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THE SEVEN-BRANCHED CANDLESTICK

A THEMATIC STUDY OF THE MARBLE FAUN.

A THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

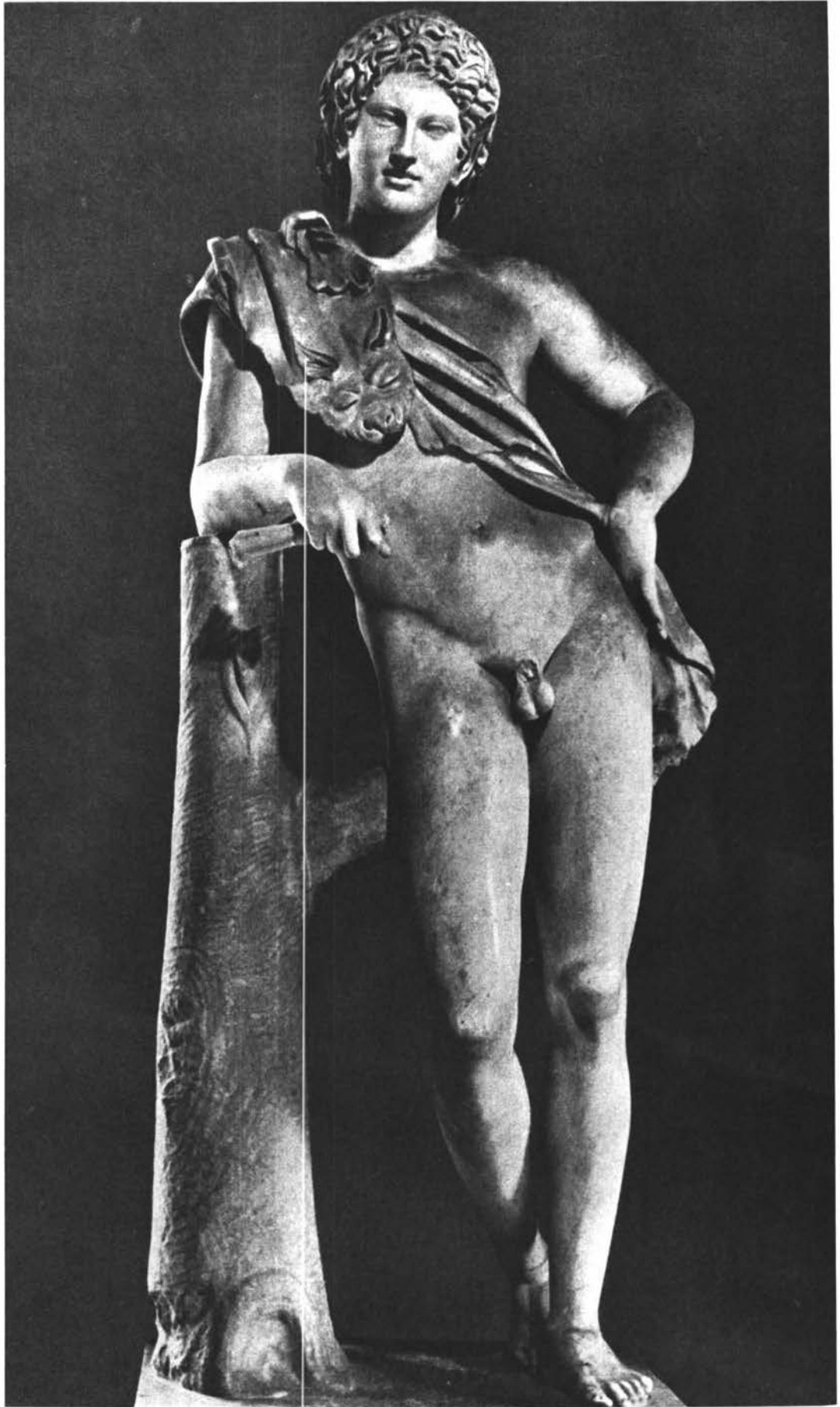
OF MASTER OF ARTS

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JAN C. HUNTER

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THE FAUN OF PRAXITELES

P R E F A C E

IN THIS STUDY OF THE MARBLE FAUN I HAVE USED THE RIVERSIDE EDITION, VOLUME VI OF THE COMPLETE WORKS OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE INTRODUCED BY G.P. LATHROP, AS MY TEXT. ALL REFERENCES TO THE TEXT HAVE BEEN PLACED IN BRACKETS AFTER THE PASSAGE QUOTED, IN THE BODY OF THE THESIS. ALL OTHER REFERENCES ARE INCLUDED IN THE NOTES AT THE END OF THE THESIS, AND FULLY DOCUMENTED IN THE BIBLIOGRAPHY. THE FRONTISPIECE IS FROM ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WORLD ART, MCGRAWHILL, LONDON, 1966, VOL.XI PLATE 240.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK PROFESSOR R.G. FREAN FOR MAKING HIMSELF AVAILABLE, AND FOR HIS ENCOURAGEMENT WHILE SUPERVISING THIS THESIS; ALSO THE LIBRARIANS OF THE MASSEY UNIVERSITY LIBRARY FOR THEIR PATIENT ASSISTANCE. FINALLY, THANKS ARE DUE TO MY PARENTS WHO PROOF-READ THIS THESIS, AND MY FELLOW STUDENTS FOR THEIR COMPANY ON THE WAY.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

SEVEN HILLS AND SEVEN WOMEN, SEVEN GEMS AND SEVEN SEPULCHRES, HAWTHORNE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN INTRIGUED BY THIS SORT OF ARITHMETIC SYMBOLISM. OF ALL THE SEVENS, IT IS THE JEWISH MENORAH, THE SACRED SEVEN-BRANCHED CANDLESTICK THAT HE HAS CHOSEN AS A THEMATIC SYMBOL FOR THE MARBLE FAUN. ON THE WAY HOME FROM ST. PETERS, HILDA AND KENYON STOP ON THE BRIDGE AND PONDER ON THE CANDLESTICK LOST IN THE TIBER. "THE SEVEN-BRANCHED CANDLESTICK ... SUCH A CANDLESTICK CANNOT BE LOST FOREVER ... AN ADMIRABLE IDEA FOR A MYSTIC STORY OR PARABLE OR SEVEN-BRANCHED ALLEGORY, FULL OF POETRY, ART, PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION. AS EACH BRANCH IS LIGHTED IT SHALL HAVE A DIFFERENT LUSTRE FROM THE OTHER SIX; AND WHEN ALL SEVEN ARE KINDLED THEIR RADIANCE SHALL COMBINE INTO THE INTENSE WHITE LIGHT OF TRUTH ... I WILL SUGGEST IT TO ONE OF OUR POETS." (422) FAR FROM SUGGESTING TO A POET SUCH AS LONGFELLOW THAT HE MIGHT COMPOSE POETRY ON THIS IDEA, HAWTHORNE USED IT HIMSELF AS THE OUTLINE TO THE MARBLE FAUN. THE SEVEN BRANCHES WERE SEVEN PERSPECTIVES THROUGH WHICH HE CREATED THE THEME OF TRANSFORMATION, IN MUCH THE SAME WAY AS MELVILLE USED THE NINE GEMS OF THE PEQUOD IN MOBY DICK.

ALTHOUGH HE THOUGHT "TRANSFORMATION", THE TITLE CHOSEN BY BRITISH PUBLISHERS, "VERY FLAT AND INEXPRESSIVE",² IT EXPRESSES THE THEMATIC CONCERNS OF THE BOOK, MORE CLEARLY THAN "THE MARBLE FAUN". IN CREATING THE BOOK HAWTHORNE

WAS TRANSFORMING RECOLLECTIONS FROM HIS NOTEBOOKS INTO AN INTEGRATED ROMANCE, USING NATURE, ART AND HISTORY TO SHOW ASPECTS OF THE THEME. THE EMPHASIS HE GIVES TO TRANSFORMATION DOES NOT CONCENTRATE ON THE MIRACULOUS, OR AN UNEXPECTED CHANGE, BUT THE CHANGE INVOLVED IN FACING EXPERIENCES, IN GROWING TO MATURITY.

THEMATICALLY, DONATELLO IS THE CENTRAL CHARACTER. HE IS FIRST SHOWN WITH A SIMPLICITY THAT, COMBINED WITH HUMAN INTELLIGENCE, MIGHT RESTORE THE DIVINE IMAGE IN MAN. HOWEVER, HE IS LESS THAN A MAN THOUGH HIS OWN DEVELOPMENT IS PERFECT IN ITSELF. A DEEPER, DARKER ELEMENT MUST BE ADDED TO HIS NATIVE INSTINCTS. ARCADIA PLUS SHADOW DEEPENS PLEASURE TO HAPPINESS. IN HIS YOUTH IN TUSCANY HE HAS BEEN LIVELY, "SO THAT," AS THE PEASANTS EXPRESSED IT, "THEIR YOUNG MASTER HAD NEVER DARKENED A DOORWAY IN HIS LIFE." (274) BUT NOW, HE IS TAINTED BY THE ATMOSPHERE OF ROME. A CHANGE COMES OVER HIM AS HE BECOMES MORE INVOLVED WITH MIRIAM. HE LOSES HIS JOY AND NATURAL EFFERVESCENCE. MIRIAM IS AWARE THAT THEIR ASSOCIATION MAY SULLY HIS INNOCENCE BUT HE REMAINS IMPERVIOUS TO HER WARNINGS.

AFTER THE MURDER, THERE IS A MOMENT OF EXUBERANCE WHEN DONATELLO'S CRIME SEEMS REDEMPTIVE RATHER THAN DAMNING. HE BECOMES A MAN "HEROIC FROM PASSION" (206), BUT AS HIS ANIMAL SPIRITS RETURN WITHOUT THEIR USUAL LIGHTHEARTEDNESS, IT IS CLEAR THAT IF THIS IS THE WAY OF MATURITY, IT IS ALSO A REVERSION TO SOMETHING WILD. MIRIAM BEGINS TO WONDER WHETHER HE IS CAPABLE OF LOVE, AND REFERENCES TO HIS AFFIN-

ITY WITH THE ANIMAL KINGDOM INCREASE. HE BECOMES A RUINED SOUL, BEWILDERED AND STUNNED.

EVENTUALLY A NEW POWER TO DEAL WITH EMOTION IS EVIDENT AS DONATELLO CHOOSES TO STRUGGLE UPWARDS AGAINST THE PAST AND HIS LIMITATIONS. LIKE THE SHRUB AT THE TOP OF THE TOWER THAT HAD NEVER GROWN "ANY SMALLER OR ANY LARGER" DONATELLO HAS BEEN CRAMPED BY THE RARIFIED ATMOSPHERE OF HIS ANCESTRAL HOME. BUT NOW KENYON NOTICES "A FAR DEEPER SENSE, AND AN INTELLIGENCE THAT BEGAN TO DEAL WITH HIGHER SUBJECTS." (302). THERE IS TRUTH IN SORROW BUT THE CHANGE IN DONATELLO IS NOT THE RESULT OF SORROW BUT OF DEALING WITH GUILT AND SIN. LIKE JOB, WHOSE FORTUNES TURNED WHEN HE PRAYED FOR HIS FRIENDS, DONATELLO IS COUNTED AS HAVING FOUND A SOUL WHEN THE IDEA OF LIVING FOR THE WELFARE OF HIS FELLOW CREATURES SUGGESTS ITSELF. BUT THIS THOUGHT IS ONLY MOMENTARY AND KENYON TRIES TO BRING HIM "OUT OF A MORBID LIFE ... INTO A HEALTHY ONE!" THROUGH TRAVEL, BY WHICH HE HOPES HE WILL "RECREATE THE WORLD BY THE NEW EYES WITH WHICH HE WILL REGARD IT." (328)

HOWEVER, DONATELLO NEEDS THE DEVOTED LOVE OF MIRIAM TO INSTRUCT HIM AWAY FROM REMORSE. HIS FACULTIES ARE BEGINNING TO DEVELOP; INSIGHT, AND PERCEPTION OF DEEPER TRUTHS ARE GROWING, AND THE WORLD OF THOUGHT BEGINNING TO OPEN. BUT SIMPLICITY AND INTELLIGENCE ARE STILL MIXED. THEN IN PERUGIA HE FEELS A BLESSING FROM THE STATUE OF POPE JULIUS UPON HIS SPIRIT; (361) BEFORE, HE HAD NO APPRECIATION OF THE GRATITUDE KENYON FELT ON SEEING THE VIEW FROM THE TOP

OF THE TOWER. (298) MIRIAM FINDS HIM A MAN OF FEELING AND INTELLIGENCE RATHER THAN THE WILD SPORTIVE THING OF NATURE. FAUN-LIFE, HAS NO LONGER ANY PLACE ON EARTH. HE HAS LOST HIS YOUTHFULNESS BUT HAS SHARED "THE RIDDLE OF THE SOUL'S GROWTH, TAKING THE FIRST IMPULSE AMID REMORSE AND PAIN, AND STRUGGLING THROUGH THE INCRUSTATIONS OF THE SENSES". (434) HE HAS BEEN RECREATED, A SOUL IS BEING BREATHED INTO HIM.

FINALLY HIS TRANSFORMATION IS SHOWN BY MEANS OF CONTRAST WITH MIRIAM. WHEREAS HE WAS A "RUDE, UNCULTIVATED BOY!", (128) SUBSERVIENT TO MIRIAM, NOW AT THEIR MEETING WITH KENYON AT THE EXCAVATIONS, HE TAKES THE LEAD AND ENCOURAGES MIRIAM TO BE REALISTIC. DECISIONS ARE THE OUTCOME OF HIS THOUGHTFUL CHOICE RATHER THAN HER STRONG PERSONALITY. IN THE END DONATELLO GOES TO PRISON, BUT THIS IS NOT FAILURE. HE IS ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS ACTIONS IN A WAY THAT SHOWS HIM TO BE NO LONGER AN INNOCENT FAUN BUT A MATURE HUMAN BEING.

MANY PATTERNS CAN BE FOUND IN THIS BARE OUTLINE. THE FOUR STATES SUGGESTED BY FOGLE IN HIS COMMENTARY ON THE SCARLET LETTER - NATURE, THE HEAD, THE HEART, AND THE HEAVENLY - ARE APPLICABLE, BUT AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE IDEA OF TRANSFORMATION CANNOT PROPERLY BE DIVORCED FROM THE SEVEN PERSPECTIVES DEFINING IT. THE MOST LIMITED OF THESE PERSPECTIVES INVOLVES THE CHANGE IN DONATELLO AS HE MOVES FROM THE INNOCENCE OF CHILDHOOD TO A MATURITY THAT INVOLVES SEXUAL AWARENESS. A LITTLE LARGER IN SCOPE IS

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STRUGGLE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH IN WHICH MIRIAM AND DONATELLO ARE BOTH INVOLVED. IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WHOLE GROUP TRANSFORMATION IS DISCUSSED IN TERMS OF THE ISOLATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF MEN, WHICH MEANS EACH MAN HAS A CONCERN FOR HIS NEIGHBOUR BECAUSE HE SHARES A COMMON HUMANITY. EVEN WIDER THAN THIS IS THE FOURTH VIEW, WHICH USES THE TERMS OF THE FALL AND REDEMPTION, BUT IS CONCERNED WITH CHOICE. THESE FOUR PERSPECTIVES, WHICH ARE LARGELY CONCERNED WITH THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS REACTION TO SOCIETY, I SHALL CALL THE CRIME GROUP.

SINCE TRANSFORMATION IN THE MARBLE FAUN IS A CONSCIOUS PROCESS, THE ABILITY TO CHOOSE AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHOICE ARE IMPORTANT ISSUES. FREEDOM AND FATE, CHOICE AND DETERMINISM LINK THIS FIRST GROUP WITH THREE FURTHER PERSPECTIVES. THERE IS FREEDOM FOR THE INDIVIDUAL TO CHOOSE, BUT ENVIRONMENT AND EVENTS OF THE PAST IMPOSE LIMITATIONS. IN WHAT MAY BE CALLED THE PERSPECTIVE OF TIME, HAWTHORNE CONSIDERS THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE OLD TO THE NEW IN HISTORICAL TERMS, REFLECTING IN PARTICULAR ON THE RELATION OF THE NEW AMERICA TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EUROPE. BUT THE PRESENT MOMENT CAN BE PRESERVED, AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PAST BROUGHT TO BEAR ON THE PRESENT, THROUGH ART. THE ARTIST TRANSFORMS THE ORDINARY THINGS OF LIFE TO SHOW WHAT IS BEAUTIFUL AND TRUE IN THEM. ART IS PRESENT IN THE BOOK IN TWO WAYS. IT IS BASIC IN THE COMMUNITY OF ARTISTS IN ROME WITH THEIR PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURE, AND IN A DIFFERENT WAY IS PRESENT IN THE GOTHIC AND PASTORAL ELEMENTS OF THE BOOK. BY USING

THESE CONVENTIONS HAWTHORNE IS ABLE TO SHOW TRUTH IN A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE.

IN HIS WRITING HAWTHORNE USES A PARTICULAR SITUATION - A GROUP OF ARTISTS IN ROME - AND THROUGH THESE SEVEN PERSPECTIVES TRIES TO CONVEY UNIVERSAL TRUTHS. THE QUESTION IS, HOW DOES HE USE THESE PERSPECTIVES? IS THE MARBLE FAUN ALLEGORY, AND WHAT PART DOES SYMBOLISM PLAY? DESPITE A CONTEMPORARY REVIEW OF 1861, TO WHICH HAWTHORNE LATER ADDED HIS SMILING APPROVAL, THE MARBLE FAUN CANNOT BE CONSIDERED AN ALLEGORY OF THE SAME KIND AS PILGRIM'S PROGRESS. MRS. MARTHA TYLER GALE PUT FORWARD THIS INTERPRETATION IN THE OCTOBER ISSUE OF THE NEW ENGLANDER, 1861. MIRIAM STANDS FOR THE SOUL; HILDA, CONSCIENCE; KENYON, REASON; DONATELLO, NATURE; AND THE MONK, TEMPTATION. SHE WRITES: "CONSCIENCE KEEPS THE MORAL ACCOUNTS OF THE SOUL, AND WILL PRESENT THEM SOONER OR LATER, AT THE TRIBUNAL OF JUSTICE. BUT CONSCIENCE HERSELF BECOMES MORBID AND IS OFTEN BROUGHT UNDER BONDAGE TO SUPERSTITION, WHILE SIN REMAINS UNPUNISHED OR UNPARDONED." 3. HOWEVER, THERE IS NONE OF THE ONE TO ONE CORRESPONDENCE OF ALLEGORY; BOTH THE LITERAL AND SYMBOLIC MEANINGS ARE IMPORTANT IN THEMSELVES. THE MARBLE FAUN CANNOT BE INCLUDED IN THAT CLASS OF ALLEGORY IN WHICH THE MEANING IS DETACHED BY A PURELY INTELLECTUAL PROCESS; IT DEPENDS ON AN IMAGINATIVE READING. SYMBOLISM DIFFERS FROM ALLEGORY IN THAT THE SYMBOL IS INCLUDED IN THE IDEA IT REPRESENTS. THE FAUN IS A GOOD EXAMPLE BECAUSE THE SYMBOL IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE INNOCENCE AND EFFERVESCENCE OF DONATELLO'S CHARACTER. IN A DISCUSSION OF THE RELATION OF ALLEGORY TO SYMBOLISM MATTHIESSEN SAYS

THAT "ALLEGORY AIDS THE EXPRESSION OF SYMBOLIC THOUGHT BUT ENDANGERS IT BY SUBSTITUTING A FIGURE FOR A LIVING IDEA." 4. HAWTHORNE USES ALLEGORY ONLY AS IT SUPPORTS SYMBOLISM. HE THOUGHT THE BEST ART THAT WHICH ESTABLISHED MULTIPLE POINTS OF CONTACT WITH FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES COMMON TO ALL MEN. USING SYMBOLISM HE ACHIEVES THE MULTIPLICITY OF MEANING NECESSARY TO CONVEY HIS IDEAS. IN THE MARBLE FAUN "TRANSFORMATION" IS A COMPLEX IDEA, AND IT IS A MISTAKE TO LOOK FOR "A MEANING".

CONSIDERATIONS OF THIS SORT SUGGEST HAWTHORNE TOOK THE FIGURE OF THE CANDLESTICK SERIOUSLY. THAT IMPORTANT TRANSFORMATIONS CONNECTED WITH ART OR HISTORY TAKE PLACE AT EVERY SEVENTH CHAPTER, AND THAT THE NUMBER SEVEN OCCURS REPEATEDLY SHOWS INTEREST IN THE USE OF THE "SEVEN-BRANCHED" PATTERN WHICH HE SUGGESTED, AS A STRUCTURAL DEVICE. BEHIND THE SYMBOL OF THE LIGHTED CANDLESTICK, HAWTHORNE USES THE IMAGE OF A RAINBOW WITH ITS SEVEN COLOURS, EACH COLOUR MERGING INTO THE OTHERS, LOSING ITS IDENTITY, UNTIL TOGETHER THEY CREATE A WHITE LIGHT. IN A SIMILAR WAY, THE SEVEN PERSPECTIVES ARE FUSED TO GIVE A RICHER IDEA OF TRANSFORMATION. IN THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS, I SHALL ATTEMPT TO SEPARATE THESE PERSPECTIVES AND CONSIDER THE WAY THEY "COMBINE INTO THE INTENSE WHITE LIGHT OF TRUTH".