims that he works each day between ten and one.)

Like great liars and skilled rhetoricians, St. George knows how to protect his credibility as a narrator; by mentioning his wife's virtues, such as her practicality, and admitting frankly that he fell in love with her, he seems to give a balanced view of her, which lends credence to his criticisms. But he quickly presses his indictment of her by extending it to wives in general, then neatly includes Marian Fancourt, for whose affections Paul is his rival, in the category of wives detrimental to literary genius, again pointing out his target's virtues in order to support his criticisms.

A masterful exposition, the fiction St. George presents to Paul convinces the younger man that art and marriage are mutually exclusive. And when Paul asks point blank
if he should give up his love for Marian, St. George, displaying an unerring sense of audience, replies: "Bless me, no. [Give up] your idea . . . the idea of a decent perfection" (15:75). Having correctly assessed Paul as an esthete from their earlier conversation and from his talks with Marian Fancourt, St. George knows that in Paul's view no mere woman, indeed nothing with the mark of life about it, can compete with the sacred ideal of Art.

Paul, of course, is the perfect audience, eager to suspend his disbelief in order to enjoy the fiction. Rendered susceptible to St. George's tale by his own esthetic sensibilities, Paul fails to catch the outright lie in St. George's text that appears near the end of the story. In the smoking room at Summersoft, St. George had advised Paul to "make up to" Marian Fancourt. Struck in St. George's study by the discrepancy between that earlier advice and his host's assessment of wives as detrimental to genius, Paul questions St. George, who replies that he had advised Paul to court Marian "because she'd make a splendid wife! And I hadn't read you then" (15:77). In fact, St. George probably hadn't read Paul at Summersoft, but he had already claimed to have read enough of Marian Fancourt's copy of Ginistrella to appraise Paul's literary promise and to divine his character. Either he had read
Ginistrella at Summersoft, if only for fifteen minutes, or he hadn't; either he knew of Paul's talent or he didn't; yet he makes both claims. Like the two contradictory versions of his wife, both of these claims cannot be true. Paul completely misses the contradiction.

St. George may simply be a skilled social and economic survivalist. When he visits Paul in the smoking room at Summersoft, he displays instincts as finely tuned as Madam Merle's in Portrait of a Lady. As Madam Merle, the professional house guest, befriends Isabel Archer before she knows whether or not Isabel will prove of any use to her, Henry St. George, the professional artist, diverts Paul from Marian before he knows that he might one day depend on Marian's financial resources. But perhaps even this reading treats St. George too gently. His wife, as Lady Watermouth informs Paul, suffers from poor health; James describes her illness so tersely that we readers can only speculate as to how badly she suffers, but her health does force her to cut short a walk in the park which could hardly be described as strenuous. Lady Watermouth considers Mrs. St. George's poor health an inconvenience, but to St. George it may mean somewhat less; he certainly wastes none of his time, which he can use to better advantage in dazzling Miss Fancourt, attending to his wife. He
does not even offer her his arm during the walk. Given her poor health at Summersoft and her death a few months later, we might infer that she had little time left at the beginning of the story, that her husband knew she had little time left, so he was already grooming her replacement. Reading the great man in this way clearly makes his relation to Paul a combat, a bitterly ironic version of the St. George legend which, by casting Paul Overt as the dragon rather than Mrs.' St. George or Marian Fancourt, contradicts the iconic readings of Tintner and others as well as the esthetically palatable but incomplete parallel that Paul himself sees in Mrs. St. George's burning of her husband's book. St. George has, after all, taken the maiden away from Paul, whom James, as mentioned earlier, also connects with dragons through iconic details. Of course, these data seem insignificant in light of the sea of iconic associations—many of which seem to be red herrings—dredged up by Tintner in defense of her thesis that Mrs. St. George and Marian Fancourt are the dragons in the story, but even that ratio seems part of James's technique because it parallels the relation, in the "text" St. George presents to Paul, of the numerous criticisms of Mrs. St. George to the relatively few slips that undermine St. George's primary theme. Because it is verifiable, one such slip, the contradiction between St. George's claim
first that he had read Paul before meeting him in the smoking room at Summersoft and later that he hadn't, should cause Paul to re-examine St. George's text. Because it exactly rather than approximately parallels the legend of St. George, the brief association of Paul with dragons should lead readers to re-examine James's text, casting a particularly cynical eye on the rhetorical complaints of Henry St. George.

St. George is clearly a liar, and all he has told Paul--and James's readers--is rendered doubtful by his documented dishonesty. Perhaps Mrs. St. George, despite St. George's accusations, has never coerced her husband save in the one incident of book burning; perhaps the burned manuscript really was, as Mrs. St. George tells Paul, bad; perhaps St. George himself, and not Mrs. St. George, seeks high social and financial position; perhaps the text St. George presents to Paul, rather than being an honest statement of St. George's honest belief that an artist must sacrifice personal happiness in order to preserve his artistic integrity, is a didactic fiction, intended to get Paul out of the way so St. George can woo Marian Fancourt and her money without competition. If so, then Paul rather than Mrs. St. George is the dragon in the story, which means that the master's lesson cannot be literally that marriage destroys the artist's integrity. St. George himself
pursues all that life has to offer of his own volition, without any documented prodding from his wife and, again without any documented prodding from his wife, St. George drives himself through forty volumes in search of social and materialistic success. His esthetic sense attracts him to a life for art's sake, but his need for recognition and riches attracts him to art for life's sake. The resulting tension, rising from the dialectic between the individual artist and his society, produces a sizeable St. George canon. St. George reaches the compromise with perfection which James had earlier presented through the sculptor Gloriani in Roderick Hudson, a compromise essential to sustained artistic effort.

The artist's integrity may be a moot point. Despite Brook K. Horvath's insistence that in James's fiction "the accounts of artistic production are couched in terms stale and stolen because the art the Jamesian artist manages to produce is just that—trite and insipid, though overlaid with a veneer of originality," readers of Henry James cannot read Henry St. George (or Mark Ambient or Neil Paraday or Ray Limbert or Greville Fane or Hugh Vereker) any more than Paul Overt can read St. George's burned book, so we cannot determine the quality—which so worries Paul—of those forty volumes. 

And in the stories discussed so far, accounts
of artistic production come only from confirmed esthetes such as the narrator of "The Author of Beltraffio" and Paul Overt, who perhaps lack mature critical judgment, and the art produced never appears directly, so we readers cannot evaluate it. The narrator of "The Author of Beltraffio" distorts Mark Ambient's work into "a kind of aesthetic war-cry" (16:4), though Ambient intends "to give the impression of life itself" and believes that in his earlier work, which the narrator so admires, he has "always arranged things too much, always smoothed them down and rounded them off and tucked them in--done everything to them that life doesn't do . . . [and] . . . been a slave to the old superstitions" (16:42), a belief which can hardly be considered an aesthetic war-cry. Paul fails miserably with the "text" St. George presents him, and perhaps reads St. George's books as ineptly as he reads St. George. We cannot accept their judgments at face value, nor can we refute them by reading the unwritten books of Mark Ambient and Henry St. George. (St. George of course agrees with Paul on the quality of his own writing, but St. George is playing a role for Paul, which as we have seen undermines his credibility.) But we do know that Ambient and St. George write and that they do so from marginal positions. Ambient suffers society's disapproval in the form of his wife's censure, and St. George must shut out
the world and all its distractions in order to write. But each retains contact with his society, Ambient through his love for his son and respect for his wife, and St. George through his love for the pleasures of society. Neither writer stands wholly separate from society, just as neither is fully immersed in it.

Paul Overt also writes, and in order to do so he appears to separate himself from society far more dramatically than does Henry St. George. "The best bits [of Ginistrella] . . . were done in dreary places abroad" (15:25), and Paul's new novel is written during a two-year sojourn on the continent, far away from English society. But Paul, like Hester Prynne and the narrator of "The Custom-House," never severs his connection with his society. Though he writes Ginistrella while far from England, he does so because he must take his dying mother to a series of spas and sanatoriums. Though Paul speaks of this protracted journey only briefly, we can imagine with some confidence how much of his time and energy must have been absorbed by the daily necessities of arranging treatment, transport, and accommodations during such long and difficult trips as those to Algiers and Colorado, just as we can empathize with the emotional strain of watching his mother die a slow death. Paul writes Ginistrella abroad, but hardly in an ivory tower.
Similarly, he writes his new novel abroad, without the
distraction of caring for his mother, but even during
this journey he does not sever himself from his society.

Determined to "go straight," Paul writes in one sense
for his own esthetic needs, but in another sense for
Henry St. George and the "two or three who know better"
(15:66) than to accept prostituted art as pure. During
the composition of his new novel, Paul recalls St.
George's general injunction that he should "stick to it-
see it through" (15:84), and realizes that "he must
make [the new novel] supremely good--otherwise he should
lack, as regards his private behaviour, a handsome
excuse" (15:83-84). Despite his seclusion, Paul has a
clear sense of audience. Whatever the motives behind
Ginistrella might have been, the new novel springs in
part from a need for self-expression and in part from a
desire to please those for whom he cares. He writes for
St. George and others like him and to appear, to
himself and to his narrow society, to have exiled
himself from society (particularly from Marian Fancourt)
for a noble end. He wishes primarily to avoid the fate
of the dishonored St. George, who he believes has
written to please his audience in order to make the
money he needs to support wife, children, and country
house, but all Paul accomplishes is a change in curren-
cy. Rather than writing for the silvery praise of the
masses, he writes for the golden words of a select few.

But Paul continues to believe in the romantic/esthetic stereotype even though he contradicts it with his own example. Though an ardent devotee of art for art's sake, not even Paul Overt can wholly separate himself and his work from his community; such is one of many lessons of the master.

In his first "acknowledged" novel, Roderick Hudson, the young James portrayed a young artist who loses his stability because he cannot balance the forces of independence and community. Beebe writes that in Roderick Hudson "the artist is destroyed as artist because of his submission to love," and Leon Edel has added that the conflict in Roderick Hudson, like the ostensible conflict in "The Lesson of the Master," is between art and passion. As Paul Overt, in forsaking Marian Fancourt in order to write his new novel, chooses intellectual rather than personal passion, so Roderick Hudson, in embracing his passion for Christina Light, forsakes intellectual passion for the personal. Rather than giving up love for art, Roderick gives up art for love. According to Edel, "the possibility of cultivating both is excluded from the Jamesian world." Difficulty arises from Edel's diction; Roderick does not "cultivate" his attraction to Christina Light but rather makes an obsession of it. Nor does he "cultivate" art
prior to meeting Christina. As the artistic side of James, "all flame and passion," Roderick cannot act so temperately.\textsuperscript{21} Rowland Mallet, in leading Roderick to Europe and in wishing to dissolve the relation between Roderick and Mary Garland so that he might woo Mary himself, cultivates art and love. Roderick Hudson, once he has been freed by Mallet's wealth from the economic necessities of his middle-class lifestyle, attacks art and love with all the passion he has. Beebe is correct in contending that "the genius of the young sculptor is negated by his failure to achieve detachment," but the detachment Roderick fails to achieve is not from life and love but from his own willfully idealized view of art, embodied in Christina Light.\textsuperscript{22} Instead of sacrificing art for love, Roderick Hudson sacrifices love, society, and life for that ideal, embracing the destruction of the artist as man because he cannot accept imperfection in art. The forces of egotism and self-denial battle each other in Roderick Hudson as they did in Arthur Dimmesdale, and the struggle destroys Roderick.

At the beginning of the novel, these forces are clearly out of balance in the young Roderick. While entombed in Northampton, Roderick manages but a small output consisting of the water-drinker he gave to Cecilia and a dozen or so small pieces "in various
stages of completion" (1:36). Because he is trying to learn (or to appear to learn) a profession and to fill in his mother's eyes the place of his deceased brother, Roderick engages in a debilitating self-denial that nearly smothers his creative drive. He emerges from that self-denial when he accompanies Rowland Mallet to Europe.

Both Roderick and Mallet feel the opposition between art and commerce. As Stephen Dedalus will do later, both express this opposition in religious terms. Roderick compares himself to Christ by describing the smashing of his bust of Mr. Striker as driving "the money-changers from the temple" (1:38), and Mallet, though in his allusion he demotes Roderick to the status of an apostle, echoes the messianic theme with the news that Roderick, in preparing to depart for Italy, "had shaken the dust of Mr. Striker's office from his feet" (1:40). The religious referents begin to establish Roderick as an embodiment of the popularly accepted romantic stereotype of the artist as one who can and must snub the worldly in order to follow his calling. But in popular belief the artist is also undisciplined.

Mallet's cousin, Cecilia, summarizes Roderick's background and reaches a curious conclusion, which Mallet does not question: "He has had no education beyond what he has picked up with little trouble for
himself . . . he had no guidance— he could bear no control; he could only be horribly spoiled . . . he broke off his connexion with a small college . . . where, I'm afraid, he had given a good deal more attention to novels and billiards than to mathematics and Greek . . . the boy's, as you say, an artist—an artist to his fingers' ends" (1:29). Both Cecilia and Mallet accept the stereotype of the artist as a social rebel who rejects discipline, guidance, and even work.

But though he lets Cecilia's conclusion pass without comment and though he seems to embrace the romantic stereotype when he admits to his cousin that he feels "too young to strike [his] grand coup" and so is "holding [himself] ready for inspiration" (1:4), Mallet does recognize the importance of hard work. He warns Roderick that he will have to work hard, and to Mrs. Hudson he explains that in Europe Roderick is "to study, to strive, to work—very hard, I hope" (1:58), and that "after twenty years, a real artist is still studying" (1:59). Mallet realizes that talent must be trained, and that realization links him with Roderick's bete noire, Barnaby Striker. Striker, the Yankee attorney, serves as a comic villain in Roderick Hudson's New England life, a provincial, puritanical antithesis to the young artist, but with economic power over him. Striker's skillfully ironic cross-examination of Rowland
Mallet places the artist's life before Mrs. Hudson in such a light that she fears for her son's health and morals amid the dirty antique statues of pagan deities with "no arms, no nose, and no clothing" (1:59) and the Italian women who will serve as models. And when Mallet explains that "to an artist who loves his work there is no lost time [because] everything he looks at teaches or suggests something," Striker exposes this belief as "a tempting doctrine to young men with a taste for sitting by the hour with the page unturned, watching the flies buzz, or the frost melt, on the window-pane," and observes drily that Roderick "in this way must have laid up stores of information that I never suspected" (1:60-61). But despite his distrust of Mallet's view of the artistic life and his antipathy to art itself, Striker serves as a model by which Roderick, if he truly learned from all that he saw, might well have profited. As a self-made man, Striker realizes the importance of self-reliance, independence, and determination. "The crop we gather," he tells Mallet, "depends on the seed we sow. [Roderick] may be the biggest genius of the age: his potatoes won't come up without his hoeing them" (1:63). Straight from the pages of the Protestant work ethic, Striker's metaphor seems tritely platitudinal, but it applies to art as aptly as to gardening.

Because he engages—albeit half-heartedly—in
building a conventional future by studying law while working in the law office of Striker and Spooner and relegating art to his spare time, Roderick represents a type which would appeal to many of James's conventional characters, such as Lady Agnes Dormer. Roderick faces the same dilemma that Nick Dormer and Stephen Dedalus will face later and which the mature, producing artist never resolves. But Roderick cannot face that dilemma with the moral courage (that quality, so highly prized by James Joyce, that enables the artist to face his own marginality rather than knuckling under to social and economic pressures) of either Dormer or Dedalus. Though his capricious, undisciplined nature, which Cecilia takes for artistic talent, prevents him from making any earnest attempts to earn a living and from achieving even a semblance of contentment in his provincial environment, Roderick cannot follow his muse until Rowland Mallet opens his purse strings and removes all the obstacles between Roderick and a career as an artist. It seems puzzling that, though Roderick later appears driven alternately by his creative drive and his passion for Christina Light, in Northhampton he is so easily stymied.

Roderick Hudson does not appear to know himself, but his apparent lack of self-knowledge stems from the fact that he thinks, speaks, and acts only from inspira-
tion. When Mallet begins musing on the popular opposition between America and the arts, Roderick declares that "America [is] quite good enough for him, and that he had always thought it the duty of an honest citizen to stand by his own country and help it on" but the narrator points out that Roderick "had evidently thought nothing whatever about it—he was launching his doctrine on the inspiration of the moment" (1:32). Moments later, of course, Roderick jumps at the chance to accompany Mallet to Europe, "with an emphasis which speedily consigned our National Individuality to perdition" (1:33). Calling himself a practical man when Mallet proposes the trip, Roderick later proves to be completely impractical by spending a small fortune on postage for the voluminous letters he writes to Mary, squandering Mallet's money and even gambling it away. Few, if any, of Roderick's words or actions are ever the result of reflection or concerted effort.

But Mallet's money smooths the way for Roderick to succeed as an artist and, during the first months of his stay in Europe, Roderick easily balances the forces of creativity and society. His betrothal to Mary Garland, though he describes their attachment in naively romantic terms, claiming that he fell in love with Mary "without suspecting it" (1:82), seems to indicate both a mature understanding of the artist's position in the world and
a desire for stability. "Unless a man's unnaturally selfish," Roderick tells Mallet, "he needs to work for some one other than himself" (1:82). Because Roderick chooses to work for Mary Garland, whom he loves because she is a moralist who embodies "security and sanity, all the 'saving clauses,' in her sweet, fresh person" (1:86), he approaches briefly the state of Hawthorne's ideal artist, who lives apart from society yet remains bound to it by his emotional ties. And James illustrates this ideal state by Roderick's first months in Rome, when the young sculptor "established the happiest modus vivendi betwixt work and play, [wrestling] all day with a mountain of clay in his studio, and [chattering] half the night away in Roman drawing-rooms" (1:102), and retaining contact (through the mail) with his provincial New England society. In the life of James's ideal artist, art and society both have their places; as he begins his career, Roderick cultivates each without making an obsession of either.

But Roderick's apparent grasp of the artist's position and his apparent desire for stability prove to be unwitting and temporary. As a talented esthete, Roderick believes that he must depend wholly on passion and inspiration for his art. As Tintner wrote in a 1981 article, "only Gloriani, the artist who has compromised with perfection, can succeed, and it is he who tries to
wean Roderick away from redoing idealized forms inherited from antiquity. But Gloriani's success is not only the financial success of his thriving trade. Creation must precede reputation and sales, and Gloriani, unlike the romantic Roderick, begins his success by continuing to sculpt whether or not inspiration strikes. His compromise with perfection is also a compromise between art and society because he must make a living and therefore must consider the tastes of his clients. Gloriani knows that utter dependence on the muse means starvation and perhaps destruction. During Rowland Mallet's small dinner party, Gloriani warns Roderick that "passion burns out, inspiration runs to seed" and that the artist "must learn to do without the Muse," and then offers Roderick an invitation: "When the fickle jade forgets the way to your studio . . . come round and see me, and I'll show you how to console yourself." Roderick's reply rings with the confidence of youth: "If I break down . . . I shall stay down. If the Muse deserts me she shall at least have her infidelity on her conscience" (1:124). Roderick later fulfills his prediction, breaking down and staying down when Christina Light, who as we shall see functions as Roderick's muse, deserts him for Prince Casamassima.

This exchange between Gloriani and Roderick dramatizes the conflict between the undisciplined young
esthete and the mature, working artist, an artist who will reappear in The Ambassadors as an admired master. A great talker and a successful marketer of his own work, Gloriani appears at first glance a charlatan. His theories of art seem deliberately contradictory and confusing, designed to help a fraud make an impression at cocktail parties: "there is no essential difference between beauty and ugliness . . . they overlap and intermingle in a quite inextricable manner . . . there is no saying where one begins and the other ends . . . hideousness grimaces at you suddenly from out of the very bosom of loveliness, and beauty blooms before your eyes in the lap of viliness" (1:107). But Gloriani's works, which Mallet sees as "elegant and strange, exquisite and base" (1:107), because they embody his stated dialectic between beauty and ugliness, show clearly that Gloriani's theories, puzzling though they may be to such as Rowland Mallet, function in the studio as well as in the drawing room. And Gloriani combines success with independence: "the artist was such an independent spirit, and was withal . . . deluged with orders" (1:107). Compared to the creative, irrational Roderick, whose passions enslave and immobilize him and whose obsession with the ideal leads him to his death, Gloriani seems both creative and rational, a man whom the compromise with perfection, which allows him to
work and to sell even as Roderick's obsession often paralyzes the younger man, has not completely tamed.

Whether James originally intended Gloriani to be a charlatan is problematic, but his revisions for the New York edition eliminated a caricatural description of the sculptor as "a great talker, and a very picturesque one; he was almost bald; he had a small bright eye, a broken nose, and a moustache with waxed ends." James substituted the rather more flattering assessment that Gloriani "might have been, facially, for firmness, one of his own expensive bronzes" (1:108), a revision which, according to Viola Hopkins, aligns the forty-year-old Gloriani of Roderick Hudson with the acknowledged master of art of The Ambassadors, whose "medal-like Italian face, in which every line was an artist's own" (21:197), so mesmerizes Lambert Strether and who "epitomizes the life which Strether has never had." James also excised a passage describing Gloriani's sculptures as "florid and meretricious; they looked like magnified goldsmith's work," choosing for the New York edition the less opinionated and perhaps even complimentary "of an art that wandered far they freely spoke" (1:107). Carl Maves agrees with Hopkins regarding the marked change in Gloriani, pointing out that in the New York edition, Gloriani is "more dignified and less satirized, more the master-to-be than the charlatan
that is, though his theories of art . . . remain the same." The two differ on James's intention. Hopkins asserts that James's revisions merely reflect the change in public taste that took place between the original publication of *Roderick Hudson* in 1875 and the New York revision of 1907, but notes with some regret that in changing Gloriani from one "who is not to be taken as the model artist" to someone in whose footsteps "Roderick would do well to follow," James "shifted the grounds of the art arguments." But Hopkins inexplicably fails to elaborate the final implication of her argument: that perhaps, in the intervening thirty-two years, James's attitude toward art had changed. Maves claims that "the difference is that James eventually saw a new significance in 'art with a worldly motive, skill unleavened by faith, the mere base maximum of cleverness' [(1:123)]. He came to respect Gloriani's Italian pragmatism, his humane cynicism, as a valid or at least potential alternative to Roderick's impassioned romanticism." Maves perhaps errs in assigning this revised view of Gloriani to Henry James because the passage he quotes comes not from authorial exposition but from the consciousness of Rowland Mallet, who has just returned from escorting Madame Grandoni and Miss Blanchard to their carriage, and who stands in the open door, contemplating the "romantic symbolism" in the juxtaposi-
tion of Roderick, Gloriani, and Singleton, who are gathered in the drawing room. James may never have thought as harshly of Gloriani as Rowland Mallet does.

Sam Singleton, Roderick's unabashed admirer, sides with the young sculptor, advising Roderick in the face of Gloriani's warnings that Roderick "can do anything in the world" (1:118), including sculpt abstract concepts such as beauty, wisdom, power, genius, and daring. But Singleton, who worships genius despite the fact that his own limited success results primarily from hard work, is nearly as young as Roderick and so shares Roderick's passion and innocence, as does Rowland Mallet. Mallet, though he knows well that for Singleton, who when he first came to Rome had "painted worthless daubs, . . . improvement had come . . . hand in hand with patient industry" (1:108), uses Singleton's water-colors to "prove" that inspiration is not as fickle as Gloriani suggests. But the "proof" is Mallet's, not Henry James's; James continually depicts Singleton at work, hiking and sketching in the Appenines (while Roderick gambles at Baden-Baden), balancing himself between art and life by "sleeping on straw and eating black bread and beans" in order to stretch his money and continue traveling and working, "but feasting on local colour, making violent love to opportunity and laying up a treasure of reminiscences" (1:144) even though he is
wracked by self-doubt rather than supported by a muse. Yet Singleton envies Roderick his self-assurance: "Ah, there's a man . . . who has taken his start once for all and does n't need to stop and ask himself in fear and trembling every month or two whether he's going on. When he stops it's to rest!" (1:145). The tormented Roderick, of course, stops more frequently, and seldom has the sense of direction that Singleton has found in his own work during his summer of sketching. Beebe describes Singleton as an example of the bent back, by which "James often represented the separation of the artist from the man."30 But the image also suggests the importance of hard work; near the end of the novel, Rowland and Roderick discuss Christina Light while they watch, from the door of their inn, a "figure on the summit of some distant rocks opposite. The figure was apparently descending into the valley, and in relief against the crimson screen of the western sky it looked gigantic" (1:480). The figure is Sam Singleton, but Rowland and Roderick do not for the moment recognize him. In light of Christina's function as Roderick's muse, his ideal of art, the symbolism, for James, seems strikingly overt: While Rowland and Roderick continue their endless chatter about art, Singleton scales the heights by dint of hard work, but Rowland and Roderick do not perceive just how high that hard work has taken
him; Roderick even laughs aloud when he realizes later that the gigantic figure was in fact Singleton. But Roderick, of all the characters in the novel, should learn from Singleton’s example as he should have learned from Barnaby Stryker’s: "Roderick had said to Rowland at first that their friend reminded him of some curious insect with a remarkable mechanical instinct in its antennae; but as the days went by it was apparent that the modest landscapist’s successful method grew to have an oppressive meaning for him. It pointed a moral, and Roderick used to sit and con the moral as he saw it figured in the little painter’s bent back, on the hot hillsides, protruding from beneath a white umbrella (1:484)". Recalling the fable of the ant and the grasshopper, James shows Roderick talking and Singleton, as always, working—and improving. Yet Singleton envies Roderick. The popular stereotype of the artist as a favored mortal whose achievements result from supernatural intervention is so attractive that Singleton, who embodies artistic discipline and self-motivation, worships it and Mallet, though the example of Singleton’s career suggests that it might be false, defends the stereotype to Gloriani.

But Gloriani, along with Madame Grandoni, knows the stereotype to be false and refutes it by example. Among the artists present in the episode, Gloriani stands out
as the most successful and as the most reasonable compromise between inspiration and hard work. Miss Blanchard paints with skill, but without genius; Singleton, though he develops skill (at least enough skill to please Rowland Mallet) through practice, is similarly uninspired. Roderick Hudson, who in opposition to Singleton forms a dialectic between genius and industry, though he is working hard at the moment because he is riding a wave of inspiration, will prove to be an artist who works only when inspired. Gloriani's art, as appraised by Rowland Mallet, results from an "inimitable" talent, brought to "perfection by fifteen years of indefatigable exercise" (1:106); Gloriani embodies a balance of genius and industry as well as a balance between art and life. Gloriani has exercised his talent because he squandered his fortune as a youth and so must make a living for himself; the fact that he did not work before losing his money suggests a beneficial aspect to esthetic commercialism. Inspired or not, Gloriani labors at his art in a social and economic context, producing sculpture both controversial and saleable. Mallet, though he enjoys Gloriani's company, denigrates him as an artist by describing him as driving "an active trade in sculpture of the ingenious or sophisticated school" (1:106). Gloriani has lost the youthful innocence that charac-
terizes Roderick Hudson and Sam Singleton, whose work Mallet prefers. (Mallet, a bit of an esthete himself, perhaps harbors an undue fondness for Singleton's work in part because he regards Singleton as his own "discovery," whose talent is "incontestable" though that talent is "but scantily recognized" (1:108).) Roderick, if he is to survive as an artist, must also lose that youthful innocence which is the source of his egotism; he must learn that the romantic stereotype fails and that the artist cannot work only when inspired and that audiences (a sculptor's customers) are, like talent, indispensable to the production of art.

The romantic stereotype serves to separate the artist from society because it separates the artist's motivation from social and economic concerns. In smashing the stereotype in two novels, Roderick Hudson and The Tragic Muse, James created artists who, because of their chosen media, must interact with the world in order to create. Novelists frequently write on speculation, but sculptors, actors, and portrait painters work to order and so must sometimes accommodate client and muse. In ordering the sculptures with which Roderick will repay his patronage, Mallet places no restrictions on Roderick's creativity, but other customers, less magnanimous, press their own ideas on the artist in an effort to participate in the creative process, a
participation Roderick refuses to allow. Roderick's egotism prevents him from finishing the statue commissioned by the admittedly insufferable Mr. Leavenworth though he has accepted the order and though Rowland Mallet advises him of the danger such temperamental behavior poses to his career. The result of Roderick's egotism is sterility. Gloriani's artistic and financial success result from the marriage of talent and discipline, and from the realization that art does not exist in a vacuum of ideality. Set apart from society by his creative drive, Gloriani nevertheless maintains contact with society through his art.

Roderick achieves Gloriani's stability only briefly, and then by the happy accident that his creative drive, which has drawn him to the alienation of his Roman sojourn, and his need for society, which has led him to propose to Mary Garland, find themselves in balance. When his drive fails him, leaving him brooding over an unfinished figure, Roderick, to the surprise of Rowland Mallet, first isolates himself in the Alps, then immerses himself in the low society of the Baden-Baden gaming tables to renew his vigor. Unlike Sam Singleton, who spends the summer sketching industriously as he rambles through the Appenines, Roderick produces nothing during his solitary stay in the Alps or during his gambling spree in Baden-Baden. But as much power as
the low society of revelers and gamblers exerts on
Roderick, it cannot match the power of Christina Light.

Christina Light represents art in *Roderick Hudson*
much as Pearl does in *The Scarlet Letter*, and there are
striking parallels between the two: both are beautiful,
illegitimate daughters, both are the objects of their
mothers' devotion, both live in close proximity to
fathers who cannot admit their paternity, and both
ultimately marry into wealthy, titled families. The
parents who produce the two are of course very dif­
ferent, and their differences illuminate the conflict of
*Roderick Hudson*. Hester Prynne lavishes all her skill
and love on Pearl, but marvels at the girl's capricious­
ness, realizing that the fruit of her own creativity is
quite beyond her control, and Arthur Dimmesdale, though
he faces his own guilt squarely, lacks the hypocrisy he
would need to involve himself in Pearl's life while
retaining his position in society. Neither crafts Pearl
into a saleable artifact; Pearl becomes marketable quite
by chance.

Like Gloriani, Christina Light embodies a balance
between talent and industry and between the ideal and
the corrupt. Her natural beauty results from her
genetic inheritance (the natural talent or "genius" of
her mother and father) and her marketability results
from a comprehensive plan and the persistent efforts of
those same parents. Mrs. Light lavishes all her money and skill on Christina: "I was determined she should be perfection," she tells Mallet. "Nothing was spared; if I had been told that she must have every morning a bath of millefleurs, at fifty francs a pint, I would have found means to give it to her. She never raised a finger for herself, she breathed nothing but perfumes, she walked, she slept upon flowers . . . she had masters, professors, every educational advantage" (1:251-52). The Cavaliere, though he cannot openly claim paternity, assists in the shaping of Christina, teaching her reading and music. Twenty years of patient crafting have developed a "work" which, like the "wares" of Gloriani, is both artistic and saleable; as Barnaby Striker might say, Mrs. Light and the Cavaliere have hoed their potatoes and they have indeed come up. The result of the two creative strategies (the expressionism of Hester Prynne and the commercialism of Mrs. Light and the Cavaliere) is ultimately the same: their creations take their places within the social and economic contexts of their times.

Because of her striking combination of beauty and social facility, Christina serves as a convenient representation not only of art but also of the relation of art to society; the way in which other characters perceive her parallels their perceptions of that
relation. Christina's beauty of course affects all who see her, but in different ways. Most of the characters in the novel, including all of the characters who are not artists, however sharply they may be struck with her beauty, are not blinded by it; within their own spheres of interest they are able to perceive Christina's position in the real world. Madame Grandoni, Mallet's expert commentator on Roman society, assesses Christina's marital prospects in her own area of expertise. She remarks to Mallet that she "was amazed at [Christina's] beauty, and [that] certainly if there be any truth in faces she ought to have the soul of an angel" (1:164), and a page later speculates that despite being handicapped by her mother's vulgarity, Christina has a chance of marrying into the wealth and position for which her mother has fashioned her: "There's something in the girl . . . that seems to make it very possible she may be marked out for one of those romantic fortunes that history now and then relates" (1:165). Prince Casamassima, born to wealth and position, believes that like other marriageable young women, Christina can be purchased. Gloriani, the successful artist who despite Roderick's criticism has the artist's eye, describes Christina as "fine as a flower-stem and yet as full as a flame" (1:190), then compares her to Salome. With his practical rather than ideal view of art, Gloriani, while
complimenting the workmanship Roderick displays in his bust of Christina, sees in a glance Christina's potential as a model (he apparently accords models the same status as hammers and chisels) and the social position that will keep her from the clutches of artists like Hudson and himself: "Your luck's too hateful, but you ought n't to have let her off with the mere sacrifice of her head. There would be no end to be done with the whole inimitable presence of her. If I could only have got hold of her I would have pumped every inch of her empty. What a pity she's not a poor Trasteverina whom we might have for a franc an hour!" (1:189-90). Rowland Mallet, as perceptive as most men, remarks on seeing Christina for the first time at the Villa Ludovisi that she is "quite beautiful enough" (1:95). On seeing Mrs. Light and the Cavaliere enter Roderick's studio, he remembers Christina as "a wonderfully beautiful girl," and when Christina enters and seats herself, he notes that "even with her eyes dropped, her beauty [is] still dazzling" (1:150). Posing for Roderick, "she look[s] divinely fair" (1:170) to Mallet, and when at another session she angrily pulls her hair down, Mallet compares her to "some immaculate saint of legend being led to martyrdom" (1:178). Though each perceives and appreciates Christina Light's extraordinary beauty, none of these characters tries to make of
Christina more than she is: a beautiful young woman whose face is her fortune.

In light of the widespread commodification of young women in the nineteenth century, the selling of Christina Light may seem so much a part of the commonplace as to be void of symbolic force. But one character in the novel refuses to recognize Christina's relation to society just as he refuses to recognize art's relation to society: the young sculptor, Roderick Hudson.

Roderick seems unable to distinguish between the real and the ideal. The other characters use similes in describing Christina; Roderick uses metaphors, choosing substitution over comparison. On first seeing Christina, Roderick calls her "a vision," then corrects Mallet's milder assessment (that Christina is "quite beautiful enough") with: "She's beauty's self--she's a revelation. I don't believe she's living--she's a phantasm, a vapour, an illusion!" (1:95). (To Roderick, beauty—or art—and life are always mutually exclusive.) A moment later, he adds hyperbole to hyperbole, telling Mallet: "If beauty's the wrong thing, as people think at Northampton . . . she's the incarnation of evil" (1:96). When she appears in his studio, he recalls her as "that goddess of the Villa Ludovisi" (1:151), and when she leaves he describes her to Mallet as "simply a breathing goddess" (1:160). Unlike Mallet's judgment of
Christina’s beauty, which intensifies during the course of the novel, Roderick’s judgment cannot intensify because he perceives her as divine from the beginning. And at first sight he guesses wrongly at her origins: "the little old man [the Cavaliere Giacosa] is n’t the papa, [but a] hanger-on of the mamma, a useful personage who now and then gets asked to dinner," he tells Mallet. "She’s not an American, I’ll lay a wager on that," he adds a moment later, "she’s a daughter of this elder world" (1:96). Roderick is half right on both counts: the Cavaliere is a hanger-on of Mrs. Light, but a permanent fixture in the Light household rather than an occasional dinner guest, and he is also Christina’s father. Christina is a daughter of Europe, but half American by blood. Roderick’s willfully idealized view of beauty demands that he separate the perfection of Christina Light from the imperfection that surrounds her.

Gloriani, of course, would never make such a mistake because Christina Light is the embodiment of Gloriani’s belief that beauty and ugliness are inseparable. In Christina’s behavior, a Machiavellian hideousness grimaces out suddenly from the bosom of physical beauty. She has learned her manipulative techniques at her mother’s knee, but has surpassed even her mother in her mastery of them. Christina’s beauty does not
prevent her from indulging in the ugliness of using
Roderick to shield herself from the bores she meets at
parties (which Roderick takes as a sign of her fondness
for him), nor from patronizing the Cavaliere (as when
she sends him to fetch lunch during the group's visit to
the terrace of the Villa Mondragone), nor from using
Roderick to torment Prince Casamassima with jealousy (as
during her lengthy walk alone with Roderick at the
Villa), nor from manipulating Roderick for her own
amusement (as she does during their tryst at the
Coliseum). Nor does Christina's beauty protect her from
the influence of a corrupt origin. As the illegitimate
daughter of an adulterous liaison between the vulgar
Mrs. Light, whom we might view with Christina as a
bitterly ironic twist of the conventional Madonna image,
and the gold-digging Cavaliere, Christina literally
blooms in the lap of vileness.

Despite her beauty, Christina, like art, cannot
exist in an ideal plane apart from the real world. Art
must inevitably be criticized and praised, admired and
despised, bought and sold. Because of her association
with the real world and all its imperfections, Christina
has learned sophistication and social responsibility,
qualities which temper her desires and limit her
actions while they serve as a backdrop for her charming
caprice. She has reached a compromise with society
which, though it may be seen as corruption, is an inevitable corruption. The perfect separation of art and the real, tainted world, a separation which is the illusion of the esthete, cannot exist.

Roderick's devotion to Christina Light constitutes an artistic egotism which proves fatal—both literally and figuratively—to the young artist. Christina, as Mallet points out, belongs "both by character and by destiny to what is called the world, the 'great,' the dangerous, the delightful world" (1:287). But Roderick denies that connection; he will not see Christina's imperfections, will not face her sophistication, but insists on viewing Christina as idealistically as he views art: both are perfect, demanding mistress/muses, who have no place in nor commerce with the real world. Just as Roderick's art must be ideal, so must Christina.

Roderick cannot accept the fact that art exists in a social and economic context rather than in the realm of the ideal, that being an artist demands the type of compromises with society that Gloriani, whose works Roderick denigrates by referring to them as "wares," has learned to make. A sculptor sculpts for himself, but also for the Leavenworths of the world. (Mrs. Light and the Cavaliere created Christina for themselves, but crafted her for the Princes Casamassima of the world.) For Roderick, Christina Light must be as pure as the
ideal art he tries to create. As he ignores social and economic concerns that relate to art, so he ignores those which relate to Christina. He insists that she doesn't care about money, that she will marry him despite all evidence to the contrary. Both Mallet and the Cavaliere Giacosa advise Roderick to forget Christina because "she'll never listen to [him]—she can't," but Roderick, insisting that Christina is "not the sort of person . . . of whom [one] may say that" and that "she does as she chooses" (1:204), rejects their advice. (To be fair to Roderick, he cannot possibly know that the Cavaliere is Christina's father and that the Cavaliere and Mrs. Light, because of Christina's illegitamacy, have irresistible power over her.)

Christina herself, observing the social forms that restrict her own freedom, asks Mallet to "remind Mr. Hudson that he's not in a New England village, that it's not the custom in Rome to address one's conversation exclusively, night after night, to the same poor girl" (1:199), but Roderick, whose naiveté prevents him from seeing through Christina's frequent flattering commands to stay by her side and protect her from bores at parties, perceives her request to Mallet as a sign of her independence rather than of obeisance to propriety. Roderick's preconceived notion of art as pure, ideal, and independent cannot be usurped by mere evidence.
But Roderick's apparent naiveté cannot excuse his egotism because he realizes, with only a little prompting from Rowland Mallet, that Christina is manipulating him. At the Coliseum she chides him with his own weakness as evidenced by his devotion to her: "Ah, the man who's strong with what I call strength . . . would neither rise nor fall by anything I say" (1:260). She chides him also with his conventionality because he cannot face his own betrayal of Mary Garland: "You've never really looked in the face the fact that you're false, that you've broken your faith. You've never looked at it and seen that it was hideous and yet said 'No matter, I'll brave the penalty, I'll bear the shame'" (1:262). To prove his strength to Christina, Roderick insists on climbing a sheer wall to fetch a flower she has casually admired, not realizing the absurdity of trying to prove his own independence by risking his life to satisfy her idle desire. The paradox of asserting himself by throwing his life away on the whim of a flirt (symbolic of Gloriani's fickle, jaded muse) simply does not occur to him. After Rowland Mallet intervenes, he points out that Christina "could go all lengths in the way of making a fool of [Roderick]" and Roderick, knowing Mallet speaks the truth replies: "Yes . . . she's quite wiping her feet on me . . . but she'll not tell me again that I'm a muff"
Yet he has proven by his foolhardy response to her persiflage that he is a muff. Art, as represented by the beautiful but corrupt Christina Light, has so absorbed Roderick that it has separated him not only from his society but from his reason as well.

As Roderick's involvement with Christina deepens, drawing him further and further from his connection with the society represented by Mary Garland, Roderick's artistic paralysis also deepens. Christina's absence from Rome leaves Roderick adrift, without society or muse. Roderick returns to work shortly after the arrival in Rome of Mrs. Hudson and Mary Garland, and after the return of Christina Light, with whom Roderick speaks in St. Peter's. After their conversation, he tells Mallet that her engagement to the Prince Casamassima is by no means certain, then returns airily to work. Back in the society of his mother and his fiancée and visited by his muse, Roderick begins to work, denying to Mallet that the presence of Mrs. Hudson and Mary has helped restore his creative vigor, preferring instead to credit his success to Christina Light. But here as elsewhere in the novel, Roderick's creativity has resulted from a conjunction of art and society. Roderick fails to see that conjunction just as he fails to see the social and economic concerns that spoil Christina's perfection.
The bust of his mother, which draws admiration even from Gloriani, is Roderick's last work. The announcement of Christina Light's marriage to her prince sullies Roderick's ideal art and launches him into an obsession so relentless that Roderick continues his pursuit of Christina even after her marriage, and in pursuing his ideal he injures everyone around him, thereby eschewing society for art. Despite his claim in Chapter XXI that she knowingly led him on, Roderick remains unable to see Christina's imperfections. "I don't see that you're less wonderful" (1:494), he tells Christina when they meet in the Alps. His belief in her perfection demands that he see her once more, though he must commit the base betrayal of borrowing money from Mary Garland to do so. In pursuit of the art represented by Christina Light, which he but imperfectly apprehends, Roderick Hudson cuts himself off from his society and dies. As he had predicted to Gloriani at Mallet's dinner party, he has broken down and will stay down, but it seems unlikely that either the Muse or Christina Light bothers her conscience over her "infidelity."

James again approached the problem of the artist's relation to society through characterization in *The Tragic Muse*. The parallel stories of Nick Dormer and Miriam Rooth, linked by the airy esthete, Gabriel Nash, illustrate as neatly as Hawthorne's allegory the tension
between artist and society that must exist in order for the artist to create. Both Nick and Miriam feel the pull of estheticism as they are drawn toward a life of art by Gabriel Nash, and both feel the pull of conformity as they are drawn toward a life of responsibility by hopeful lovers. But both also remain in firm contact with society through their families, friends, and audiences, while resisting the temptation to relinquish art for the sake of social and financial security. Only Gabriel Nash, the esthete author of "a novel of sorts," who has, by his first appearance in the novel, already stopped writing, separates himself from society in the name of art.

Nick experiences the conflict between art and respectable society early in the novel when he invites his sister, Biddy, to walk through the garden of the Palais de l'Industrie to look at the statuary assembled for the Paris Salon. When Lady Agnes, offended by the "murders, tortures, [and] all kinds of disease and indecency" (7) she has already seen at the exhibit, protests, Nick is "struck as by a kind of challenge" (7). The opposition between Nick and his mother closely resembles the opposition between Mark Ambient and his wife in that Nick, because he focuses on the ideas, refinements, and artistic expression in the exhibit, does not apprehend violent or erotic subject matter as
indecent or immoral but as the sculptors' understandable attempts to draw critical notice and as manifestations of "intelligence [and] eager observation" (8). At the core of Nick's appreciation lies an essentially Jamesian concept: the sculpture is "full of ideas, full of refinements; it gives one such an impression of artistic experience. They try everything, they feel everything" (8). The sculptors practice the art of living, which they then portray through their sculpture. Unlike his mother, who measures all she sees by a moral standard which, like Beatrice Ambient's moral standard, consists of an internalized fiction, Nick does not allow petty morality to color his appreciation of art or of life.

James may well have used the parallel structure of The Tragic Muse to define the relation of the artist to his society. The two working artists in the story, Miriam Rooth and Nick Dormer, both deal in portraiture: Miriam portrays imaginary characters in word and gesture, and Nick portrays real people in paint and canvas. Just as theater would cease to exist without an audience, so would portraiture. The relation between painter and audience is of course less direct than between actor and audience, but it is not less concrete. Nash's comment that portrait painting, because it is "a revelation of two realities, the man whom it was the artist's conscious effort to reveal and the man (the
interpreter) expressed in the very quality and temper of that effort . . . [offers] a double vision, the strongest dose of life that art [can] give, the strongest dose of art that life [can] give" (257) applies also to acting, which reveals both character and actor. But Nash considers the theater an inferior art:

"the dramatist is so hampered by his audience . . . the omnium gatherum of the population of a big commercial city, at the hour of the day when their taste is at its lowest, flocking out of hideous hotels and restaurants, gorged with food, stultified with buying and selling and with all the other sordid speculations of the day, squeezed together in a sweltering mass, disappointed in their seats, timing the author, timing the actor, wishing to get their money back on the spot, before eleven o'clock . . . he has to make the basest concessions. One of his principal canons is that he must enable his spectators to catch the suburban trains, which stop at 11.30. What would you think of any other artist—the painter or the novelist—whose governing forces should be the dinner and the suburban trains? . . . What crudity compared with what the novelist does! (40-41)

Here Nash expresses the esthete’s contempt for the tastes of society and for the artist’s need to accommodate his audience. Couched in Nash’s persuasive prose, the point seems well taken, but it reveals the esthete’s naive understanding of audience. Novelists, of course, rarely put their work on the stage between dinner and the evening train, but even they must work within the framework of their audience’s expectations. A few pages
earlier, in explaining why he had given up writing, Nash had complained that "literature . . . is for the convenience of others [and] requires the most abject concessions [and] plays such mischief with one's style" (7:34). If we follow Nash's view to its logical extreme, even the simple necessity of writing in a recognizable language constitutes a concession to audience. But Nash himself, though he disavows any concern for audience, constantly plays to the company. His first appearance in the novel reveals his stage personality; he speaks in obscurities, creating an esthetic persona, but always aware of audience: "While the stranger spoke he looked cheerfully, hospitably, at Biddy; not because it was she, she easily guessed, but because it was in his nature to desire a second auditor—a kind of sympathetic gallery" (15). And later, during Miriam's first recitation at Madame Carrès, Nash turns his back on Miriam, striking a pose which, according to the narrator, "said as clearly as possible: 'No, no, you can't call me either ill-mannered or ill-natured . . . I hate . . . this idiotic new fashion of the drawing-room recitation and of the insufferable creatures who practise it . . . therefore what I'm doing's only too magnanimous—bringing these benighted women here, paying with my person, stifling my just repugnance'" (7:131). Nash is ill-mannered, and he does not stifle his
repugnance, but displays it through his attitude. Other characters in the scene, such as Peter Sherringham and Madame Carré, feel also a "just repugnance" at Miriam's performance, but none other than Nash turns his back on the hopeful actress. Nash's action presents to the others—to Nash's audience—an esthetic persona so sensitive that it cannot abide listening to a bad actress even for a few minutes. If "to be is such a métier; to live such an art; to feel such a career" (7:33), there seems no need to make such a show of being, living, and feeling. Despite his insistence that "you don't begin to have an insight into the art of life till it ceases to be of the smallest consequence to you what you may be called" (21), Nash's constant posing, his deliberate attempts to shock and bewilder polite society, and his assertion that his "behaviour consists of [his] feelings" (7:31) all show that even Nash's "art" depends on his audience. His relation to society—the tension between his drive toward isolation and his need for community—produces the persona of Gabriel Nash, artist. Throughout the novel Nash plays this role—not only living and feeling but making a show of living and feeling. If we take Nash seriously as an "artist of life," then we cannot fail to realize the importance of audience—society—to the artist, even to the artist who claims to feel utter indifference to the
critical opinions of others.

But of course we cannot take Nash—or anyone else—seriously as an artist of life. As an utterly undisciplined man of talent, Nash, like Roger Chillingworth and Stephen Dedalus, represents the artist lost to egotism. He fails as a writer because he no longer writes, because he refuses to compromise the purity of his own sensitivity or to accommodate his audience by working in a recognizable art form. William F. Hall identifies Nash as the "ideal aesthetic consciousness, the critical self of Sherringham, the artistic self, the personified imagination of Nick Dormer" and suggests also that "Nick Dormer's relationship with Nash . . . is a projection of his relationship with that part of him that is an artist." Ronald Wallace links Nash with Valentin de Bellegarde and Ralph Touchett as a "comic spokesman [whose] spirit is also evident in the whole line of Jamesian artists of life" and asserts that Nash "espouses the wit, creativity, and consciousness in the fiction of Henry James which keep human society and individual men sane and healthy . . . the tone of a Henry James novel is the tone of Gabriel Nash, insisting on a high comic affirmation of life." But Nash is an unproductive esthetic consciousness, an undisciplined artistic half, and an unsympathetic comic spokesman who sometimes enjoys offending those less artistic than he.
No real tension exists between Nash and society because Nash is completely secure in his marginality; he has intercourse with his fellows solely for the sake of amusement. And he cannot represent a Jamesian ideal: James tried repeatedly to articulate his own esthetic principles in his essays and prefaces, but Nash never tries at anything and seems to live without principles.32

Nash expresses his own dislike of principles early in the novel when he reminds Nick Dormer of their college days and of his complaint that Nick "had formulas that were like walking in one's hat" (7:30). We can perhaps easily imagine Nick at Oxford, brought up in "the same simplicity" as his father, who "went through life without a suspicion that there's anything in it that can't be boiled into blue-books" (7:181-82), and we can also imagine the effect of Nick's formulas on a free spirit such as Gabriel Nash. Formulas are not the enemies of art; conventions exist in all artistic media just as they exist in society, but they are perhaps less sacred or perhaps more frequently challenged. Art, unlike Gabriel Nash, cannot do completely without them. Nash frequently reverses himself and refuses to commit to any principles save his esthetic system, which produces nothing but Nash's enjoyment. We have already seen how Nash expressed his repugnance at
Miriam Rooth's pathetic early try at acting, yet when Nick Dormer proposes to relinquish his as yet unattained seat in Commons for a career as a portrait painter, Nash admires the absurdity of Nick's plan because it demonstrates a perfectly impractical, hoeless devotion to the fine. Nick fears that he may produce "nothing but daubs," but Nash insists that production is "the old false measure of success" and that Nick should instead enjoy "the beauty of having been disinterested and independent; of having taken the world in the free brave personal way" (7:180). According to Nash, painting well will "make [Nick's] case less clear, [his] example less grand" (7:180), and actually having talent "will spoil everything!" (7:183). Repelled by Miriam's foolishness in pursuing a career on the stage, Nash is attracted by Nick's foolishness in pursuing a career in the studio. Nick's example seems grander because in leaving politics he must give up so much more than Miriam must, but if Nick's example is great, then isn't Miriam's at least good? Nash's nearly protean inconsistency castigates Miriam while it exalts Nick.

In offending such staid characters as Lady Agnes and Julia Dallow and in drawing Nick away from the House of Commons and into his studio, Nash seems to function allegorically by dramatizing the conflict between society and the artist. But like "The Author of
Beltraffio" and "The Lesson of the Master," The Tragic Muse, while it dramatizes the conflict of the artist and society, clouds the issue by dramatizing also the conflict between the esthete and society. Nash, though he disavows any concern for audience, plays to his audience, representing to it the persona of the esthete in the same way that Miriam Rooth represents characters from plays and that Nick Dormer represents the subjects he paints. From Nash to Dormer we see a movement from the protean to the permanent, from the intangible to the concrete. In the center of that range stands Miriam Rooth.

Miriam's progress from rank amateur to respected professional artist illustrates the importance of hard work and discipline to artistic success in the Jamesian world. Though as a stage actress Miriam can leave nothing concrete behind, she demonstrates clearly that art and plasticity are not incompatible and that art depends on society for its existence. Though she ardently wishes to set herself apart from the crowd, to achieve a pleasant marginality through the highly paid art of acting, Miriam realizes that she can only do so by pleasing her audience, so she tirelessly seeks expert critical opinion, using every forum offered in order to hone her skills. At first glance, Miriam seems in tension between egotism, as evidenced by her single-
minded pursuit of her muse, and self-denial, as shown by her playing the same part for an entire year before she dared risk alienating her audience by moving on to a new challenge. But James is seldom so direct. Miriam's acting represents an unconscious denial of self because Miriam's need for an audience demands that she act continually. As Peter Sherringham realizes, Miriam had "the histrionic nature . . . in such perfection that she was always acting; that her existence was a series of parts assumed for the moment, each changed for the next, before the perpetual mirror of some curiosity or admiration or wonder--some spectatorship that she perceived or imagined in the people about her . . . she positively had no countenance of her own, but only the countenance of the occasion, a sequence, a variety . . . of representative movements" (7:189). Yet when Peter proposes to Miriam, asking her to exchange the "dusty dusty boards of the play-house" (8:341) for a role as his wife on the diplomatic stage (a stage Peter values highly), Miriam asserts her own identity with the confidence and power of the mature artist. Her talent as an actress consists primarily of her ability to assert herself while throwing off her own identity, to become by denying, to find herself in the characters she portrays. Though she seems as protean as Gabriel Nash, unlike Nash, who plays only one role (that of Gabriel
Nash, esthete), and who never varies that role because he is perfectly independent, Miriam changes roles not only on stage but also in society. Because she is a mature artist—as the naive, undisciplined Nash is not—Miriam can engage in the self-denial needed for artistic expression. We need no clearer example of an artist in tension between ego and society. But in the same novel we have Nick Dormer.

Like several of Hawthorne's characters—notably Oberon and Owen Warland—Nick Dormer sees his own artistic drive as more curse than boon. To his "evil genius," Nash, Nick complains: "You opened my eyes, you communicated the poison. Since then, little by little, it has been working within me; vaguely, covertly, insensibly at first, but during the last year or two with violence, pertinacity, cruelty. I've resorted to every antidote in life; but it's no use—I'm stricken... it tears me to pieces" (7:182). Nick seems to have been struck by a serpent. Described in such terms, art is not only venomous, but also insidious, cruel, irresistible, and undesirable.

But like Hawthorne's narrator, who cannot shake his affection for Salem, and like Hester Prynne, who cannot lightly leave Boston, Nick cannot easily desert his family and friends for the bohemian lifestyle of the struggling artist. Gabriel Nash, who claims that
personal relations govern his career, simply severs those relations when they become inconvenient; Nick, whose personal relations—until his departure from the House of Commons—really have governed his career, cannot sever them as blithely as Nash does. Nick genuinely cares for his mother, though he can see clearly her pathetically conventional tastes and attitudes, and fears hurting her. He also fears offending his father's memory, his father's old friends, and his own benefactor, Mr. Carteret, though he recognizes the narrowness of these politicians' vision. And he fears hurting Julia Dallow, though Julia hates art and shudders at Nick's ambition because she shares his mother's "fine old superstition that art's pardonable only so long as it's bad—so long as it's done at odd hours, for a little distraction, like a game of tennis or of whist" and regards "the only thing that can justify it, the effort to carry it as far as one can (which you can't do without time and singleness of purpose) ... as just the dangerous, the criminal element" (7:18). Gabriel Nash, who refers to Julia as a "baleful woman" (7:184), enjoys befuddling conventional people; his conversation with Julia at Peter Sherringham's tea consists largely of vague esthetic complaints that elicit only puzzled questions from Mrs. Dallow. In his own way, Nash is as narrow as she. But Nick sees
both sides of the conflict and, though he expresses his
artistic desires to Nash in Paris, feels his responsi­
bilities to family and friends so strongly that he
returns to England, drags himself through the detestable
rigors of a political campaign, and takes his seat in
Parliament. When he finally does take his leave of Mrs.
Dallow, Nick does so at her insistence; though he feels
sharply enough the incompatibility of art and Parliament
because each is a full-time endeavor, he does not see a
direct conflict between art and marriage or between art
and social intercourse. He does not need the irrespon­
sibility of Gabriel Nash to protect his talent, nor
does he fear the taint of society. Like Hester Prynne,
Hawthorne's allegorical representation of the ideal
artist, Nick comes to live in suspension between egotism
and self-denial. He does not choose between the opposed
versions of Nick Dormer created by Gabriel Nash on one
side and by Julia Dallow et al on the other, but instead
accepts a self formed by the tension between his
powerful creative drive and his social responsibili­
ties.

Nick must of course make a choice similar to that
which Arthur Dimmesdale failed to make. Both Nick and
Dimmesdale have gained and maintained positions of power
through didactic rhetoric, Dimmesdale as a preacher and
Nick as a politician. In order to pursue art, both must
relinquish those positions and confess to drives and desires considered sinful by their society in order to pursue their creative urges. Like Dimmesdale, Nick continues to practice his rhetoric in order to avoid a painful confession and a loss of status. Unlike Dimmesdale, Nick feels a creative drive powerful enough to lure him from his place in the mainstream to a position analogous to Hester's marginality.

Nick's failed attempt to paint the independent and perhaps unfeeling Gabriel Nash symbolizes James's vision of the undisciplined, unproductive esthete who chooses to live in isolation rather than to form real personal relationships and to accept responsibility. Nash's departure might be seen as support for Hall's contention that Nash represents an ideal esthetic consciousness (an often elusive entity), but the support would be much firmer if Nash had continued to sit and Nick had been unable to capture him. Nash's disappearance seems to indicate instead that under scrutiny the ideal esthetic consciousness, the romantic/esthetic stereotype, the popularly held view of the alienated artist eschewing social and personal involvement, simply vanishes.
III

Between Scylla and Charybdis:
Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom
as the Poles of the Dialectic

Though at first glance it may seem spurious to compare James Joyce's approach to art with Nathaniel Hawthorne's, I intend to show in this chapter how the paradigm set forth in my discussion of *The Scarlet Letter* applies to Joyce's best-known works, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*. The tension between the artist's failed drive toward alienation and his failed drive toward community operates in Joyce's best work in the same way that it operates in Hawthorne's. The artist moves to the fringes of his society, then reaches back toward that society through his art. As in *The Scarlet Letter* and in the fiction of Henry James, in Joyce's fiction the dialectic is illustrated through characterization: Stephen Dedalus represents the artist lost to egotism, and Leopold Bloom represents the artist lost to self-denial. But unlike Hawthorne, Joyce did not position a representation of the ideal artist between the egotist and the self-
sacrificer. Molly Bloom of course provides a convenient and tempting analogue, but reading her as a new Hester Prynne fails because Joyce, unlike Hawthorne, wrote realistically rather than allegorically, and because he saw a clear distinction between the creative arts to which he devoted his life and the interpretive arts which, though he certainly cultivated and enjoyed them, he considered secondary. Joyce, like Stephen Dedalus, rejected a musical career because "the interpreter of another man's music has a role inferior to the creative role [he]--and Shem--elected."¹ There is no Hester Prynne in Ulysses. In the composition of both A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses, Joyce appeared to follow the dictum of his own youthful protagonist, Stephen Dedalus, refining the artist completely out of existence. But the artist can never be completely absent from his work; though he might choose to eliminate direct commentary from his narration, that choice in itself is a rhetorical device.² Absence becomes presence. In Portrait and Ulysses, Joyce demonstrated through the failure of his main characters the necessity of the tension between the artist and his society. The main characters in these two novels, Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom, though they share certain traits and are closely linked to each other through their often discussed spiritual father/son
relationship, represent in Joyce's fiction diametrically opposed views of art. Both these characters possess undeniable artistic ability: Stephen's verbal facility is nothing less than stunning, and Bloom's discourse is nearly Joycean in its variety and richness. Stephen, the callous young esthete, sees art as an end in itself, a new religion of which he himself is the high priest, and on whose altar he will not shrink from figurative human sacrifice. Bloom, the empathetic adult adman, sees art as an integral part of daily life which exists for the benefit of people. Stephen, who professes to dislike "the aqueous substances of glass and crystal" (U 550), desires only the eternal and immutable, but Bloom thrives on the temporal and fluid. Neither character, despite his abilities, can be considered an artist in a mature sense because neither character creates art. Stephen turns away from society in the pursuit of art and produces nothing. Bloom tries to immerse himself in society, and he also produces nothing. The tension between these two extreme viewpoints expresses the agon of the artist, who must make his own separate peace between his creative impulses and the already created society. Both Stephen and Bloom are outsiders by nature; Stephen desires an escape from Irish society while Bloom desires assimilation into it. But Stephen can never really escape Irish society and Bloom can
never really belong.

Joyce's heavy reliance on autobiographical data leads in *Portrait* to a significant difficulty in determining the distance—or lack of it—between Joyce and his protagonist. Apparently in the belief that the article "the" in the title of Joyce's *kunstlerroman* refers specifically to the author, many readers have seen Stephen Dedalus as the young Joyce. Since parts of *Stephen Hero*, the clearly ironic ur-*Portrait*, began appearing in print in 1944, ironic readings of *Portrait* have established a narrative distance between creature and creator, and Joyce biographies such as Richard Ellmann's have provided more than enough data to show that Joyce, though he shared Stephen Dedalus's moral courage, did not share his esthetic naiveté. Stephen, for example, refuses to participate in the esthetic life of University College; Joyce himself was an active speaker and writer, presenting a controversial paper on Ibsen, "Drama and Life," to the Literary and Historical Society (an event dramatized in *Stephen Hero* but absent from *Portrait*), after which he eloquently defended his position against a number of vocal critics in the audience, and publishing a review of Ibsen's newest play, *When We Dead Awaken*, in the *Fortnightly Review* of April 1, 1900, a feat which brought him a reputation as a writer, a fee of twelve guineas, and a compliment from
Ibsen himself. If Joyce, who like Stephen distanced himself from his society and who like Bloom immersed himself in it (though he lived in such far-off places as Paris, Zurich, and Trieste, Joyce lived his creative life in the Dublin of his fictions), is an artist, then ironic distance between Joyce and Stephen suggests that Stephen is not.

Without drastic character revision, Stephen Dedalus will never be a writer. Though blessed with rare linguistic skill and a sharp analytical ability, Stephen is utterly lacking in creative drive and discipline. Rather than becoming an artist by working at his craft, Stephen affects the pose of an artist; he spends almost none of his time writing, still less revising. Stephen's literary output is minuscule: one juvenile poem to Emma Clery (to which Stephen alludes) in *Portrait*, ten years later the villanelle of the temptress, and a scrap discarded on the beach in *Ulysses*, which Bloom finds but does not read. So the two and a half poems Stephen does manage to produce in the nearly nine hundred pages of fiction of *Portrait* and *Ulysses* he shares with no one.

Though the Dedalus canon would hardly fill two pages, Stephen is known as an "artist," as if being an artist were a matter of birth, like being male or being Irish. MacCann refers to him as a minor poet when
Stephen refuses to sign the petition for world peace, and the dean of studies asks Stephen point blank if he is an artist in Chapter V and receives a positive answer. When the dean gently chides Stephen for his literary inactivity by asking when the college may "expect to have something from [Stephen] on the esthetic question," Stephen sidesteps the issue by deprecating his own abilities, and at the same time reveals his naively romantic approach to artistic creation: "I stumble on an idea once a fortnight if I am lucky."³ Real poets, knowing that writing generates ideas and that without drafting there can be no revision, work at their art; Joyce himself scrapped Stephen Hero in order to produce Portrait, then spent at least seven years on Ulysses and perhaps fourteen on Finnegans Wake. Stephen does not write and revise, but waits passively for inspiration to strike. His function is not to create art, but to be an artist, an attitude which the young Joyce fortunately outgrew.⁴

Despite the contention of various critics that Stephen has become an artist by the time he parts with Leopold Bloom in the "Ithaca" episode of Ulysses, there seems little to indicate that Stephen will in fact go home and start writing. Robert Scholes, who sees "no hint of mockery in Joyce's reverent attitude toward the creative process" during the composition of Stephen's
villanelle and who believes that "the inspiration and the poem are intended to be genuine," writes that during that composition Stephen "ceases to be an esthete and becomes a poet." But Stephen never finishes another poem. Rick Bowers insists that Stephen's "artistic development is too truly organic for such finger-pointing analysis," that "Stephen embodies an artistic spirit that definitely is moving," and that "Stephen has been consistently portrayed as an artist in search of earthly direction [and his] success is subtly heralded by the peal of morning churchbells accompanying his departure" from Bloom's house in Eccles Street. Stephen may have found his earthly direction in his meeting with Bloom, but that direction, marked by the "double reverberation of retreating feet on the heaven-born earth" (U 578) leads away from the practical, mature Leopold Bloom, Stephen's spiritual father, which does not augur well for Stephen's success. Ann Kimble Loux suggests that Stephen's growth into an artist is revealed by his wandering from trinity to trinity throughout the novel, and finds affirmation of Stephen's status as an artist in his rejection of the penultimate trinity of Leopold, Molly, and Stephen offered by Bloom and his acceptance of the final trinity of "Stephen--creating, Stephen--redeeming, distributing his own substance, Stephen--sustaining his readers with wisdom,"
a trinity which "seems to suggest that Stephen has formulated yet another metaphor for his growing confidence in his ability to create." But this final trinity does not appear in Ulysses, and Stephen's ability to create is not at issue. Writers write; Stephen Dedalus does not. While the greatly maligned Henry St. George "bloom[s] with a regularity," Stephen forever buds.  

Stephen has even less compassion than drive. In his perception and evaluation of life, Stephen consistently fails to accommodate human imperfection. Because he sees clearly the inconsistencies and contradictions that sustain his family, friends, country, and religion, Stephen tries to liberate himself from all social influences. Because he cannot understand the drives and pressures that lead men and women into the various compromises and accommodations that cushion and protect us in our continual interaction with reality and that are reflected in our institutions, Stephen's liberation becomes a form of imprisonment. His exile begins long before his departure for the Continent, when he begins, like his namesake, to build the labyrinth that will imprison him, systematically cutting off all avenues of escape. As do the spiritually paralyzed characters in Joyce's Dubliners, Stephen participates in his own oppression, forcing himself with his own arrogance to live the life of the artist in exile.
How seriously we take Stephen's claim to the title of artist helps to determine how seriously we can take his perception of art. Controversy over Stephen's status as either artist or esthete centers on Stephen's Thomist esthetic theory and the villanelle he composes in Chapter V of *Portrait*. The theory, despite Stephen's deviations from the words of Aquinas and recent assertions that the source of Stephen's esthetics lies not in Aquinas but in Kant and Hegel, has not been satisfactorily refuted on a theoretical plane, but in practice the text of *Portrait* clearly shows that neither Stephen's perception of the beautiful nor his creation of art conform to it. For example, during Stephen's morning walk to the university in Chapter V, all that he sees becomes associated with art: the wet trees recall the female characters of Hauptmann, Fairview recalls Newman, the shops of the North Strand Road recall Cavalcanti, and the stonecutter's in Talbot Place evokes the spirit of Ibsen. He sees nothing along the way in terms of its own wholeness, harmony, and radiance. In the words of Thomas W. Grayson, Stephen "does not perceive, recognize, and become satisfied. On the contrary, he casts most of his perceptions of reality out of his heart with an execration. He does not perceive; he engages in literary fantasy." In the same way, Stephen perceives the girl on the beach in the
epiphany that closes Chapter IV as a bird rather than as a girl: "She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird. Her ... bare legs were delicate as a crane's and ... the white fringes of her drawers were like featherings of soft white down. Her slateblue skirts ... dovetailed behind her. Her bosom was as a bird's soft and slight, slight and soft as the breast of some darkplumaged dove" (P 171). At the moment of perception, Stephen's Thomist model vanishes, lost in the subjectivity of apprehension. At first sight Stephen transmutes girlness into birdness; he does not first apprehend her as "one thing," then as "a thing," then as "that thing which [she] is and no other" (P 213). Girls (bird imagery frequently describes Emma also) resemble birds only in the mind of Stephen Dedalus, who throughout the novel works busily at transforming himself into a "hawklike man." Stephen's three stages of esthetic apprehension are found nowhere in the novel save his exposition to Lynch in the last chapter.

Perhaps the cleverest clue to the vulnerability of Stephen's theory surfaces during the aforementioned exposition to Lynch. Stephen uses as an example a basket inverted on a butcher boy's head, defining integratas and consonantia as each concept relates to the basket. Difficulty arises when Stephen considers
claritas: "When you have apprehended that basket as one thing and have then analysed it according to its form and apprehended it as a thing you make the only synthesis which is logically and esthetically permissible. You see that it is that thing which it is and no other thing" (P 213). Unfortunately, at the moment of apprehension, the basket is serving the butcher boy as a hat. While it is true that Stephen speaks of essences rather than of utility, it is also true that the essence of basketness is indistinguishable from the essence of hatness; that which defines an object as a basket also defines that object as a hat. Stephen's esthetic theory demands singularity of interpretation, yet the example he uses to demonstrate that theory to Lynch speaks for multiplicity.

Opinion on the literary merit of the villanelle has remained divided, but it seems clear that the poem itself directly contradicts Stephen's theory of artistic creation. Hugh Kenner was perhaps the first to suggest that the poem, which Stephen composes in bed, is the direct result of a wet dream, but Bernard Benstock has gone a step further, asserting that "anyone who can read the opening paragraph of the villanelle section and fail to realize that Stephen has awakened before dawn because of a nocturnal emission might just as well skip the entire section." Perhaps naively lyrical, a cri de
that somehow finds expression in one of the most
difficult poetic forms in English, the villanelle arises
from a personal experience which Stephen, in transmuting
life into art, refines out of the poem even as he
refines himself out of existence. Marguerite Harkness
suggests that the villanelle fails because it cannot
stand on its own, that we "must use the rest of A
Portrait to explicate the poem: it is not a clear,
radiant image separate from the rest of the world", and
Benstock agrees, insisting that "it would take a die-
hard New Critic to examine [the villanelle] out of
context." Stephen himself bears out this contention
as he imagines Emma's uncle, the suave priest, reading
his villanelle aloud. The priest, Stephen realizes,
would "approve of the literary form" (P 222). Presented
with such obscure verses, a critic could approve of
little else. Because Stephen has so far removed the
poem from the life that he as a self-proclaimed artist
professes to purify, turning "a proper young Catholic
girl" such as Emma into a temptress, inability to
decipher such a poem implies no limitations in the
critic, but severe limitations in the poet's ability to
communicate. Lifted from its context in the novel
and read out at the breakfast table, the poem would seem
incomprehensible; its difficult form, though chosen out
of no apparent poetic necessity, would seem its one
recognizably admirable quality.

The failure of the villanelle is more fundamental: in its composition Stephen subjugates content to form. He apprehends the poem as a villanelle at the same time that he apprehends it as a poem. Stephen feels "the rhythmic movement of a villanelle pass through" (P 217) the first lines of his poem, but he makes no analysis of the suitability of form to content. Such an intuitive selection of such a difficult—and seldom used—poetic form might in reference to another poet—Ezra Pound, for example, who made an exhaustive study of poetic form—indicate that the writer has so thoroughly assimilated his craft that he thinks in formal verse. But in this case the form of the poem seems irrelevant, even pretentious. The repeated lines that characterize the villanelle are not integrated into the poem; their amputation would in no way damage its effect. And because the villanelle is such a demanding form, it contradicts Stephen's avowed intention, which he expresses offstage to Cranly, of seeking unfettered freedom in art, a goal rendered impossible by the symbiotic relation between artist and audience. Stephen's poem is a poem in the same sense that Stephen is an artist.

Stephen's own view of the process through which he creates art from life is suspect. Stephen ordains
himself "a priest of eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life" (P 221), but as Robert Boyle, S.J. suggests, Stephen's comparison is flawed by the oddity, from the view of Catholic orthodoxy elsewhere in the image, of Stephen's participle, transmuting. One would expect transubstantiating or changing, but not transmuting...all the words can mean a basic shift in substance, but transmute carries with it not only its magical atmosphere from its use in alchemy (which here goes with enchanted), but the notion that once the change is effected, you will be able to perceive it...transubstantiate...carries with it the notion that no physical means can uncover the change in substance.

Stephen's esthetic naiveté causes him to view the process of artistic creation as a magical transformation, an occurrence for which the artist merely serves as a vessel. But Stephen, in a delicious Joycean irony, in fact does transubstantiate the daily bread of experience not into art which is represented as art but into the art that constitutes Stephen's view of the world. As with the bird girl, Emma, and the butcher boy's basket, Stephen transubstantiates the world at large at the moment of perception, but Stephen himself cannot see any change in the life that he has so quickly transformed. All that Stephen understands he understands only after he has changed it into an esthetically
palatable form, though Stephen himself remains unaware that any change has taken place.

Whatever we may think of Stephen's esthetic theory or of the only finished example of his work that appears in the course of two novels, we have in *Portrait* several clear contradictions of Stephen's perception. These contradictions support ironic readings of both theory and villanelle because they show how badly Stephen distorts life as he "transmutes" it into art. The clearest such contradiction is the last in the novel: the juxtaposition of Stephen's final conversation with Cranly and his journal entries describing that discussion.

The journal entries give Stephen the edge in his argument with Cranly: "Long talk with Cranly on the subject of my revolt. He had his grand manner on. I supple and suave. Attacked me on the score of love for one's mother" (P 247). In the time between the actual discussion and the recording of it in his journal, Stephen has neatly and unwittingly transubstantiated that particular bit of life into "art." By representing as suppleness the rhetorical amorality that serves him well in any argument, Stephen suppresses the sophistry that marks his discourse with Cranly. In urging Stephen to serve Mass, Cranly praises the constancy of a mother's love: "Whatever else is unsure in this
stinking dunghill of a world a mother's love is not" (P 241-42). Stephen's reply is utterly irrelevant: "Pascal, if I remember rightly, would not suffer his mother to kiss him as he feared the contact of her sex" (P 242). This assertion implies a neurosis in Pascal and damages Cranly's contention not at all. Stephen adds sophistry to sophistry, supporting Pascal with Aloysius Gonzaga and pointing out that the Church in which Cranly is urging him to serve has canonized Gonzaga. Cunning but spurious, Stephen's argument runs this way: "Gonzaga was a saint and Pascal was a genius; neither man liked contact with women; therefore, a mother's love is inconstant." For Stephen, suppleness equals sophistry. All Stephen has "proved" is his father's sarcastic contention that Stephen should read law.

Both the suavity Stephen reports in his journal and Cranly's "attack" seem absent from the actual discussion, which Stephen himself, perhaps needing support in his break from the Church, began. Suavity, the power to encourage easy and frictionless intercourse, demands an emotional detachment that Stephen cannot maintain in his argument with Cranly. Adverbs such as "hotly" and "bitterly" tag Stephen's speeches, and Cranly labels him excitable. More sincere than suave, Stephen confesses to Cranly both his fears and his hopes. For his part,
Cranly agrees with Stephen's decision to leave Ireland, but points out that Stephen need not consider himself an exile or a heretic, that others beside Stephen have disagreed with priests and dogma but have remained within the Church. Cranly's words to Stephen, characterized by a thoughtful honesty, are those of a friend and perhaps, in light of the homosexual overtones rippling through the scene, a would-be lover; in no sense do those words constitute an attack.

The hints of homosexuality pass unnoticed by Stephen, who here as elsewhere shows an inability to see life clearly. Cranly's belief in the constancy of a mother's love is reinforced by his rare empathy for mothers: "Your mother brings you into the world, carries you first in her body. What do we know about what she feels? But whatever she feels, it, at least, must be real. It must be" (242). These two traits, subtly delineated, indicate in Cranly an overzealous, perhaps unhealthy, attachment to his mother and label Cranly a "mama's boy," in popular belief a trait of the homosexual. But Stephen fails to understand the significance of Cranly's remarks: Cranly "felt then the sufferings of women, the weaknesses of their bodies and souls: and would shield them with a strong and resolute arm and bow his mind to them" (P 245). Cranly's empathy Stephen misreads as subjugation; Cranly's womanliness he
sees as masculine weakness.

Elsewhere Joyce's prose identifies Cranly with women in general and with Emma in particular: Like the dark-eyed Emma, Cranly has "dark, womanish eyes" (P 178), and Stephen frequently recalls both Emma and Cranly as disembodied heads. He can "never raise before his mind the entire image of [Cranly's] body but only the image of his head and face" (P 178), transforming him in his journal entries into a secular John the Baptist, and he sees Emma as eyes "from beneath their cowl" (P 69), her "shawl about her head like a cowl" (P 82). The two young men walk arm in arm throughout their discussion of Stephen's revolt. Cranly "takes" Stephen's arm on page 238, "presses" it at the top of 239, "takes" it again at the bottom of the page, "tightens his grip" on it on 241, and "seizes" it--a touch by which Stephen is "thrilled"--on 247. His tone turns cold when Stephen, unsure of Cranly's question about love, asks if he meant love of women--Cranly's rivals. Cranly's address to Stephen on occasion seems more than friendly:

---Go easy, my dear man. You're an excitable bloody man, do you know.
He laughed nervously as he spoke and, looking up into Stephen's face with moved and friendly eyes, said:
---Do you know that you are an excitable man? (P 239)
None of the other students speak to Stephen in such an effeminate tone. And as Stephen announces his intention to leave Ireland, Cranly speaks to him as directly as he dares: "—Alone, quite alone . . . and do you know what that word means? Not only to be separate from all others but to have not even one friend . . . and not to have any one person . . . who would be more than a friend, more even than the noblest and truest friend a man ever had" (P 247). Someone more than a friend is a lover. Cranly, as Stephen realizes, is speaking of himself, but Stephen misses the import of his friend's words. As a homosexual in turn-of-the-century Catholic Ireland, Cranly knows perhaps better than anyone what "alone" means. But despite all these hints of Cranly's homosexuality, which might have led a more practical, sympathetic "artist" to consider the problems a homosexual must face in a society as rigid as Dublin's, Stephen must imagine another reason for his friend's sadness. Cranly's "despair of soul" (P 248), a brief revelation which appears for only a few moments at the end of a lengthy discussion but which Stephen considers important enough to note in his journal, stems not from his own hopeless, friendless condition but from his father's "exhausted loins" (P 248). For Stephen, the more poetic, but in real terms nonsensical, explanation
Stephen's journal entries almost seem unconnected to the actual conversation with Cranly. Because much of the original conversation comes to us through Stephen's impressions in a close third person point of view, we can be sure that Stephen is not consciously lying, but rather transmuting the material of life into art, even here, as he builds himself into persona and myth.

In constructing his own myth, Stephen dissociates himself from the relations and ideas that for most people constitute the framework of life. On a purely intellectual plane his critical appraisals of his father, his mother, his friends, his teachers, his "beloved," his country, and his religion might justify his forceful separation from them, but Stephen seems unaware of the emotional needs that drive men and women to establish relations with one another and to build institutions on abstractions. To understand all is to forgive all; the arrogant young Stephen Dedalus forgives so little because he understands so little.

Stephen's unforgiving intellect sometimes focuses on the tiniest defects, enlarging and magnifying them until they are quite transformed into a type of "art" that seems utterly separated from its source. For example, in his hearthside discussion of esthetics with the dean of studies at University College, Stephen takes
issue with the dean's use of the word "funnel," insisting that the object in question is properly called a "tundish." (A nice touch by Joyce: solidly in character, Stephen seems not to know the common word "funnel," preferring instead the obscure "tundish.") A tundish, according to the OED, performs the same function as a funnel: "a wooden dish or shallow vessel with a tube at the bottom fitting into the bung-hole of a tun or cask, forming a kind of funnel used in brewing; hence gen = funnel." A funnel, also according to the OED, is simply "a cone-shaped vessel usually fitted at the apex with a short tube, by means of which a liquid, powder, or the like, may be conducted through a small opening." All tundishes are funnels, but not all funnels are tundishes. Stephen, not the dean, is incorrect.

From this inaccuracy, on which Stephen leans rather heavily, the young "artist" derives an unrest of spirit that interferes with his use of the English language: the dean's language, "so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech . . . my soul frets in the shadow of his language" (P 189). With these thoughts Stephen adds another episode to the myth of Dedalus. English, though not the native language of Ireland, is the language on which Stephen was raised; he has never been a speaker of Irish and in fact dropped out of a class in the Irish language after the first
lesson because of Emma's harmless flirtation with the instructor, Father Moran. He even expresses disdain for his ancestors who allowed a handful of Englishmen to subject them. Stephen has no attachment to the Irish language, yet he enjoys, as part of the pose he has affected, feeling estranged from it and feeling oppressed by the English. And he does not easily forget. The tundish still bothers him sixty pages later: "I looked it up and find it English and good old blunt English too. Damn the dean of studies and his funnel! What did he come here for to teach us his own language or to learn it from us? Damn him one way or the other!" (251). Angry over nothing, Stephen estranges himself from the dean of studies and all he represents in order to enhance the myth of Stephen Dedalus, exiled artist.

In similar fashion, Stephen alienates himself from the romantic interest in his life, unnamed in Portrait but identified in Stephen Hero as Emma Clery. Emma commits a sin that renders her unsuitable as companion to the priest of art: flirting with a priest of the Church. Venial at worst, Emma's "sin" results in her excommunication from Stephen's new religion. Stephen's reaction to Emma's "infidelity" shows just how far he will go in his schoolboyish worship of art. The flirtation that so angers him is, like Molly Bloom's adultery with Blazes Boylan, a Bloomian natural phenome-
non: a young girl coming of age, experiencing a sexual awakening, finds herself attracted to a man whom her society has taught her from the cradle to respect and admire. But Stephen perceives the flirtation as Emma's conscious choice of Father Moran over himself, and constructs in his mind an opposition between Church and Art. In doing so he takes to himself the function of the priest and apportions to Art the eternality of God in order to appropriate the power of the priest: "To [Father Moran] she would unveil her soul's shy nakedness, to one who was but schooled in the discharging of a formal rite rather than to him, a priest of eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life" (P 221). But art suffers in the comparison. Stephen's anger (he is at best an undisciplined "priest") distorts Emma into images of other women who have teased or mocked him; he cannot see her clearly. In a few moments he has transmuted her into a symbol of "the womanhood of her country, a batlike soul waking to the consciousness of itself in darkness and secrecy and loneliness, tarrying awhile, loveless and sinless, with her mild lover and leaving him to whisper of innocent transgressions in the latticed ear of a priest" (P 221). Though in the quoted passage Stephen sees himself as a type of the mild lover whom Irish womanhood betrays to the priests of the
Church, the image reverses itself neatly: Emma's loveless and sinless "tarrying" with a "mild lover" such as Father Moran seems exactly the sort of "innocent transgression" that needs no priest's ear. A priest of the Church would forgive Emma; Stephen excommunicates her. Catholicism recognizes human frailty and responds to it with compassion; Stephen's new religion does not.

Stephen treats his father with similar roughness. To Cranly he describes his father as "a medical student, an oarsman, a tenor, an amateur actor, a shouting politician, a small landlord, a small investor, a drinker, a good fellow, a storyteller, somebody's secretary, something in a distillery, a taxgathering, a bankrupt and at present a praiser of his own past" (241). Harsh and correct, Stephen's appraisal of his father focuses on the facts of his father's life while ignoring the human drives and desires that affect all our lives. Reduced to a series of occupations, several of which are financially useless, Simon Dedalus's life as recounted by Stephen seems an exercise in futility. No one plans such a life. Stephen fails to understand that many people drift from one occupation to another as circumstances and opportunities permit, that they often choose to separate their identities from their work, or that even failures can maintain a healthy self-concept through self-delusion, sometimes by praising their own
pasts. And in criticizing his father, Stephen, the self-proclaimed "artist" who so seldom labors in his vocation and who produces so little "art," leaves himself open to the counter-charge that he himself is a praiser of his own future.

In choosing his role Stephen separates himself from real life. During the course of Portrait he learns to distrust his mother, his father, his friends, and his teachers. All of these characters are flawed because all are human, but each within his own limits gives Stephen sound advice from which Stephen refuses to profit. His mother, in Stephen's view oppressed by the Church, hopes that he will learn "what the heart is and what it feels" (P 252. His father, a failure, suggests that Stephen study law, for which his disputatious nature seems well suited. And Davin, when Stephen taunts him for paradoxically supporting both world peace and Irish nationalism, points out that Stephen is "a born sneerer" (P 202). But the dean of studies, perhaps amused by Stephen's curious combination of modesty and self-assurance, gives Stephen the soundest advice, fittingly in the form of a parable: "Epictetus . . . tells us in a homely way . . . that he put an iron lamp before a statue of one of the gods and that a thief stole the lamp. What did the philosopher do? He reflected that it was in the character of a thief to
steal and determined to buy an earthen lamp next day instead of the iron lamp" (187). Completely missing the point, Stephen assumes that the dean mistook the philosophical lamp in Stephen's metaphor for a real lamp. In fact, the dean has built on the metaphor, advising a more earthbound approach to art (an earthen lamp instead of an iron one) while simultaneously pointing out that human beings are imperfect and that the wise man prepares to accommodate imperfection. The theft of the lamp is another Bloomian natural phenomenon.

Stephen distrusts the priest's parable but rather than analyze it he studies the dean's face: "What lay behind it or within it? A dull torpor of the soul or the dullness of the thundercloud, charged with intellect and capable of the gloom of God?" (P 187-88). Behind the dean's face lies a kindly old educator. Perhaps amused by Stephen's pretentious devotion to the abstractions of art, he gently urges the boy, in Stephen's own metaphorical language, to continue his studies: "Only a trained diver can go down into those depths and explore them and come to the surface again" (P 187). The dean learns willingly from Stephen, seizing the funnel/tundish discussion as a chance to add to his own knowledge rather than as an opportunity to correct Stephen. And in the hall he greets each
student in an arriving class by name, "briskly and impartially" (P 190), the action of a dedicated teacher, not a soul afflicted by torpor. As in his other personal relations, Stephen willingly sacrifices an imperfect human being to the perfect abstraction that is Art, creating a version of that human being that meets the needs of the myth of Dedalus.

None of this lengthy attack on Stephen is intended to suggest that Stephen is evil or cruel by nature. Rather, he is lost, a gifted intellectual groping for his place in a society that neither values nor favors him. In Portrait he decides that that place must lie outside Ireland. (The decision he takes at the end of the novel reflects an image from a schoolroom competition in the first chapter, when Stephen remembers the song he sang "about the wild rose blossoms on the little green place. But you could not have a green rose. But perhaps somewhere in the world you could" (P 12).) In Ulysses, he has sought that place in Paris, but has been summoned to Dublin ("Nother dying come home father" (U 35)) by his mother's illness. He is still lost.

Of course, in order to argue a thesis that encompasses both Portrait and Ulysses and that leans heavily on one character who appears in both novels, we must try to demonstrate that the Stephen Dedalus we meet in the Martello tower on page one of Ulysses is the same
Stephen Dedalus whose struggles took center stage in *Portrait*. There seems little reason to suspect that Joyce might have scrapped a character as carefully constructed as Stephen Dedalus, young esthete, in order to resurrect only the Dedalus name in another novel. Numerous references forge the link between the Stephen of *Portrait* and the Stephen of *Ulysses*. Still affecting the pose of the artist, Stephen continues to affect the hat, ashplant, and black clothing, declining Mulligan’s offer of a pair of trousers by saying not that he prefers black but that he cannot wear grey. He still puts very little effort into his art, trying instead to make a living simply by being an "artist" rather than by creating art: he asks Haines if he might profit from Haines’s proposed collection of his sayings (not writings) and rather than write his theory on *Hamlet*, he offers to permit Eglinton to publish his talk on the play for a fee. Stephen refers to characters from *Portrait*, recalling Cranly’s arm and smile, and his meeting with the dean of studies in the physics theatre. Further, Stephen’s attitude toward work remains unchanged; as in *Portrait*, he seldom works at his art and never revises, and when Bloom says that all must work, Stephen answers: "count me out . . . meaning work" (U 526). And Stephen retains his desire for the immutable: he wrestles with the ebb and flow of his
thoughts and impressions in "Proteus," trying to achieve stasis by capturing permanence on paper. His hydrophobia appears in both novels: his mother must wash him in Portrait, and he declines to join Mulligan in his morning swim in Ulysses. Further, he explains his hydrophobia to Bloom, who has just provided a long list of the qualities he admires in water, by professing his dislike of "the aqueous substances of glass and crystal [and his distrust of] aquacities of thought and language" (U 550). His dislike of glass and crystal seems pretentious, and his dislike of aquacities in language naive. Though glass originates in aquacity and continues to flow at an imperceptible rate once cooled, it is more nearly immutable than any other artificial substance, biodegrading in roughly a million years. And language is intrinsically aqueous. Further, very late in Ulysses, Stephen engages in the same sort of literary fantasy that dominated his walk to the college in chapter five of Portrait, associating a perfectly ordinary knife so strongly with Roman history that he can't bear to "look at the point of it." Bloom, humoring Stephen's affectation, removes "the incriminated article, a blunt hornhandled ordinary knife with nothing particularly Roman or antique about it to the lay eye, observing that the point was the least conspicuous point about it" (U 519). Nearing the end of
Joyce’s epic saga, Stephen continues to affect the pose of the artist, pretending to a sensitivity that he never exhibits in his dealings with real people. But perhaps the clearest evidence is idiosyncratic: in both novels, Stephen denigrates Tennyson, calling him a rhymester in *Portrait* and punning on his name ("Lawn Tennyson, gentleman poet" (U166)) in *Ulysses*.

While Stephen agonizes over the immutable, producing but a few words that he hopes are timeless, Leopold Bloom labors in the service of the rhetorical black hole known as a newspaper. Endless streams of forgettable prose, simple graphics, and sophomoric rhymes pass through the pressrooms, only to be scanned or skimmed and thrown out with the trash. Although, as Lenehan remarks to M'Coy, "there’s a touch of the artist about old Bloom" (U 193), Bloom’s more worldly views of art, neatly embodied in Joyce’s choice of Bloom’s occupation, run counter to Stephen’s: Stephen seeks the static, while Bloom enjoys the kinetic. For Bloom, art and life are inseparable because Bloom, with his essentially Spinozistic outlook, immerses himself in life. 13 Stephen continually sacrifices family, friends, church, and country on the altar of his new religion, but Bloom regards art, in all its forms, as a tool rather than as an angry god that must be appeased.

One of the uses Bloom finds for art is simply
profit. As a middle class family man, Bloom must always provide for his wife, and as a modern liberal democrat he believes in work and in the possibility of financial and social advancement. Utterly bourgeois in his lifestyle if not his personal philosophy, Bloom constantly invents schemes for making money, or speculates, as with the Guinness brewing family, on how much money a given industry generates, then calculates the cost of communion wafers. As an advertising salesman, he uses art as a selling tool. He spends part of Bloomsday tracking down the crossed keys he needs to ornament the newspaper ad he is trying to sell to the tea, wine, and spirit merchant, Alexander Keyes. In Stephen's terms didactic, Bloom's "art" often works toward profit. And Bloom understands the way art works through association and connotation to influence or manipulate the viewer:

"—The idea, Mr. Bloom said, is the house of keys. You know . . . the Manx parliament. Innuendo of home rule. Tourists, you know, from the isle of Man. Catches the eye, you see" (U 99). The Manx parliament and home rule have nothing to do with the quality of the teas and liquors marketed by Alexander Keyes, but like modern advertisers who attempt to forge psychological links between romance and soft drinks, familial love and fast food, babies and radial tires, Bloom knows how to loosen the purse strings with a gentle tug on the heart.

One of those thousand and one uses is toilet paper. Reading Titbits in the outhouse, Bloom quickly calculates how much the writer of the prize story, "Matcham's Masterstroke," received at the rate of one guinea per column. The story "did not move nor touch" Bloom, yet he admires its writer, who had "received payment of three pounds, thirteen and six" (U 56). And Bloom imagines winning the contest himself by inventing a story to illustrate one of the proverbs. Joyce could hardly have chosen a more blatant form of literary pandering for his hero's aspirations. Platitudinal wisdom is trite, and often contradictory, but it is also convenient and popular, so stories illustrating proverbs would probably sell. Unlike that of Stephen Dedalus, who writes from wet dreams and hopeless longings, Bloom's creative urge often seems derived from the
profit motive.

There are numerous examples in the novel of the association of art and money in Bloom's life. A print of "The Bath of the Nymph," which Bloom framed to please Molly, hangs over his bed; looking at it prompts Bloom to recall that though the print itself was a magazine inclusion and therefore free, he had given three and six for the frame. His daughter Milly is in the photo business, and Bloom himself, on seeing a college sports poster, describes its art work as "damn bad ad" and mentally modifies the image into "something to catch the eye" (U 70), thereby evaluating the "art" of the poster only in terms of its commercial effectiveness. At All Hallows he wonders "who has the organ here. Old Glynn he knew how to make that instrument talk, the vibrato: fifty pounds a year they say he had in Gardiner street" (U 67). Ducking into the dining room of the Ormond hotel to avoid meeting Blazes Boylan, Bloom settles down to eat with Richie Goulding. The two hear the voice of Simon Dedalus floating from the adjacent bar. Bloom's reaction is predictable, focusing first on one type of profit, then another: "Tenors get women by the score ... glorious tone he has still. Cork air softer also their brogue. Silly man! Could have made oceans of money" (U 225). None of the other characters connects music and money the way Bloom does.
Bloom's appreciation of art often seems inseparable from his drive for profit. Preparing to leave the cabman's shelter in "Eumaeus," Bloom begins planning the marketing of Stephen Dedalus: "all kinds of Utopian plans were flashing through his (B's) busy brain . . . . literature, journalism, prize titbits, up to date billing, concert tours in English watering resorts . . . turning away money, duets in Italian . . . he more than suspected [Stephen] had his father's voice to bank his hopes on." As they walk, Bloom, in order to "trail the conversation in the direction" (U 538) of his plans, speaks knowledgeably about music, "a form of art for which Bloom, as a pure amateur, possessed the greatest love" (U 539), and on hearing Stephen sing, Bloom's first thoughts are of profit: "A phenomenally beautiful tenor voice like that . . . could easily . . . command its own price . . . and procure for its fortunate possessor . . . an _entremet_ into fashionable houses in the best residential quarters of financial magnates . . . ." (U 541-42). In a flash, Bloom details all that Stephen might gain by pursuing, if only temporarily, a career on the musical stage: money, social prestige, and women. Bloom's thoughts are nearly dominated by money. When he rescues Stephen in Nighttown, his first thought is for Stephen's money; he closes his own day with a balance sheet. And not only does he consider writing solely for
profit, he allows his wife to take part in a series of concerts promoted by Blazes Boylan, though he knows the danger Boylan poses to his relation with Molly. When Boylan plans an assignation with Molly, Bloom absents himself from his own house; a cynical reader might easily imagine that Bloom wishes to avoid jeopardizing Molly's professional relations with her promoter. Bloom's tolerance, the cynic might argue, springs only in part from his recognition both of his own guilt in Molly's adultery (he has not had intercourse with his wife since before Rudy's birth, ten years before) and of Molly's sexual needs. But in choosing to consider Molly's infidelity as a natural phenomenon, Bloom does more than rationalize away the emotional wounds of the cuckold: he also protects his own income. A confrontation between Bloom and Boylan might abort the proposed concert tour.

To read Leopold Bloom as a mere profiteer is, of course, brutally reductive; he does, after all, donate five shillings to the collection for the bereaved Dignam family, a donation which, in light of his limited success as a salesman, he can ill afford. Bloom's association of art with money points not toward greed but rather toward an opportunism forced on Bloom by a bourgeois modern society. The profit motive, as embodied in Leopold Bloom, defines the middle class; to
be fair to Bloom, his quick eye for opportunity and his ready apprehension of the marketability of art must be considered a mere adjunct to his necessary concern with money. (Bloom’s pursuit of financial success sometimes takes less than honorable forms: according to Molly and the dun who narrates most of "Cyclops", he fawns over the aging Dante Riordan in the hope of profiting by her will, and in "Ithaca" he considers the possibility of exacting "hushmoney by moral influence" (U 603) from the men who have cuckolded him.) To censure Bloom for his monetary ambition would be to damn outright, a la Stephen Dedalus, many of the other characters in the novel: Simon Dedalus, who withholds what little money he has from his starving children; Bantam Lyons, who cadges a paper in order to throw money away on a horse race; the narrator of "Cyclops," a dun who complains (while cadging drinks from everyone in Kiernan’s pub) because Bloom won’t buy a round; and the citizen, who trades on his dead rhetoric for drinks and biscuits. These characters beg and squander, while Bloom works and conserves. Unlike Stephen and unlike the sponges and leeches of the Dublin pubs, Bloom tries to participate fully in modern life.

As part of that participation, Bloom continually connects art not only with money but with human needs and desires, in fact with life and love. While lunching
in Davy Byrne's, Bloom wonders if the statues in the library museum are realistic enough to have anuses. In order to help Molly satisfy her sexual desires, which he himself will not address physically, he fetches her pornographic books which he does not read himself. In Portrait, Stephen condemns pornography as an improper art because unlike the "proper" art of tragedy, it arouses a kinetic emotion (desire) rather than the static tragic emotion which Stephen prizes so highly, but Bloom chooses not to concern himself with such distinctions, instead buying the books simply because his wife enjoys them and because they help her cope with her husband's celibacy. And in the Ormond, Bloom hopes that Simon Dedalus and Ben Dollard will continue singing because the music takes his mind off Blazes Boylan's approaching assignation with Molly Bloom. Unlike Stephen, Bloom sees art as a means to help people get through life rather than as a rigid religion to which people must be sacrificed.

Also unlike Stephen, Bloom continually denies his own emotions rather than offend those around him. Through most of the novel, Bloom works hard to fit in with the "real" Irishmen who have become his friends and acquaintances. During the ride to Dignam's funeral, Bloom and his three companions notice Blazes Boylan pass by on the street; Bloom, rather than face the man who
will debauch Molly later in the day, examines his nails while wondering silently that anyone could see any merit or attraction in a man like Boylan, even as his friends voice their admiration and envy. Though he has reason to hate Boylan, Bloom never says a word against him. Mr. Power then asks Bloom about the proposed concert tour, and in the ensuing discussion Bloom admits that he will not be traveling with the troupe. Bloom has learned to accept Molly’s affairs, but seeing Boylan clearly makes him uncomfortable, and that discomfort can only be increased by the thought, elicited by Mr. Power’s polite questioning, that Molly and Boylan will soon be traveling together with every opportunity to repeat their adultery while he himself observes the anniversary of his father’s suicide in county Clare. His discomfort must be further enhanced by the presence of another of Molly’s lovers, Simon Dedalus, in the carriage. Yet Bloom represses his feelings in order to take part in the polite social intercourse of the carriage. Later in the ride he begins a joke about a fellow Jew which depends for its humor on a racial stereotype. To be sure, the real life model for the moneylender, Reuben J. Dodd, was not Jewish, and Bloom himself, because his father had converted before his birth, has never been a practicing Jew and does not consider himself a Jew, but Simon Dedalus labels Dodd a
Jew and the others in the carriage perceive Bloom as a Jew; Bloom's purpose in recounting the anecdote is to separate himself from Reuben J. and thereby identify himself with the group in the carriage. As always, he achieves but limited success because his own mildness and his incompetence as a storyteller allow him to be interrupted by the others so that Martin Cunningham delivers the punch line and Simon Dedalus casually improves the joke with an apt ad lib. 14

But Bloom continues his attempts to assimilate. While the others praise the deceased Dignam, Bloom's thoughts reveal the real reason behind Dignam's death: "Blazing face: redhot. Too much John Barleycorn. Cure for a red nose. Drink like the devil till it turns adelite. A lot of money he spent colouring it" (U 79). A particularly Irish fault has brought Dignam to the grave, and a carriage full of Irishmen pointedly ignores that fact. Bloom's tact, understandable and proper in the circumstances, prevents him from correcting the others, but his silence during the rest of the ride stems less from tact than from submissiveness and a powerful desire to belong. While Mr. Power and Simon Dedalus casually pass their uninformed, unsympathetic judgment on suicides, Bloom, whose father had poisoned himself, keeps his peace. Martin Cunningham tactfully manages to change the subject and Bloom,
rather than silently castigating Power and Dedalus for their callousness, focuses his thoughts instead on Martin Cunningham, offering silent appreciation for his concern: "Sympathetic human man he is . . . always a good word to say" (U 79). And Bloom also gives evidence of his own empathy: "And that awful drunkard of a wife of his. Setting up house for her time after time and then pawning the furniture on him every Saturday almost. Leading him the life of the damned. Wear the heart out of a stone, that" (U 80). Despite his own discomfort, Bloom can shift quickly into his friend's point of view.

Bloom's imaginative empathy appears in Ulysses only moments after Bloom himself appears, manifesting itself in Bloom's communion with his cat. No sloppy sentimentality, Bloom's empathy does not interfere with his perception of faults, but it does enhance his perception of the causes behind those faults. The cat, for example, he sees as vindictive and cruel, but he recognizes that the "sinful" behavior which we humans perceive as vindictiveness and cruelty is simply part of a cat's nature, a natural phenomenon. In Bloom's thinking, perception of "sin" is nearly always followed by forgiveness, and frequently by an attempt to imagine how the "sinner" sees the world: "Wonder what I look like to her. Height of a tower? No, she can jump me" (U 45). By viewing himself through the eyes of a cat,
Bloom demonstrates in his first appearance in the novel not only his ability to use his imagination to understand others rather than to pigeonhole them (as Stephen does), but also his ability to modify his imaginative assessments. Throughout both novels, Stephen passes irreversible judgment, exhibiting his own need for the immutable, but Bloom modifies and revises his opinions through imagination.

Bloom's empathy grants him the ability, which Stephen Dedalus does not share, to recognize human foibles, and to accept them as necessary aids to living. Just as he can empathize with his father, seeing his suicide not as a sign of weakness but as a manifestation of "the love that kills" (U 94), so too can he empathize with the Irish with whom he shares country but not culture. He kneels with them at Dignam's funeral, but not without first putting down his newspaper to protect his trousers. Listening to the mass, he recognizes the value of the ritual: "makes them feel more important to be prayed over in Latin" (85). Though he does not feel the same programmed needs as his Catholic compatriots, he does have an empathetic understanding of those needs. Because he is practical, Bloom deplores the waste of wood in burying each fresh corpse in a new coffin, but because he is compassionate, he recognizes the human reasons for the waste: "Ay, but they might
object to be buried out of another fellow's. They're so particular. Lay me in my native earth . . . the Irishman's house is his coffin" (U 90). And further, despite the fact that the man has cuckolded him, Bloom can even empathize with Simon Dedalus, one of the most pathetic characters in the novel, at a moment when Simon appears ludicrously spiteful and impotent. Bloom sees Stephen from the funeral carriage and alerts Simon, who delivers an impromptu tirade against Buck Mulligan: "That Mulligan is a contaminated bloody doubledyed ruffian by all accounts. His name stinks all over Dublin. But with the help of God and His blessed mother I'll make it my business to write a letter one of those days to his mother or his aunt or whatever she is that will open her eye as wide as a gate" (U 73). The power of a man who needs both God's and the Virgin's aid to write a letter might be less than that of Macbeth's first witch, who couldn't wring a chestnut from a sailor's wife; either seems too weak to measure. Simon's bluster, undercut by the anticlimax of his threat, brings a harsh unspoken judgment from Bloom, followed by Bloomian empathy: "Noisy selfwilled man. Full of his son. He is right. Something to hand on. If little Rudy had lived" (U 73). Dedalus's sorrow awakens Bloom's own. Bloom's ability to see through another's eyes is perhaps the key to his opposition to
Stephen. In *Portrait*, Stephen passes harsh judgment on friends and relations rather than trying to understand the drives and events that have shaped them. Stephen occasionally softens in *Ulysses* (as when he guides his student, Cyril Sargent, through his addition problems), but he seldom uses his imagination to understand or even to communicate with those around him; Bloom continually uses his imagination to shift his point of view.

This far-reaching empathy, reminiscent of George Eliot's thematic concerns in *Scenes of Clerical Life*, leads Bloom to understand and forgive nearly all the other characters in the novel. Not only can he imagine himself as his cat sees him and life as Martin Cunningham must live it, but he also empathizes with the smoking boy, Dignam's son, the dead Patrick Dignam, the priest at Dignam's funeral, Mrs. Purefoy and other women in labor, a blind piano tuner, and beasts of burden. As he does with the foibles of the "real" Irishmen, Bloom recognizes the danger in the boy's smoking, but imagines also the causes behind it and determines to leave the boy his vice: "O let him! His life isn't such a bed of roses. Waiting outside pubs to bring da home. Come home to ma, da" (58). Later, he imagines the woes of another son, Patrick Dignam, wondering if the boy had been present at the moment of his father's demise. And
Bloom tries also to empathize with a corpse, wondering if Dignam is really dead and imagining the terror of premature burial. Even the priest receives Bloom's sympathy: "he must be fed up with that job, shaking that thing over all the corpses they trot up . . . all the year round he prayed the same thing over them all and shook water on top of them . . . tiresome kind of a job. But he has to say something" (U 86). On learning from Mrs. Breen of Mrs. Purefoy's difficult labor, he imagines "three days . . . groaning on a bed with a vinegared handkerchief round her forehead, her belly swollen out. Phew! Dreadful simply! Child's head too big: forceps. Doubled up inside her trying to butt its way out blindly, groping for the way out. Kill me that would" (U 132). After helping the blind stripling across the street, Bloom imagines life without sight: "Poor fellow! Quite a boy. Terrible. Really terrible. What dreams would he have not seeing? Life a dream for him. Where is the justice being born that way?" (U 149). And his imagination quickly extends injustice to include a larger disaster: "All those women and children excursion beanfeast burned and drowned in New York" (U 149). Bloom's empathy extends even to beasts of burden. Contemplating the impulse that might lead a man to a career as a bass drummer, Bloom sympathizes first with the wife, who must listen
to the man practice at home, then with the animals from whose hides the drums are made: "Asses' skins. Welt them through life, then wallop after death" (U237). Bloom's empathy seems boundless.

That boundless empathy for the individual gives rise to a social conscience that appears often in Bloom's thoughts as he walks around the city; confronted with individual cases, Bloom frequently sees the larger picture. Observing a railway pointsman at work, Bloom wonders if his apparatus might be improved: "Couldn't they invent something automatic so that the wheel much handier? Well but that fellow would lose his job then? Well but then another fellow would get a job making the new invention?" (U 76). Social and economic mutability transcend the importance of the individual's job. And later, as the funeral carriage moves slowly through a drove of cattle, Bloom wonders aloud why "the corporation doesn't run a tramline from the parkgate to the quays . . . all those animals could be taken in trucks down to the boats" (U 81) rather than crowded through the streets, delaying traffic. And he advocates municipal funeral trams, which would ruin Corny Kelleher's trade, but which would enhance both the efficiency and dignity of the numerous funeral processions that pass daily through Dublin. The funeral itself leads Bloom to the larger view, and he automatically calcu-
lates the implications: "funerals all over the world everywhere every minute. Shovelling them under by the cartload doublequick. Thousands every hour. Too many in the world" (U 83). Minutes later, he considers the victims, "who passed away. Who departed this life. As if they did it of their own accord. Got the shove, all of them" (U 93). Bloom's empathy sees through the memorial rhetoric of the individual case to get at the social ramifications.

Bloom's social awareness reappears in his decidedly bourgeois personal ambitions. He longs to become a landowner with a "thatched bungalowshaped 2 storey dwellinghouse" (U 585) in the country convenient to a tram or train. (This elaborate daydream, a type of private "art," provides another example of imagination as an aid to living: his nightly vision of "Bloom Cottage" helps Bloom sleep.) But the cottage Bloom envisions is by no means a place of merely private retreat; success does not mean withdrawal. Bloom remains, as always, aware of his position within the community: "gardener, groundsman, cultivator, breeder, and at the zenith of his career, resident magistrate or justice of the peace with a family crest and coat of arms and appropriate classical motto", a position from which he plans to dispense "unbiassed homogeneous indisputable justice, tempered with mitigants of the
widest possible latitude but exactable to the uttermost farthing with confiscation of estate, real and personal, to the crown" (U 588). For Bloom, the individual always appears in a social context; the benefits of success are accompanied by responsibilities not only toward one's fellows but toward recognized authority.

Bloom often exhibits his social conscience in progressive forms. Though he himself, practiced in self-denial, cannot understand why a man would risk his health for a sexual encounter with a diseased prostitute, Bloom recognizes the spread of disease through prostitution as a genuine threat to the public health and, rather than condemn either the prostitutes or their customers (though he disapproves of both), he proposes with some ardor that "women of that stamp . . . a necessary evil, [should be] licensed and medically inspected by the proper authorities, a thing, he could truthfully state, he, as a paterfamilias, was a stalwart advocate of from the very first start" (U 517).

Prostitution, in the tolerant Bloomian world view, exists as a natural phenomenon which cannot be eliminated and so should be regulated pro bono publico. This progressive stance, part of Bloom's larger desire "to amend many social conditions, the product of inequality and avarice and international animosity" (U 571), marks Bloom as a man of principle who truly wishes to protect
society rather than to impose his own will on it.

Bloom's social conscience extends even into fantasy. As in his daydreams—he imagines himself an honorable justice of the peace, in his Nighttown wanderings he sees himself as a savior to his nation, leading his compatriots to "the new Bloomusalem in the Nova Hibernia of the future" (U 395), a benevolent democratic despot who embraces all in his domain, shaking hands with a blind stripling, embracing an elderly couple, playing with children, consoling widows, kissing the bedsores of a veteran, and giving his coat to a beggar. Even the Citizen blesses the messianic Bloom. But Bloom stresses rectitude within the social context, advising the whining Paddy Leonard to pay his taxes. Bloom's platform is egalitarian, firm, and forgiving though it proposes sweeping changes to Ireland's traditional problems: "I stand for the . . . union of all, jew, moslem, and gentile . . . compulsory manual labor for all . . . general amnesty, weekly carnival with masked licence, bonuses for all, esperanto the universal language with universal brotherhood. No more patriotism of barspongers and dropsical impostors. Free money, free rent, free love and a free lay church in a free lay state" (U 399). Under Bloom's rule, religious doctrine shall no longer divide the country, there will be no soft-handed upper class, language
barriers will be dissolved, and pseudo-patriotic leeches like the Citizen will no longer ply their trade on the barstools of Ireland.

The Citizen prompts one of Bloom's few displays of self-assertion. His marginal position in Irish society, despite his drive for community, does not engender in Bloom either anger or resentment. Despite the prejudice with which he as a supposed Jew is often treated, Bloom, unlike Stephen, appears to have no quarrel with society, but he does have a quarrel with intolerance. In the "Cyclops" episode Bloom encounters anti-Semitism at its most irrational: the Citizen, who has himself betrayed the cause he espouses by "grabbing the holding of an evicted tenant" (U 269) and thereby aroused the wrath of another revolutionary group, the Molly Maguires, tries to fasten the blame for Ireland's troubles on the Jews. As Bloom points out, "some people . . . can see the motes in others' eyes but they can't see the beam in their own" (U 267). Ireland's troubles are at least in part the fault of the Irish who participate in their own oppression. The Citizen, by taking over the home of an evicted tenant, uses the system of English law, a system imposed from without which should rightfully be the object of his rebellion, to his own advantage. Further, the Citizen has no harsh words for Martin Cunningham, Jack Power, or "the Orangeman or
presbyterian" (U 276) Crofton, all of whom arrive in a
car from Dublin Castle, the seat of British government
in Ireland. Face to face with the real oppressors of
Ireland (himself as well as the Castle functionaries),
the Citizen can only spout more invective against the
Jews. And when Bloom finally asserts himself simply by
stating facts ("Your God was a jew. Christ was a jew
like me"), the Citizen flies into a blind rage,
paradoxically threatening Bloom with an oath that is at
once hypocritical, pathetic, and hilarious: "By Jesus,
I’ll crucify [Bloom] so I will" (U 280). Angered by a
misappropriation of the holy name, the Citizen in turn
misappropriates it, revealing just how little one
particular Christian has learned from the example of
Christ. It seems unlikely that prejudice more
irrational than the Citizen’s exists anywhere on earth.

Bloom’s comparison of Christ to himself leads to a
realization that Bloom’s compassion, i.e., the self-
denial that prevents him from expressing, except on rare
occasions, his own passion, renders Bloom a Christ-like
figure. During the discussion in Kiernan’s pub, which
coincides with Molly and Boylan’s assignation, he
compares the Irish and the Jews: "And I belong to a
race, too . . . that is hated and persecuted . . .
robbed . . . Plundered. Insulted. Taking what belongs
to us by right. At this very moment . . . sold by
auction in Morocco like slaves or cattle" (U 273). As David Hayman has written, "we know what is being taken by whom 'at this very moment'." Yet Bloom, though his wife is being debauched even as he speaks, champions love over hatred, even going so far as to declare that love, the word known to all men, is life. (Stephen, though he shows in the national library that he knows that word known to all men, takes in Nighttown a view quite different from Bloom's, equating love with servitude: "We have shrewridden Shakespeare and henpecked Socrates. Even the allwisest Stagyrite was bitted, bridled and mounted by a light of love" (U 353). Not even poets and philosophers are safe from love's curse.) According to Hayman, Bloom "has in fact turned the other cheek."16 Of course, if we accept Molly Bloom's assessment in "Penelope" of her husband's sometimes bizarre behavior, then the parallel between Bloom and Christ is hopelessly inexact. But through most of the novel, Bloom's compassion shows a Christlike latitude.

The Citizen's anti-Semitism, recalled later in the novel, prompts Bloom to comment on the absurdity of nationalism, which exists as yet another social problem that can be solved by tolerance: "Every country, they say, our own distressful included, has the government it deserves. But with a little goodwill all round. It's
all very fine to boast of mutual superiority but what about mutual equality. I resent violence and intolerance in any shape or form. It never reaches anything or stops anything . . . it's a patent absurdity on the face of it to hate people because they live round the corner and speak another vernacular, in the next house so to speak" (U 525). Bloom again champions love.

In _Ulysses_ we see movement toward a synthesis of Bloom and Dedalus. Stephen has clearly experienced a moral and artistic growth that argues for his development as a writer. Stephen has softened in his relations with other people, reserving his contempt in _Ulysses_ for characters like Haines, who perhaps deserves it for his patronizing pretentiousness. (In "Telemachus" Haines describes six hundred years of English savagery toward the Irish as rather unfair treatment and, in "The Wandering Rocks," insists on real Irish cream with his tea and scones--as if anyone would be foolish enough to import as perishable a commodity as cream--in order not to be imposed upon.) In "Nestor," Stephen exhibits surprising patience in the classroom, striking a balance between the demands of scholarship and the abilities of Cyril Sargent, whom Stephen insists gently must learn to work his sums for himself rather than copy them off the board as Mr. Deasy had commanded. And gazing at the homely, futile boy Stephen, recalling his own mother and
perhaps his discussion with Cranly near the end of *Portrait*, shows a flash of Bloomian empathy: "Yet someone had loved [Sargent], borne him in her arms and in her heart... she had loved his weak watery blood drained from her own" (U 23). Here Stephen is "almosting" what the heart is and what it feels.

Stephen has also begun to approach a maturer view of himself. In "Proteus," he chides himself for his esthete's costume: "God, we simply must dress the character" (U 35). And with his reassessment of himself comes a recognition of at least one mistake made by an only slightly younger Stephen Dedalus in *Portrait*, as Stephen knows now the real reason for Cranly's despair: "Wilde's love that dare not speak its name. His arm. Cranly's arm" (U 41). In *Portrait* Stephen had somehow failed to see Cranly's homosexuality, choosing instead a more esthetically pleasing explanation. In *Ulysses* he begins to see the truth.

Stephen also demonstrates in *Ulysses* a maturer understanding of literary creativity. Stephen's view of Shakespeare's work as autobiographical is a sophistic exercise in imaginative literary criticism, but it is also a skillfully constructed fiction in which Stephen, who in *Portrait* seemed scornful of any but esthetic concerns in art, shows an increased awareness of audience. As literary criticism, Stephen's thesis seems
spurious; Stephen can muster only scant support for his contention that Shakespeare was cuckolded by his brothers and that Hamlet's verbal attack on Gertrude in Act III, Scene IV stems from Shakespeare's own anger toward his wife, Ann Hathaway, and in fact Stephen himself does not believe it. But rather than building a case on textual evidence, Stephen spins his yarn like a storyteller, constructing a truth-telling lie on a factual base just strong enough to lend credence to the lie. The facts which provide Stephen with a plausible framework for his theory include Shakespeare's long absence from his wife, whom he left in Stratford, his stingy financial support, Hamlet's anger toward his mother, and the final "insult" to Ann Hathaway in Shakespeare's will. Stephen sets the scene skillfully, embellishing the historical possibilities: "—It is this hour of a day in mid June, Stephen said, begging with a swift glance their hearing. The flag is up on the playhouse by the bankside. The bear Sackerson growls in the pit near it, Paris garden. Canvas-climbers who sailed with Drake chew their sausages among the groundlings" (U 154). Both economical and effective, this brief introduction evokes the atmosphere of the Globe, linking the quotidian auditors of twentieth century Dublin with the heroic auditors of Elizabethan London. And a mental aside reveals his awareness of
audience: "Local colour. Work in all you know. Make them accomplices" (U 154). And as Stephen embellishes some facts, he suppresses others: "don't tell them he was nine years old when [the daystar that arose at his birth and which he according to Stephen watched as he returned home from Ann’s embrace] was quenched" (173). Stephen’s rhetoric aims not toward overcoming the disbelief of his listeners with supported argument, but toward persuading his listeners to suspend their disbelief; he uses not the techniques of scholarship but the techniques of fiction. Stephen’s theory, of course, partly explains Joyce’s practice; as the Shakespeare of Stephen’s imagination mixed events from English life with plots from myth and history to produce the "docudramas" of his day, so James Joyce borrowed liberally from his own experiences in Dublin as well as from myth and history to produce Portrait and Ulysses. What Stephen produces during the interview in the national library is a miniature fiction in the manner of James Joyce: he uses what he can from history, suppresses that which he cannot, and invents what he needs.

Despite his apparent skill as a storyteller, Stephen, rather than work at writing, prefers to maintain the pose of the artist, playing the role for his friends in the library. Stephen plays here to a larger audience than he had in Portrait, in which he
expounded his esthetic theory to Lynch alone, a change which might indicate a small movement toward community. In that sense, Stephen briefly enters society imitating his father, the admired raconteur. But Stephen still avoids work, and he still prefers merely to be an "artist" rather than to create art. At the end of his exposition on Hamlet, he jokingly offers to allow Eglinton to publish the interview for a fee, as if even the casual conversation of an unpublished writer had a value in the market place.

Bloom produces no more art than Stephen does— and makes very little money. Stephen turns away from the world of men, devoting himself to art for art's sake, and Bloom immerses himself in the modern world of commerce, constantly looking for some way to make money from art. Neither creates anything worthwhile. Both Stephen and Bloom are intellectually superior to the people around them, yet each is mired in sterility. Without looking for simple answers, we can see that Stephen and Bloom, despite their spiritual bond, are carefully constructed opposites. Stephen, stifled by family, country, and church, makes a vain lunge for freedom; Bloom, born into a religion and culture that alienate him from his countrymen, tries with the same lack of success to belong in order to get on in the world: he fawns over the aging Dante Riordan, only to
be shut out of her will; he tries to ingratiate himself with Mr. Power, Simon Dedalus, and Martin Cunningham with an anecdote about the moneylender, Reuben J. Dodd, only to set himself apart again when he shocks his Catholic companions with the ill-considered remark that Paddy Dignam's sudden death, which of course denied him the sacrament of extreme unction, was "the best death" (U 79). He can no more belong to Irish society than Stephen can escape it.

Oddly, the result of both Bloom's attempt to embrace Dublin society and Stephen's desperate flight from it is the same: utter creative sterility. Stephen's self-satisfied expressionistic esthetics allow him to take refuge in an unreal world of his own making. Stephen need not create art because he need not communicate with society; to Stephen the role of the artist, not art, is what matters. As he does in other aspects of his life, Stephen chooses form over content. Bloom's profit-oriented approach to art, communicative, manipulative, and didactic, eliminates the expressionistic. Absorbed in himself, Stephen cannot communicate; denying himself in his drive for assimilation, Bloom cannot communicate. Neither Stephen nor Bloom, the most intellectually capable characters in the two novels, leaves a mark on the world of art.

If neither Stephen nor Bloom can create art, and
each is rendered sterile by his relation (which he chooses for himself) to the society in which he lives, then Joyce's work suggests a necessary symbiosis between art and society, a synthesis between Stephen and Bloom. This synthesis nearly occurs in "Eumaeus" and "Ithaca" as the two achieve a brief, nearly familial closeness. In addition to their physical proximity throughout these two episodes, Bloom and Stephen find that they agree in a number of areas: artistically inclined, they both prefer music to the graphic arts; eclectic in their interests, both prefer a continental lifestyle; and both find sexual attraction "alternately stimulating and obtunding" (U 544). Each has a thorough knowledge of his ancestral beliefs and customs and a slight, accidental knowledge his ancestral language, yet hardened by childhood programming and innate stubbornness, both have become free thinkers.

But the many differences between Stephen and Bloom prevent the synthesis. In addition to name, age, race, and creed, temperament separates Stephen, the artistic soul, from Bloom, the scientific. Stephen's artistic temperament so dominates him that he lacks the practicality to guess why the chairs in a cafe are inverted on the tabletops at closing. But Bloom's scientific bent, though it enables him to understand that all music is numbers, does not prevent him from realizing that
simply calling out numbers would "fall quite flat" (U 228). Though each has drifted away from his family's religion, Stephen has rebelled against the ritual and dogma of the Catholic church (a la Stanislaus Joyce), while Bloom, who had in youth "treated with disrespect certain beliefs and practices" of Judaism, has the compassion that allows him both to view those practices more charitably as "not more rational than they had then appeared, not less rational than other beliefs and practices now appeared" (U 595) and to understand the human needs behind such practices. But the sharpest difference remains in their respective views of the individual's relation to his community as formulated by Stephen in "Eumaeus": "You suspect, Stephen retorted with a sort of a half laugh, that I may be important because I belong to the faubourg Saint Patrice called Ireland . . . but I suspect . . . that Ireland must be important because it belongs to me" (U 527). Bloom, whose insistence that all must work places equal value on peasants and writers, sees the writer in a social context, performing his literary labors for the good of his society, while Stephen views the writer as separate from society, entitled to appropriate that society as the raw material of art. As we have seen in Hawthorne and James, the truth lies somewhere between these extremes.
Ultimately, the synthesis fails; Stephen and Bloom go their separate ways when Stephen "promptly, inexplicably, with amicability, gratefully" (U 570) declines Bloom's offer of a bed for the night and an apartment for the future. Though Bloom proposes a continuing symbiosis between Stephen and the Blooms in the form of Italian lessons for Molly, voice lessons for Stephen, and discussions between Bloom and Stephen, he realizes that none of these future relations will likely be realized because the past, in which Bloom has lost a biological son, Rudy, and an adoptive son, the circus clown, is irretrievable and because the future, which Bloom has tested by means of a marked coin, is unpredictable. There seems no indication that Stephen will return. Homeless, drunk, weak from hunger, he doggedly insists on his own alienation by departing into the small hours of the morning; if he won't, in such a condition, fall gratefully into a borrowed bed, it seems unlikely that he will enter into a permanent relation. Separated by their respective views of love, life, art, and community, Bloom and Stephen will remain apart.

Stephen's self-aggrandizement at the expense of society fails as an esthetic methodology, but so does Bloom's self-effacement. Joyce dictates no ideal approach to the creation of art, but he suggests with his depiction of diametrically opposed yet failed
systems that art can only exist as part of a truce, however uneasy, between the individual and society. Perhaps if Bloom could step back to allow his keen perceptions room for expression, he "might manage a sketch" (U 56) after all. And if Stephen could remain in contact with the world and people he is trying to escape, his poetry and criticism might become more than the sophistic display of a stunning verbal facility. Joyce himself fled his native Ireland, but he never left it behind.
Conclusion

As we have seen from studying talented characters ranging from Hawthorne's peripatetic storyteller to Joyce's wandering adman, none of the artistically gifted characters created by three of the greatest novelists ever to write in English can function as an artist once he has severed his ties with his society of origin, nor can any of them create after wholeheartedly accepting the values of that society. The tension arising between the talented individual's "otherness," which draws him apart from society, and, in a sense, his "sameness," his desire to find a place (which his "otherness" denies him) within the posited abstraction we call the mainstream, is a condition necessary to the production of art. In the fiction of these three masters, the producing artist exists suspended between isolation from society and immersion in society; if the writer reaches either of these poles of the dialectic, then he ceases to create art.

Examples of talented individuals who achieve the ideality of isolation are Hawthorne's Aylmer, Rappaccini, and Roger Chillingworth, James's Theobald, the narrator of "The Author of Beltraffio," Roderick Hudson, and Gabriel Nash, and Joyce's Stephen Dedalus. Despite
extraordinary talent, none of these men functions as a creator once he has detached himself from communal values, and several of them appear as destroyers. Aylmer, because he has lost contact with the mainstream's acceptance of human imperfection and placed all his faith in his talent, cannot create, but can only destroy, and Rappaccini, because he has rejected the vulnerability which in part defines mankind, destroys his daughter's humanity. Owen Warland at times appears to have separated himself from society, but even when he sits in his darkened shop, hunched over his wondrous butterfly, he tries to retain a spiritual link to his society as represented by Annie Hovenden. Roger Chillingworth, skilled enough in the art of medicine to ease the pain of both Pearl and Hester in the Boston jail and to keep the brooding Arthur Dimmesdale alive despite the power of the minister's psychosomatic illness, detaches himself from the values which define the role of the physician and perverts his knowledge to the service of vengeance. James's Theobald, refusing to accept mainstream notions of art that demand finished products, creates but one chalk drawing (which the narrator admires as recalling the "touch of Correggio") in his entire career, a career he wastes in planning to paint a perfect Madonna, and that one drawing springs from his fondness not for art but for Serafina, his
model. The narrator of "The Author of Beltraffio" writes nothing, and in attempting to mold life into a Platonic imitation of art, precipitates the death of a little boy. Roderick Hudson, who, like Theobald, idealizes a mortal woman into an earthly representation of a divine muse, cannot sculpt once his devotion to that muse has cut him off from the values of his Northampton society. Gabriel Nash, who professes himself a practitioner of the art of life, gives up writing because, like Theobald, he will not manifest himself by imperfection and will not compromise art by succumbing to the conventions which make communication between artist and audience possible. And Stephen Dedalus, who consciously rejects family, country, and church in his desire to found a new religion of art with himself as high priest, never completes another poem after the creative spasm that results in the Villanelle of the Temptress in Portrait.

There are in the fiction of these masters fewer examples of artists immersed in society. Hawthorne, because he saw talent as both a gift and a curse, perhaps doubted that the artist could immerse himself so deeply in society that his creative drive vanishes altogether. The Canterbury poet, for example, disenchanted with the life of the alienated artist, tries to deny the otherness that has led him to the fringes of
life by entering a Shaker colony, a chiefly agrarian society that demands physical rather than intellectual labor, but even there, seemingly against his will, he continues to write. Owen Warland, bouncing back and forth between workshop and tavern, manages on occasion to leave his talent behind by entering the society of drunkards, but even there, beauty seeks him out. The newly domesticated Lord Byron of "P’s Correspondence," in order to complete his integration into the society whose values he now shares, denies his creative drive by cutting the life out of the acclaimed poetry of his youth.

James has left even fewer examples of the artist lost to social or economic conformity. Ralph Limbert and Jane Highmore of "The Next Time" certainly share social and economic drives, but neither has denied the gift of art in order to find a niche in the mainstream. A number of Jamesian artists seem at first glance to represent the worldly charlatan whose creative force has been diffused by worldly concerns, but each represents instead that compromise with perfection that is essential to art. Joyce has given us Leopold Bloom, who directs his artistic talent toward such inartistic ends as the sales of Alexander Keyes’s wines and spirits and the formulaic approach to fiction he plans in "Calypso" after reading *Titbits*. 
In the fiction of Hawthorne and James appear several successful artists. Hawthorne's artists, with the exception of the painter of "The Prophetic Pictures," make great sacrifices but achieve only limited success. Oberon cannot sell a single story, and Owen Warland must, after all his lonely labor, offer up his exquisite creation to the destructive impulses of a child, a child perhaps symbolic of Hawthorne's view of the mainstream's critical capabilities. Forced to live in the forest and to wear the mark of shame for life, Hester Prynne suffers the snubs and insults of a society bent on adapting her to its narrow purpose, and ekes out a living with her needlework; the reward for her suffering is her entry into the realm of free thought, a realm closed to the other Puritans.

James's artists, as mentioned above, often appear to be charlatans: the Gloriani of Roderick Hudson expounds paradoxical theories of art while doing a brisk business with people who have made status symbols of his sculpture, and Henry St. George enjoys country house visits with the upper class while complaining to Marian Fancourt and Paul Overt that his wife and family have forced him into commercialism. But these men have, like Mark Ambient and like Owen Warland, recognized the necessity of fitting art into a socio-economic context, of reconciling art with the real world. This reconcili-
ation is implied by the inevitable compromise of art. All artistic media are intrinsically flawed. In music, the ideal must be expressed through the physical properties of strings, tubing, reeds, and vibrating columns of air; in painting, through watercolors, oils, chalk, and pastels; in sculpture, through stone and metal; in literature, through words that have been selected to represent images in the mind of the writer and must be translated back into images in the mind of the reader. Listeners cannot hear Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as the deaf Beethoven heard it because only ideas can exist on an ideal plane. In order to function (whether we consider the function of art to be meaning or, as Archibald MacLeish would have it, being) art must first be reified, and in order to translate the ideal into the real, the artist needs command over both tools and materials; in every work of art there is craft. The artist must be prepared—as esthetes such as Theobald, Gabriel Nash and Stephen Dedalus are not—to get his hands dirty, and to accept, to whatever degree ego and temperament allow, the compromise with perfection that reification demands. Because reification forces a mixture of the ideal and the real, it forces also a mixture, as Gloriani tells Rowland Mallet, of "the pure and the impure, the graceful and the grotesque" (1:107), a phrase which perfectly defines the beautiful Christina
Light, whom Roderick Hudson sees as an ideal.

As art is a compromise between the ideal and the real, so too is it a compromise between the expressive and the representational. No matter how didactic or sectarian the work, or how true to nature, it is the artist's talent that shapes philosophy or dogma or nature into painting, sculpture, music, poetry, and fiction. Representation is a catalyst for communication, because reference to external reality is also a reference to common experience, the commonality of which affords viewers, listeners, and readers an entry into the subjective reality, or fiction, created by the artist. The compromise between the expressive and the representational, then, is also a compromise between the expressive and the communicative, which mirrors the compromise between "otherness" (which argues for isolation) and "sameness" (which argues for assimilation) in which the artist lives.

In the fiction of Nathaniel Hawthorne, the artists who succeed in creating art are those who can resist the temptations of both isolation and assimilation and who achieve neither separation from nor reconciliation with society but an uneasy coexistence. Owen Warland, estranged by his neighbors' practicality, works in seclusion, motivated by his love of the beautiful, but always aware of the disapproval of his community and
always pricked by his love for Annie Hovenden, whom he idealizes in the same way that James's Theobald idealizes Serafina and Roderick Hudson idealizes Christina Light. If art in Hawthorne's view could exist apart from society, then perhaps Owen would have had no need to make of his butterfly a wedding present for the Danforths. Oberon, who can create but cannot sell, in one sense seems the supreme egotist who has sacrificed all in the name of art. He also works in seclusion, but his goal is publication rather than creation, and his misery results not from possession by the demon Art but from public rejection. If the artist could create in a social vacuum, then Oberon might sit contentedly in his garret, thumbing dreamily through the pages of his rejected tales. Hester Prynne, forced to the fringes of her society as punishment for the "sin" of creativity (as the narrator of "The Custom-House" would have been shamed by his Puritan ancestors for the same sin), develops in the forest an avant-garde art foreign to Puritan tastes and propriety when she adorns Pearl in her own finest handiwork. Yet she is also able to produce "commercial" art in the needlework which becomes the fashion in the Boston colony. Dimmesdale and Chillingworth produce only artifice, the minister "confessing" while lying and the physician "healing" while tormenting; each conforms to the letter of his
tacit contract with society but not to the spirit; each
lives in falsehood. Dimmesdale appears to be a saint,
but he is actually a sinner; Chillingworth appears to be
a healer, but he is actually a destroyer. Hester, by
embroidering the letter with flourishes of gold,
produces art, transforming an emblem into a symbol,
adding meaning to meaning through her actions in the
sickrooms of the colony and living a complex truth. She
is an adulteress and an angel—and an artist; she lives
apart from human interests while standing close beside
them, a soul in tension between isolation and immersion,
the poles of the dialectic.

Henry James's successful artists live in the same
state of tension. Ralph Limbert's talent leads him to
produce one jewel-like novel after another, though his
social and economic difficulties demand that he try to
turn out more ordinary, saleable work that can find its
place in the mainstream. Mark Ambient, who writes
novels such as Beltraffio (which his obtuse house guest
insists on interpreting as the battle cry of estheti-
cism) demands truth in art, a type of fiction firmly
grounded in reality. He also lives in tension between
his work and his family, able to write in his study and
to relate to his moralistic, anti-esthetic wife in his
garden, and able to care deeply for his delicate son and
to continue writing after the boy's death. Ambient
balances—not easily but perhaps capably—social involvement and esthetic integrity; his "otherness" draws him toward the study, his "sameness" toward the garden.

Another successful Jamesian artist, Henry St. George, convincingly demonstrates that an artist need not separate himself from social or familial relations in order to write. The quality of St. George's work may have suffered from his need to support his family through writing, but the only "evidence" for that contention is suspect because it comes from the equivocating St. George and the naive, easily duped Paul Overt. But whether or not we accept Paul's opinion and/or his perhaps fallacious esthetics, the existence in the story of forty volumes of prose by Henry St. George indicates that St. George, like Mark Ambient, lives in tension between his work and his familial and social responsibilities.

In his novels about artists, James again portrayed the artist as existing in tension between art and society. Roderick Hudson, as long as he balances his passion for art and for the beautiful temptress/muse, Christina Light, with his attachment to Mary Garland and Northampton society, produces promising sculpture, but when his devotion to Christina overpowers his bonds to Northampton, and when the "fickle jade" forsakes him for
an arranged marriage to the rich Prince Casamassima, Roderick can no longer work. He experiences a brief rekindling of his creative powers when Mary and his mother arrive in Rome, but even that flame fades, outshone by the brilliance of Christina Light.

In *The Tragic Muse*, James explores the same dialectic through three artist characters, Miriam Rooth, Nick Dormer, and Gabriel Nash. Both Miriam and Nick feel the demands of "otherness" and take great risks to satisfy those demands, yet each remains in contact with society as a partner in a cultural symbiosis. Miriam risks ridicule and laughter in order to follow her muse, but she maintains social contact even as a star, enjoying one party after another, and ultimately demonstrates her partial acceptance (or at the least her acknowledgment) of mainstream values by marrying Basil Dashwood. Yet she will not give up art in order to marry Peter Sherringham, an action which would, because it would require her acceptance of a traditionally female social role, constitute immersion in society. To follow his muse, Nick Dormer risks poverty and loneliness. Drawn away from familial and social involvement by his desire to be a painter, he nevertheless feels bound through the novel by his obligations to his family and friends. Though his break with these obligations is abrupt and traumatic, it remains incomplete. Nick,
unlike Gabriel Nash, needs to explain himself, to be understood, and to pay his debts honorably, so he tries to justify his actions to his family, Mr. Carteret, and above all, to Mrs. Julia Dallow.

Both Miriam and Nick live in tension between the temptations of isolation and the comforts of immersion in society, and both live the lives of working artists. Gabriel Nash, who professes to care not a fig for society and who enjoys an utterly carefree life, has completely given up writing, and frequently airs his derogatory views on the compromise with perfection necessitated by the artist's need to accommodate his audience. It is Gabriel Nash who in the course of the novel is courted, accepted, evaluated, and scrutinized by Nick Dormer, and who finally disappears. At the end of the novel, when Miriam advises Nick to exorcise Nash by painting him, and laughingly adds that he could rid himself of Julia by painting her, Nick realizes that to paint Julia would be to risk falling in love with her again. Yet he does just that, choosing to rid himself of Nash and, on Miriam's advice, to take his chances with Julia. Nick's actions result in the disappearance of Nash, the portrayal of Julia Dallow, and in a private showing of Nick's work. Divorced from the isolated esthete and re-connected to society (though not immersed in it because he has not yet married Julia and because
he has given up his political career) through his association with Julia, Nick remains in tension between art and community and continues to work.

Unlike Hawthorne and James, Joyce has created no ideal artist, but in Portrait and Ulysses has implied such a character precisely by its absence and by the absence of art. His two talented characters, Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom, embody the poles of the dialectic because one, Stephen, has succeeded in separating himself from social concerns and the other, Bloom, has bent his talents towards a worldly program. Neither creates because neither can strike the balance between separation from society and immersion in it. Stephen will not accept responsibility or compassion, and Bloom will not throw them off.

All the fiction I have discussed shows that Hawthorne, James, and Joyce, three of the most accomplished and influential English language novelists, shared at some level a belief in the necessity of social involvement for the creative artist. The popular but naive idea that the "real" artist must be alone with his thoughts in order to create is repeatedly disproved by the best writers of all modern schools and genres. Artists may be drawn away from society by the talent, vision, and sensitivity that constitute their "otherness," but the social interests that constitute their
"sameness" keep them from achieving the isolation for which they appear to be striving. The tension between the two is essential to art.
NOTES

Notes to Pages 1-35


5. Trilling, p. 163.


7. Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts pp. 21, 22.


9. The Romantics themselves, rather than simply utilizing nature, often re-shaped it for poetic purposes. Wordsworth's "Lucy Gray," for example, tells of a young girl who one night died in a blinding blizzard, and whose fate was learned the following day by the discovery of her footprints leading to the bank of a stream. I have, of course, no experience with nineteenth-century British blinding blizzards, but twentieth-century American blinding blizzards fill in footprints very quickly. The nature of Wordsworth seems also to have been the nature of Thoreau with all its subtle links to the world of the spirit, but Wordsworth never climbed Katahdin.


Notes to Pages 36-100


4. The Death of the Artist, p. 3.


10. Curran, p. 44.


18. Hawthorne's various portrayals of Puritans, in his short fiction as well as in The Scarlet Letter and The House of the Seven Gables, often seem unduly harsh, but in pastor Wilson we see a shining example of Puritan charity: "Better to fast and pray upon [Pearl's paternity]; and still better . . . to leave the mystery as we find it, unless Providence reveal it of its own accord. Thereby, every good Christian man hath a title to show a father's kindness towards the poor, deserted babe" (86).


Notes to Pages 100-185


5. Reiman, p. 507.


24. Henry James, Roderick Hudson (Boston: J.R. Osgood, 1876), 99.


29. Sensuous Pessimism, p. 54.


31. Subsequent literary history reveals that the need for a recognizable language can be stretched to an extent that infringes very little on artistic freedom, as in the narration of Joyce's Finnegans Wake and the slang of Alex and the Droogs in Burgess's A Clockwork Orange.

Notes to Pages 186-246


2. See Booth for a full discussion of the rhetorical techniques available to the novelist.


11. Benstock, p. 36.


13. John Henry Raleigh, "Bloom as a Modern Epic Hero." Critical Inquiry 3 (1977), 583-98. Like Spinoza, who in his Ethics wrote that the emotions were the source of human bondage and the intellect the means to freedom and that the wisdom of the free man is a meditation on life rather than death, Bloom wastes little of his intellectual energy on death, preferring instead to let his thoughts run free over the panorama of life: "There is another world after death named hell. I do not like that other world she wrote. No more do I. Plenty to see and hear and feel yet. Feel live warm beings near you. Let them sleep in their maggoty beds. They are not going to get me this innings. Warm beds: warm fullblooded life" (U 94). In describing Bloom as "Homer's man in Plato's role with Spinoza's outlook" (p. 595), Raleigh details numerous allusions in Ulysses that link Bloom with Spinoza, including a book in Bloom's possession entitled Thoughts from Spinoza, and claims that "Spinoza was the fountainhead for Bloom's politics since Spinoza was one of the first, and one of the greatest, proponents for the twin ideas of toleration and liberal principles in a modern republic" (p. 591).


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