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The Politics of Utopia: Examining Three Hawthorne Romances as Political Allegories

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THE POLITICS OF UTOPIA:

EXAMINING THREE HAWTHORNE ROMANCES AS POLITICAL ALLEGORIES

by

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Dedication

To Rion and Josiah
Thank you for always supporting me,
I love you.

Acknowledgements

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The years between 1849 and 1852 were Nathaniel Hawthorne's most productive in terms of creative output. Hawthorne penned three romances—the name he gave his longer fictions—in addition to a children's book and a political biography during these years. These longer stories exhibit the high degree of influence the political climate of the late 1840s and early 1850s had on Hawthorne. The Compromise of 1850 sought to bridge the growing schism in the nation on the topics of boundaries and slavery. By reading Hawthorne's novels as political allegories of the Compromise of 1850, the political instability of the time becomes clear. Each of the three romances represent a stage of the Compromise (before, during, and after), and the characters are veils through which the political ideologies of the time are represented. *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) parallels the expansionist ideas of Manifest Destiny and urges occupation of the middle ground. However, *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) issues a warning that the actions of the present will influence those in the future through its story over several generations of Pyncheons. In the third romance, or *The Blithedale Romance*, Hawthorne writes a peaceable dissolution to the utopian community of Blithedale in the wake of the Fugitive

Slave Law. It is only through the veil of allegory as well as the veil of romance that Hawthorne found the necessary space from which to discuss the volatile issues of slavery.

Introduction

The American political atmosphere of the mid-nineteenth century was fraught with tension, and the anxiety felt by the public found its way into the pages of novels and romances of the time. The difficulty lay in a large land acquisition from the Mexican-American War. The familiar and volatile political dispute of slavery led to threats of secession in 1849 that Alexander Hamilton had warned against in *The Federalist Papers*. In "No. 6: Concerning Dangers from Dissensions between the States," Hamilton began a two part essay over the internal tensions that may cause disunion. The "love of power or the desire of pre-eminence and dominion" was foremost in his mind as a cause for disunity since the struggle for power was often associated with finances, but a close second was named in "No. 7: The Same Subject Continued: Concerning Dangers from Dissensions Between the States": the territorial disputes including the addition of states as well as disagreements concerning borders (A. Hamilton). Alexander Hamilton effectively augured the problems of 1849 through his writings published seventy years earlier. The debate regarding Texas's borders and the addition of California became necessary in part because of the economic value of the land, but California's inclusion was contested because of the political instability it would cause: was the state admitted as Free or slave?

The debates involving California and slavery came to the forefront in late 1849 when Howell Cobb and Robert Winthrop battled to become the Speaker of the House for thirty-first Congress (Bordewich 114-6). The eventual election of Cobb took three weeks to achieve, but the arduous process of choosing a speaker underscored the inflammatory

topic of slavery as well as the evenly matched representation for and against slavery (119). Rookie Senator Stephen A. Douglas and Henry Clay, who had returned to public office after a few years' retirement (H. Hamilton 26), are often credited with playing key roles in brokering the Compromise of 1850. However, historians like Graham Peck, Holman Hamilton, and Fergus Bordewich argue that the simplistic view of this historic event—North and South, young and old, novice and experienced—is misleading. The intense debate surrounding the admission of California and the possible expansion of slavery covered a gamut of political thought and permeated the United States of America and its territories. With the century celebration of the *Declaration of Independence* a mere 20 years away, many in the nation became worried about the possible dissolution of the union, not the celebration of the centennial.

Political pundits were not the only ones experiencing change, though. Many writers in the early nineteenth century composed creative work using Romanticism, a fine arts movement emphasizing the emotion of the artist (Coeckelbergh 42).European visitors like Alexis de Tocqueville and Harriet Martineau had visited the United States and found a lack of nationalist literature (Gross 315). Tocqueville observes that "the inhabitants of the United States have then at present, properly speaking, no literature" (536) in *Democracy in America* (1835), and Martineau similarly found a lack of unique American literature in *Society in America* (1837).[1] American writers, too, admitted "we have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe" (Emerson), and a demand for a unique American voice to represent the country was issued (Reynolds 18). A group of

[1] Martineau, Harriet. *Society in America*. Saunders and Otley, 1837. *Internet Archive.* <https://archive.org/details/societyinameric04martgoog> p. 111

writers from Concord, Massachusetts answered this challenge with Transcendentalism—a philosophy that merged religion and literature. Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller were all leaders of this new tradition.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804 – 1864) was a friend and neighbor to the leading Transcendentalists of his time; however, in a world that was in the midst of a major shift, Hawthorne chose to write Romances. In the prefaces to his longer works, Hawthorne tries to define his understanding of Romantic literature, and in his second full-length romance, he defends his use of Romance as being a way to "connect a by-gone time with the very Present that is flitting away" (2:2). Therefore, Hawthorne elected to study Puritan and New England history in response to the demand for nationalist literature (Reynolds 18). In his youth, Hawthorne borrowed Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702), Daniel Neal's *The History of the Puritans* (1816-17), and John Winthrop's *History of New England from 1630-1649* (1825-26) from the Salem Athenaeum (Reynolds 18); however, Hawthorne was also personally connected to the Puritan history. Nathaniel Hawthorne's great grandfather, John Hathorne, was a magistrate during the Salem witch trials (Wineapple 15); a fact that prompted the addition of the "w" in his patronymic.

Initially a writer of short stories, Hawthorne's name began to be associated with novel writing in 1850 with the publication of *The Scarlet Letter*. This romance—as Hawthorne called his longer works—became popular during his lifetime for two distinct reasons: one, the "Custom House" preface and two, Hester Prynne's adultery. One of the selling points of *The Scarlet Letter*, according to Hawthorne, was the "Custom House" sketch that detailed his time as a Custom House officer and his frustration at the spoils

system of government (16:329), which many readers understood and with which they sympathized. After experiencing success with *The Scarlet Letter* because of the political elements, Hawthorne went on to publish *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), *A Wonder-Book for Boys and Girls* (1851), *The Blithedale Romance* (1852), *The Life of Franklin Pierce* (1852), and a second release of a previously printed collection of short stories all before the end of 1853. These three years were his most prolific years of publication, and these years coincided with the debates, adoption, and the immediate fallout of the Compromise of 1850. While Hawthorne's work has been associated with the Puritan setting or historical influence, a richer reading can be derived from analyzing the texts in the context of the 1840s and 1850s political debates. Given the popularity of his politically charged works, the political climate, and the push to create American literature, critical work on Hawthorne's novels should include reference to the political upheaval and the current debates of his time.

There is a wealth of scholarship already written on Hawthorne, and of that scholarship, many researchers have investigated the relationship between Hawthorne's novels and history. Scholars like F. O. Matthiessen, Nina Baym, Jonathan Arac, and Larry Reynolds approach Hawthorne's novels through the lens of New Historicism and have influenced the development of this thesis. While their erudition using a New Historicist lens has helped shape this project, the connection between Hawthorne's work and the politics of his era have been neglected thus far.

F.O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (1941) is the first to take a more modern view of Hawthorne's

work. Matthiessen devotes the second book of four to understanding Hawthorne's place in the American Renaissance. The American Renaissance refers to the literature and art produced in the second half of the nineteenth century that was characterized by a "devotion to the possibilities of democracy" (Matthiessen ix). Matthiessen begins by placing Hawthorne's work as tragedy that has "accepted the inevitable coexistence of good and evil in man's nature" as well as possessing the power to "envisage some reconciliation between such opposites" all while maintaining "an inexorable balance" (180). Matthiessen research antedates a New Historicist view of Hawthorne's literature by relating some of the political influences of Hawthorne's time in a chapter—"Dark Necessity"—which mainly covers *The House of the Seven Gables*. Matthiesen's study of the American Reneissance provides the necessary substructure for New Historicism, but it stops short of evaluating the first three novels in a political context.

Another scholar who has written extensively over Hawthorne's oeuvre is Nina Baym. A noted feminist critic, Baym divides Hawthorne's work into three periods—birth to 1849, 1850's, and 1860's—in *The Shape of Hawthorne's Career* (1977). Baym encourages readers to evaluate Hawthorne's literature as a production of his time—historical, not necessarily political—yet much of Baym's analysis focuses on proving Hawthorne was in favor of many feminist tenets. In continuation of Baym's feminist view of Hawthorne, Lauren Berlant in *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life* (1991) argues that female characters are often allegorized as the symbol for a nation. Therefore, the political aspect of Hawthorne's time that Baym tends to neglect (the link to the nation) is expanded upon in Berlant's discussion of

Hawthorne; however, Berlant only narrowly discusses the creation of the female national symbol in terms of *The Scarlet Letter*. Some short stories are discussed in Berlant's work, but the remaining Hawthorne romances are neglected.

Jonathan Arac, though, focuses his scholarly work on Hawthorne's place in the nationalist literature of the mid-nineteenth century. More specifically, *The Emergence of American Literary Narrative* (1995) covers a forty year time period that Arac divides into three sections: local narrative, personal narrative, and literary narrative. Critical discussion in this scholarly work places Hawthorne as well as George Bancroft, Herman Melville, Edgar Allen Poe, and others in relation to each other and the building of a national narrative. Arac identifies the Compromise of 1850 as a turning point in the nationalist literature of America since it "subordinated freedom to national unity" (114). During the political instability of the 1850s, Hawthorne's romances provided an imaginary solution to the antithetical crisis since the romances take place in "neutral territory" (137, 1:36). The alignment of Hawthorne's work in relation to the literary narrative of America has aided my project overall by providing a general foundation, or a starting point; however, Arac's work only considers the authors' work as taking place before the Compromise of 1850 or after. A detailing of how the partisan politics influence the elements of Hawthorne's romances is not provided; however, it is the aim of this thesis to fill in the gap.

Within the last decade, Larry Reynolds has written *Devils and Rebels: The Making of Hawthorne's Damned Politics* (2008). Reynolds's approach to Hawthorne's work is a blending of New Historicism with biography. In other words, Reynolds traces

Hawthorne's personal political stance from youth to death based on the use of images related to revolution and witchcraft in his writing. From the beginning, Reynolds views Hawthorne's work as "quiet thought over bold action" (15). Reynolds connects the hysteria concerning witchcraft in Puritan times with the uncontrollable fear sweeping the nation during Hawthorne's time. Reynolds links Hawthorne's views on race through two historical lenses of the time: revolution and witchcraft. Reynolds's criticism brings further continuity to Hawthorne's oeuvre by reaching into the Puritan past that influenced Hawthorne's writing and bringing insight into Hawthorne's reliance on witchcraft and its associated images, which is helpful to the research done for this thesis. However, Reynolds only provides a brief overview of the political elements of the novels, and textual analysis of the political elements of Hawthorne's romances, while well-developed, are sparse. This thesis will expand upon the groundwork laid by Reynolds and will examine Hawthorne's first three romances as a product of the political instability of the 1850s.

While these scholars and others have contributed to the current view of Hawthorne and his work, an examination of the political allegories contained within the first three romances has yet to be written. A concentrated look at the first three romances is necessary for a couple of reasons. First, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The House of the Seven Gables*, and *The Blithedale Romance* signal a major shift in Hawthorne's writing: from short stories to full-length novels. In discussing longer works versus shorter works, Jonathan Arac makes the following distinction: "a long work usually establishes authorial values more securely than can an unconventional short work" (Arac 58). Therefore, a

novel—or a series of novels by the same author—should be studied to reveal the political instability of the mid-nineteenth century since a full-length narrative will provide the space necessary for developing a complete characterization. Second, Hawthorne's first three novels were published successively in 1850, 1851, and 1852, which places the composition of those novels in 1849, 1850, and 1851. In other words, this concentrated production of Hawthorne's writing may reflect the political instability of the time period. While Hawthorne borrowed from his journals and correspondence to compose sections of his romances, the frameworks for the romances or the impetus for writing were not in place prior to the political upheaval of the mid-nineteenth century. The historical period in which these romances are written has influenced (either consciously or subconsciously) Hawthorne's narratives.

The first chapter of this project will discuss Hawthorne's first novel. Hawthorne began writing *The Scarlet Letter* in 1849[2] when gold was found in California and the term Manifest Destiny was coined by John O'Sullivan. The expansion of the United States inextricably meant that issues associated with slavery would have to be discussed and agreed upon. Furthermore, there was an entreaty for the writers of the nineteenth century to create a national literature, a unique American voice. In a speech to the Phi Beta Kappa Society in 1837, Ralph Waldo Emerson began his oration by declaring an end to "our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands" (Emerson), yet in the same speech, he exhorted those assembled to "walk on [their] own feet…work with [their] own hands…speak with [their] own minds" (Emerson). Hawthorne, already established as one

[2] In a letter to J.T. Fields dated January 15, 1850, Hawthorne writes of his almost completed manuscript (16:305); therefore, the book must have been written in the preceding months.

of the leading writers of the day, pens *The Scarlet Letter*, his first[3] full-length novel, utilizing the historical setting of Puritan Boston and the political factions of his time. The first chapter examines the political allegory of *The Scarlet Letter* as a warning about the sectional politics of 1849. Hester may be read as a female allegory for the nation (Berlant 27) posed between Chillingworth and Dimmesdale, who would then represent the political factions most prevalent in the nation during 1849. The characterization of Chillingworth as a man from England signals his alignment with the traditional, conservative party. In this reading, if Chillingworth is the allegorical Whig, then Dimmesdale would be read as the radical liberal, or Democrat. At the end of Hawthorne's first romance, the warring coteries die, which seems to be a warning for the real life, and the child of Hester and Dimmesdale—the nation and a Democrat—Pearl is the lone survivor.

The second chapter details the allegory present in *The House of The Seven Gables* (1851). Hawthorne began writing his second novel in 1850 as the United States was facing division. The inclusion of new states, the boundaries of existing states, and the ongoing debate concerning slavery created a schism that threatened to divide the country. To capture the intricacies of these struggles, Hawthorne conceives of Pyncheon house. In the midst of a proprietary dispute spanning generations, the claimants to the house mirror the major political parties of 1850; however, other inhabitants of the house, like the new political parties, obscure the process of determining ownership. The initial disparity is recorded a couple of generations before the action of the story begins, and it mirrors the

[3] While *Fanshaw* (1828) is published anonymously prior to *The Scarlet Letter,* Hawthorne took steps to purge the novel from his repertoire (Wineapple 78).

formation of the United States. *The House of The Seven Gables* is the only novel in which Hawthorne provides a happy ending. This ending, though, is indicative of the compromise eventually reached by those in Congress in order to avoid a more permanent division of the house.

The final chapter details the political allegory contained in Hawthorne's third book in as many years: *The Blithedale Romance* (1852). The setting of this story at Blithedale is significant both personally and historically to Hawthorne. As a short term resident of the utopian community, Brook Farm, Hawthorne drew on his experience to provide realistic background to the fictional Blithedale—a fact Hawthorne addresses in the preface to the romance. As Hawthorne begins to pen this novel in 1851, the nation is experiencing the initial effects of the Compromise of 1850, or more specifically the effects of the Fugitive Slave Law. The social unrest caused by the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law threatens the stability of the nation and is subtly reflected through the utopia and its inhabitants. In the narrative, Blithedale's members are composed of people from all stations of life who are attempting to see each other as equals, much like the abolitionists who were grappling with the meaning and implementation of equality. In an ironic twist from his first novel, the women of Blithedale function as memetic characters for the divided Democratic party, and Coverdale, the male narrator, mirrors Hawthorne's indecision between the Democratic party and the Free Soil party. When read as an allegory, Hollingsworth's philanthropic work to reform prisons is analogous with the Whig party, who supported prison reform. The end of the romance also marks the peaceable dissolution of the fictional community, which causes personal distress for

Coverdale. The allegorical interpretation of this third novel through the lens of the Compromise of 1850 unveils a resignation for the eventual splintering of the national utopia.

The social and political impact of the Compromise of 1850 was so great that the reverberations are visible in the literature produced during the mid-nineteenth century. Therefore, the coincidental alignment between the Compromise and Hawthorne's augmented written output should be viewed as intentional, and the first three romances published in three distinct phases—debate, compromise, and immediate aftermath—of the Compromise warrants further examination as political allegories. Hawthorne initially establishes a neutral space in *The Scarlet Letter* through the characterization and setting. The impartial expanse Hawthorne creates allows the reader to objectively see the volatile political dispute through a veil of safety. As a follow-up to the moderation advocated through *The Scarlet Letter*, a political reading of *The House of the Seven Gables* reveals a call for action. The characters who gain a favorable denouement—Holgrave and Phoebe—are those who moved toward compromise. Finally, by reading *The Blithedale Romance* as a political allegory, the reader can discern the hope for a peaceable, yet disappointing and inevitable, fracturing of utopia, or the nation. The allegory of a romance may have provided the distance necessary to confront the explosive issues of slavery. The veil, to borrow a favorite image of Hawthorne, of romance was not sufficient to obfuscate the issue, so two veils had to be used.

Chapter 1

The Balancing Act

Hinting at Compromise in *The Scarlet Letter*

Most Hawthorne scholars write at some point on an aspect of *The Scarlet Letter* since it presents ambiguous interpretations to the ideological issues inherent universally. In his seminal work *American Renaissance,* F. O. Matthiessan comments that "Hawthorne's method lay in these remarkable providences, which his imagination felt challenged to search for the amount of emblematic truth that might lie hidden among their superstitions" (276-77). The "emblematic truth," as Matthiessan later points out, often takes different forms for different people and leads to Hawthorne's "device of multiple choice" (276), or the ambiguity present in Hawthorne's meaning. The abstruseness present in *The Scarlet Letter* has invited additional scholars to contemplate Hawthorne's reasons for writing and disseminating the true hegemony being advocated. Sacvan Bercovitch discusses the story in terms of "cultural symbology" or "the system of symbolic meanings that encompasses text and context alike, simultaneously nourishing the imagination and marking its boundaries" (xxxi). In *The Office of the Scarlet Letter* (1991), Bercovitch centers upon the eponymous letter whose job is not clearly defined by Hawthorne nor is its effectiveness neatly established. Much of Bercovich's analysis focuses on Hawthorne's writing as the beginning of national literature; his work mostly ignores the political climate of the time in which Hawthorne wrote. It is not until more recent times, when Larry Reynold's writes *Devils and Rebels,* in which scholars begin to look at the political landscape of the 1850s and connect the composition's time period

with the novel. While significant steps have been taken to link the political history of the time—the Compromise of 1850 (appendix A)—with *The Scarlet Letter*, this work examines *The Scarlet Letter* as a political allegory for the election of 1848 where Zachary Taylor, Lewis Cass, and Martin Van Buren sought the presidency amid the growing political uncertainty surrounding slavery.

There are myriad ways in which the political history of 1848 and 1849 is reflected in *The Scarlet Letter*. As the United States' centennial approached and debates regarding the impact of Manifest Destiny on slavery came into the forefront of American politics, Hawthorne wrote his first full-length novel, which became his most famous work. Thematically, the setting and characterization point to moderation, or a middle ground in the midst of a volatile time. Capitalizing on another uncertain time in American history—the Puritans arrival in the New World from across the Atlantic—Hawthorne stages the story in Puritan Boston. This setting allows for both extremism and moderation to be seen in an objective light. Hester's house, which is located between the forest and Boston, is symbolic; Hester, or the government, is the balance between lawlessness and lawfulness. Hester, as the compromised female of the story, is representative of the precarious position of the United States. As such, she is caught between two lovers: Chillingworth, the jealous husband, and Dimmesdale, her new and true love. These men's characterizations are indicative of the liberal and conservative politics, respectively. Furthermore, the child of Hester's illicit affair, Pearl, is characterized in a manner consistent with the newly formed Free Soil Party of 1848, and she is provided as the hope for the future. Finally, the mob in Puritan Boston is the antithesis of those who

participated in the incendiary nature of the Philadelphia riots of 1844, which are the harbingers of increasing national instability due to American expansionist ideas. When reading *The Scarlet Letter* as an allegory, the importance of moderation rises to the forefront.

The Ambiguous Yet Perfect Setting

The Scarlet Letter begins with a chapter about a prison door in which Hawthorne sets the stage for his story. Hawthorne satirically describes that the prison is located in "a new colony, whatever Utopia of human virtue and happiness they might originally project" (1:47). It is obvious from the beginning that the original settlers, from Hawthorne's point of view, intend for their settlement of the new world to be a utopia; however, as the paragraph continues, this perfect society first build a cemetery and a prison (1:47). The utopia that fails before it truly begins is fundamental to understanding Hawthorne's theme in this novel as well as his themes in his subsequent two novels. The term utopia is derived from two Greek words meaning "not" and "place" (OED). Thus a utopia etymologically means a place that is not real; however, utopia is often defined in literature as a perfect place (OED). The antonymic meanings of utopia lend the word to—what is called in logic—self-contradiction. More specifically, there is a contradiction between the word origin and the usage, the intention and the reality. This difference is what Hawthorne capitalizes on in "The Prison-Door" to establish his setting. The "founders of a new colony" (1:47) set out to establish a utopia, a perfect place located in an uninhabited land; however, these same people also provide land for a cemetery and a prison once they arrive (1:47), which negates the original intention in establishing their

society. So the origin and the usage are at odds with one another, and Hawthorne uses the ambiguity located between the two as the foundation for his theme and the tension of his story.

Hawthorne continues to use this juxtaposition of opposite meanings of utopias in the placement of Hester's house. "On the outskirts of the town, within the verge of the peninsula, but not in close vicinity to any other habitation" (1:81), Hester's house stands. It is located in a secluded area that is not associated with any other building; it is the nowhere of utopia. Furthermore, the house is located "on the shore, looking across a basin of the sea at the forest-covered hills" (1:81). The presence of water is significant since Hester has committed adultery. Among its many symbolic meanings, the water washes away all sins (Heb. 10:10), so the location of Hester's house implies the cleansing power of redemption. Eventually. When Pearl is seven, the community "refuse[s] to interpret the scarlet A by its original signification" and instead declares it to mean "Able" (1:160-1). Hester does not receive widespread forgiveness from the community until seven years pass—the holy number of completion. Therefore, the location of the house is both stratifying and unifying. Hester is both banished and accepted. The setting is both broken and ideal.

The tension present between the intention of utopia and the realization of the same utopia is captured in the concept of manifest destiny in Hawthorne's time. John O'Sullivan who is credited with coining the term "manifest destiny" wrote an article concerning the annexation of Texas. The newspaper column, which appeared in 1845, is filled with unifying terms: "Texas is now ours," "the next session of Congress will see

the representatives of the new young state in their places," and "let their [Texas's] reception in 'the family' be frank, kindly, and cheerful" ("Annexation"). The rhetoric surrounding O'Sullivan's use of "manifest destiny" is saturated with sanguine hopes for the future. The addition of Texas would be a peaceful, non-violent process that resolved the slavery debate in the United States (Reynolds 151). Harmony, inclusion, and resolution to the slavery issue were the goals of manifest destiny; however, the term had undergone dramatic semantic shift by 1849. Manifest destiny again made headlines due to the debates concerning the annexation of California; however, the usage of the term changed from inclusive family to belligerent individuality. For example, a short article published in March of 1849 suggests that the exodus of people to California will be composed of a rougher sort: "gambler, smuggler, thief, murderer, and pirate" ("Extending the Area"). The shift in rhetoric was not the only change. In the fall, the *Christian Register* attacked those who advocated war and violence under the aegis of "manifest destiny" ("A Convenient Shelter for the 'Manifest Destiny' People"). Noted historian Lester D. Langley summarizes the shifting term in his most recent book, *America and Americas*: "Manifest destiny was more the credo of the belligerent than that of the pacifist, a necessary imperative to preserve the union" (Langley 49). The term once meant for peace and inclusion became a divisive term often employed in an effort to maintain the delicate amity the nation had concerning the slavery question and land expansion.

When Texas was annexed, strong boundaries for the new state were not drawn. Instead, debate concerning the Texas boundary surfaced in early 1848 when the Treaty of

Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, and the general border between Mexico and the United States was decided upon as the Rio Grande River (US Cong. 926). The western border of Texas, though, had not been set. Instead, expansionist ideas had taken hold, and Texas's borders were "amoebalike, waxing and waning according to the biases of the cartographers" (Bordewich 63-4). Just a month after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, the Governor of Texas asked President Polk to involve the United States military in a dispute over Santa Fe, a city that Texas felt belonged to them (Bordewich 67). Santa Fe's response to the suggested governance of Texas was succinct and clear: "'we would now inform our Texas friends that it is not necessary to send us a judge, nor a district attorney, to settle our affairs'" (Binkley 8). The indistinct Texas border caused conflict for the residents of Texas and Santa Fe as well as the politicians in Washington whose job it was to mediate the disagreement. In reading *The Scarlet Letter* as a political allegory, the indeterminate location of Hester's house becomes more significant since Texas's borders are unarticulated. The location of the habitation is not given an address; the only reference points are in antipathetic terms: "outskirts of town," "abandoned," and "lonesome dwelling" (1:81). The negative space that inhabits the space between Hester's home and the town is not clearly defined just as Texas borders were left to the cartographer's discretion.

Interestingly, the original concept of manifest destiny mirrors Hawthorne's feelings concerning slavery. In 1851—after *The Blithedale Romance* is published—Hawthorne writes what will become his most controversial words for latter audiences: "slavery [is] one of those evils which divine Providence does not leave to be remedied by

human contrivances, but which, in its own good time, by some means impossible to be anticipated, but of the simplest and easiest operation, when all its uses shall have been fulfilled, it causes to vanish like a dream" (23: 352). This excerpt from *The Life of Franklin Pierce* has been used by biographers to identify Hawthorne's stance on the slavery debate; however, Brenda Wineapple points out that Sophia, Hawthorne's wife, did not think that Hawthorne "approve[d] of slavery in America, but he didn't think annexation a 'calamity,' believing or hoping that slavery would wither on the vine when it inched in to the far reaches of Mexico" (Wineapple 187). Hawthorne's controversial stance in the middle—against slavery, but against abolition—is best understood from Hawthorne's use of negative space in *The Scarlet Letter*. The indeterminate location of between these oppositional pairs begs the question of whether Hawthorne's politics are closer to those supporting slavery or inching toward those opposed to slavery. The "centrist strategy," as Sacvan Bercovitch states, allows Hawthorne to vacillate between "utopian and dystopian resolution and…its return to cultural origins speaks to the threat of fragmentation while proposing the benefits of gradualism" (87). The location of Hester's house as being excluded from both the town and the wilderness indicates the late 1840's moderate standpoint.

The Political Characters

The protagonists in *The Scarlet Letter* as well as the general mob at the beginning of the story all represent a political aspect of 1850. The character of Hester, like the earlier discussion on setting has hinted, is as a moderate. Her house is just one indication of her political affiliation. A stronger case for moderation can be made through her

relationship with both Dimmesdale and Chillingworth. Ironically, Dimmesdale the minister reflects a progressive view of the world, while Chillingworth is emblematic of a conservative Whig. Michael Ryan argues that "in the character of Chillingworth, Whig moral government is represented as an assault on the theological foundations of the Democratic political theory" (213). While overall it is my intention to agree with Ryan, the focus of this paper is not on the theological doctrine of the political parties. Instead, the focus is on the behavior of the candidates of these parties during the election of 1848 and the ensuing instability of 1849 (Appendix B). Pearl, like her mother, represents the moderate's point of view, but she is representative of an emerging group of moderates for the 1850s. The new political group that Hawthorne becomes affiliated with, the Free Soil Party, is hinted at through the character of Pearl. Finally, the social unrest of Hawthorne's time, as evidenced by the riots in 1830 and 1840, is juxtaposed with the Puritan community in *The Scarlet Letter.*

Hester, to begin with, is in a complicated relationship with two men. On one hand, Hester is married to Roger Chillingworth, a scholar from England turned doctor for Puritan Boston (1:58, 71). Chillingworth arrives in Puritan Boston on the day of Hester's punishment, and in his first conversation with a fellow citizen, he states that "'a learned man…should come himself to look into the mystery'" (1:62). Chillingworth's over-confident response from the beginning hints at the character's affiliation with the Whig party. As the legal husband of Hester, Chillingworth is standing on moral ground, and the allusion the citizen uses in response to Chillingworth reminds the reader of those morals: "that matter remaineth [sic] a riddle; and the Daniel who shall expound it is yet a-

wanting" (1:62). This biblical allusion to Daniel as interpreter of King Nebuchadnezzar's dreams (Dan. 2) is in line with the Whig doctrine, since the "Whig claim that an elite of morally superior people should exercise moral government over others through the political state (Ryan 204). Daniel maintained his allegiance to God while living in a polytheistic society just as Chillingworth asserts a moral claim to Hester despite her infidelity to him. Assured of his righteous superiority, Chillingworth later has a tense conversation with his wife in which he exacts a promise of anonymity that Hester fears "'will prove the ruin of [her] soul?'" (1:77). Hester, as the moderate, realizes the potential for danger, but she cannot precisely name it, much like those watching the election of 1848 in Massachusetts. Historian Frank Otto Gatell describes the election of 1848 as "a year of triumph and tragedy" for the Whig Party (18). The schism opening within the Whig party over slavery would have been evident to Hawthorne, whose brother-in-law Horace Mann, a Whig, was a member of Congress from Massachusetts's in 1848 (Wineapple 198). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Hawthorne would have intimate knowledge of the political machinations of the Whig Party, even though he was a Democrat.

Furthermore, Chillingworth's name is indicative of the character's alignment with the Whig party. Perhaps the most revealing aspect of the name is the breakdown of the compound patronymic into "chill" and "worth," which solidifies the character's purpose within the romance. In his first conversation with Hester in the jail, Chillingworth admits his heart has been "'lonely and chill'" (1:74) before meeting Hester, and Hawthorne uses "chill" to insert Chillingworth's presence throughout the romance. Dimmesdale endures a

"life-long chill" (1:125) when he is forced to board at the same house as Chillingworth because of his poor health. The cold that Hawthorne alludes to is Chillingworth's pursuit of Hester's lover, or Dimmesdale, and it is the quest for "others' sins, as Whigs would have government do" (Ryan 213) that Hawthorne establishes in accord with Chillingworth. Additionally, there are undercurrents of political meaning as Ryan points out: "'Chill,' in the novel's political typology, also stands opposed to terms such as 'heart'" (213). Abolitionists accused supporters of slavery of being heartless, furthermore, Henry Clay, a Whig politician who owned slaves, advocated for gradual emancipation (Ramage and Watkins 33). In an 1844 *Liberator* article, the author, dubious of Henry Clay's contradictory stance on slavery, writes "'Will Satan cast out Satan?'" ("Whig Desperation"). The rhetoric used to vilify Clay seems to be echoed in the description of Chillingworth. Pearl refers to Chillingworth as the "old Black Man" (1:134) while playing in the graveyard outside Chillingworth's window; the Black Man is a synonym for Satan. Furthermore, as a man who was fired from his Custom House job because a Whig came into office, it makes sense that Hawthorne would cast the party in a negative aspect.

The other man that Hester is in a relationship with is her lover, Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale. In a pivotal conversation with Chillingworth over secret sin, Dimmesdale first claims that "'many, many a poor soul hath given its confidence to me, not only on the death-bed, but while strong in life, and fair in reputation'" (1:132); however, in the next breath, Dimmesdale claims others "[keep] silent by the very constitution of their nature. Or,--can we not suppose it?—guilty as they may be…they shrink from displaying

themselves black and filthy in the view of men; because, thenceforward, no good can be achieved by them" (1:132). Dimmesdale's position on unconfessed sin is both that it is necessary to confess and it is necessary to keep the secret, which is in direct opposition to the Bible. Dimmesdale's inconsistency is difficult to understand in this context, so to better understand the apparent change in Dimmesdale's theology, a closer examination of the Democratic candidate in the election of 1848 should take place. Lewis Cass, a Democrat from Michigan, initially supported the Wilmot Proviso, a piece of legislation proposing that slavery is banned in all territories seized from the war (Bordewich 12); however, once Cass realized "the proviso threatened the American war effort and the unity of the Democratic party" (Klunder 293) he abandoned the idea. This change necessitated a public statement in which "Cass explained that he avoided taking a public stance on the issue of slavery expansion because his name was before the people as a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination" (294-5). In other words, Cass reversed his opinion because he did not wish to alienate the voting public. The "talking out of both sides of their mouths with respect to slavery's extension in order to appeal to both Northerners and Southerners, who interpreted their statements in different ways" (H. Hamilton 13-4) may have been a savvy political move for the presidential race of 1848, but "it made for trouble in the Presidency of 1849" (14). Dimmesdale operates in much the same way; he changes his theological ideology to suit his situation. When he must ask for the name of Hester's lover publically, he emplores, "'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). He is both pious in asking Hester to confess the name of her fellow sinner, and he is admitting his complicity in the affair when he says he will "step down" since the balcony he is on is higher than her scaffold. Dimmesdale, like the Democratic Party, tries to have it both ways.

Arthur Dimmesdale's name is also significant to his function. Dimmesdale's name is a compound word that can be broken into "dim" and "dale." While other scholars have found significance in the location of Arthur and Hester's affair, the woods, I wish to posit an additional layer of meaning: a political significance. "Dim," according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, means "not clear to the sight," and "dale" is a term for land. The obfuscation of Dimmesdale's theological stance as well as Lewis Cass's political double speak both align with the name Hawthorne bestows upon Dimmesdale. The link between dim, dale, and the political chicanery used by Cass to obtain votes is best seen through the Nicholson letter. Penned in December of 1847, Lewis Cass hoped the published letter aided his campaign for Democratic presidential nomination, which it did. In the letter, Cass summarizes: "I am opposed to the exercise of any jurisdiction by congress over this matter [the expansion of slavery]; and I am in favor of leaving to the people of any territory which may be hereafter acquired, the right to regulate it themselves" ("Letter of Mr. Cass"). Thus Cass's official position on any new land obtained from Mexico is that the territory may decide on the slavery issue themselves, but Klucher points out he "[does] not make it clear *when* the people of a territory could decide the question of slavery, or whether such a decision would be binding throughout the territorial stage of government" (296-7). Therefore, the issue concerning slavery and

territory is unclear like the name Dimmesdale. Furthermore, Dimmesdale's character in *The Scarlet Letter* is also frozen by inaction. Dimmesdale is aware of his sin and the need for penance; however, the "bloody scourge," fasting, and "vigils…night after night" (1:144) could not erase the sin of which Dimmesdale is guilty. In fact, no punishment—self-inflicted or torture by Chillingworth—convinces Dimmesdale of his. As his name reflects, there are no clear indications of his true sorrow on this point.

Hester, on the other hand, functions in much the same way as the American public. Situated between the man she married and the father of her child, Hester struggles to maintain the relationship with both men as equal. The initial conversation with Chillingworth reflects this idea when Chillingworth calls on Hester to keep his identity secret since she is keeping her lover's name a secret (1: 76). The logic Chillingworth employs here suggests a fair and balanced race from the beginning with each party treated to the same terms. Even the chapter titles maintain this equality; one chapter is entitled "Hester and the Physician" while another is "The Pastor and His Parishioner." While there is equality between these two men and their demands on Hester's time, Hawthorne provides a sympathetic view to Dimmesdale, the Democrat. The preference is unsurprising since Brenda Wineapple notes in her biography of Hawthorne that he was a self-proclaimed Democrat (70). In Lauren Berlant's book *The Anatomy of National Fantasy*, Berlant proposes that the women are often used for political purposes as the icon of a nation (27), and history supports this assertion. In Latin, nations are given the feminine ending "a" (as in Roma or Italia), and New World maps from 1490s through 1600s had a tradition of using the female form as allegorical figures. The allegorical

female represents strength as a “Mother” figure as well as exploitation (26-27), and Hester meets both of those criteria. She is the single mother of Pearl, and she is being used by both Dimmesdale and Chillingworth. Caught between two men, Hester has to choose between “reasons of the heart and the claims of institutions—and conflict is precisely what the letter is designed to eliminate” (Bercovitch 8).

The focus on the scarlet letter that gives its name to the book is a topic that has been hotly debated. Sacvan Bercovitch argues that the letter is to eliminate conflict in book and it does not complete its office according to Hawthorne (Bercovitch 8). However, the exact job it is to complete is unclear. Being an extension of Hester, the citizen on the United States, the letter is her burden to make a good decision between the two parties: to vote. Hawthorne alludes to this idea and confronts the obvious problem concerning this analogy early in the book: “Hester Prynne came to have a part to perform in the world. With her native energy of character and rare capacity, it could not entirely cast her off, although it had set a mark upon her, more intolerable to a woman’s heart than that which branded the brow of Cain” (1:84). The mark about which Hawthorne writes is the scarlet letter that is especially burdensome to women. While Hawthorne progressively places a female as the voting citizen who must choose, he allows the caveat that women are not well-suited to the pressures of deciding. Furthermore, in the end, Hester fails to decide on one man or another for life. Dimmesdale, who she leans toward choosing, is too weak to escape Puritan Boston and dies, while Chillingworth is never considered as a long-term option. Her failure to choose means that the office of the letter fails.

Fortunately, though, the story does not end with Hester; she has a child. Hawthorne provides a new generation of citizen in Pearl, the heiress of both Chillingworth and Dimmesdale (1:261). Specifically, Pearl represents the newly formed Free Soil Party. The child of Hester and Dimmesdale "[can] not be made amenable to rules" (1:91) and is rejected by the Puritan children (1:94), yet she is also adored by nature. As Hester abandons Pearl to intercept Dimmesdale near the romance's conclusion, Pearl is left to find entertainment alone in the woods. Fortunately, the wild animals in the forest have united in an effort to welcome the child into their neighborhood: a mother partridge and her children, a pigeon, a squirrel, a fox, and even a wolf greet the child—at this last animal even Hawthorne recognizes the assembly borders on "improbable" (1:204). Pearl's alignment with nature hints at the Free Soil Party whose motto espouses "'free soil, free labor, and free men'" (Esh 53). The Free Soil party broke away from the established two-party system and was comprised of disgruntled Whigs and Democrats who had already splintered from the political parties: "Barnburners, 'Conscience' Whigs, and abolitionists" (Esh 53). This motley crew of voters were "willing[ ] to walk out of [their] own party" (53) and lose the election of 1848 as long as it meant that the pro-slavery Democrats did not win. Hawthorne hints at his disgust with politics in "The Custom House" sketch before the story begins. His job at the Salem Custom House was lost due to the election of 1848 when Zachary Taylor, Whig, was elected as President.

Finally, the witnesses of Hester's humiliation in the beginning bear similarities with the mobs and riots of the 1830s and 1840s. As more and more citizens recognized

the challenges inherent with Manifest Destiny and expansionist politics, groups began to organize and riot in response, and one group dedicated to the preservation of origin was the Native American party. One of the more volatile reactions involving the Native American party took place in May 1844 over the course of four days. As reported by *The New York Evangelist,* a meeting of the Native American party in Philadelphia was interrupted by a disorderly group, and the violent clashes resulted in the death of several people, destruction of two churches, and the eventual call for Martial Law ("Dreadful Riots in Philadelphia"). The passionate response of those at the meeting may have been related to the politics of the Native American party. The group is comprised of people on the periphery, not politicians (Levine 456), and as such, members may have felt disregarded by the mainstream politicians, which would lead to fear and violence. One of the primary focal points of the Native American party—also known as the Know-Nothing party and the American party—is resistance to change, and the change could be Catholics wanting to teach with their Bible or resistance to the high number of immigrants arriving in the city (Dorsey 15). The four day riot in May was followed by another three-day riot in July prompted by the Independence Day celebrations (Dorsey 17).

The incendiary passions of radical groups like the Native Americanists appear to be in opposition to the mob assembled in Puritan Boston; however, a close examination reveals the two groups are linked to one another. From the introductory description of the mob at Hester's ignominy, Hawthorne hints that the seemingly sedate citizen may have a "coarser fibre [sic]" (1:50) in them. Furthermore, the women of Puritan Boston gossip about Hester's sentence by suggesting she is branded or killed (1:51), but they are

dissuaded from physically attacking her. The vehement discussion of the crowd intimates the rumblings of Hawthorne's time. The difference for Hawthorne is that the crowd he controls in the book only inflicts psychological damage, while the crowd he cannot control physically terrorizes a city. Jonathan Arac posits that "Hawthorne's meditations on the Puritan crowd as the basis for modern politics form a sober counterpoint to the controversies in the popular press (Arac 60-1). Thus, Hawthorne takes the rowdy and highly volatile activities of his present day and uses the polar opposite to show the extremities of American political life. It appears that there is danger in having the mob act on their feelings; Hawthorne's writing might be "transformed into apparent approval of either abolitionism or antiabolitionism—neither of which Hawthorne supported" (Arac 61). In an effort to stay neutral, Hawthorne opted for the disgruntled women over the violent crowd.

The tenuous position of the United States can be seen when examining the political allegory in *The Scarlet Letter.* The utopia-like government is found to have a significant weakness for which the founding fathers did not provide: slavery. On March 7, 1850, Daniel Webster delivered a famous speech concerning the Compromise of 1850. It begins:

> Mr. President, I wish to speak today, not as a Massachusetts man, nor as a northern man, but as an American, and a member of the Senate of the United States. It is fortunate that there is a Senate of the United States…a body to which

> the country looks with confidence, for wise, moderate, patriotic, and healing counsels. (Webster)

The overall tone of Webster's address in the beginning is conciliatory. He denounces all individual factions and calls people to unite for a larger cause, being an American. While Webster's speech did not have an impact on the composition of *The Scarlet Letter*, the sentiments Webster expresses are shared by Hawthorne in reading his romance as an allegory.

The thematic focus of *The Scarlet Letter* is to inhabit the middle ground. Hester is a balanced character in that she sins and then suffers the consequences and both the knowledge of her transgression and penance take place publically. Similarly, Hester's house is located in indeterminate space between the town and the wilderness. On the other hand, Chillingworth, who single mindedly hunts for Hester's lover to torture him, dies alone, and the same fate is given Dimmesdale who hides his affair with Hester until the moment before he dies. Avoiding the extremes is rewarded in *The Scarlet Letter*. When viewing *The Scarlet Letter* as a political allegory, the theme becomes especially relevant for the volatile debates of 1848 and 1849. The contentious debates regarding Manifest Destiny and the expansion of slavery may have influenced Hawthorne's writing. Locating the middle ground, not to act but to inhabit, seems to be urged by Hawthorne, but is finding "neutral territory" enough? If we read *The Scarlet Letter* as a political allegory, the answer becomes apparent in Hawthorne's second romance about a house with two owners.

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Chapter 2

The House Divided

The Struggle for the White House in *The House of the Seven Gables*

Although *The Scarlet Letter* was published in the spring of 1850, Hawthorne wrote his publisher, J.T. Fields, in late August 1850 concerning his new romance that he hoped to have ready by November (16:359). *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) was published just over a year after *The Scarlet Letter*, and within that time frame, the United States lost a President and faced the crisis of 1850, which culminated in the Compromise of 1850 (Appendix A). The eight bills associated with the Compromise passed Congressional vote during the first half of September 1850 (Bordewich 344-5), so Hawthorne was composing his second romance while the debates concerning the Compromise took place. In fact, Hawthorne records his frustration with the progress of his new romance in a letter to Fields in early November and laments it will not be ready for publication by the first of the year (16:371). He claims the new romance "requires more care and thought than the 'Scarlet Letter'" and "many passages of this book ought to be finished with the minuteness of a Dutch picture" (16:371).With Hawthorne beginning the story in August and expecting its completion in November, the premise and theme for *The House of the Seven Gables* was evidently in place. However, the specific tone that Hawthorne hoped to establish took more time and care, and it occurred as news of the Compromise reached the public.

While *The Scarlet Letter* continues to be referenced in modern culture,[4] *The House of the Seven Gables* does not enjoy the same contemporary popularity. Therefore, a brief description of the romance needs to be given. The plot of *The House of the Seven Gables* centers on a mystery concerning the true ownership of the house as well as the land around it. The first chapter begins with a history of the house covering several generations. Matthew Maule originally builds a house on an arable piece of land, but Colonel Pyncheon, an aristocrat who greedily desires the land, accuses Maule of witchcraft to obtain the land. Maule, innocent of the false charges, curses the Pyncheon family upon his death, though. Once in Pyncheon hands, the house Maule built is replaced with a grand house of seven gables; however, Colonel Pyncheon dies the day the house is completed without disclosing to an heir the location of its deed. As the story begins, the current inhabitant of the house, Hepzibah Pyncheon, is a middle-aged spinster of poor pecuniary means, yet she refuses the help of her overbearing cousin, Jaffrey Pyncheon, a doppelganger of Colonel Pyncheon. Instead, Hepzibah takes on a boarder, Holgrave, and opens a small shop in the house to earn money. Hepzibah's brother, Clifford, returns from prison to live at the house, and Phoebe, a country cousin, also joins Hepzibah in the seven gabled house. In the story's denouement, Holgrave, a descendent of Maule, and Phoebe resolve the location of the missing paperwork and become engaged. The house is ultimately abandoned by all involved, and Holgrave and Phoebe invite the living Pyncheons to live with them in the country.

[4] In Samuel Chase Coale's *The Entanglements of Nathaniel Hawthorne,* the opening chapter "The Legacy of the Scarlet Letter: Hawthorne in Contemporary Culture" details the use of *The Scarlet Letter* in contemporary culture.

One of the early scholars to provide an extended analysis of Hawthorne's second novel is F. O. Matthiessan in his 1941 *American Renaissance*. Matthiessan's examination begins with a thorough discussion of Hawthorne's controversial stance on slavery. Matthiessan posits that Hawthorne's complex political views stem from the mixture of his identification with the Democratic Party and his conservative values (318). However, once Matthiessan begins his analysis of the novel, only political surface issues like aristocracy and power are addressed. Further discussion of political parties or the threat of civil war is not included. More recently, Larry Reynolds wrote *Devils and Rebels* (2008) which discusses the evolution of Hawthorne's politics in each chapter. In the introductory portion of Reynolds's chapter on *The House of The Seven Gables*, he too discusses Hawthorne's link with the Free Soil and Democratic Party, but Reynolds adds information regarding the political disputes associated with the Compromise of 1850. Unlike Matthiessan, Reynolds includes discussion of political elements alongside his analysis of the novel. While Reynolds's inquiry is well researched, there is a focus on Hawthorne's personal life and personal politics woven into the analysis. While Reynolds is not the first to speculate on Hawthorne's political ideology, it is impossible to discern a writer's personal beliefs from their creative writing. What can be examined, though, are the historical influences of the time period in which the piece was written.

While the fictional and the historical elements of Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* have been explored separately, this chapter will merge the separate spheres of fictional and historical to explore the political allegory that Hawthorne writes in the novel. The Compromise of 1850 was a hard-fought political battle, and at the time of the

publication of *The House of the Seven Gables*, the compromise was less than one year old. The political struggle for dominance in the Houses of Congress is reflected through the eponymous venue of the novel. Set in the midst of a generational history, the conflict regarding the ownership of Pyncheon House spans just over one hundred and fifty years, from the 1690s to 1850. The characterizations of the two families that claim ownership of the house mirror the major political parties of the 1850s: Democrat and Whig. As for a leader, Hepzibah Pyncheon as the sole inhabitant of the house is the improbable frontrunner. The ambitious scope of the story also includes important historical decisions like the admission of California as a state—a territory containing the precious commodity of gold—and the fragile compromise regarding slavery. Additionally, there are resemblances between the various political factions of the 1850s and the diverse, yet static, minor characters. The tumultuous political atmosphere of the late 1840s and early 1850s led to a splintering of the two-party system in the United States that is seen through the characterization of Uncle Venner, Clifford, Phoebe, and Holgrave. In framing his work as an allegory, Hawthorne again places the romance in "neutral territory" (1:36) which allows the reader to remove themselves from the emotionally charged events of reality. It is only through dissecting the political allegory of *The House of the Seven Gables* that one can truly make sense of the denouement and the cautious optimism that closes the novel.

Setting of the Past and Present

Pyncheon house, or the house of the seven gables, is given an elaborate, yet disputed, one hundred and sixty year history (2:10-11) that is linked with the history of

America's beginning. Often overlooked, yet fascinating, aspects of Hawthorne's writing are the mathematic puzzles in his stories, and two such puzzles exist in this story. *The House of the Seven Gables* is published in 1851, and when one subtracts the one hundred and sixty years mentioned in the first chapter from the publication time, the colonial year 1691 is the result. The year 1691 is significant in history since that is the year in which the Plymouth settlement is officially dissolved and replaced by a new charter from England that combines the Plymouth colony and the Massachusetts Bay colony (IV. Massachusetts). In other words, 1691 is the year that two colonies dissolve into one. This major change for the two settlements is reflected antithetically in the story: instead of combining the two settlements into one, the story begins with one house that has two different owners. Furthermore, the house's seven gables are significant in a mathematical manner, too. Robert A. Ferguson notes "the seven gables of the house mark off the decades from the founding of the nation" (46). Seven decades before the publication of *The House of the Seven Gables* is 1781, or the year in which the Articles of Confederation are ratified. Thus, the house is representative of the United States of America in both colonial history and the time of publication. The fact that the house, or the government, is under dispute, though, is significant as well.

The first chapter provides detail concerning the complex ownership of the house of the seven gables, which also initiates the major mystery of the novel: who really owns the land on which the house resides? The house that is compared to "a great human heart, with a life of its own" has a "meditative look" (2:27) on the second story. From the early descriptions, it appears the house has its own personality outside of the ownership

debate—a beating heart with a thoughtful look. By giving these life-like characteristics to the house, Hawthorne links the disposition of the inhabitant with the exterior of the house, which deepens the concern regarding the financial crisis in the house. The personification imbued to the house hints at other comparisons for the historical abode. Inside the Pyncheon house, the facility is in disrepair and shows signs of pecuniary want (2:33-34). In the same way, the White House in 1850 was in such a state of shabbiness and "Fillmore was so disgusted that he took up temporary residence in Georgetown" (Bordewich 281). In an allegorical sense, Hawthorne is comparing the incarnate Pyncheon house to the living federal government. Gregory Peck, a historian focusing upon the antebellum era, writes primarily about the political changes that took place during the antebellum period. In the 1820s and 1830s, voters became interested "in the fate of democracy and economic development [which] spurred their participation in the political system, [and] led to the rise of the Democratic and Whig parties" (Peck 145). The creation of the two-party system begins because of voting patterns, and the Democratic and Whig parties are mirrored in the ownership dispute regarding Pyncheon House. Unfortunately, the two-party System of Democrat and Whig begins to collapse in the 1840s and 1850s as "voters' growing interest in slavery's influence on economic opportunity and the meaning of freedom" (145-146) varied widely and splintered the two resolute parties, which will be explored later. Nevertheless, the disputed ownership of Pyncheon House in the first chapter provides the foundation for Hawthorne's allegory of the United States government. The two potential owners, Matthew Maule and Colonel Pyncheon, are representatives of the Democrat and Whig parties, respectively.

The Democratic representative to the house of the seven gables' dispute is Matthew Maule, a hard-working landowner. The Maules, in general, are "always plebian and obscure; working with unsuccessful diligence at handicrafts…living here and there about town, in hired tenements, and coming finally to the alms house" (2:25). While Matthew Maule does not build the house with seven gables, he does dig the well that resides on the property, and his son is hired to build the great house (2:10). Given Maule's economic background and commoner status, Maule is like a Democrat. Democrats in the 1840s were "agrarian, suspicious of economic development, and jealous of concentrated power" (Eyal 248). While Matthew Maule's story does not begin with an attitude of distrust for authority, he and his progeny become suspicious of those who wield power. In the Democratic party, a rift between Northern and Southern delegates had been increasing. The division within the Democratic party can be seen through the betrayal Maule experiences at the hands of Colonel Pyncheon. In an article appearing in July 1849, the pro-slavery author writes of "friends in Congress from the North, belonging to the Democratic party, who nobly defended and maintained her rights [in favor of slavery]. But now, what is the state of things? Nearly all those friends have been stricken down" ("Who Has Betrayed the South"). Hawthorne was notably one of those "friends." As a supporter of the Democratic party, he switched his allegiance to the Free Soil party because of their stance on slavery (16:456).

To digress, however, the well that Maule digs has "soft and pleasant water" (2:6), and Maule's Well, which it is known as even after the Pyncheon family claims the land, is valued for the water but more so for its central location in town. Unfortunately, Maule

is a working-class man who is "executed for the crime of witchcraft" (2:7), so his descendants are unable to retain ownership of the land. In having Maule accused of witchcraft, Hawthorne uses a motif with which he is intimately familiar. Hawthorne's great grandfather was "a Salem magistrate during the witchcraft delusion of 1692" (Wineapple 15)—the year after Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies combine. Larry Reynolds devotes a whole chapter of his book *Devils and Rebels* to the subject of witchcraft in Hawthorne's writing. One of the conclusions drawn is that "Hawthorne indeed felt guilty about the role his ancestors played in Puritan history" (Reynolds 52), so Maule is a character with which the reader is supposed to sympathize. This compassion is purposeful, too, because Hawthorne was "a stalwart Democrat" (Wineapple 70). To further illustrate Hawthorne's remorse for his ancestor's actions and his belief in the Democratic Party, the ultimate owner of the house is Holgrave, or as he confesses in the end, a descendant of Matthew Maule (2:316). Thus, the Democratic claim to the house is found in Maule's claim.

The other possible owner is Colonel Pyncheon, a wealthy and powerful statesman, who buys the surrounding land and assumes ownership of Maule's land. Moreover, Colonel Pyncheon claims to have bought a large amount of land from the local Indians, but he dies before he is able to prove the legal sale (2:18-19). Colonel Pyncheon is the Whig representative in the struggle for the house of the seven gables. Michael Ryan provides a summary of the basic thinking of Whigs as "an elite of morally superior people [that] should exercise moral government over others through the political state" (204). The land dispute between Colonel Pyncheon and Maule as well as Colonel

Pyncheon and the Indians displays the sense of entitlement to which Ryan alludes. “There is something so massive, stable, and almost irresistibly imposing, in the exterior presentment of established rank and great possessions” (2:25), and being in possession of rank and wealth, Colonel Pyncheon imposes the law as he sees fit by purchasing, or taking, the land he desires. Furthermore, it is rumored that Colonel Pyncheon not only “joined in the general cry, to purge the land from witchcraft” (2:8), but he participates as one of Maule’s foremost accusers when Maule is suspected of witchcraft. Reynolds, again in his chapter on witchcraft in Hawthorne’s writing, observes that Hawthorne is doubtful of “the ways in which the evil perceived by the most prominent witch-hunters reveal more about themselves than about the devil” (77). Therefore, the Puritanical zeal with which Colonel Pyncheon accuses Maule of witchcraft actually exposes Pyncheon’s true self, the true devil of the story; however, because of Pyncheon’s elevated status in the community, he is not suspected of any wrongdoing. The righteous condemnation that Colonel Pyncheon portrays combined with his power within the community to parallel with the Whig party; the Whigs were in control of the presidency from 1848 to 1852. Some scholars go so far as to suspect that Charles Upham, a Whig from Massachusetts who persuaded President Taylor to fire Hawthorne from his job at the Salem Custom House, is the model for Judge Pyncheon (Reynolds 170). Nevertheless, as one opposed to Whig politics, Hawthorne’s feelings in regards to the Whig party as suspicious can be applied to his characterization of Pyncheon as a shifty leader in the community. Furthermore, Colonel Pyncheon’s descendent, Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon, has also retained a penchant for living the double-life first exhibited by the Colonel. Judge Pyncheon is, in

his youth, an "irreclaimable scapegrace" (2:311) who frames Clifford for murder, but as the story begins, the Judge is "unquestionably an honor to his race" (24). The Pyncheon family, while wealthy, is not meant to be admired; they are merely claimants to the physical house. In the same way, Whigs are simply one of two political parties that can inhabit the Houses of Congress. It should also be noted that Hawthorne, like his affinity for Democrats, has an aversion to Whigs. As the moral leaders of the community, Whigs often held jobs like judge and minister. While Hawthorne repents of his ancestor's mistakes regarding the Salem witch trials, he often "regard[s] with suspicion the role of judge as well as appeals to his passions in seeking condemnation of others" (Reynolds 52). In making the current Pyncheon a respected judge and the past Pyncheon an accuser of witchcraft, Hawthorne is providing additional reasons to mistrust the family of powerful and wealthy people as well as the Whig party.

While the plot is driven forward by the question of which man owns the house, there is another major character that inhabits the house. Hepzibah Pyncheon is "not a young and lovely woman, nor even the stately remains of beauty, storm-shattered by affliction—but gaunt, sallow, rusty-jointed maiden, in a long-waisted silk-gown, and with the strange horror of a turban on her head!" (2:41). Hepzibah's description, while comical, is not feminine; rather it is masculine. The disjuncture of Hepzibah's physical appearance and her patronymic provide a mask for her role in the story. Nina Byam makes the case for Hepzibah to be the protagonist and heroine of the story despite her appearance and unwillingness to take on the role (609). As a "figure of mingled parody and pathos" (608), Hepzibah is an unlikely and reluctant heroine that most resembles the

enigmatic executive branch of the United States government. Aside from the obvious parallel regarding the residence of the divided house—the President lives in the White House and Hepzibah resides in the house of the seven gables—the head of the government during the Compromise of 1850 changed due to the sudden death of President Zachary Taylor. Because of this change, a direct parallel between President Taylor and Hepzibah is complicated by the presence of a second president, President Millard Fillmore. Thus, the comparisons with Hepzibah, while specific to each President, are generally stated as the executive office.

To begin, President Taylor, before obtaining the White House, was "devoid of civilian accomplishments beyond the management of his Louisiana plantation," but his savvy regarding the "nation's political landscape was surprisingly current for a soldier" (Bordewich 24). While President Taylor's endeavors up until his election were limited to the battlefield, Hawthorne capitalizes on this leader's lack of resume in his characterization of Pyncheon House's chief resident. Hepzibah decides to open a cent-shop not because she particularly likes work or because she has past experience with the work but since she is unfit for the regular jobs women would typically take: seamstress and governess (2:38-39). She feels she must provide for her brother who is soon to gain his freedom after being wrongfully incarcerated. As head of the household, she fills the masculine duty as the financial provider. In fact, Hepzibah grows stronger throughout the story: "she [is] enriched by poverty, developed by sorrow, elevated by the strong and solitary affection of her life, and thus endowed with heroism" (2:133). The weak and unremarkable woman becomes the strong defender because of what she has suffered. In

the same way, President Fillmore evolved from Vice President to President. The death of President Taylor in early July 1850 automatically promoted Vice President Millard Fillmore to the Presidency. In a letter dated July 10, 1850, Millard Fillmore addressed both Houses of Congress: "I appeal to you to aid me under the trying circumstances which surround me in the discharge of the duties from which, however much I may be oppressed by them I have not shrunk" ("By Last Night's Mails"). This correspondence, which was printed in several newspapers, characterizes the newly appointed President of the United States as a humble man who understands the difficulty of the battle in front of him. Hepzibah's determination to persevere as the head of her house echoes Fillmore's letter: she is underprepared yet she is willing to face the challenge. However, instead of overcoming the obstacles in confident manner, Hawthorne satirizes Hepzibah's timid and reluctant opening of the shop—"The crisis was upon her!" (2:42). Of course the nation was in crisis, too, as Millard Fillmore took the oath of office. Questions regarding his personal and political ideology abounded, and as a partial answer to the rumors circulating, an editorial writer testifying to his knowledge of President Fillmore as a man complimented him as "too dignified—that he does not mix enough with the common people. He was never in his early days found at low taverns and groggeries, playing the demagogue with rowdies" ("Day Book"). In the same way, Hepzibah "[acquits] herself even less creditably, as a shopkeeper" (2:66) because her status as an aristocrat limits her relationship with the customers she must wait upon (2:54). Despite her lack of resume, like President Fillmore, she finds a way to succeed. Bordewich notes that it was "Fillmore's personal influence" (333) as the President that ultimately saw the fruition of

the Compromise of 1850. President Fillmore's work as the Vice President prepared him for the rigor of the presidency.

While the allegorical comparison thus far regarding Hepzibah is mixed with both positive and negative, Hawthorne had respect for the office of the President, which may be hard to believe since the Presidents were men and Hepzibah is a woman. Nonetheless, Hepzibah's name is an allusion to the Bible. Hepzibah is a queen, and she is the mother to Manasseh (2 Kings 21:1). The President of the United States is like a loving mother: the president is responsible for the citizens of his/her country. However, in true Hawthornian style, this compliment comes with a warning of its own; Manasseh was an evil king who destroyed all the good his father had done before him (2 Kings 21:2-3). While Hawthorne seems to acknowledges the supremacy of the executive branch, he also warns that it can change for better or worse at any moment. So, the story begins with one house, two possible owners, and a warning about leaders, but the story also reflects the political upheaval that occurs with the Compromise of 1850.

The conflict regarding the ownership of the house of the seven gables is also linked historically with the period in which the story is published. The nation that was once one, the United States of America, is threatening in 1850 to splinter into two distinct nations. The impetus for the split is obvious: slavery. Most of the bills that make up the Compromise of 1850 are related to the topic of slavery. A specific bill—and topic of contentious debate—regarded the admission of California as a state, not a territory. In order to become a state, Congress had to first recognize and organize the territory; however, Henry Clay, a leading Whig senator from Kentucky, proposed that California

skip the territory stage and become a state immediately (H. Hamilton 54). One of the main reasons for the unusual admission of the state is the presence of gold in the proposed territory. In a letter reprinted in the *Daily National Intelligencer* in 1849, Henry Schoolcraft describes the gold as "fragments [ ] found in the valley of the Sacramento in the shape of pebbles and sand" ("Diluvial Gold Deposite [sic] of California"). Another short article from Mississippi in 1850 claims that gold "collects round the pebbles at the bottom of the rivers" ("California Gold"). The valuable land of California would yield revenue—"there must be gold enough in California to pay the debt of England" ("California Gold"). Furthermore, politicians could see the advantage of extending the borders of the United States all the way to the Pacific Ocean (Bordewich 50). In the same way, Maule's Well, only briefly mentioned at the beginning of *The House of The Seven Gables*, is described in detail later as being "a fountain…with what appeared to be a sort of mosaic-work of variously colored pebbles" (2:88). The description of the fictional spring is consistent with John Marshall's descriptions of gold "'pellicule,'" or pebbles of gold, found in California (Bordewich 17) as well as the first-hand accounts printed in newspapers. Furthermore, both the gold and water from the well were economic commodities after which people desired. Therefore, California's gold, like Maule's Well, is sought after for the wealth it can bring.

The connection between the property ownership of Pyncheon house and the debates regarding California's inclusion into the United States is based upon the intersection of theory and law. In the preface to *The House of The Seven Gables,* Hawthorne famously defines the difference between a romance and a novel. A romance

"while, as a work of art, it must rigidly subject itself to laws, and while it sins unpardonably, so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart—has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances to a great extent of the writer's own choosing or creation" (2:1). In other words, a romance allows a writer more freedom, but writers must still compose their work within certain boundaries, or laws. Hawthorne's definition of romance is similar to the definition of an allegory because Hawthorne is combining the abstract, or freedom, with the concrete, or laws. Reynolds summarizes the issue this way: "Hawthorne always notice[s] how stories [are] told, especially the ways the imaginary [can] combine with the actual" (68). The shift from the imagined to the tangible is significant, and Milette Shamir extends this concept by saying "Hawthorne's definition of romance, thus, spills over from the purely literary into the legal domain" (747). By focusing on the legal issue of ownership in the story, Hawthorne provides an avenue through which to view the challenges facing the nation regarding states' boundaries.

Henry Clay elaborated on his proposal to accept California as a new state, as well as other bills comprising the Compromise of 1850, in early February of 1850 by addressing the slavery issue related to admitting California as a state—will California be introduced as a free state or a slave state? In Clay's opinion, "delegates to a constitutional convention, backed by voters in a referendum, could determine whether their fledgling state would accept or reject slavery" (H. Hamilton 56). Thus Clay formally declares Californians have the right to choose—a legal stance—but he is almost assured that California will choose to become a free state—a supposition, and therefore abstract

(Bordewich 131-132). Newspapers editorialized Clay's remarks with sarcasm, "Henry Clay comes forward with a Compromise, as he calls it. He concedes to the North certain *sentiments*" ("'Watchman! What of the Night?'"). The vitriolic attitude of the nation, though, was not limited to Clay and his proposal; Daniel Webster also sought the middle ground and received acerbic attacks. Webster's Seventh of March speech in support of Clay's compromise also earned derision: "Where has winter been grim enough to fright slavery away? In Russia? Where has labor been hard enough to tempt a man to work for himself, and make him hate to force another to work for him?" (Philips). In his speech, Webster parallels the concrete with the abstract. Holman Hamilton summarizes Webster's opening remarks on the subject of California and slavery: "Had not earlier Americans looked upon slavery as a political rather than a moral evil?" (76). Webster pairs the legal or political issue with the aesthetic, moral issue, which is later paralleled by Hawthorne through determining the proprietor of Pyncheon House. Like the mystery surrounding the ownership of Pyncheon House, the debate over slavery was not resolved in the early part of 1850, much to the chagrin of editorialists. Criticisms like the thirty-first Congress "made a woful [sic] beginning; it has been six months in session, and it has enacted but four laws" ("Art. X—1 Speech of Henry Clay"), and doomsday rhetoric such as, "The speeches before us are significant indications of such a storm on our national horizon" (Art. VII.—The Churches) were common. To cope with the negativity surrounding any action regarding slavery, Hawthorne had to cloak the issue in a romance to "effectually convince mankind (or, indeed, any one man) of the folly of tumbling down an avalanche of ill-gotten gold, or real estate" (2:2).

The combination of colonial history, fiction, and current history into parallel structures is a unique technique. Brenda Wineapple aptly describes *The House of The Seven Gables* as "a book of middle ages," (235) and while Wineapple is not commenting upon the parallelism of the story, she is commenting upon the theme: "for time is the novel's cardinal theme, time and its relentless passage in a world hell-bent on progress" (235). Hawthorne weaves this theme of time in an overt manner through the history of the house and in a covert manner in the structure of the book, and through the connection of these allusions, Hawthorne is providing a warning. The allusions connect the colonial time of 1691 and its amalgamation of colonies with the current time with its disputes over slavery to highlight a tale of potential disaster. In the unconcealed portion of the allusion, the house, whose ownership is under dispute until the very end, is paired with the beginning of the nation. Hawthorne's story of the Pyncheon family involves ambition, greed, fear, and death; however, if read as a political allegory, the same adjectives can apply to the United States. The divisive politics could result in a civil war, but the allegorical Pyncheon house, in the end, is abandoned (2:314). The potential for division vanishes into nothing because the representatives of the two opposing parties unite in the ultimate compromise: the marriage of Holgrave and Phoebe. By writing a romance, Hawthorne can espouse his opinions without risk of censure: he was a Free Soiler, living in a Whig stronghold.

The House Politicians

A second major aspect of Hawthorne's writing that further reinforces the political allegory is found through characterization of the minor characters living in or associated

with Pyncheon House and the unsatisfactory ending to the plot. Critical reception during Hawthorne's lifetime first touched upon the problem of plot in *The House of The Seven Gables*. Early critic and friend Edwin Percy Whipple reviewed the story for *Graham's Magazine* and found "the first hundred pages of the volume [as] masterly in conception and execution…[but] other portions of the book have not the same force, precision, and certainty of handling" (168). Whipple is referring to the narrative shift that occurs when Clifford Pyncheon physically arrives at the house. The problems that Clifford's arrival from prison creates—how to entertain him, help him, keep him safe—slow the storytelling and divert attention from the mystery. While this less than glowing recommendation for the book begins Whipple's review, he provides a different assessment of the characterizations, which are the "best of Hawthorne's individualizations" and "his masterpieces of characterization" (169). This mixed review is mirrored across the Atlantic, too. Anthony Trollope claims the story is "bought in with less artistic skill, because the author has labored over his plot, and never had it clear to his own mind;" however, in the same article, Trollope concedes that there are well-drawn characters (Trollope 203). The misalignment between the descriptions of the characters and the action of the story is explored in this section. *The House of the Seven Gables* is both good in terms of characterization and unsatisfactory in terms of plot.

As primarily passive characters; Uncle Venner, Clifford, Phoebe, and Holgrave seem little more than stock characters. However, once the characterization of the protagonists and antagonist are considered through a political lens, these secondary characters possess commonalities similar to the political dysfunction of the antebellum

period. In the 1840s and 1850s, the political climate of Washington was sundered. In Holman Hamilton's history of the Compromise of 1850, he notes "the Senate [was] comprised [of] not two but four principal parties" (33). The propagation of the additional political parties is elaborated on by political historian Graham Peck. In a chapter written in *Practicing Democracy*, Peck observes voters in the 1840s and 1850s experienced a "growing interest in slavery's influence on economic opportunity and the meaning of freedom [which] led them to experiment with various alternatives to the established parties" (145-6). Therefore, as voters became increasingly aware of the economic impact of the slave trade, the American voter often re-evaluated their political allegiance. Just as the government division between Democrat and Whig are reflected in the contested ownership of Pyncheon House, the splintering of the political parties is seen in through the characterization of those either associated with or living in the house of the seven gables.

The first character to examine is Uncle Venner, a sympathetic traditionalist who is similar to those of the older generation who founded the Whig party. The history of Uncle Venner, while brief, provides an extensive history this Pyncheon man's association and disassociation from the family. From the outset, Uncle Venner is "in extreme old age" (2:61), yet he visits Hephzibah on her first day of business and offers advice regarding the shop (2:60-2). Uncle Venner's mother at some point in the history of the family married a Pyncheon man, but instead of being accepted by the family, Uncle Venner's mother is "persecuted" (2:60), according to Hephzibah. Thus Uncle Venner, while a Pyncheon man, is viewed sympathetically even though he is a Pyncheon heir. In a

similar manner, some of the northern Whig leaders are also aged men. Henry Clay, from Kentucky, and Daniel Webster, from Massachusetts, both returned to the United States Senate in 1849 as a septuagenarian and a sexagenarian, respectively, after previously declaring their retirement (H. Hamilton 25-6; Bordewich 131). Clay's and Webster's re-emergence on the political scene at their advanced age is indicative of the need for established leadership. Likewise, an essential aspect of Uncle Venner's characterization is the wisdom offered to Hepzibah from his lifetime of experience: "'Give no credit!'" and "'Never take paper-money!'" (2:65). Having "studied the world at street-corners, and at other posts equally well adapted for just observation" (2:155), Uncle Venner is admired by Clifford as "the only philosopher [he] ever knew of, whose wisdom has not a drop of bitter essence at the bottom! (2:317). Clay, too, often promoted his humble origins even though "his father was in fact a prosperous Virginia tobacco planter" (Bordewich 74). Thus the similarities between the pillars of the family and party enhance the political allegory contained in the fictional house of seven gables.

Next, Clifford, the wrongly accused brother who finds vindication near the close of the novel, closely mirrors those in the Democratic Party who lobbied for the Compromise of 1850. The first real evidence the reader is given of the physical presence of Clifford is at the end of the sixth chapter when Phoebe is heading to her room. Phoebe is "conscious of a footstep mounting the stairs" (2:96). While the sound of feet on stairs in a large house is innocuous, the term is repeated again in the next sentence (2:97), and the sound echoes just as a certain Senator echoed for Clay's proposals to be converted into a bill in April 1850. Henry Foote, Democrat from Mississippi, was elected to the

Senate in 1847. In his third year of a four year term, Senator Foote found himself at the center of a controversy—not over the Compromise—in the Senate house. On April 17, 1850, Senator Foote began leveling verbal attacks on long-time Senator Thomas Benton (D. Missouri), who eventually had enough and stalked toward Foote in an belligerent manner (Bordewich 217-19). Foote, feeling threatened, "took a position in the area, just in front of the Sergeant-at-Arms' seat, at the right of the Vice President, *drawing a pistol from his bosom, and cocking it!*" ("Scene in the U.S. Senate"). While Foote was disarmed without incident, the tense scene only added to the anxious atmosphere of the debates concerning the Compromise of 1850. Foote was investigated, but he was not reprimanded by the Senate (Bordewich 221; H. Hamilton 94). Hawthorne's characterization of Clifford is similar to the Democrats leading the efforts to enact a compromise in 1850. While Foote was found innocent of any foul intent, Clifford is not so fortunate. Before the novel begins, Clifford is accused and found guilty of murdering his uncle (2:23), but in the end, the real murderer is revealed to be Jaffrey Pyncheon (2:312). Clifford is allowed to live a life free of his supposed past actions in much the same way as Foote does in the Senate.

The new generation of the Whig Party is represented by the character of Phoebe. As the child of a male Pyncheon who married "a young woman of no family or property, and died early" (2:24), Phoebe possesses qualities of both the old bloodline and the new much like Uncle Venner; however, unlike Uncle Venner, Phoebe is representative of the younger and more modern Whig. She is characterized by her "gift of practical arrangement" (2:71), her beauty, and the "gift of song" (2:138); all of which she uses to

brighten Pyncheon House and cheer its inhabitants. All of these traits are characteristic of feminine qualities admired during this time period. Matthiessan suggests that Phoebe is representative of "the rising democracy (324), and there is support for this reading of Phoebe's character. Reynold's elaborates on this idea in *Devils and Rebels* by claiming "*The House of The Seven Gables* delineates and celebrates the social changes wrought by a new market economy and the displacement of old gentility, represented by Hepzibah and Clifford, by an emergent plebianism, represented by Holgrave and Phoebe" (173). The problem with these assessments is that the comparison is unequal. Holgrave and Phoebe are a romantically involved couple, while Hepzibah and Clifford are family. The lack of parallelism between the two relationships creates problems for the argument. Instead, this chapter argues that Phoebe is representative of a new faction of the Whig party that will later be known as Republican; however, because the Republican Party is not formed until the after this romance's publication, the term Whig will be used. Given Phoebe's mixed heritage of aristocrat and commoner, Phoebe is able to adapt better to the reduced living circumstances in Pyncheon House. Hepzibah employs Phoebe as both the sales clerk of her store as well as a companion to restore Clifford to his former self (2:136). It is important to note, though, that Phoebe only does these tasks because they come naturally to her.

Phoebe does not have to learn a new skill or change from the way she had been living previous to arriving at the house. Her presence is considered to be "some angel" sent from God (2:142), which is significant since Phoebe is a biblical name. In a letter to the Romans, Paul writes that the people listen to "our sister, Phoebe who is a servant of

the church which is at Cenchrea…for she herself has also been the helper of many" (Rom 16:1-2). While not much is known about Phoebe in the Bible, Paul goes on to encourage the Romans to "keep [their] eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances" later in the chapter (Rom 16:17). Phoebe in *The House of The Seven Gables*, then, functions in a similar fashion to Phoebe of the Bible. As a rule follower, she is to be cautious of who she follows, which will become important when she declares her love for Holgrave. Moreover, the final warning Paul gives the Romans about "dissensions and hindrances" proves to be especially important for the current political situation. As the younger class of Whig, Phoebe is representative of those who would have crossed traditional party lines to vote in favor of the Compromise of 1850. Finally, as if to punctuate her perfection, Phoebe is a pseudonym for Sophia. In a series of letters dated July 1851, Hawthorne writes to "Phoebe," who is traveling with Una and their newest addition, Rose (16:468-73). Therefore, Phoebe is like the new generation of moderate Whig politicians with whom Hawthorne is sympathetic.

Holgrave, or the Daguerreotypist, is a man of many trades and talents who rents a room from Hepzibah. Holgrave's penchant for working the earth (2:91) provides the first hints at his parallel with the Free Soil party. Martin Van Buren, a Free Soil leader, "stressed that legitimate government arose from 'the Democracy,' meaning ordinary yeomen farmers and tradesmen" (Esh 37). The fact that both Holgrave and Free Soilers have a corresponding affinity for nature and a more traditional and simplified life are not mere coincidence. Additionally, the Free Soil party was "an amalgam of abolitionists, free-soil Democrats, and antislavery Whigs" (Peck 158), and the party attracted Northern

Democrats, like Hawthorne, mainly "due to the Fugitive Slave Law" (Reynolds 183).While Holgrave is often found "in the arbor of the Pyncheon-garden" (2:181), he has held an assortment of jobs in his short lifetime that are reflections of the mélange that constitutes the Free Soil party. A "country-schoolmaster," "a salesman," "political-editor of a country-newspaper," a member in "a community of Fourierists," and "a public lecturer on Mesmerism" (2:176) are all jobs the twenty-two year old Holgrave has completed. Therefore, he is not the typical agrarian of the Democratic party who has moved to the Free Soil party. The wide range of jobs he has completed provides the depth necessary to include the assortment of individuals in the Free Soil party. He spends his free time with "men with long beard, and dressed in linen blouses, and other such new-fangled and ill-fitting garments;—reformers, temperance-lecturers, and all manner of cross-looking philanthropists" (2:84). The description of Holgrave's friends, typically Whig characteristics, hints at the antislavery Whigs who joined the Free Soil party.

Furthermore, Free Soilers like Van Buren were critical of those who were wealthy and wielded great power, so he wrote "Whilst the lust of power with fraud and violence in its train, had led other and differently constituted governments to aggression and conquest, our movements in these respects have always been regulated by reason and justice" (qtd in Esh 46). These pacifist sentiments are comparative to Holgrave's function in the novel. Holgrave, as a descendent of the martyred Maule, is at the mercy of the Pyncheon family—albeit unknowingly: he rents a room in the house and Hepzibah does not suspect his ancestry. Also, Holgrave waits to be asked into the library at Pyncheon House even though in his first meeting with Phoebe he expresses interest in viewing

Colonel Pyncheon's portrait in person (2:93). Instead, Holgrave waits until Hepzibah and Clifford have fled the house before he investigates his "inheritance" (2:316). Thus, Holgrave's minor character represents a popular but short-lived party faction. If, however, Phoebe is accepted a fictionalized character for Sophia, it follows that Hawthorne would cast Phoebe's love interest as himself, a Free Soiler.

If the characters are allegorical representations of the political parties, then the romantic relationship between Phoebe and Holgrave embodies the compromise. However, the compromise is not unreservedly accepted by all involved initially; there are those who oppose the compromise like William Jay. In a letter published in *Liberator*, Jay attacks the eight resolutions proposed by Henry Clay (Jay). As an abolitionist, Jay has strong feelings against any portion of the compromise that involves the advancement of slavery and urges for a reconsideration of the bills. This caution is best seen near the end of the novel where Holgrave declares his love for her. Phoebe replies incredulously, "'you will lead me out of my own quiet path. You will make me strive to follow you, where it is pathless'" (2:306). Aware of her limitations and the warning against compromise, Phoebe admits to her fault; however, in the true spirit of a compromise, Holgrave meets her halfway. He promises to "'conform [him]self to laws'" and believes her "'poise will be more powerful than any oscillating tendency of [his]'" (2:307). When the two agree, "they transfigured the earth, and made it Eden again" (2:307). At the end of the novel, the curse bestowed by Matthew Maule evaporates with the union of Phoebe and Holgrave. This vanishing act occurs the moment Holgrave declares his love for Phoebe. To draw further attention to the significance of the moment, Clifford comes in

the door shortly after their mutual declaration declaring "'I thought of you both [Holgrave and Phoebe], as we came down the street, and beheld Alice's Posies in full bloom. And so the flower of Eden has bloomed'" (2:308). The presence of the flowers planted by Alice Pyncheon, a Pyncheon victim of Maule's curse, is symbolic of the forgiveness the two families receive.

Moreover, the allusion to Eden is significant. Eden is the setting for the early chapters of Genesis, and God allows Adam and Eve to live in this perfect setting with only one rule: "from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (Gen 2:17). Unfortunately, Eve succumbs to temptation in Eden, and after she and Adam eat the fruit, they are banished from Eden (Gen 3). Hawthorne suggests that the burgeoning relationship between Holgrave and Phoebe will nullify the original sin perpetrated by Colonel Pyncheon. In addition, the union of Phoebe Pyncheon and Holgrave is the compromise for which their families have waited one hundred and sixty years. In a moment reminiscent of "The Custom House" sketch preface where Hawthorne apologizes for his ancestors' behaviors, Hawthorne writes in the forgiveness of his actions. Likewise, the Compromise of 1850 should be seen as the positive culmination of the slavery oversight made by the founding fathers (Hannum 141).

Hawthorne's controversial stance on the slavery issue as presented in Chapter 1 is complex. In The Scarlet Letter, Hawthorne attempts to create negative space from which the issue can be viewed as a silhouette. By doing so, he establishes the "neutral territory" of the allegory necessary for discussing the volatile issues associated with the Compromise of 1850. In following the allegorical progression through the novels, the

ending of *The House of The Seven Gables* subtly enacts Hawthorne's views on slavery, or what he would like to see happen in regards to slavery. The Pyncheon and Maule families do not change in the one hundred and sixty year history of the romance. Hawthorne limits the families' ability to grow, move away, and even change economic status; they are slaves of their ancestors' actions. If we view the Pyncheon and Maule family dispute as slavery, the union of the two families and the subsequent disappearance of the curse effectively eliminate slavery.

However, as several critics have pointed out, the narrative stalls with the entrance of Clifford and the happy ending of the novel seems forced. For example, Mark Rifkin summarizes the plot of the story: "The search for [a] deed animates much of the plot, and its discovery and the proclamation of its supposed worthlessness propels the novel to its close" (40). The addition of vivid verbs to Rifkin's summary is a valiant attempt to create interest for a story that ends in a rather anti-climactic manner. However, the plot of the story like the Compromise of 1850 at the time of publication has yet to be ended. To elaborate further, the initial mystery of the novel—finding who really owns the land—leaves quite the trail of bloodshed. For example, Matthew Maule, the first victim, is hanged so Colonel Pyncheon can by the land uncontested (2:7). The next generation finds Alice Pyncheon succumbing to Maule's son—also named Matthew—as he inadvertently manipulates her into committing suicide (2:210). The dramatic "doubling that occurs…causing victims to become victimizers as the generations unfold" (Reynolds 171) is the more interesting plot element; however, the narrative shifts to focus upon the return of Clifford and the subsequent fallout associated with his return: assimilation into

the house, recovery of wits, and reintroduction to his family. The political arena works in much the same way as the main plot in that the path to compromise in 1850 is uncertain and treacherous. The splintering of the political parties into various factions "made one thing clear to Democrats and Whigs alike: party loyalties alone could not bind voters to the Union" (Peck 159) especially when debates centered on slavery. Political candidates who cannot rely on their constituent votes create instability in regards to job security—a circular pattern with no winners.

Another troubling aspect about the ending is the relatively quick declaration of love by Holgrave and Phoebe followed immediately by most of the characters' exit to the country. One way of viewing the denouement is through "the tension in the romance between old gentility and new plebianism (neither of which are portrayed very favorably), obscure[ing] the underlying point of the romance, which is the baseness at the heart of the current political system" (Reynolds 173). In this interpretation of Holgrave's and Phoebe's love, their union is seen not as an emotional connection but as a wise political move. Removing the emotion from the young people's declaration of love, though, seems antithetical, especially when one considers that Holgrave and Phoebe hold an intimate place in Hawthorne's heart. F. O. Matthiessen, on the other hand, in his evaluation of *The House of The Seven Gables*, hypothesizes that "the flimsy interpretation of the young lovers derives from the fact that [Hawthorne] has not visualized their future with any precision" (332). It is true that the story ends without any negative fallout from Holgrave's confession (2:316-7); however, if the story is an allegory the Compromise of 1850, then the real results of the compromise have yet to be

seen. While the short-term effects of the Compromise (avoiding secession) have been seen, the long-term effects are not visible. *The House of the Seven Gables* achieves the goal Hawthorne set out in the preface—to teach something in a subtle way (2:2)—" since his work was a mirror of its age by virtue of its searching honesty and of its inevitable unconscious limitations" (Matthiessen 336). As an allegory for his time, the unconscious limitation is that Hawthorne cannot write the ending of a history that has not happened yet. The ultimate result from the compromise is being lived during his lifetime, so the ending seems abrupt and forced, Despite the gothic elements of death and curses, it is important to note that "Hawthorne assumed with confidence the continuance of democratic opportunity" (332). Therefore, the story ends abruptly with Holgrave and Phoebe marrying. The two families become one. The two colonies, Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay, become one in 1691. And the nation (hopefully) becomes one through the Compromise of 1850.

The allegorical reading of *The House of The Seven Gables* reveals an optimistic attitude surrounding the Compromise of 1850. Stephen Douglas summarized the Compromise as

> No man and no party has acquired a triumph, except the party friendly to the Union triumphing over abolitionsm and disunion. The North has not surrendered to the South, nor has the South made any humiliating concessions to the North. Each section has maintained its honor and its rights. And both have met on the common ground of justice and compromise. (Bordewich 355)

In Douglas's eyes, the Compromise did not have any winners or losers, but it does result in the nation coming together as one—meeting on the middle ground. In the preface to his novel, Hawthorne echoes Douglas's sentiments as he writes:

> Many writers lay very great stress upon some definite moral or purpose, at which they profess to aim their works. Not to be deficient, in this particular, the Author has provided himself with a moral—the truth, namely, that the wrong-doing of one generation lives into the successive ones, and, divesting itself of every temporary advantage, becomes a pure and uncontrollable mischief. (2:2)

The intentional theme or "moral" to his story does not lie with one side or the other, with one generation or another, or with one person or another. *The House of The Seven Gables* is a story written with all the different points of view included into one cohesive story, and a character's actions within the story will affect additional characters in ways that cannot be foreseen. In much the same way, Hawthorne can see how the issues that make up the Compromise of 1850 are interconnected with a larger history of the nation that will have repercussions for successive generations.

Both *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables* present themes of neutrality. The focus on neutrality in *The Scarlet Letter* is one of locality; placing oneself in moderate region. As an extension of the allegory begun in *The Scarlet Letter*, *The House of the Seven Gables* also focuses on balance, but there is a shift from a stationary location to action. The characters in Hawthorne's second romance that do not exert influence to change like Clifford, Hepzibah, and Uncle Venner are lifeless, and although they physically live, Hawthorne does not reward their passivity. The exception to this

inaction is when Clifford and Hepzibah leave town after realizing Jaffrey Pyncheon is dead (2:250); Hawthorne recompenses their action with an invitation from Holgrave to move to the country (2:317). On the other hand, Holgrave and Phoebe who grapple with their historical, predestined characterizations are given a favorable ending. Like the politicians of 1850, when the romance was being composed, action needed to be taken to save the country from dissolution. But will the Compromise bridge the schism in the United States? After a year of seeing the Compromise enacted, Hawthorne pens *The Blithedale Romance* where utopia fails.

Chapter 3

The Failed Utopia

The Peaceable Dissolution

In November 1851, approximately four months after the publication of *The House of the Seven Gables*, Hawthorne wrote John Sullivan Dwight to sell a short story and communicate his inability to write any further short stories because he was "about the engage in a longer work" (16:506). *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) was published the following May. There is a ten month gap between finishing *The House of the Seven Gables* and beginning *The Blithedale Romance*. In the intervening time, the Compromise of 1850 went into effect. Specifically, the Fugitive Slave Act was enforced and social unrest followed as a result.

The Blithedale Romance (1852) is Hawthorne's only novel told from a first-person point of view, and the plot is driven forward by dual yet related mysteries of the Veiled Lady and Priscilla's heritage. The story encompasses Miles Coverdale's journey of joining and leaving a utopian socialist community, Blithedale. Upon arrival at Blithedale, Coverdale is captivated by Zenobia, a beautiful and confident woman, and he meets Hollingsworth, a philanthropist, as well as Priscilla, an orphan. While all of the characters wax and wane in affection for one another, Zenobia eventually declares her love for Hollingsworth, but Hollingsworth falls in love with Priscilla, Zenobia's younger half-sister. Priscilla returns Hollingsworth affection, and the two marry and move away. Heartbroken, Zenobia issues a curse to always follow them before exiting to drown herself. Finally, Coverdale reveals that he is writing the story years after it has taken

place, and he admits to a jaded view of his time at Blithedale in part because he fell in love with Priscilla, too. Like *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables, The Blithedale Romance* can be read as a political allegory; and when read allegorically in succession, it seems that the action urged previously is now relinquished with an apathetic attitude.

The scholarship over *The Blithedale Romance* is sparse, but in the last ten years, several scholars have become interested in the romance. Most scholars who address this novel choose to write journal articles or book chapters as opposed to entire books dedicated to the analysis of *The Blithedale Romance*, so a major deconstruction of Hawthorne's novel has yet to be written. Nevertheless, the scholarship over the romance is diverse and well researched. Jennifer Greiman discusses the mythology of the veiled lady as an extension of the prison reform topic. In her article "The Spectacle of Reform: Theater and Prison in Hawthorne's Blithedale Romance," Greiman argues that the image of the veiled lady is not only a reference to convicts in the prison system, who were deprived of sight at times, but an image of the subjugation of slaves. Another topic often analyzed is the unreliable first-person narrator, Coverdale. In "Veil of Allegory," Brian Britt discusses Coverdale's unreliability as an extension of the character's lack of moral center. For Britt, the spiritual veil as well as the physical veil obscures the characters' views of the truth. A final topic scholars discuss concerning *The Blithedale Romance* is the concept of spectatorship. Both Greiman and Britt discuss this subject to some degree, but Jonathan Arac discusses the idea more fully in his *The Emergence of American Literary Narrative*. Coverdale's retreat into the trees, Arac posits, is indicative of the

distance Hawthorne hopes to achieve in regards to the political upheaval in the 1850s (160-1). Robert Milder has gone the furthest to analyze *The Blithedale Romance* in his recent work *Hawthorne's Habitations* (2013). "Sisters Act," the chapter dedicated to Hawthorne's third romance, examines the socialist experiment, as Milder puts it, as "a study of human beings left to themselves in a world left to itself" (140). While some of these scholars briefly touch upon the political atmosphere of the 1850s, there has not been a comprehensive review of the political allegory contained in *The Blithedale Romance*. Furthermore, an examination of the political allegory within Hawthorne's first three romances has yet to occur. The enervation surrounding the violent repercussions of the Fugitive Slave Act can be seen through the political allegory of the romance. Thus, *The Blithedale Romance* should be read as a product of the political era, not simply as an extension of Brook Farm.

Blithedale's similarity with Brook Farm is well documented. In a letter to his Sophia dated April 13, 1841, Hawthorne writes of the "polar Paradise" (15:526) of Brook Farm to which he was headed. Similarly, Coverdale begins his journey to Blithedale on "an April day…well towards the middle of the month" when a "north-easterly blast" (3:10) escorts him to his destination; furthermore, Hawthorne and Coverdale both suffer from an illness upon arrival (15:534; 3:41). Most scholars agree that Margaret Fuller's death at sea the year before the novel is published heavily influenced Hawthorne's female protagonist Zenobia, who commits suicide (Milder 145; Reynolds 179-80; Wineapple 248). However, Hawthorne addresses these similarities and more before the book begins: "[the author's] whole treatment of the affair [Brook Farm] is altogether incidental to the

main purpose of the Romance; nor does he put forward the slightest pretensions to illustrate a theory, or elicit a conclusion, favorable or otherwise, in respect to Socialism" (3:1). Hawthorne realizes that his time spent at Brook Farm would be linked with the book, so he takes an opportunity in the "Preface" to address his real intentions concerning the setting. By stating that he is not advocating for Socialism, Hawthorne encourages the enthymeme concerning why he uses the utopian setting. This enthymeme includes Brook Farm and Socialist government under a broader heading: idealized government. Hawthorne is addressing the unstated, yet broader topic of idealized government, not the specific types of governments. Storey and Storey note that Hawthorne romanticizes his time at Brook Farm. One of the major differences between Blithedale and Brook Farm is that Blithedale appears more profitable than Brook Farm (140). Therefore, the hyperbole used to describe Brook Farm should be examined to determine why Hawthorne chose this communal living location for his third romance in three years. The exaggerated elements of the novel are used to create a better, more perfect society—a utopia.

Completed in May 1852, *The Blithedale Romance*, like its predecessors, is an allegorical extension of the Compromise of 1850. Unlike the two prior texts, *The Blithedale Romance* simulates some of the consequences of the Compromise. The most visible and explosive element of the Compromise was the Fugitive Slave Act (Hamilton 168). The Fugitive Slave Act's five main components (appendix C), according to Elizabeth Varen, were designed by Southern delegates to provoke Northern abolitionists (235). The emotional upheaval suffered by both the North and South is reflected through the characters and the story of Blithedale, but Hawthorne's response as read through

Coverdale's inaction is puzzling. In Chapter 1, *The Scarlet Letter* begins with a discussion regarding the utopian dreams of Puritan Boston; however, three years later those dreams have yet to be realized. The nation was again facing a cataclysm over the topic of slavery. As the final piece of creative literature he writes before accepting a consulship overseas, *Blithedale Romance* may represent Hawthorne's new understanding of utopia.

Testing Utopia Through Setting

Scholars like Ryan Stuart Hill, Robert Milder, and Brenda Wineapple have evaluated the setting of Blithedale in association with Hawthorne's residence at Brook Farm in 1841, but the significance of this location extends beyond Hawthorne's experience in this Socialist community. The "more perfect union" of the Preamble is echoed in the utopian community of Blithedale, and by 1851 when Hawthorne was writing *The Blithedale Romance*, the initial relief that accompanied the Compromise of 1850 was already showing signs of waning. Therefore, the setting of a utopian society that dissolves before the end of the story is more significant than Hawthorne's personal residence at Brook Farm. The impetus for the utopian community that fails harkens back to *The Scarlet Letter*. In the first romance, the inhabitants of Puritan Boston attempt to establish a utopia, but the reality of the settlement is that a jail and prison are the first permanent structures (1:47). With this inauspicious beginning, the first hint of failure is seen. If viewed as a political allegory for the Compromise of 1850, *The Scarlet Letter* reveals the possible fracturing of union. The recurrence of a utopia in *The Blithedale Romance* should be viewed in relation to the first romance. Whereas Hester lived in

neutral territory, Coverdale cannot. Although Blithedale is founded as a utopia, Hawthorne's experience at Brook Farm negates the possibility of a recreation of unbiased space—Coverdale shares his opinions with the reader through his first-person narration. Therefore the utopian experiment of *The Blithedale Romance,* too, is preordained to failure. The failed community in both cases is indicative of the public's perception regarding the Compromise of 1850.

In February of 1851, the Fugitive Slave Act was put to the test for the first time in the case of Shadrach Minkins. The *Liberator,* based in Boston, detailed the incident in a short article written by an unnamed witness, and the article reveals the tension in the United States in the wake of the Fugitive Slave Law. A brief examination of the rhetoric in this article and the tensions implied through the rhetoric are included here. First, the writer notes that Marshal Devans was first applied to concerning Minkins, but Devans had "not yet returned from Washington, whither he went to answer a complaint against him for his delinquency in regard to the [Fugitive Slave Act]" (Arrest). From the writing, it is clear that the slave owners of the South were anxious to test the efficacy of the law, and the absence of Marshal Devans reveals that some commissioners were reluctant to execute the law. Therefore, the Compromise did not heal the divisions rampant in the country. Next, "Marshal Riley and an ex-constable named Byrnes" went to the Cornhill Coffee-House "on the pretence [sic] of getting breakfast," while "Shadrach was unsuspectingly waiting on them" ("Arrest of a Man in Boston as a Slave—Rescue of the Prisoner"). The word choice through this section of the article—"pretence" and "unsuspectingly"—emphasizes the pathos one should feel for Shadrach Minkins: this

gainfully employed individual is accosted while at work. Once Minkins found his way to court per the Fugitive Slave Act, he was ordered to return to Virginia with his owner, John DeBrees; however, a group of men sympathetic to Minkins arrived after the summary judgement and ushered Minkins from the courthouse ("Arrest"). The writer for the *Liberator* takes specific notice that he/she thought it "quite improbable that there was any knocking down of officers outside the door" and that officers inside the courtroom did not "offer any resistance to the egress of Shadrach with his friends" ("Arrest"). It is interesting to read the emphasis of the care the rescuers took in not harming anyone. When compared to the rhetoric of the arrest, the slave owner enforcing the new Fugitive Slave Act is the obvious aggressor and the Northern kidnappers, who are guilty of a crime according to the law, are the peaceful heroes. This litigation was just the first of several cases that tested the Fugitive Slave Law, but it is one of the only ones to result in the freedom of the accused. The vehemence shown through the use of rhetoric was repeated in many other articles of the time. As an avid reader, Hawthorne would have been privy to these reports; furthermore, Hawthorne's association with the political pundits of the time contributes to his awareness of these accounts. Hawthorne's brother-in-law, Horace Mann, is a Whig Congressman, and his college friend, Franklin Pierce, is on the cusp of running for President, which he obtains. Therefore, it is likely that Hawthorne knew of the Minkins case and other like it; furthermore, it is reasonable to believe these violent outbursts impacted his writing.

The setting of *The Blithedale Romance* in a utopian society is similar in precepts to the United States government. In discussing a utopia, Sacvan Bercovitch claims the

"Puritans conceived of the American paradise as the fulfilment of scriptural prophecy" (*Puritan Origins* 137); therefore, the use of biblical allusion in Puritan texts lays the foundation for the utopian ideas of America. Onboard the *Arbella*, Winthrop delivers "A Model of Christian Charity," which exhorts the listeners to become the "city on a hill" Jesus commanded in Matthew (Winthrop, Matt. 5:14). The members of Blithedale community, according to Coverdale, have "give[n] up whatever we had heretofore attained, for the sake of showing mankind the example of a life governed by other than the false and cruel principles, on which human society has all along been based" (3:19). Through the martyr-like attitude of Coverdale, the echoes of John Winthrop can be heard. Coverdale insists on Blithedale being seen as an example that demonstrates equality for others to emulate just as Winthrop claims the settlement in the New World will be a beacon to the world of what it means to have a Christian society. Blithedale and Puritan Boston are initially the exemplar. As if to further expound on this parallel, Coverdale later relates that Blithedale is "favored with many visits…especially from people who sympathized with our theories" (3:81). In other words, Blithedale is the epitome of Socialist utopias, and people visit Blithedale to see how the community functions. In the same way, the structure of the American government is to be emulated. "Hawthorne," as Lauren Berlant posits, "sees the nation's utopian heritage as a fundamental fact of America's meaning" (33). In discussing the formation of American national identity, Lauren Berlant notes that "the cultural expression of national fantasy is crucial for the political legitimacy of the nation: it is evidence of the nation's utopian promise to oversee

a full and just integration of persons" (21). The word "fantasy" is especially important. Just as in *The Scarlet Letter*, the intended utopia is the focus at one level of the narrative.

Another level of the narrative, though, places focus on the reality of the utopia, or the individuals that comprise the community. Hawthorne carefully creates a distinction between the framework of the community and the people. Just before Coverdale relays the news of Blithedale's many visitors, Zenobia, much to her chagrin, realizes Hollingsworth and Priscilla have romantic feelings for one another, and Coverdale observes Zenobia's expression as a "tragic actress….when she fumbles in her bosom for the concealed dagger" (3:78) as Priscilla passes in front of her. The envy with which Zenobia views Priscilla is visible only in a passing moment and in a shadow. While Zenobia does not act on her impulse, the presence of this feeling shows the individual community members are not entirely perfect. The first dinner at Blithedale also illuminates this incongruity: "It [is] the first practical trial of our theories of equal brotherhood and sisterhood; and we people of superior cultivation and refinement (for such, I presume, we unhesitatingly reckon [ ] ourselves) [feel] as if something [is] already accomplished towards the millennium of love" (3:24). Coverdale's notice of his superiority at the table is proof of the failure regarding the equality he touts; however, the success, it seems, is in the attempt to change.

The slavery question in the United States was similarly complicated. Larry Reynolds points out a difficult concept that seems incongruous: "to argue against slavery and on behalf of the Negro were two separate and distinct activities in antebellum America" (Reynolds 89). In other words, it was possible for a person to argue against

slavery yet be a racist; the two topics were mutually exclusive. While Hawthorne "despised the slave trade, which implicated both North and South" (Wineapple 188), he objected to sitting down to eat with African Americans (199). The Minkins case is rife with these inconsistencies. The law should be adhered to, but the writer of the *Liberator* article exonerates Minkins though his/her tone. It is the paradox of equal and not equal that Hawthorne expands upon in this romance. The utopian society of Blithedale is not immune to jealousies within the community; nevertheless, the community's overall structure remains functioning. The distinction between the two perspectives of the community—the general view versus the specific view—is made in order to emphasize the problems with the United States government. The debate concerning slavery was not yet resolved despite the Compromise of 1850. The intention of the Compromise is separate from the execution of the Compromise; the intention is different from the reality. This idea is familiar because Hawthorne used the paradox in *The Scarlet Letter*—Hester is both rejected initially because of her transgression and finally accepted because of her transgression.

Political and Fictional Characters

Another important aspect of the political allegory contained within *The Blithedale Romance* is the politicization of the principle characters. Zenobia, Hollingsworth, and Priscilla hold political opinions that mirror those of the three major political parties of the time: Democrat, Whig, and Free Soil. In the immediate aftermath of the Compromise of 1850, these political parties did not exhibit harmony; furthermore, the reality of enforcing the Fugitive Slave Act "provoked the outrage and defiance of many white Northerners

who saw the act as making them personally complicity with slavery" (Reynolds 182). The unwanted presence of slave hunters began to affect the Northern states in as little as two months after the passage of the Compromise of 1850, as the Minkins case shows. The distressing enforcement of the Compromise is represented by the sudden and monetarily motivated appearance of Westervelt. Unlike the optimism we see at the end of *The House of The Seven Gables*, the experiment at Blithedale Farm implodes.

By setting of *The Blithedale Romance* in a Socialist utopian, Hawthorne highlights the perceived perfection of the nation in which he lives. The passage of the Compromise of 1850, as discussed in the previous chapter, was "a brilliant example of collaborative statecraft" (Bordewich 371) and was represented through the union of Phoebe and Holgrave. Civil war had been avoided, but the harsh realities of the compromise quickly destroyed the shiny veneer of harmony. The Fugitive Slave Act, by far "the most explosive part of the Compromise" (Hamilton 168), made every American citizen responsible for assisting in the capture of an escaped slave and doubled the fines for rescuing escaped slaves among other things. From a Christian perspective, the Fugitive Slave Law made offering hospitality to a traveler a criminal action, which is in direct opposition to their beliefs. Often referred to as the "Golden Rule," Christians are commanded to treat others in a manner consistent with how they wish to be treated (Matt. 7:12). Offering food and shelter to travelers is a common way to express the Golden Rule. Unfortunately, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 made basic generosity a crime.

Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* famously interacts with the Compromise of 1850 through the various trials of the eponymous character and his

friends. As a fictional depiction of the effects of the Fugitive Slave Law, Stowe demonstrates the value of Christian hospitality in both the North and the South. Similarly, Hawthorne addresses the value of hospitableness in *The Blithedale Romance* through the courtesy offered to visitors at Blithedale. Hawthorne's interaction with the Fugitive Slave Law is probably unconscious,[5] yet the stigma of the law haunted him.[6] Luke Bresky details the social mores of Blithedale as part of the international debates "concerning the significance of American manners as indicators of democracy's actual and potential success" (87). While Bresky's focus is on the viability of democracy according to international standards, the case can be made that democracy's sustainability in the United States was also being tested though the setting. The social unrest over slavery continued to factor into debates in 1851, especially as officials commenced the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. The Fugitive Slave Act declared that "any person who shall knowingly and willingly obstruct, hinder, or prevent" the recapture of an escaped slave was guilty of a crime (Fugitive Slave Act). This law instigated immediate negative feedback from antislavery supporters like the editors of the *Liberator* newspaper, who published sixty articles in January 1851 attacking the Fugitive Slave Act.[7] Some opponents of the law, like William Seward, argued there was a "higher law" to which government answered. Rendering aid and offering shelter to those in need was a Christian belief, and as such, superseded the mundane law. By examining Hawthorne's

[5] F. O. Matthiessen summarizes Hawthorne's oeuvre as "a record of unconscious depths whose source was beyond his control" (232).
[6] In a letter to Zachariah Burchmore dated July 15, 1851, Hawthorne admits "the Fugitive Slave Law cornered [him]" (16:496) into declaring for the Free Soil Party.
[7] This information was obtained via a search term "Fugitive Slave Act" on the *American Periodicals* database.

treatment of hospitality in *The Blithedale Romance*, the subtle resistance to the Fugitive Slave Act can be seen.

In *The Blithedale Romance*, the appearance of strangers and visitors at the fictional Blithedale is not an unusual occurrence. Through his narration, Coverdale reveals that the community often entertains "people who sympathize[ ] with our theories" (3:81); however, one of the first unexpected visitors is given an uncharacteristically cold reception. Priscilla arrives on Coverdale's first day at the farm, and a true test of the group's charity is provided. Privately, Coverdale initially speculates that Priscilla might be "one of [Hollingsworth's] patients, to be wrought upon, and restored to spiritual health" (3:27), or less kindly phrased, Coverdale thinks Priscilla may be rescued by Hollingsworth after having been accused of a crime. It is significant that the first guest may be a criminal since the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 made offering aid to escaped slaves a criminal action. The group assembled at Blithedale is unaware of Priscilla's history, and she requests her history remain unspoken until a later date (3:29). While the mystery of Priscilla's history occupies the pages of the romance, the reaction of the inhabitants on this first night is often overlooked. The refined, city-dwellers, like the more industrialized north, are hesitant to allow Priscilla admittance, yet Silas Foster, the agrarian man to whom the house belongs, offers Priscilla—convict or not—a seat at his table. This moment is marked only by a brief observation by Coverdale in which he recognizes Foster's deplorable table manners are in opposition to his honorable and Christian behavior toward Priscilla (3:30).

The ironies present in this very short scene point to the social conflict Hawthorne sees in the wake of the Compromise. As it has already pointed out, Hawthorne did not agree whole-heartedly with either the abolitionist or the anti-abolitionist (Arac 61, Wineapple 188). Instead, it appears that both sides are at fault, and to illustrate the point, Priscilla is greeted and accepted by Foster who most resembles a Southerner since he is a man who works the land. Zenobia, on the other hand, is more closely related to the refined Northern population with her exotic flower and flirtatious banter with Coverdale (3:16-7). Priscilla's initial rejection by Zenobia is tantamount to an immigrant's rejection at the United States border, or a runaway slave who is denied hospitality. Zenobia in this instance can be compared to the national symbol of the Statue of Liberty (1875). In exploring the formation and importance of the feminine icon, Lauren Berlant explains that choosing a female to represent the nation is necessary since "the power of this 'Mother' [is] to make citizens out of exiled subjects" (26) because a mother is nurturing. As Hollingsworth points out, it is Zenobia's job to welcome Priscilla, but Zenobia requires a reminder of her duty. In the same way, many abolitionists saw the need for a reminder to the people's Christian duty in the wake of the Fugitive Slave Act.

As an allegorical character, Westervelt functions in a similar, appalling fashion as the slave hunters who appeared in the North to enforce the Fugitive Slave Act and recover runaway slaves. From Coverdale's first acquaintance with Westervelt, the tension between Coverdale and Westervelt is palpable. Coverdale, who is using his day off to find solitude in the forest, is accosted by Westervelt whose appearance almost has "the effect of an apparition" (3:91) and addresses Coverdale as a "friend" (3:91). The sudden

appearance of Westervelt jolts Coverdale out of his reverie, and Westervelt's assumed relationship with Coverdale rankles Coverdale's nerves. In a similar way, the North found the reality of enforcing the Fugitive Slave Act both surprising and revolting. Less than six months after passing the Fugitive Slave Act (September 1850), Shadrach Minkins became the first runaway slave to be arrested in February 1851; however, before he could be arraigned, "the biggest crowd of black men ever seen in the city [of Boston] burst into the federal courthouse and forcibly liberated Shadrach Minkins" (Bordewich 364). Being the first of its kind, the Minkins's arrest seemingly occurred out of nowhere quite like Westervelt's appearance startles Coverdale's solitude. Additionally, Minkins was arrested while working as a waiter at Taft's Cornhill Coffee House (Colson) before being taken from the federal courthouse; both exits were aggressive. In a similar way, Westervelt's address to Coverdale disregards basic manners and is prompted by "selfish economic interest[ ]" (Bresky 101). Westervelt addresses Coverdale with the express purpose of gaining an audience with Zenobia and Priscilla (3:92, 96), both of which have worked for him. The apparent disdain for common hospitality, though, reached beyond the Minkins case.

Through the characterization of Hollingsworth, Hawthorne creates a doppelganger for the Whig party. Before the reader ever meets Hollingsworth, Zenobia tells of a man whose speaking ability is above compare (3:21-2), like a great politician in the United States Senate. Henry Clay was known as a great orator since "his language was simple, his eloquence translucent, and his voice full, rich, clear, sweet, musical, and inspiring like a trumpet" (Bordewich 134). Hollingsworth, though, is a philanthropist

who is focused on reform, but his charitable work of prison reform "mask[s] destructive and deadly egotism (Reynolds 184). The caustic ideas of the Whig party have been difficult to elucidate upon, so Hawthorne tries another incarnation of the Whig party ideal in Hollingsworth. It is not the "flesh and blood, and the sympathies and affections" (like Chillingworth) but something "pernicious to the happiness of those who should be drawn into too intimate a connection with him" (3:70). The problem is ethereal and therefore difficult to define. Whigs believed legislation was the best way to bring about moral reform (Ryan 204), but legislating morals is practically impossible. The premise of moral government sounds good, but the execution is difficult. The prison reform Hollingsworth is passionate about eventually amounts to nothing. When Coverdale asks him how many convicts he has reformed, Hollingsworth can only answer, "'Not one!'" (3:243). The passionate, yet ineffectual, philanthropist fails.

While many scholars draw parallels between Zenobia and Margaret Fuller, this work is most concerned with view Zenobia as a political representation for the Free Soil party. Since Hawthorne was a member of the Free Soil party, it is not at all surprising that the object of Coverdale's affection (3:247) is representative of the political party to which he is aligned.[8] From the beginning, Zenobia displays a strong feminine presence at Blithedale. Her first verbal exchange with Coverdale looks forward to the day when those "'who wear the petticoat, will go afield'" (3:16) instead of being confined by household chores. The radical view Zenobia espouses early in the novel is consistent with views of feminists in Hawthorne's time, like Margret Fuller, but these feminists were often

[8] See Arlin Turner, "Autobiographical elements in Hawthorne's 'The Blithedale Romance.'" *Studies in English* 15 (July 1935): 39-62. *JSTOR.* 27 Jan 2018.

abolitionists, which politically places them as sympathetic to the Free Soil party. One of Zenobia's more controversial moments in the story occurs at Eliot's Pulpit. In this scene, the usually confident Zenobia acquiesces to Hollingsworth's assertion that "'the heart of true womanhood knows where its own sphere is, and never seeks to stray from it!'" (3:123)—a surprising and uncharacteristic turn for a feminist. In the end, however, Zenobia characterizes herself as "weak, vain, unprincipled, (like most of [her] sex; for our virtues, when we have any, are merely impulsive and intuitive,) passionate, too'" (3:217). The disheartening tone of Zenobia's self-characterization may have been influenced by Hawthorne's personal feelings on women. Hawthorne's success as a writer was inextricably linked with women, according to Wineapple: "If his fiction did not sell, he was not an adequate provider; if it did, he was writing trash like Stowe and company" (283). The strong female presence of Zenobia, like Stowe and Fuller, threatened Hawthorne, so he limited her character to a manageable state. Most tellingly for both the threat to his livelihood and her alignment with the Free Soil party, though, Zenobia dies at the end of the story. As noted by Reynolds, "many Northern Democrats who aligned themselves with the Free-Soilers due to the Fugitive Slave Law…returned to [their] old party" (183). As will be explored shortly, Hawthorne abandoned the dying Free Soil party to support his friend, and future President, Franklin Pierce.

Priscilla most aligns with the Democratic party of the time. When Priscilla first appears at Blithedale, Coverdale observes "there has seldom been seen so depressed and sad a figure as this young girl's" (3:27). Like the short-statured Stephen Douglas (H. Hamilton 31), Priscilla's initial presence is not awe-inspiring; however, she "bud[s] and

blossom[s], and daily put[s] on some new charm" (3:72) as the story progresses. In the same way, Stephen A. Douglas, nicknamed the "Little Giant" (H. Hamilton 31), worked initially with President Polk on a bill to annex California as a state (Bordewich 42). His multiple efforts to craft a proposal that would pass failed during Polk's presidency (43). Nevertheless, Douglas worked closely with Henry Clay, a Whig, to draft an omnibus bill, and when Clay had to leave the Senate because of health reasons, Douglas transformed "into a true national statesman to be reckoned with" (303). However, Douglas, who had crossed party lines to advance the Compromise of 1850, may have been seen as betraying his Democratic roots. One of the final descriptions of Priscilla occurs in town where she is described as "the Oriental princess" yet 'dethroned, on trial for her life, or perchance condemned already" (3:213). The tragic tone that accompanies this description foreshadows even more sorrow for the characters of Priscilla and Zenobia as well as the political factions of Democrat and Free Soil.

As Hawthorne finished *The Blithedale Romance*, the political campaigns for the presidential election of 1852 were starting to form. Hawthorne had been a Free Soil party member for a few years, but in early June of 1852—just a month after sending the first draft of *The Blithedale Romance* to Edwin Whipple (16:536)—Hawthorne writes to his college friend Franklin Pierce about writing his presidential biography (16:545). Pierce was a Democrat. While the separation between the Free Soil platform and the Democratic platform was relatively small, especially for a man who initially identified himself as a Democrat, his disconsolate departure from the Free Soil party can be viewed in the farewell scene between Zenobia, a Free Soil representative, and Priscilla, a Democratic

representative. At Eliot's pulpit, the four protagonists meet serendipitously, but their meeting is tense. Hollingsworth calls Priscilla to his side, but before Priscilla acquiesces, she walks to Zenobia and sits at her feet "in the very same attitude which she had assumed on their first meeting" (3:219). The return to the beginning is important for Hawthorne, and not just because of narrative structure. He is returning to his roots as a Democrat, too. Zenobia prompts Priscilla to speak what she needs to before leaving, but Priscilla can only gasp, "'We are sisters!'" (3:219). This admission is a nod to the relatedness of the Free Soil party and the Democrats. Zenobia then asks for forgiveness from Priscilla and admits, "'You have been my evil fate; but there never was a babe with less strength or will to do an injury'" (3:220). This final admission is followed shortly by Zenobia committing suicide. In a similar manner, the Free Soil party lost about half of their members to the Democratic party when Franklin Pierce was nominated (Varon 249). The two parties, like the two sisters, could not continue to coexist.

The political allegory of *The Blithedale Romance* reveals the pessimism for the future of the United States in the immediate wake of the Compromise of 1850. The political alliances and the instability of the union are portrayed through the characters and setting of Hawthorne's third romance in as many years. At the end of Millard Fillmore's State of the Union Address in 1851, he revisits the issues that threatened to tear the nation asunder:

> "No human legislation can be perfect. Wide differences and jarring opinion can only be reconciled by yielding something on all sides, and this result [Fugitive

> Slave Law] had been reached after an angry conflict of many months, in which one part of the country was arrayed against another, and violent convulsion seemed to be imminent…A year has now elapsed since that recommendation was made. Too that recommendation I still adhere, and I congratulate you and the country upon the general acquiescence. (Fillmore)

While Fillmore's words are reassuring at the close, the President also noted there were a number of riots and mobs that protested the law and people had died trying to free captured slaves. Hawthorne's third romance, like President Fillmore's State of the Union speech, ends with forced optimism. Coverdale recalls his time at Blithedale fondly, but notes the inevitable destruction of the utopia. This demise is disconsolate because it has forced the choosing of sides, like the debate over slavery.

It is through reading Hawthorne's first three romances as political allegories that the Compromise of 1850 comes into sharp focus. It is not surprising that the intense feelings surrounding slavery threatened to divide the nation; Alexander Hamilton warned of the potential for war between states in "No. 7" of *The Federalist Papers*. The political battle for supremacy in Congress between the North and the South as well as the Whigs and the Democrats is chronicled through Hawthorne's romances. Hawthorne veiled the issues in the pages of a romance because of their volatility. Although the three romances contain three different settings and different sets of characters, the three romances chronicle the beginning, middle, and end of the Compromise similar to a modern trilogy today.

The moral and political shock contained in *The Scarlet Letter* serves to introduce the political tension leading into the Compromise. Beginning the story with "The Custom House," which details Hawthorne's real experience as a Custom House officer, situates the reader in a political frame of mind from the start. Hester's adultery, while scandalous to his readers, locates Hester between two men who have laid claim to her much like the government was in a power struggle between the Whigs and the Democrats. In *The House of the Seven Gables*, Hawthorne continues to cloak his political parallels with a story concerning a property dispute. The mystery of the rightful owner mirrors the real-life question regarding whether the Compromise of 1850 will occur or not. The eventual engagement of the two sides indicates the Compromise will happen. However, the sanguine hopes for the future are quickly abated in *The Blithedale Romance*, which details a utopian community that is ultimately abandoned. The shock and volatility of discussing slavery, the joining of the two sides, and understanding how the Compromise will work are all unveiled truths that Hawthorne confronts in the pages of his romances.

It was a concept that remained hidden until a candidate for the Senate from Illinois spoke "'a house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe the government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided" (Lincoln). Abraham Lincoln failed to oust Stephen Douglas as the Senate candidate when he gave this speech in 1858, but the words were true to what Hawthorne wrote less than ten years prior. The United States, which had been founded on utopian principles, was in the throes of a significant dispute; however, the knowledge that the fight over slavery

would ultimately be set aside showed faith that the unity established early in the nation would prevail. It is the same faith that carries into modern politics, too. Recent presidential platforms like the one successfully employed by President Donald Trump rely upon the return or emergence of "a more perfect union" (Preamble). The perfection has yet to be attained, but the political concept of utopia survives.

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Appendix A. Compromise of 1850

The term "Compromise of 1850" refers to a series of resolutions passed during the 31st Congress. Originally conceived of by Henry Clay, the legislation was brought before Congress on January 29, 1850 by Stephen Douglas as eight resolutions.

> "1st. *Resolved*, That California, with suitable boundaries, might, upon her application, to be admitted as one of the States of the Union, without the imposition by Congress of any restrictions in respect to the exclusion or introduction of slavery within those boundaries…
>
> 2d. *Resolved*, That as slavery does not exist by law, and is not likely to be introduced into any of the territory acquired by the United States from the Republic of Mexico, it is inexpedient for Congress to provide by law, either for its introduction into or exclusion from any part of the said territory; and that appropriate: Territorial governments ought to be established by Congress in all of the said territory, not assigned as the boundaries of the proposed State of California, without the adoption of any restriction or condition on the subject of slavery.
>
> 3d. *Resolved*, That the western boundary of the State of Texas ought to be fixed on the Rio del Norte, commencing one marine league from its mouth, and running up that river to the southern line of New Mexico; thence with that line eastwardly, and so continuing in the same direction to the line established between the United States and Spain, excluding any portion of New Mexico, whether lying on the east or west of that river.

4th. *Resolved,* That it be proposed to the State of Texas that the United States will provide for the payment of all that portion of the legitimate and bona fide public debt of that State, contracted prior to its annexation in the United States, and for which the duties on foreign imports were pledged by the said State to its creditors not exceeding the sum of 8------- in consideration of the raid duties so pledged having been no longer applicable to that object after the said annexation, but leaving thenceforward because payable to the United States; and upon the condition also that the said State of Texas shalt, by some solemn and authentic act of her Legislature, or of a convention, relinquish to the United States any claim which it has to any part of New Mexico.

5th. *Resolved,* That it is inexpedient to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, whilst that institution continues to exist in the State of Maryland, without the consent of that State, without the consent of the people of the District, and without just compensation to the owners of slaves within the District.

6th. *But Resolved,* That it is expedient to prohibit within the District the slave-trade, in slaves brought into it from States or places beyond the limits of the District, either to be sold therein a merchandise, or to be transported to other markets without the District of Columbia.

7th. *Resolved,* That more effectual provision ought to be made by law, according to the requirement of the Constitution, for the restituting and delivery of persons

> bound to service or labor in any State, who may escape into any other State or Territory in the union.
>
> And 8th. *Resolved*, That Congress has no power to prohibit or obstruct the trade in slaves between the slaveholding States; but that the admission, or exclusion of slaves brought from one into another of them, depends exclusively upon their own particular laws. ("Slavery Question")

Through the course of the debate, the eight resolutions were consolidated into the following four. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which is an integral part of the Compromise of 1850 has been included in appendix C for convenience.

First, the boundaries of Texas were settled. Texas cedes her claim of land that stretched to Santa Fe to the modern-day New Mexico for the sum of $10 million.

Second, California is admitted to the union.

Third, a territorial government is established in Utah.

Fourth, the slave trade in the District of Columbia is restricted.

Appendix B: Political Background

The traditional two-party system of political parties disintegrated in the 1850s due to the volatile issue of slavery. Additionally, the two parties—Whig and Democrat—were undergoing significant change. The Whig party dissolved and the Democrats were split into several sub-parties. The purpose of this Appendix is to provide some background for understanding the political upheaval of 1849-1852.

The Whig party, who traditionally supported moral government (Ryan 204), began to divide over the expansionist politics of the late 1840s. Frank Gatell notes there were two Whig factions in Massachusetts for the 1848 election: Cotton Whigs and Conscience Whigs (18). Cotton Whigs were those who were primarily in favor of slavery, while Conscience Whigs were anti-slavery (20). Horace Mann, brother in law of Nathaniel Hawthorne, was a Conscience Whig.

Hawthorne, though, was a Democrat and then a Free Soiler before returning to the Democratic party to support his college friend, Franklin Pierce. The Democratic party was known to encourage "the dissenter, the theorist, the aspirant" (Emerson "Introductory Lecture"). While the Democratic party of the late 1840s and 1850s was also steeped in religious doctrine, Democrats advocated a separation between church and state (Ryan 205), and this party suffered from divisions within, like the Whigs. Martin Van Buren belonged to one faction in New York called the Barn Burners (Esh 30). This group supported anti-slavery laws. The Free Soilers were a similar group in that they supported anti-slavery laws, but they were located primarily in Massachusetts. The Free

Soil party nominated Van Buren as a third party on 1848 Presidential ticket against Lewis Cass who was the Democratic candidate (neither won).

The Liberty Party, or the Native or Native American Party, mostly identified with the Conservative doctrine of the Whigs; however, the party rose to prominence as the Conscience Whigs were losing power. As an extension of the Conscience Whigs, the majority of members in this party supported the abolition of slavery, but their support of anti-slavery law should not be confused with equality. Supporters of the Liberty party (Nativist or Native American) generally believed that white Americans, who they named as Native American or Nativists, were superior to immigrants and even Catholics (Levine 458).

Appendix C. Fugitive Slave Act

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 is summarized below from the *Congressional Globe*.

Section 1states that "appointed commissioners" are "authorized and required to exercise and discharge all the powers and duties conferred by this act."

Section 2 provides each territory of the United States with a "Superior Court" whose job it is to hear these cases.

Section 3 gives the Superior Court the ability to hire more commissioners for the execution of this law.

Section 4 provides the Circuit and District Courts as well as the Superior Courts jurisdiction to grant certificates to reclaim fugitive slaves from service or labor.

Section 5 warns all marshals and deputy marshals to obey the law or be fined $1,000. Furthermore, marshals and deputy marshals are held responsible for the escape of fugitives in their custody. Marshals and deputy marshals are allowed to appoint a suitable person to help execute the law, and "all good citizens are hereby commanded to aid and assist in the prompt and efficient execution of this law."

Section 6 gives commissioners the right to issue warrants for the apprehension of fugitives. It also provides for summary judgement and eliminates the ability of the fugitive to offer testimony in their case.

Section 7 warns citizens that "knowingly and willingly obstruct, hinder, or prevent" the reclamation of a fugitive will be fined no more than $1,000 and spend up to six months in jail.

Section 8 provides remuneration for the marshals, deputies, and clerks involved in the recapture of a fugitive: $10 for full services and $5 in cases where proof does not warrant a certificate. Additionally, marshals, deputies, and clerks are allowed to charge claimants for the care and maintenance of fugitives while in their custody.

Section 9 states that the State's officer is responsible for the retention of the fugitive even when an escape or rescue is attempted; however, the officer will be rewarded for their due diligence by the U.S. treasury.

Section 10 explains what type of evidence is needed to reclaim a fugitive.