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Hawthorne’s American readers, delighting in romances set in somewhat exotic foreign countries, would naturally expect to encounter at least a few of the world-famous statues and pictures, and the romancer would not
disappoint them. A second reason for bringing such objects into
the scene is that they afford the author an opportunity to make
his own comments on certain works, or more broadly, on the two
principal media: painting and sculpture. And this he does, albeit
not always to the delight and edification of the modern reader. In
general, however, Hawthorne's remarks on art command a certain
amount of respect, occasionally for their validity, but more often
for their honesty. As Norman Holmes Pearson notes, he frequently
came close to absurdity in his praise of the work of his country-
men who were painters, but his remarks on the work of American
sculptors evoke "only admiration for the perspicuity which kept
him aware of their inadequacy."5

There are more meaningful employments for art, however. One
of these is that art objects are made to become highly functional
in a scene. For example, the statue of Pope Julius seems to bestow
the blessing of heaven on the reunion of Donatello and Miriam. It
is a reminder that their sin as well as their love has brought them
together, and that heaven will exact expiation for the one by for-
bidding them the joys of the other. Another important—perhaps
the most important—use of art is as a symbol for or comment on
character. There are few instances in the novel in which art figures
which fail to fill out in some way the personality and character of
one of the chief players. The "Faun" of Praxiteles would certainly
be foremost in this category. Finally, works of art offer thematic
connotations. The busts which Kenyon makes of Donatello are ex-
cellent illustrations of this, for they successively mirror in stone
and plaster the moral growth of the young Italian as sin seems to
elevate and deepen his character through remorse over his murder
of the monk. These devices just mentioned suggest the several pos-
sibilities which Hawthorne has explored in his attempt to make
art functional in his novel, and it remains now to consider specific
variations or instances as they relate to the four principals, begin-
ning, appropriately enough, with Donatello, the "Marble Faun"
come to life. Since he and Kenyon are most frequently associated
with sculpture rather than painting, the two male characters will
be considered before going on to Hilda and Miriam who work in
the (for Hawthorne) more feminine medium of paint.

The opening paragraph of the novel serves several purposes. The
four principal characters are introduced, though not by name; the
setting is pinpointed—"one of the saloons of the sculpture gal-

5The French and Italian Notebooks, I (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department
of English, Yale University, 1941), lvii.
role of art within the setting is indicated. By mentioning the names of several famous statues—the "Dying Gladiator," the "Lycian Apollo," "Antinous" and others—Hawthorne immediately attempts to capitalize on his famous setting to lend a glamorous reality and authenticity to it. The "Faun" of Praxiteles is not introduced until the third page when attention is immediately called to it by Donatello's resemblance to it. Miriam declares that the "portraiture is perfect in character, sentiment, and feature," and these first two chapters are given over to, among other things, developing this parallel. A paragraph on the character of the "Marble Faun" is worth quoting for what it tells of Donatello's character, and for what it implies about the story to be told and the theme to be unravelled:

Perhaps it is the very lack of moral severity, of any high and heroic ingredient in the character of the Faun, that makes it so delightful an object to the human eye and to the frailty of the human heart. The being here represented is endowed with no principle of virtue, and would be incapable of comprehending such; but he would be true and honest by dint of his simplicity. We should expect from him no sacrifice or effort for an abstract cause; there is not an atom of martyr's stuff in all that softened marble; but he has a capacity for strong and warm attachment, and might act devotedly through its impulse, and even die for it at need. It is possible, too, that the Faun might be educated through the medium of his emotions, so that the coarser animal portion of his nature might eventually be thrown into the background, though never utterly expelled. (24).

A great part of the story of the novel is to be seen here in the description of the character of the stone figure. Donatello's love for Miriam is implied, along with the sacrifice of his innocence for her—the "death" of the old Donatello—and his moral growth through expiation. Significantly, it is Miriam who comments further on the nature of the "Faun" (27–28), incidentally implying a contrast between its carefree nature and a shadow on her own heart. Hawthorne then illustrates what she has seen in the stone figure by describing the utter amorality of the flesh-and-blood counterpart, Donatello, in his childlike admiration of her. Finally, the romancer provides a lengthy literal description of the "Faun," though it is interesting to note that he has not described it accurately, a fact easily noticed by comparing his account with any photograph of the statue. Julian Hawthorne calls attention to it in *Hawthorne and His Circle*, noting that his father "could not have visited it often; for both in his notes and in his romance he makes the same mistake as to the pose."

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*Works. VI* (Boston and New York, 1891), p. 21. Further references to this volume will be indicated by page number placed in parentheses in the text.

*(New York, 1903)*, p. 325. Contrary to Hawthorne's description, the "Faun" has nothing in his right hand and his left arm is akimbo.
Certainly one may assume that most of the description of the "Faun" is meant to apply to Donatello also. "If there is any difference between the two faces," remarks Hilda, "the reason may be, I suppose, that the Faun dwelt in woods and fields, and consorted with his like; whereas, Donatello has known cities a little, and such people as ourselves. But the resemblance is very close, and very strange." (21-22) Mariam adds to this by disagreeing. "Not so strange, ... for no Faun in Arcadia was ever a greater simpleton than Donatello. He has hardly a man's share of wit, small as that may be." (22) Later they both agree that Donatello's gambling play is "the very step of the Dancing Faun." (29) The two are alike even in age, though so many years separate them, for Donatello, like his stone counterpart, "has a look of eternal youth in his face." The statue, morally as well as physically, represents the Donatello who exists at this point in the novel. The living faun's transformation will be viewed in terms of his departure from this stone norm, and the humanizing process will also be depicted at certain stages in other statuary shaped by Kenyon who, as spectator, is best able to view the change objectively.

While Praxiteles' "Faun" depicts and characterizes the young Count as he is at the beginning of the story, the two busts Kenyon makes of him portray him at other points in his moral development. The first of these is executed at Monte Beni. Since this is not long after the murder, Donatello's features mirror the emotional shock and the death of his innocence. This is difficult for the sculptor to capture, and indeed he gives up, but by "some accidental handling of the clay, entirely independent of his own will," Kenyon gives the countenance "a distorted and violent look, combining animal fierceness with intelligent hatred." (514) Hawthorne adds that, had Miriam and Hilda seen this bust, they would have recognized the face of the boy-faun as he was when in the act of murder. Donatello insisted that the bust not be changed so that he would have before him a reminder of his crime, but Kenyon would not agree.

Later in the novel, Kenyon executes another bust of his friend. Through Hilda's response to it, the reader becomes aware that this work has symbolic significance and, further, that it makes Kenyon's first attempt more significant too. "It gives the impression of a growing intellectual power and moral sense," Hilda says. "Donatello's face used to evince little more than a genial, pleasurable sort of vivacity, and capability of enjoyment. But, here, a soul is being breathed into him; it is the Faun, but advancing towards a state of higher development." (433) Kenyon is surprised at this, but Hilda advances the parallel a bit further. "Is it not, perhaps, the chance result of the bust being just so far shaped out, in the
marble, as the process of moral growth had advanced in the origin-
"It is indeed, but not by chance on the romancer's part, for
previous to this discussion, he had mentioned in an aside that his
reader was probably acquainted with Thorwaldsen's "three-fold
analogy": "the clay model, the Life; the plaster cast, the Death;
and the sculptured marble, the Resurrection." Donatello himself is
the clay model, the living image of Praxiteles' "Faun" which cap-
tures the essence of the spirit of life. Kenyon's plaster cast was
never put in a more permanent form and existed only for a few
moments, but this was long enough for it to become symbolic of
the instant death of Donatello's innocence and his immediate
awareness of sin. The second bust, which Kenyon was executing
in marble, captured the resurrection of a human being who had
tasted sin and had developed morally through contact with it. In
these three pieces of statuary there is a working out of the felix
culpa theme which, because of Hawthorne's reticence to allow his
characters to fully accept it, must finally be discounted. However,
it does remain the theme of the novel, though phrased as a ques-
tion rather than a statement.

Functioning in a more complex manner is the statue of Pope
Julius. Here story, theme, and setting are all united as three of
the four major characters come together at noon under the up-
raised hand of the venerable Pope, a reunion which signifies by
Donatello's acceptance of Miriam that he has begun to develop,
to realize that he must live in the world with his sin and share it
with his fellow sinner. Here a familiar Hawthornian theme is
being touched on: sin as a force which isolates man from his fel-
lows and so dams him. But to a degree, this has been averted, for
a divine approval seems to be given to Donatello's strange alliance
with Miriam, for the "majestic figure" seems to bless them and
approve "the pledge of a deep union that had passed under his
auspices." (371) Donatello's attitude toward the stone pope also
suggests a new reliance on God for mercy and forgiveness, for he
compares it to the brazen serpent which Moses raised up in the
wilderness for the healing of the Israelites when they were plagued
by snakes. (361)

Two other examples of the use of sculpture may be mentioned
briefly. One involves an analogy Hawthorne draws between the
sylvan dance in the Borghese park and a bas-relief on an antique
vase or the front of a sculptured sarcophagus. (110) Such orna-
mentation would depict a dance of satyrs, nymphs and other an-
cient poetic creatures; these are the stone counterparts of Dona-
tello, Miriam, and their dancing comrades. But always in the art
image, "some tragic event is shadowed forth or thrust sidelong
into the spectacle," Hawthorne adds, and at this point, the spectre-
model-monk enters the dance and the whole atmosphere of the scene changes, suggesting the evil influence he will presently have on Donatello and Miriam. Finally, there is the broken “Venus” which was found covered with earth in the excavations on the campagna. At first it seems it is Kenyon who discovered her, but this would be less appropriate, and the original find is attributed to Donatello. The “Venus” here is undoubtedly meant to symbolize the shattered ruin of the Faun’s early pagan-like attraction to Miriam. Now, out of the ruins of their lives, suggested by the physical ruins in the area of the excavations, a mature, Christian-oriented relationship could develop, thanks to the humanizing experience Donatello has undergone.

Only in two or three instances are paintings or portraits important in connection with Donatello. In Miriam’s studio he is startled by a picture of “a woman with long dark hair, who threw up her arms with a wild gesture of tragic despair, and appeared to beckon him into the darkness along with her. . . . ‘When my eyes first fell upon her, I thought her arms moved, as if beckoning me to help her in some direful peril,’” he admits, foreshadowing the beseeching glance by which Miriam would cause him to murder the monk. (58) At this point, the innocent nature of the boy only occasionally recognizes the deeper, spiritual struggle Miriam (the woman in the portrait, of course) is having with her past which has come to light and life in the shape of the spectre-model.

At another point, the frescos in a saloon at Monte Beni are a comment on the frame of mind of the owner of the castle. Though they are faded and appear to be “like the ghosts of dead and buried joys,” Donatello recalls that “‘when I brought my own cheerfulness into the saloon, these frescos looked cheerful too.’” (262) Now that the observer has changed, the faded paintings reflect the loss of joie de vivre of the Monte Beni descendant. Similarly, after his great sin Donatello comments on Fra Angelico’s pictures to Kenyon, who is trying to persuade him to look at some of them. “‘. . . His angels look as if they had never taken a flight out of heaven; and his saints seem to have been born saints, and always to have lived so. Young maidens, and all innocent persons, I doubt not, may find great delight and profit in looking at such holy pictures. But they are not for me.’” (356) The beginnings of a conscience are evinced in this rejoinder, marking in yet another way the evolutionary process through which Donatello will completely lose his natural innocence.

Kenyon is the “man of marble,” and he is consistently and naturally associated only with statuary throughout the novel. His work as an artist is to attempt to capture the idealized essence of a subject, and as Darrel Abel suggests, he himself represents some-
thing of an ideal in his role as a self-contained, fully developed artist—a standard, as it were, by which the other two artists may be measured. It is inherent in the general role of the ideal artist to be detached somewhat from life about him; thus he is capable of looking more objectively at his surroundings. Kenyon is such a figure. He moves easily and unobtrusively through the narrative, for he is in accord with the other three major characters, yet somehow aloof from their susceptibilities. He is more stable intellectually and more fully developed aesthetically than the others, and this is why he can be a close friend and confidant to all three, different as they are. He is created in the mould of other Hawthornian characters such as Holgrave and Coverdale in that he is more often the spectator than the active participant in the action of the novel. Finally, he is able to see his art in relation to time. What is good is timeless and will endure; what is not is, like the portrait busts of contemporaries, simply “concretions and petrifactions of a vain self-estimate.” (144)

Aside from the busts of Donatello already discussed, the “Cleopatra” is probably the most notable example of Kenyon’s art. After a lengthy description of the statue which was really the work of William Wetmore Story, an intimate friend of the Hawthornes, the romancer comments on the “repose” of the work: “The spectator felt that Cleopatra had sunk down out of the fever and turmoil of her life, and for one instant . . . had relinquished all activity, and was resting throughout every vein and muscle.” (152) Then, following a succinct comment on the features of the figure ("The face was a miraculous success"), there is a summing up of the spirit of the statue: “fierce, voluptuous, passionate, tender, wicked, terrible, and full of poisonous and rapturous enchantment. . . .” (153) This is Kenyon’s work of art, and a strange one it is for the “man of marble” to have created. It may be that Hawthorne’s enthusiasm for his friend Story’s work carried him too far here, or it may be as Rudolph von Abele has suggested, that the “Cleopatra” represents a duality in the sculptor’s attitude, for while he was fashioning her, “full of ‘hot life,’ fresh from the ‘fire’ of his imagination,” he was also in love with the “spotless virgin” Hilda. But as Kenyon shows his masterpiece to Miriam for the first time, she immediately recognizes a kindred being in her friend’s creation, for she too is a strong, passionate woman. On the supposition that Kenyon has the insight into such a nature to be able to create a work like the “Cleopatra,” Miriam appeals

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8Darrel Abel, “A Masque of Love and Death,” University of Toronto Quarterly, XXIII (October, 1953), 18.

to him for sympathy and is about to take him into her confidence. Just in time she senses his reluctance to share her secrets—perhaps a sensible Victorian attitude on his part, but also a reluctance peculiar to the artist who must look at the world with detachment, without becoming too involved in it. The “Cleopatra” characterizes him in his role as the artist who must have the insight to create an art product with life, yet with ideality; a timeless work, yet a work of individuality and particularity for his time and place. This statue also is a comment on Miriam, for she has in common with the Queen of the Nile her rich passionate nature. Her character is made more vivid and alive by her recognition of the kindred vitality in Kenyon’s work of art.

Somewhat later in the novel, Hilda also sees the “Cleopatra,” and though she sincerely admires it, it does not have the appeal for her that it has for Miriam. Her own nature and character are not reflected in it, and neither her aesthetic sense nor her womanly passion can give her an insight to equal that which her good friend experienced.

The small sculptured hand modeled on Hilda’s is another interesting example of Kenyon’s art. Illustrated here, of course, is not only his love for Hilda and his determination to possess her hand in marriage, but also his way of viewing every aspect of life about him in terms of his art. He also models “a beautiful little statue of maidenhood gathering a snow-drop.” (427) Such a fragile, airy creation was never put into marble, but it suggests the “delicate character” the sculptor assumed while being “unconsciously wrought upon” by Hilda’s influence.

Two other examples of Kenyon’s art must be mentioned. One is a statue of a youthful pearl-fisher “who had got entangled in the weeds at the bottom of the sea, and lay dead among the pearl-oysters, the rich shells, and the sea-weeds, all of like value to him now.” (142–148) This symbolizes the search and the sacrifice of the artist for the ideal in his art. Miriam, however, sees only a moral in it: “... what a strange efficacy there is in death. If we cannot all win pearls, it causes an empty shell to satisfy us just as well.” Perhaps this suggests her contentment with something less than the ideal in her own art. Finally, there is a bust of Milton which Kenyon has executed. It has been suggested that this piece of work is simply a tribute on Hawthorne’s part to “one who had preceded him in probing deep into man’s universal nature.”

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20This incident recalls a moment during the “moonlight ramble” when Miriam looks at the bronze equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius on the Capitol Hill and longs for someone such as the fatherly-looking old ruler to go to with her griefs and problems. Both statues, though the “Cleopatra” indirectly, draw from her an appeal for comfort and consolation.

The bust is then a reminder that Milton had considered in *Paradise Lost* the same theme of the fall of man which occupies Hawthorne in this novel.

Any work of art which relates to Miriam, whether she is the artist or whether she simply comments on it, is invariably highly significant. Since she, like Kenyon, is an artist with an artist’s sensitivity, Hawthorne takes care that this aspect of the character-setting relationship is worked out very carefully. The first reference to Miriam’s work serves to underline her predicament in the novel by characterizing her relationship with the spectre. After she meets him in the catacombs, he follows her about and serves as model for some of her work. Since he is evil, his influence immediately becomes apparent, for art is ideally a clear, pure medium of expression which would not fail to be changed by a negative element. The “shadow or reminiscence” of the features of the monk lingers in Miriam’s drawings, and the “moral atmosphere of these productions was thereby so influenced, that rival painters pronounced it a case of hopeless mannerism, which would destroy all Miriam’s prospects of true excellence in art.” (47)

The chapter on Miriam’s studio is especially interesting for its use of art. Through the device of having her show Donatello some examples of her work, the reader is introduced to a series of functional and symbolic pictures and drawings from which he may deduce Miriam’s psychological attitude. (60–61) Each one of this stack of “pen-and-ink sketches and pencil-drawings” deserves some comment. In the first, Jael is depicted driving a tent nail through the temple of Sisera. (Judges, Ch. 4) In its initial conception, Jael had been pictured as “perfect womanhood,” but by a “wayward quirk of her pencil,” Miriam made her into a “vulgar murderer.” The second sketch is of Judith after she had decapitated Holofernes. A third represents Salome receiving John’s head on a charger. Hawthorne apparently got the idea for this sketch from Luini’s picture in the Uffizzi Gallery, but he has Miriam imparting to the Roman daughter a sense of remorse and love which others have not so generously granted her. “Over and over again,” Hawthorne writes, “there was the idea of woman acting the part of a revengeful mischief towards man,” and the “moral” was always that “woman must strike through her own heart to reach a human life, whatever were the motive that impelled her.” (61) One writer suggests that by “drawing sketches of violence, she tries to purge herself of the model’s presence, but . . . fails by recognizing that the violence she imagines would be even more wicked if practiced than anything the model himself has done.”12 Hawthorne, however,

seems to be implying here that Miriam has committed some deed for which she cannot be altogether condemned, but still a deed which may be held over her by someone who knows of her guilt or shares it with her. As a heroine she may have a mysterious background which must remain fascinatingly vague, but she must also be acceptably innocent to the other characters and the reader until her involvement in the crime of murder which motivates the novel. These sketches do not please Donatello, and even their creator admits that they are “ugly phantoms that stole out of my mind; not things that I created, but things that haunt me.” (62)

Miriam has drawings of a different kind, however, things created in “a happier mood of mind, and one, it is to be hoped, more truly characteristic of the artist.” (62) The subjects here are scenes of everyday life, and once again one may note Hawthorne’s emphasis on the semi-Platonic ideal which shines through a work of art, for he writes that they were “so finely and subtilely idealized that they seemed such as we may see at any moment, and everywhere; while still there was the indefinable something added, or taken away, which makes all the difference between sordid life and an earthly paradise.” The significant aspect of this group of sketches is that in almost every one “a figure was portrayed apart” which looked in as a spectator on the homey scenes of day-to-day life, a figure of which “the face and form had the traits of Miriam’s own.” (63–64) Again Hawthorne’s theme of sin as an isolating force is touched on, though the exact sin which figures in Miriam’s past is never made clear. Plainly she feels some guilt or responsibility and recognizes, in her own view at least, that this sets her apart morally from society about her.

One other picture in Miriam’s collection must be mentioned. This is a self-portrait, a picture of a woman so beautiful “that she seemed to get into your consciousness and memory, and could never afterwards be shut out, but haunted your dreams, for pleasure or for pain. . . .” (65) She is one “Jewish aspect,” and Donatello had no trouble at all in recognizing the subject. But what would a more refined observer have seen? Hawthorne suggests that the artist “had doubtless conveyed some of the intimate results of her heart-knowledge into her own portrait, and perhaps wished to try whether they would be perceptible to so simple and natural an observer as Donatello.” (66–67) In yet another way, then, the author implies that Miriam has some secret to hide, but that it would take a kindred eye to detect it.

In another chapter, there is a third set of sketches. When the “aesthetic company” gathers in the apartment of one of its members, a discussion comes up over a group of faded and yellowed drawings. Hilda affirms that one of these had been executed by
Guido, a favorite of hers, and that the sketch was a rough draft for a painting that hung in the Church of the Cappuccini. This painting in turn had served as the model for a mosaic in a shrine in St. Peter’s, the shrine at which Hilda was later to kneel in prayer. The sketch shows the Archangel Michael in the act of subduing a demon, and Hilda recalls that the artist had found it necessary to state publicly that no resemblance was intended between the demon of the painting and a certain Cardinal Pamfili. But the features of the devil seem somehow familiar to Hilda and Kenyon; Donatello immediately identifies them as those of Miriam’s model. Hawthorne, as he often does, suggests by a series of questions all the possibilities for such a resemblance. It seems likely that a family relationship might be intended between the old Cardinal of Guido’s time and Brother Antonio, Miriam’s tormentor.

A visit to the Church of the Cappuccini for the purpose of re-examining the painting is proposed for the following day, and it is at this point that the painting begins to be revealing in connection with Miriam, for later on that very same evening of the discussion of the drawing, he and Donatello become guilty of murder. The next day at the church, Miriam, being the more articulate of the two, expresses a much stronger feeling about the painting when she views it and questions whether it is a valid representation of the struggle between good and evil. For her auditors she pictures the scene as it should be painted. The struggle would be grim and fierce; the Archangel would be wounded and the devil would writhe under his foot, still contesting the victory. But with all “this fierceness, this grimness, this unutterable horror, there should still be something high, tender, and holy in Michael’s eyes, and around his mouth.” (217)

Kenyon is impressed with her approach to the subject and suggests that she paint such a picture. Miriam replies that she is “sadly afraid the victory would fall on the wrong side.” In her response to the picture, she is relating her own struggle with evil; victory in such a battle is not easy, as it would seem to be for Hilda, but involves a desperate struggle, one which Miriam herself has, in fact, just lost, for her final pronouncement is made as she recollects the murder on the preceding evening.

Hilda’s admiration of Guido’s dainty Archangel who, with unruffled wings and unhacked sword, has defeated the demon is indicative of the ease of her victory in her own struggles with evil, and recalls that she herself has throughout the novel been associated with the Virgin of her aloof shrine. In this instance she is characterized as the New England Puritan who really is pure in heart and whose Calvinism is sufficient unto any day. Her perception of evil is no greater than her perception of the depths of
human character, for Hilda is a copyist, one who copies or imitates repeatedly the famous works of the European museums. She is so morally pure and aesthetically sympathetic that it is easy for her to enter into the intent of the artist and so achieve a better copy, a copy which captures the spirit of the work more satisfactorily than the work of her rivals. The old masters, Miriam tells Kenyon, are his "‘only rivals’" for Hilda’s hand. She does not wish to be a creative artist, and her aloof nature limits her to dealing only with such works as are wholly moral, as for example Guido’s "Archangel Michael." Even his "Beatrice," she insists at first, is sinless, though later she agrees that the luckless heroine deserved her fate. Still, the moral note is inherent in either attitude. A work with no obvious moral intention she would not have attempted to copy, and it was not her practice anyway to reproduce the whole painting, but to choose "some high, noble, and delicate portion of it, in which the spirit and essence of the picture culminated. . . ." (76) By subordinating her own talents, which were not inconsiderable, to those of the masters, she chose "the better and loftier and more unselfish part, laying her individual hopes, her fame, her prospects of enduring remembrance, at the feet of those great ones, who she so loved and venerated. . . ." (78) Such an attitude is obviously functional, underscoring dramatically the fact that Hilda is a conformist and an imitator, as contrasted with being a creative individualist.

After the tour of Miriam’s studio, it is only to be expected that Hilda’s studio will also be introduced into the story, but Hilda has only one painting that is significant, and it is more important for what it says about Miriam than about its creator. It is easy for Hawthorne to describe Hilda’s work, for it is a copy of a famous painting by Guido, a portrait of Beatrice Cenci. The original was supposedly in the Barberini Palace and its owner would not let anyone copy it, though it was otherwise open for inspection. Like other artists, Hilda has studied the picture and carried it away in her heart bit by bit. According to Miriam, hers is the best copy yet made. The portrait of "a very youthful, girlish, perfectly beautiful face, enveloped in white drapery" is dominated by a note of sadness, and the eyes seem to make "a strange, ineffectual effort to escape." (82) The final effect is to make the viewer "shiver as at a spectre."

Hawthorne uses the portrait of Beatrice—and the connotations it must of necessity have—as a principal device in characterizing Miriam as tragically isolated from "the sphere of humanity." He never makes a definite connection between the two which would suggest that Miriam was directly modeled on Beatrice, nor does it seem likely that he meant it to be so. He simply uses the beauty
of the subject and the aura of sin which the Cenci name evokes to suggest a similar vague background of sin for the beautiful Jewess who both condemns and understands the act imputed to Beatrice. The reader is undoubtedly meant to get the impression that she has been in a similar situation herself. She is not even certain herself of the extent of her own guilt and resents any reflection on her innocence. While looking at Kenyon’s “Cleopatra,” she surprises him with the statement that her conscience is “still as white as Hilda’s” and then adds, “Do you question it?” Kenyon, of course, immediately replies in the negative. But as Miriam looks at her friend’s copy of the “Beatrice,” she is forced to disagree with Hilda’s statement that the legendary beauty was a “fallen angel,—fallen, and yet sinless.” “If I can pretend to see at all into that dim region, whence she gazes so strangely and sadly at us, Beatrice’s own conscience does not acquit her of something evil, and never to be forgiven,” Miriam says. Then she inquires of Hilda, “‘... do you think that there was no sin in the deed for which she suffered?’” Hilda is forced to agree that Beatrice’s was a “terrible guilt, an inexpiable crime” and that “her doom is just.” At this, Miriam becomes once more almost defensive: “Your judgements are often terribly severe,” she replies to Hilda, “though you seem all made up of gentleness and mercy. Beatrice’s sin may not have been so great: perhaps it was no sin at all, but the best virtue possible in the circumstances.” The importance to Miriam of the degree of Beatrice’s sin may be seen in her remark which sums up for her the whole conversation: “I would give my life to know whether she thought herself innocent, or the one great criminal since time began.” (84–5)

At this point, the scene becomes most meaningful with the following development:

As Miriam gave utterance to these words, Hilda looked from the picture into her face, and was startled to observe that her friend’s expression had become almost exactly that of the portrait; as if her passionate wish and struggle to penetrate poor Beatrice’s mystery had been successful. (85)

Here, in an attempt to fathom the secret of the picture, Miriam seems to give away some part of her own secret by unknowingly allowing Hilda to glimpse a sisterhood between her and the subject of the painting. Hawthorne’s use of art in this case is highly functional, based on parallelism, for this is the first incident in a chain which leads Hilda to conclude the general nature of Miriam’s guilt. In preparation for a later summary of the situation, it might be said at this point that if X equals the revealing expression on Beatrice’s face, then Miriam’s expression equals X, because in this scene they momentarily have this aspect in common.
The next step is an illustration of the innocence of Hilda which emphasizes her strange capacity to allow the mood of another artist to enter into her own so that she can duplicate the spirit of another's painting. Hawthorne comes to this in a scene just preceding that of Hilda's rejection of Miriam on the day after the murder. The picture of Beatrice is again the frame of reference, and this time a "peculiarity" of the portrait is mentioned which will be most important.

It is a peculiarity of this picture, that its profoundest expression eludes a straightforward glance, and can only be caught by side glimpses, or when the eye falls casually upon it; even as if the painted face had a life and consciousness of its own, and, resolving not to betray its secret of grief or guilt, permitted the true tokens to come forth only when it imagined itself unseen. No other such magical effect has ever been wrought by pencil. (238-9)

Opposite the easel on which this picture rests is a mirror which reflects the faces of both the artist and the subject on the canvas. In "one unpreamediated glance," Hilda experiences a moment of truth through her ability to enter into the mind of a subject. (239) "She fancied—nor was it without horror—that Beatrice's expression, seen aside and vanishing in a moment, had been depicted in her own face likewise, and flitted from it as timorously." She immediately feels guilt transferred to her own soul; yet she knows she is innocent of any sinful act. However, it was "the knowledge of Miriam's guilt that lent the same expression to Hilda's face," so she feels guilt simply by knowledge or "association," though she is, of course, innocent. Still, since her face mirrors Beatrice's expression for a moment, Hilda also assumes the quality associated with the expression X.

At this point, Hawthorne seems to step in in his own person to declare that Beatrice is indeed innocent. "Who ... can look at that mouth ... and not pronounce Beatrice sinless? It was the intimate consciousness of her father's sin that threw its shadow over her, and frightened her into a remote and inaccessible region, where no sympathy could come." (239) The lady's guilt, then, Hawthorne seems to be saying, is not really actual guilt at all, but a reflection of the guilt of her father—guilt by knowledge or "association." And X, the expression on the face of the picture, is now directly associated with Beatrice the subject whose innocence (for the purpose of the romance) Hawthorne has established.

Now, since Miriam's expression equals X, Hilda's equals X, and finally Beatrice's also equals X, presumably Miriam, Hilda and Beatrice should all be innocent, or if guilty in any degree, only so by "association," i.e., knowledge or acquaintance. Yet, of the three, presumably only Miriam may actually be considered guilty.
—and this only since the night of the moonlight ramble—because
she acquiesced in the murder of the monk. Before that time, it
might be assumed that she, like Hilda and Beatrice, merely re-
acted the guilt of someone about her, possibly Brother Antonio—
again guilt by “association.” It is extremely subtle of Hawthorne
to allow Hilda first to recognize Beatrice’s innocence (which the
romancer ascribes to her only later), and then, on Miriam’s urging,
to agree that Beatrice was guilty, though as Hawthorne suggests,
only in her knowledge of a crime. This is the type of guilt Hilda
recognizes in herself as she glimpses her image in the mirror;
this is the type she knows Miriam harbors, for she has seen her
give silent consent to the murder. In her shocked state of innocence,
Hilda can show her friend no mercy. Hawthorne seems to suggest
that true innocence is complete unawareness and ignorance of evil.
At least, this seems to be so for such characters as Hilda and Dona-
tello, who are never the same after their contact with sin. For
both, however, such a contact led to a higher level of moral con-
sciousness which recognizes sin in the world as an undeniable part
of human existence. The portrait of Beatrice Cenci has functioned
to demonstrate this, and to indicate subtly the type and degree of
guilt of two major characters.

It only remains to note that the matter just discussed represents
the principal instance in The Marble Faun of Hawthorne’s use of
the mirror motif. Here, the mirror, as always, symbolizes the truth
of the imagination which finally is a more enduring and eternal
truth than that reported through the medium of the physical world.
Hawthorne is careful to use the right verb—“fancied”—when he
has Hilda recognize in a moment the nature of Beatrice’s guilt,
for “fancy” here suggests the imagination, though Hawthorne did
make some distinctions between them.

The portrait of Beatrice figures in the story once more, though
somewhat incidentally. A young Italian artist notices Hilda stand-
ing before a portrait entitled “Joanna of Aragon” and captures
on his canvas her expression at that moment. Hilda is attracted to
the picture because she thinks she detects a slight resemblance to
Miriam, but the young artist draws her gazing “with sad and earn-
est horror” at a spot of blood on her white robe. Hawthorne adds
that the picture of Hilda attracted considerable attention and was
thought to have been suggested by a copy of Guido’s “Beatrice.”
The young artist called the picture “Innocence, dying of a blood-
stain,” and was laughed at for his trouble, for a viewer was all too
apt to assume that the subject of the painting had perpetrated
some dark deed to cause her to have that sad expression. But the
young artist was insistent. “Can you look at the innocent anguish
in her face, and ask that question?’” he demands. “‘No; but, as I read the mystery, a man has been slain in her presence, and the blood, spurtling accidentally on her white robe, has made a stain which eats into her life.’” (378) The artist painted more wisely than he knew, of course, for the parallel of his interpretation with what actually happened is figuratively quite correct.

Two other chapters remain to be considered. Hilda is the only major character in these, for her friends have departed from Rome and she is left to herself with her knowledge of the crime of Miriam and Donatello. At such a time and in such a mood of despondency as is upon her, it is only natural that she turn to the great interest of her life—art—for solace. In Chapter XXXVII, “The Emptiness of Picture Galleries,” Hawthorne does three things. First, there is a casual tour of the work of several famous painters that must have delighted readers who were familiar with Rome’s art treasures. He also steps aside to make a few comments of his own which are relevant to Hilda and her immediate situation. For examples, he discusses Sodoma’s fresco at Siena of Christ bound to a pillar. In her desolation, Hilda wishes to see this picture again, and the implication is that the artist captured emotions (e.g., “a sense of loneliness”) which Hilda is experiencing at this time. Finally, and probably most important, Hawthorne illustrates in these two chapters (XXXVII–XXXVIII) the inefficacy of art as a consoling force for sorrowing mankind. He does this by causing Hilda, who is alone in the city to turn to art for comfort in her anxiety. But she has lost her sympathetic insight into the old masters, and with it the ability which had made her the best copyist in Rome. Why and how such a loss? Hawthorne seems to imply that her knowledge of the murder has brought about this “transformation,” for he notes that “her capacity of emotion was choked up with a horrible experience,” and “it inevitably followed that she should seek in vain, among those friends so venerated and beloved, for the marvels which they had heretofore shown her.” (383) However, the fault is not all Hilda’s. In writing of certain “Italian masters,” Hawthorne puts a portion of the blame on the artists and their approach to their art. They were “not human,” he says, “nor addressed their work to human sympathies, but to a false intellectual taste, which they themselves were the first to create. . . . they substituted art instead of nature.”

Though Hawthorne does not directly say so, one wonders too if Hilda is not suffering because she has cut herself off from Miriam, her true friend. If this idea is acceptable, it would be another variation on the usual handling of the theme of the fall of man,
for it would have Hilda sinning and suffering by deliberately isolating herself from another who needed her help and sympathy.\textsuperscript{13}

Hilda, then, can no longer console herself with art. In Chapter XXXVIII, “Altars and Incense,” she is to be found making a series of pilgrimages to the churches of Rome. Since art provides no consolation, she has begun to turn to God. Hawthorne toyed with the idea of the Virgin Mary as a mother-image for his character, but suggests his own rejection of Catholicism when he concludes that Hilda “never found just the virgin mother whom she needed.” (396) Always there is a human element in the picture or statue which keeps the girl from kneeling to her. Only once does she go this far—at the shrine in St. Peter’s which was decorated by the mosaic of Guido’s “Archangel Michael and the Demon”—and then she quickly retracts her tribute.

The shrine adjacent to that decorated by the Guido mosaic is adorned with a painting by Guercino. It represents “a maiden’s body in the jaws of the sepulchre, and her lover weeping over it; while her beatified spirit looks down upon the scene, in the society of the Saviour and a throng of saints.” (401) Hilda comes to wonder whether she may not rise above her despondency and look at her situation as objectively “as Petronilla in the picture looked at her own corpse.” This hope born in her foreshadows the scene in the confessional in the next chapter when Hilda does indeed get some relief from her anguish by telling a priest what she has witnessed.

The art in the setting of The Marble Faun, so well integrated with plot, theme and characterization, is the most colorful and interesting aspect of this romance. Without it, the book could hardly exist, for it provides an “objective correlative” around which the theme of “transformation”—the spiritual rise through a moral fall—is worked out. Art is used as a device for characterizing the several aspects of all four principal characters. It contributes to thematic development, and such works as the “Faun” and the “Beatrice” are unifying devices for the novel and important to its structure. But even were it not for these matters, the intrinsic value of art as a setting justifies Hawthorne’s attempt to capture this aspect of the Roman scene of the 1850’s. Surely it is not exaggerating to say that the American romancer was something of a pioneer in developing to such a great extent the role of art in a romantic fictional setting.

\textsuperscript{13}Arlin Turner, Nathaniel Hawthorne, An Introduction and Interpretation (New York, 1961), p. 64.