

## **Portraits of Spiritual Isolates: A Study of Egotism in Nathaniel Hawthorne's Works**

Doctoral Program in Humanities

Graduate School of Letters

Ritsumeikan University

おざき ゆうこ  
Ozaki Yuko

This dissertation studies the problem of egotism in Nathaniel Hawthorne's works. It comprises three chapters, each of which examines the central figures of his narratives in order to unveil several phases of the problem.

The first chapter analyzes Hawthorne's early historical tales: "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," "Roger Malvin's Burial," and "Young Goodman Brown." The self-deceptive protagonists of the tales symbolize the dishonest attitude of the nineteenth-century New Englanders toward the past evil of their community. It is demonstrated in this chapter that egotism in Hawthorne's view is, in the most basic sense, the spiritual isolation from humankind in consequence of the failure to acknowledge one's moral imperfection.

The second chapter focuses on Hawthorne's short stories around the 1840's: "The Birth-mark," "Rappaccini's Daughter," "The Artist of the Beautiful," and "Ethan Brand." The main characters of these works are the monomaniac investigators lacking in proper respect and sympathy for other human beings. We point out that these egotists are partly Hawthorne's ironical self-portraits because the author, too, was an earnest investigator of humanity and spiritual isolate.

The third chapter takes up The Scarlet Letter and The Blithedale Romance. Our primary focus is on Roger Chillingworth in the former, and Hollingsworth and Miles Coverdale in the latter. The spiritual isolation of these characters is a result of the enormous power of their emotion and temperament over their will. We consider that Hawthorne's novels foreground the aspect of egotism as the unconquerable weakness of humanity, while his short stories treat the issue allegorically within the strict good/evil moral system.

In the conclusion, we mention that Hawthorne has investigated into man's corrupt nature not because of his cynical view of humanity but because of his genuine sympathy and affection for human beings.