

Failure of Patricide:

Fearful Reunion with Fathers in Nathaniel Hawthorne's Short Stories

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[Abstract]

In Nathaniel Hawthorne's three short stories, which were written relatively early in his career as a writer—"My Kinsman, Major Molineux," "Roger Malvin's Burial" and "Alice Doane's Appeal"—there is a consistent theme of the symbolical murdering of "fathers" and of a fearful reunion with them. It is notable that although all of the protagonists of these three works, Robin Molineux, Reuben Bourne and Leonard Doane, commit a ceremony of "patricide" in the climactic scenes of the works to overcome their traumatic memory relating to fathers and feel an inward, perverted exultation from it, it is not that they reach that scene of initiation only through their own efforts. There is, in the assumed-patricide, a presence of real culprits who murder their fathers, and the youth are also in need of mediators to see and to confront their fathers again. In contrast with Hawthorne's attempt to deal with his bitter memory of his paternal figures and to overcome it, the failed patricide rather discloses the fact that the author and his characters cannot overcome their traumatic memories of their fathers.

Key words: patricide, father, independence, initiation, paternal figures

Introduction

When it comes to the theme of "patricide" in Nathaniel Hawthorne's works, two short stories which were written in his comparatively early days may come to mind—Hawthorne's "Roger Malvin's Burial" and "My Kinsman, Major Molineux." The term "patricide" in literary works means not so much that a character kills his father in the literal sense of the word as that he defeats his father and becomes independent from the paternal authority during the process of initiation. In "Roger Malvin's Burial," that Reuben Bourne leaves his father-in-law dying in the wilderness is thought to be patricide. In "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," meanwhile, the scene in which Robin bursts into mocking laughter, seeing face to

face his relative, Major Molineux, who has been beaten by a lynch mob and whom Robin has come to the town to be adopted by, can be mentioned as another symbolic patricide. As for the latter work, in particular, it has often been mentioned that Robin attains the initiation, and from this point of view, Frederic Crews insists that Robin is released from filial dependence and hatred toward Major Molineux, and gains the ability to make his way in the world on his own¹. Q. T. Leavis and Roy R. Male also mention that Robin's laughter at the scene I have mentioned stands not only for his decision to become independent from paternal authority, but also for the independence of American colonists from British rule (Leavis 41-42; Male 52). Richard P. Adams, in addition, points out that the theme of maturity into adulthood is suggested

in many of Hawthorne's short stories including "Roger Malvin's Burial" and "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" (40).

What should be noted, however, is a certain inconsistency in the patricide of these characters, the achievement of which has almost been taken for granted. Both of the protagonists in these two works, Reuben and Robin, have traumatic experiences concerning their fathers, or, have been repressed by them, and both of them are depicted as if they are cathartically released from paternal authority by means of patricide. The protagonists' initiation through the symbolic murder and liberation from their "fathers," however, does not seem to be attained in a true sense.

In this essay, I will focus on the theme of patricide in Hawthorne's three short stories—"Roger Malvin's Burial," "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," and "Alice Doane's Appeal," which can be read as a work of patricide as well—and will remark on the contradictions in their self-proclaimed success of murder, hence revealing the fact that the protagonists' and Hawthorne's patricide, in a practical sense, has ended in failure.

1. Fearful Memories of Fathers and Reunion with Them

It is often pointed out that Hawthorne's father and his uncle, Robert Manning, who was the author's surrogate father, had a great influence on Hawthorne's life. The author's real father was a sailor and hardly at home. When his son was only four years old, he passed away during his sailing. As for his father's death, Gloria C. Erlich states that Hawthorne might feel a sense of guilt about it:

Perhaps on one of Captain Hawthorne's rare visits to Salem, Nathaniel, accustomed to being the only male of his family, wished his father would go away and never come back. Then, when the boy was only four years old, news arrived that his

father had died—would indeed never come back. The mother was thrown into disarray and panic by this news. Perhaps his powerful wishes had caused his father's death and his mother's distress. *He must have felt guilt over parricidal wishes unexpectedly fulfilled*, anger at his father's apparent abandonment, and fear that perhaps he deserted to be abandoned. (105, emphasis added)

Louis B. Salomon also discusses the same theme of imaginary patricide, which children weave after their father's inexplicable death. He suggests that Hawthorne felt guilty about his father's death, since he was inwardly hoping for it, and that he makes atonement for his father in "Alice Doane's Appeal," "Roger Malvin's Burial" and many other works².

It seems true that Hawthorne depicts an imaginary patricide in "Alice Doane's Appeal" and "Roger Malvin's Burial." In the case of "Alice Doane's Appeal," for example, the protagonist, Leonard Doane, murders Walter Brome—who alluded to a love relationship with his sister, Alice—in jealousy. Scrutinizing the dead corpse of Walter, Leonard remembers the agonizing death of his father in his youth, and he sheds tears. This scene, in which Leonard sees his father in Walter, seems to show that the protagonist feels as if he has killed not the romantic rival but his own father. As regards the guilty feeling he bears about his real father's terrible death, Frederic C. Crews insists that the lives of Leonard and Alice, in which they are alone together, owing to the absence of their parents, are led in a pseudo-Oedipal relationship (56). When Alice is substituted for their mother, Leonard is to monopolize his mother's affection by his losing his own father. Surviving alone with his sister, Alice, and bearing a desire for incest with her, Leonard comes to develop a feeling of guilt about his father's miserable death, with which in truth he has nothing to do. His father's decease is thus an unforgettable memory for him because he thinks he has committed a patricide.

In "Roger Malvin's Burial," it is clear that Reuben feels as if he has killed his father-in-law, Roger Malvin, as is known from the narrator's saying that "[b]y a certain association of ideas, he at times almost imagined himself a murderer" (CE X 349). It has often been mentioned that Malvin's initials, "R. M." are the same as those of Hawthorne's uncle, Robert Manning, who took substantial paternal authority over Nathaniel after his father's death, and disciplined him so strictly that he seemed to abhor him throughout his life. Hawthorne's giving Roger Malvin the same initials as his powerful uncle also highlights the fact that Roger Malvin is for Reuben Bourne and the author a symbol of paternal authority.

In "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," it is not that Robin observes the death of his real father, but the conflict in the relationship with his father can be read in this narrative as well. Simon O. Lesser insists that Robin is yearning for a freedom from paternal rights, and that since he is to submit to the paternity again when he sees his uncle, Robin is in reality unwilling to see Major Molineux³.

As Hawthorne had the traumatic experience of his father's sudden death on foreign soil, the author's memory is reflected in each of these works. The protagonists Hawthorne wrote about in these three short stories consistently bear a sense of inferiority and self-hatred through the involvement with their fathers, and, as is mentioned earlier, all of them commit "patricide" to get rid of it⁴.

These characters, furthermore, are to appear in scenes in which they reunite with their own fathers and face their bitter feelings concerning their fathers at the endings of the respective narratives. When Robin, in "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," sees his uncle in the climactic scene, it is his reunion with his "father," granted that his relative is another symbol of the patriarchy, as Lesser has mentioned. In "Alice Doane's Appeal," if Walter is a figure who reminds Leonard of his dead father, his visiting the grave with Alice to see Walter represents the protagonist's interview with his father. In "Roger Malvin's Burial," in the same way,

when Reuben at last stands in front of Malvin's grave stone, from which he was desperately trying to escape, he is to reunite with his dead "father."

2. "Patricide" and Sense of Superiority

In the three short stories, Hawthorne wrote the scenes of patricide, which symbolize characters' initiations, as we have seen. In this connection, it is worth mentioning that protagonists of these three works have something in common; each of them takes on bizarre, abnormal behavior in these climactic scenes of patricide. In "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," Robin bursts into laughter when he sees his relative being beaten. Reuben, in "Roger Malvin's Burial," could not help secretly coming back and taking a peep at the dying man in the scene in which Reuben leaves his father-in-law dying in the wilderness. In the case of "Alice Doane's Appeal," Leonard, out of curiosity, stares at the face of the dead corpse of Walter after he kills him. Let us now examine how the protagonists' perverted actions are depicted in these scenes of initiation.

In "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," Robin feels fearful at the sight of his uncle being beaten. We are told, "They [Major Molineux and Robin] stared at each other in silence, and Robin's knees shook, and his hair bristled, with a mixture of *pity and terror*" (CE XI 229, emphasis added). Robin's feeling, however, begins to change at this horrible moment:

Soon, however, a *bewildering excitement* began to seize upon his mind; the preceding adventures of the night, the unexpected appearance of the crowd, the torches, the confused din, and the hush that followed, the spectre of his kinsman reviled by that great multitude, all this, and more than all, a perception of tremendous ridicule in the whole scene, affected him with a sort of mental inebriety. . . . The contagion [of laughter] was spreading among the multitude, when, all at once, it seized upon Robin, and he sent forth a

shout of laughter that echoed through the street; every man shook his sides, every man emptied his lungs, but Robin's shout was the loudest there. (CE XI 229-30, emphases added)

Although Robin at first feels "pity and terror" to see his uncle, he begins to be thrilled with "bewildering excitement," and influenced by the contagion of laughter around, he also starts laughing.

In the case of "Roger Malvin's Burial," after leaving his dying father-in-law in the wilderness, "[Reuben] walked more hastily at first, than was consistent with his strength; for a sort of guilty feeling, which sometimes torments men in their most justifiable acts, caused him to seek concealment from Malvin's eyes" (CE X 345). Although he feels himself to be guilty, he nevertheless cannot repress his desire to see the way his father-in-law has been deserted and is dying:

But, after he had trodden far upon the rustling forest-leaves, he crept back impelled by a *wild and painful curiosity*, and, sheltered by the earthy roots of an upturn tree, gazed earnestly at the desolate man. (CE X 345, emphases added)

"A wild and painful curiosity," which must be inconsistent with his "guilty feeling," drives Reuben at this moment to be a voyeur.

In the case of "Alice Doane's Appeal," on the contrary, Leonard at first pervertedly feels great joy to have murdered his enemy. We are told, "I trod out his [Walter's] accursed soul, and knew that he was dead; for my spirit bounded as if a chain had fallen from it and left me free" (CE XI 273). His great joy, however, begins to fade away. He sees his dead father in the person he had killed:

'I bent down over the body of Walter Brome, gazing into his face, and striving to make my soul glad with the thought, that he, in very truth, lay dead before me. I know not what space of time I

had thus stood, nor how the vision came. But it seemed to me that the irrevocable years, since childhood had rolled back, and a scene, that had long been confused and broken in my memory, arrayed itself with all its first distinctness. Methought I stood a weeping infant by my father's hearth; by the cold and blood-stained hearth where he lay dead. I heard the childish wail of Alice, and my own cry arose with hers, as we beheld the features of our parent, fierce with the strife and distorted with the pain, in which his spirit had passed away. . . . Immediately, I stood again in the lonesome road, no more a sinless child, but a man of blood, whose tears were falling fast over the face of his dead enemy. The delusion was not wholly gone; that face still wore a likeness of my father . . . ' (CE XI 273)

Although, in the case of Leonard, perverted excitement is followed by pity and terror of his father's death, he imagines he himself has murdered his father.

In this manner, the protagonists of all three works take abnormal behavior in the symbolical murdering of their fathers. They unconsciously intend to get an actual feeling of exceeding their fathers in doing so. Despising the defeated fathers in their perverted actions, the sons, with confidence, declare their victory, namely, their success of committing patricide.

3. Mediators of the Reunion with Paternal Figures

As mentioned in the first paragraph, although Robin, Reuben and Leonard in the three works feel fear and hatred for their "dead fathers," they are to reunite and face up to them in climactic scenes. If we regard them as having committed patricide, it means that they have succeeded in symbolically killing their fathers and attaining initiations.

We should not overlook, however, that these characters are in need of "mediators" who help them to have an interview with their fathers.

In "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," for example, although Robin declares his victory against his paternal figure, Major Molineux, by his shouting laughter in front of a relative, one should note that Robin at first does not mean to confront with this ceremony of initiation. As is known from the fact that the leader of the mob violence tells Robin, "Watch here an hour and Major Molineux will pass by," it is the leader who informs him of the whereabouts of Major Molineux, brings the major before the eyes of Robin and makes the youth compulsorily get involved in the ceremony of becoming an adult. Although he walks around the town all day to find the relative, it is ironic that what he is doing when he finally finds the person is just "sitting" in front of a church, accompanied by a kind gentleman, who can be another father figure of the youth. The leader (and the gentleman) thus becomes the "mediator" and provides considerable assistance to the initiation of Robin.

In "Roger Malvin's Burial," Reuben is unwilling to see the paternal figure. Even though he acknowledges his obligation to return to the place he has left Roger Malvin and to bury the body of the victim, he cannot turn it into action. Along with his worry about someone discovering that he had told a lie about his father-in-law when he left him behind, wounded, there is also a possibility that he is fearful of the reunion itself with his "father." Over a period of many years, he cherishes the illusion that the dying father is waiting for him to return to the wilderness in order to aid him:

For years, also, a thought would occasionally recur, which, though he perceived all its folly and extravagance, he had not power to banish from his mind; it was a haunting and torturing fancy, that his father-in-law was yet sitting at the foot of the rock, on the withered forest-leaves, alive, and awaiting his pledged assistance. (*CE X 349*)

As is known from his impossible imagination about Roger Malvin as still living alone in the woods and

waiting for him to accomplish his duty, Reuben is not only fearful of the revelation of his lie but also scared of the very presence of his deserted "father," and of seeing him again by himself. As a result, accompanied by his wife and the son, he enters the wilderness, where his "father" awaits him, for the first time when it becomes inevitable. Frederic Crews suggests that Reuben unconsciously follows his son, Cyrus, and shoots him to death for the purpose of expiation of his own sin. If we agree with this assertion, it is Cyrus who brings his father to the place of Roger Malvin's death and mediates his father's reunion with him. Reuben confronts his father-figure only by shooting his son, who resembles himself in his youth, instead of killing himself, and by putting his son's body between Roger Malvin and himself. In this way, Reuben is definitely in need of a mediator to assist the reunion with his father as well.

In the case of "Alice Doane's Appeal," he also needs help in coping with his paternal figure. I have noted that Walter Brome, who is the twin brother of Leonard and was murdered by him, is identified not only with himself, but also with his dead father. As is known from the fact that Leonard goes to the grave of his victim along with Alice, his sister acts as an intermediary between the "father" and himself. The end of the narrator's story is "the Appeal of Alice to the spectre of Walter Brome; his reply, absolving her from every stain; and the trembling awe with which ghost and devil fled, as from the sinless presence of an angel" (*CE XI 277*). The only thing we are told in this citation is a brief summary of their conversation which hints that Alice made an "appeal" to Walter and that, as a result of his permission, Alice regains her purity. We should not, however, overlook a slight irrationality in this last scene; what should have been related here is an apology by Leonard for his brutal murder, or, in other words, a reunion of the youth with his father-figure, for whose death he is responsible in the same way as the case of Reuben and his "father." Although one can imagine that Leonard comes to have a guilty feeling toward his "father" for his assault and that he

is trying to make up with him by seeing him again, Hawthorne here focuses on the purity of Alice, oddly straying from the topic of Leonard and Walter Brome, as if the author feels empathy for him in his fear of the father.

As we have seen, all of the protagonists in these short stories are in need of mediators who reunite them with their paternal figures. If a “successful” patricide means to face up to their fathers in a state of independence and to overcome their sense of inferiority and fear toward fathers, that every single protagonist requires mediators raises the question of whether they commit patricide and accomplish their initiations in a real sense. Although the author attempts to have his characters become independent in the process of murdering and gaining predominance over their “fathers,” he meanwhile discloses the sons’ incompetence and dependent personality through his making third parties intervene between the problem of fathers and sons. As is clear in the previous citation of “Alice Doane’s Appeal” mentioned above, Hawthorne did not, or could not depict a direct and successful confrontation of the sons with their paternal figures.

4. The Real Culprit of the Murder

I have noted above that although the protagonists of the three short stories—Robin, Reuben, and Leonard—feel inward bliss at having humiliated and disgraced their fathers, they do not truly succeed in patricide in that their relying on mediators in the precise moment. In addition to this, one should note the fact that it is NOT them who in reality harassed and murdered their fathers. Instead, aside from the protagonists, there are real torturers who kill paternal figures in these works.

In “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” although Robin laughs at his relative scornfully and although it appears that Robin demonstrates his independence from his “father,” the real culprits who cause the Major’s disgrace is the wild mob. Robin himself does not know what is happening in the town having to do

with the scheme of ousting the Major until he appears in the climactic scene. Moreover, his burst of laughter at the Major is brought about not so much by his voluntary will as by the situation in which he is involved; that is to say, “the contagion” (CE XI 230) of laughter. Instead of having the purpose of looking down upon Major Molineux, he is rather confronted with a choice between allying with the relative or with the mob, and he cannot help but choosing the latter. As it is the wild group who subverts the paternal right for Robin, he is fearful of this mob as well, to the extent that “Robin’s knees shook, and his hair bristled, with a mixture of pity and terror” (CE XI 229). As for his laughter, which is brought about by passive motivation and his reaction after the ceremony of patricide, dependence of the youth is more conspicuous than his self-reliance. Although this work is read as a story of independence of the youth (or, as many critics have mentioned, of young America), and although Hawthorne may have intended to write it, the protagonist’s inability to accomplish his independence is ironically emphasized at the ambiguous end of the work. Robin begins to “grow weary of a town life” and asks his new guardian “the way to the ferry” (CE XI 231).

In the case of “Alice Doane’s Appeal,” although Leonard feels as if he killed his own father, we are told in the narrative that his father was killed by Indians. Reuben Bourne in “Roger Malvin’s Burial” nearly believes himself to be a murderer of parricide as he leaves his dying father-in-law behind in the wilderness, but it is mentioned that “[Reuben’s] presence, the gratuitous sacrifice of his own life, would have added only another, and a needless agony to the last moments of the dying man” (CE X 349). As Roger Malvin himself remarks, “For me there is no hope; and I will await death here [in the wilderness],” he is doomed to die at the instant of getting a fatal wound in the Indian’s war, and it is the native American who for real killed him. It is not mentioned in detail, but in both “Roger Malvin’s Burial” and “Alice Doane’s Appeal,” the fathers of the two

protagonists are killed by Indians. In the case of Reuben, in particular, his horror at the Indians is described in the narrative⁶. From the perspective of American history, in which white people immigrated and developed colonies afterward, the native people of America can be thought to be their “fathers.” White people oppressed Indians to expand their territory, and it means that they have committed a “patricide” in American history. What Reuben and Leonard witness in their fathers’ death is therefore the punishment and revenge on their fathers as “sons” for murdering the Indians as “fathers.” In addition to the fact that the Indians in a true sense bring about the deaths of their fathers, Reuben is fearful of the native people because they demonstrate sanctions against the sons who commit parricides.

In this manner, the protagonists of the three short stories have traumatic experiences of fathers’ deaths, and in order to expunge those bitter memories, they try to kill their father-figures symbolically. Although they are filled with a sense of superiority toward their fathers, however, it is ironical that the deaths of the fathers are not brought about by these sons; there are in reality the presence of others who kill the paternal figures. Precisely because they cannot repress the fear about their fathers, they still feel strong dread toward the real culprit of the “patricide” as well.

Conclusion

As I have noted, although the three protagonists of “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” “Roger Malvin’s Burial” and “Alice Doane’s Appeal” show their rapture and sense of superiority in their murdering of their father-figures symbolically, and although they are given a possibility by the author of achieving independence from their fathers through the supposed patricide, a careful look at the end of the stories will enable us to know that their attempt in truth results in failure. All of these stories have open endings, and it is not clear whether these characters can shed the influence of the “fathers” and accomplish their

initiation. I have already discussed that, in the climactic final scene of “Alice Doane’s Appeal,” where reunion and reconciliation should have been written between a revengeful father and the son of patricide—namely, Walter Brome and Leonard—, the author, for whatever reason, shifts his focus of the narrative out of the theme of the two youths into the purity of Alice, which seems to exemplify the author’s awkward and terrifying refusal to deal with the father. In “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” the only thing Robin thinks just after seeing his relative get beaten up is to go back to his hometown, as if he admits the fact that his wild laughter in front of Major Molineux was just false bravado. In “Roger Malvin’s Burial,” although it seems that Reuben’s sin was “expiated,” and “the curse was gone from him” (*CE* X 360) through his murdering the son and returning again to the wilderness with his “father,” Roger Malvin, he is not in a real sense released from the spell of the past. At the time when Roger Malvin tells him to leave him there in the wilderness, his father-in-law does not mean to put a curse on him. “The curse” mentioned above is what Reuben thinks to be a curse. Not so much from a feeling of guilt as from his terror of the defeated paternal authority, he (or, the author) forges the imaginary “curse” which is placed on him. For this reason, he is for years obsessed with his unconsciously fabricated need to go into the woods and to reunite and face up to his “father,” as is the case with Robin, who looks for his relative in “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” and Leonard, who sees his father-figure again in “Alice Doane’s Appeal.”

Even after the ceremony of presumed-patricide ends, the sons cannot exceed their paternal figures. The more they are fixated on the fancy of having defeated their fathers, the more clearly it brings to the forefront the fact that the sons are inwardly afraid of the absolute paternal authority.

Losing his father in his youth, Hawthorne had hard feelings toward him, and through depicting characters who have the same traumatic experience between fathers and try to commit patricide to face up with

them, the author attempts to reunite with his father as well. It is often said that Hawthorne extremely detested his uncle, Robert Manning, and if this is the case, to write literary works itself was for Hawthorne an attempt at symbolic patricide of his father-figure, who would not allow his nephew to be a writer. He does not, however, succeed in his trial of patricide as I have mentioned in the three short stories; the protagonists in these works are not released from fear of their “fathers.” Although the author at first probably meant to depict the theme of release from paternal authorities and the independence of youth from it, he could not vividly imagine the characters (or himself) overcoming their bitter memories concerning fathers and achieving independence from it so that he actualized its image on the pages of each work. The strong persistence of the characters and the author in surpassing their “fathers,” instead, reveals the hidden fact that they have a strong fear and a sense of inferiority which are not conquered to the last.

Notes

1. Crews states in *The Sins of the Fathers* that “[Robin’s] ambition to supplant Major Molineux is scarcely greater than his respect for him, and the Major’s final humiliation appropriately calls up both ‘pity and terror’ (III, 639) in him. Robin has been led to this moment only through a series of initiations in which other adults have shown contempt for the Major, and it is only in their combined company that he can laugh at deposed majesty. At the end of the story he has merged himself with a jealous, jostling democracy of father-haters, but he shows no further enmity toward his kinsman. We may say that he has cathartically rid himself of both filial dependence and filial resentment, and will now be free, as his benevolent friend expects, to ‘rise in the world without the help of your kinsman, Major Molineux’ (III, 641)” (78).

2. Salomon states that “it seems to me not reasonable to infer that the stories I have cited, and

many more which I have not space to cite here, together with the Johnson sketch in ‘Biographical Stories,’ constitute a sort of expiatory ritual whereby Hawthorne strove to say *Rest, rest, perturbed spirit* to the ghost of his sailor-father” (16, emphasis in original).

3. Referring to Robin’s ambivalent feeling toward his uncle, Major Molineux, Lesser remarks that “[w]e see that, unbeknown to himself, the youth has good reasons for *not* wanting to find Major Molineux: when he finds him, he will have to re-submit to the kind of authority from which, temporarily at least, he has just escaped. At some deep level the Major appears anything but a potential benefactor; he symbolizes just those aspects of the father from which the youth so urgently desires to be free. As an elderly relative of the father and an authority figure, he may be confused with the father. In any case, however undeservedly, he has now become the target of all the hostile and rebellious feeling which were originally directed against the father” (221, emphasis in original).

4. When he describes these characters, he is to some extent self-referential; when Leonard and Alice lose their parents, it reminds us of Hawthorne’s own experience in which he and his sister, Elizabeth, were informed that they have lost their father and become orphans. In “Roger Malvin’s Burial,” as I have mentioned before, Malvin makes us think of the author’s uncle, whom he disliked for his being strict with Nathaniel and becoming his surrogate parent.

5. There may be a possibility that, as Lesser insists, Robin is not trying to find his relative in effect.

6. As regards fear for the native Americans, it is mentioned in the narrative that “an almost superstitious regard, arising perhaps from the customs of the Indians, whose war was with the dead as well as the living, was paid by the frontier inhabitants to the rites of sepulture; and there are many instances of the sacrifice of life in the attempt to bury those who had fallen by the ‘sword of the wilderness’” (*CE* X 344-45).

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The Nathaniel Hawthorne Page at American Literature, featuring a biography and Free Library of the author's Novels, Stories, Poems, Letters, and Texts. Young Hawthorne was a contemporary of fellow Transcendentalists: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Louisa May Alcott, Hawthorne was part of this prominent circle of Massachusetts writers and philosophers. The Transcendentalists believed in the "inherent goodness of both people and nature." I would encourage you to think of them as intellectual hippies of the early 19th century (the movement sprang forth in the 1820s and 1830s). Hawthorne was a founding member of Brook Farm, a utopian experiment in communal living -- though he is not portrayed as a deep believer in its ideals.

Nathaniel Hawthorne. In one of this author's short stories, the protagonist is visited by the ghost of a former parishioner of his, who offers him a cup of her tears mixed with water from a fountain. In another story by this author, a butterfly alights upon the title character's head after a scuffle knocks a vase off a table. In this work, the assistant Aminadab laughs at the failure of a concoction that had been tested on a plant. For 10 points, name this short story by Nathaniel Hawthorne in which Aylmer kills Georgiana in his attempt to remove the titular blemish. "The Celestial Railroad". In this Hawthorne story, Matthew and Hannah join a group of adventurers looking for the title object. The nasty "Cynic" is blinded after he removes his glasses and looks straight at the object.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (July 4, 1804 – May 19, 1864) was an American novelist, dark romantic, and short story writer. His works often focus on history, morality, and religion. He was born in 1804 in Salem, Massachusetts, to Nathaniel Hathorne and the former Elizabeth Clarke Manning. His ancestors include John Hathorne, the only judge from the Salem witch trials who never repented his involvement. He entered Bowdoin College in 1821, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in 1824, and graduated in 1825. He... Nathaniel Hawthorne, American novelist and short-story writer who was a master of the allegorical and symbolic tale. One of the greatest fiction writers in American literature, he is best known for *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables*. When Nathaniel's father "a ship's captain" died during one of his voyages, he left his young widow without means to care for her two girls and young Nathaniel, aged four. She moved in with her affluent brothers, the Mannings.

Discuss Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" with Clifton Fadiman. American editor and anthologist Clifton Fadiman analyzing Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment." This 1969 video is a production of Encyclopædia Britannica Educational Corporation. Nathaniel Hawthorne in *Scarlet Letter* elucidates and goes deep into discussing the dark and hidden aspects of human souls. It is not only Roger Chillingworth who probes into the minister's mind in. She gets very frustrated by her behavior and cries out in a great misery "O father in Heaven, what is this being which I have brought into the world?" Hester is further annoyed and frightened when the people refer to Pearl as a demon offspring. (Bewley, 1959: 28). Hawthorne is very wise in his descriptions and is well aware of all these facts and innate characteristics within the people. He shows it in Hester's nature and her state of mind in relation to.