Puer Psyche: Loss of Creative Potential in *The Blithedale Romance*
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**Abstract:** Critics have noted that Miles Coverdale embodies the Jungian *puer aeternal* archetype and remains psychologically stunted throughout *The Blithedale Romance*. In an attempt to avoid emotional entanglements that require any form of self-actualization, Coverdale protects his fragile psyche by projecting his own internal archetypes onto unwitting Blithedale community members. Unfortunately for him, this approach culminates in the stagnation of his own potential as a poet. In this paper, I argue that this narrative inaction is deliberate. I suggest Hawthorne intentionally denies his protagonist psychological development in order to explore the interplay between personal failing and failed creative purpose.

**Key Words:** *The Blithedale Romance*; *puer aeternal*; archetype; Jung; psyche; projection

Northrop Frye was among the first to understand romance as the genre most akin to "the wish-fulfillment dream" in which, despite his many adventures, the emergent hero "never develops or ages" (Frye 186). This is especially true of *The Blithedale Romance*, in which narrator Miles Coverdale grows older, but remains forever psychologically adolescent. As protagonist, he retains his status as the Jungian archetype of the *puer aeternus* throughout the novel. Coverdale remains just as undeveloped in the final chapters, recalling the narrative for us in his middle age, as he was in the early chapters at Blithedale, many years earlier (Holland 22). Although Coverdale's lack of evolution provokes a certain amount of antipathy in readers, placing the blame on romance as a genre does little to appease his detractors: "The problem for many critics," notes Michael Borgstrom, "is not just that Coverdale makes inappropriate narrative and social choices but that he is inconsistent in the choices that he makes" (365). However, where others see this arrested and incongruous development as the result of poor narrative planning by Hawthorne, I suggest Coverdale's inconstancy is both intentional on the part of the author and central to understanding the narrative. I argue that Hawthorne deliberately denies Miles Coverdale any psychological evolution so that we may recognize that this stunted growth presages the poet's failed creative purpose. Coverdale is unable to mature enough to fulfill what Frye considers "the element that gives literary form to the romance, the quest" (187) and this lack of development destines Coverdale for both professional and personal impotency. Stymied
by what can be best understood as his own failed attempts at Jungian individuation, Coverdale ineffectually projects his own internal archetypes onto other Blithedale community members, sabotaging his own growth and denying his creative potential.

A person who cannot move past the adolescent stage of psychological development is said to exemplify the archetype of the *puer aeternus* (von Franz 2). Because Mark Holland has so thoroughly treated Coverdale in this light, I will not duplicate his work here. Instead, I draw attention to his closing assertions that Coverdale, as narrator

does not understand what has happened to him in relation to Zenobia, Priscilla and Hollingsworth, nor does he understand his antipathy toward Westervelt. For Coverdale not to reach an understanding of his relations to the other main characters is for him to fail at integrating the parts of his psyche which these characters represent. He simply cannot withdraw what he has projected onto them.

(Holland 22)

In taking up where Holland leaves off, I suggest that Coverdale's failure at integration shows that he has balked at the task of individuation, as it is understood by C.G. Jung. This life-long psychological process of "self-realization" (*TEAP* 206), which "follows the natural course of life—a life in which the individual becomes what he always was" (*ACU* 40) is never fully realized by Miles Coverdale. In fact, he never really becomes much of anything. Coverdale admits as much in the novel's final pages, when he tells us that he has given up writing poetry and that his life "lack[s] a purpose" (223).

In many ways, *The Blithedale Romance* is a narrative of the time and circumstances under which Coverdale attempted—and failed—to face the obstacles impeding his own psychological growth. Millington suggests that Coverdale writes this story as an attempt to construct a self through retrospection (Millington 155), while Baym sees Blithedale farm as "identified with the self's body" (Baym 186). To the extent that the farm may function in this way, we can extend the metaphor so that the Blithedale community members—which can be taken as representative of various aspects of the self—are integrated, or *meant* to be integrated, into the farm/self in such a way as to allow the community to function as a whole. Unfortunately, the ego-consciousness (here represented by Coverdale) is so feeble
in its attempts at integration with the other parts of the self (the novel's other characters) that neither Coverdale nor the farm are able to realize their full potential. Holland has noted that Coverdale never comes to understand what drives his relationships with any of the other characters, but in reading the novel through a Jungian lens, we may at least come to understand the un-integrated parts of the self Coverdale projects.

One such example is the archetype of the Jungian anima, which often appears in dreams as a veiled lady (P&A 54) and "functions as a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious, determining what signals pass over from the one to the other" (Abood 6). Prior to his departure for Blithedale farm, Coverdale attends a showing of the Veiled Lady's performance and asks her to prophesy the outcome of the Blithedale experiment to allay his doubts. Like the archetype, the Veiled Lady of *Blithedale* purportedly "beholds the Absolute" (183), which could be understood as the vast depths of the Jungian collective unconscious. Coverdale refers to her as a "disembodied spirit" (8), and a "shadowy phenomenon" (100) since she "seemed to have no more reality than the candlelight image of one's self, which peeps at us outside of a dark window-pane"(100). This spectral description of the unknown woman, coupled with Coverdale's insistence on asking her a question to which he himself has no answer, suggests that he has projected his anima, which is actually an image of the self, upon the Veiled Lady. In fact, Coverdale and the Veiled Lady have much in common. Margaret Jay Jessee has pointed out that not only is Coverdale's very name suggestive of concealment, but that the character "spends much of the novel hiding from others so that he can observe them without being observed himself" (61). Both characters are veiled, sometimes literally, sometimes figuratively, and their frequent attempts at obfuscation are reflected in each of their names.

At this point in the narrative however, Coverdale is not yet self-aware enough to see his reflection in her. In fact, the Veiled Lady (as his amina) is so far removed from his consciousness that Coverdale may only gain access to her as the member of an audience. This reveals the heart of the problem for Coverdale: if he is to fulfill his destiny as a poet, he will have to establish a close relationship with his anima, which is the gateway to inspiration and creativity and originates with the collective unconscious. Without a solid connection to that vital bridge, Coverdale will never transcend his second-rate status as poet, much less achieve Jungian self-realization. Although he respects the spectral phenomenon of the
Veiled Lady enough to question her about the future of the Blithedale project, her Delphic reply remains unintelligible to Coverdale. Despite serious consideration, showing that at least his attitude toward the anima, if not his approach, is correct, he cannot make sense of her answer.

Even so, Coverdale remains transfixed by this "stranger, or whatever she were" (27). When the same young woman arrives anonymously at Blithedale farm shortly thereafter, she is "enveloped in a cloak" (27) and Coverdale's curiosity is again piqued by her hidden and mysterious ways. One again, Priscilla captures his imagination, and we hear him whisper to himself, "Who is this?" (27). We are reminded that the anima often appears as an unknown or mysterious woman (P&A 54), and Jung's analysis helps us interpolate Coverdale's response: Everything unknown and empty is filled with psychological projection; it is as if the investigator's own psychic background were mirrored in the darkness. What he sees … or thinks he can see, is chiefly the data of his own unconscious which he is projecting into it (228).

Coverdale does not yet know the woman as Priscilla, but now that she is at Blithedale, he is in closer proximity to his anima figure than ever before. In the city he was unable to gain a private audience with her but at the farm, Coverdale now has an opportunity to establish the relationship that will help him individuate – if only he can overcome his puerile ambivalence. However, it is not to be. Even after Priscilla reveals her face, she remains guarded for the rest of the novel and this emotional veiling allows Coverdale to continue to project his anima onto Priscilla, throughout. Following on Holland's understanding of Coverdale as a puer, we can view Priscilla—this "slim and unsubstantial girl" (27)—as the corollary to Coverdale's own underdeveloped and adolescent self, which has an insubstantial and immature relationship to its own anima.

The number of similarities between Coverdale and Priscilla also further the idea that she could represent the feminine aspects of Coverdale's self. Her initial display of shyness reflects Coverdale's own inability to emotionally connect with others. Coverdale's initial impression of Priscilla is of her having a "wan, almost sickly hue, betokening habitual seclusion from the sun and free atmosphere, like a flower-shrub that had done its best to blossom in too scanty light" (27). A mere dozen pages later Coverdale describes himself in similar terms: "The truth was, the hot-house warmth of a town-residence […] had taken
much of the pith out of my physical system" (39). His own self-imposed confinement within his "hot-house" apartment has made him just as much of a delicate "flower-shrub" as she. When Coverdale awakens on his second day with an illness which will last for several weeks, he projects his own "sickly hue" onto Priscilla, despite the fact that she never falls ill. Knowing nothing of her background, he nonetheless assigns to her a history of having been, just like himself, in "habitual seclusion from the sun."

Their similarities continue throughout the novel. When Coverdale finally recovers his strength and feels like "quite another man" (58) with "a lively sense of the exultation" (58), he finds Priscilla has also changed and is now adorned in flowers like a "May Queen" (57), looking "more charming than I should have thought possible" (56). As further evidence that Coverdale projects aspects of himself onto Priscilla, his improved health and attitude mirrors exactly what he sees in her, and vice versa. Additionally, a more spiritual connection now appears to join the two as well. Coverdale sees in Priscilla a series of "sudden transformations, only to be accounted for by an extreme nervous susceptibility," which he believes "characterize the girl" (57). During such transformations, Priscilla will evince sudden changes in attitude and comportment, "appearing to listen, as if she heard someone calling her name, and knew not precisely in what direction" (57). "It was difficult to resist the impression," notes Coverdale, "that […] she must have overheard [some conversation] and been wounded" (34). Ironically, these episodes always follow either personal thoughts or clandestine conversations in which Coverdale is critical of Priscilla. His negative thoughts, inspired by fear and doubt, appear to mentally weaken and harm the girl/anima, suggesting a psychic connection between the two.

The correspondence between the two is physical as well. Just as the narrator composes poetry using little wooden pencils, Priscilla knits purses with "little wooden instruments" (35). And just as a certain level of linguistic dexterity is required to fully understand poetry, Priscilla’s purses require a certain level of manual dexterity to fully open: her little pouches are made in such a way as to make it difficult for "any uninitiated person [to] discover their aperture" (35). Perhaps it is no surprise then that "the purse that Priscilla knits at Blithedale, constantly in progress but never quite finished until late in the romance, is the symbol of her developing identity" (Gable 267). Given the parallels between Coverdale and Priscilla, this perpetually unfinished work is also symbolic of Coverdale’s
unfinished progress toward integrating with his anima. As Priscilla's character develops, so too does Coverdale's attention toward her, metaphorically suggesting that he gets closer and closer to making that vital connection with his anima which would finally allow him direct access to his own inner source of inspiration for creativity. Unfortunately, Coverdale never fully integrates, just as Priscilla never actually completes her purse. Toward the end of the novel, as he is about to abandon the Blithedale, Coverdale notices Priscilla working on the nearly finished purse and asks if she will give it to him as a keepsake. "Yes," she answered; "if you will wait till it is finished" (131). Her answer suggests that she (speaking as his anima as well as a woman) is willing to connect with him, but that he is not yet developed enough to do so. In effect, it is he who aborts the project before the work is finished. Thus, when Coverdale leaves the farm, he misses out not only on the object of the gift, but also the opportunity to self-actualize; this is the reason he will remain obsessed with Blithedale farm, and what could have been, for the rest of his life.

While Priscilla appears to serve primarily as Coverdale's anima projection, Zenobia oscillates between a secondary anima figure and a representative of the mother archetype. When she first appears in the narrative, Zenobia initially seems to draw a positive anima projection from Coverdale. Her name evokes the bold Palmyrian queen who briefly defied the Roman Empire and the narrator compares her designation to the veil of the Veiled Lady. Although it affords her little anonymity, Zenobia's name embodies a certain mystery for Coverdale. He imagines her having such "bloom, health, and vigor" that "a man might well have fallen in love with her for their sake only" (17). His use of the word bloom highlights the connection Coverdale unwittingly makes between the two women and himself. While he sees himself and Priscilla as weak, delicate flowers, Zenobia is the picture of health and vigor—an important distinction. Zenobia is a strong woman with whom only a mature man might enter into a relationship, while Priscilla is a weak, wisp of a girl who is hardly capable of such a charged connection. Zenobia and Coverdale antagonistically flirt with one another and Coverdale even goes to far as to fantasize about her naked while they speak. Where Priscilla is shy and retiring, Zenobia possesses "noble courage" (19); in contrast to Priscilla's slim stature and "sickly hue," Zenobia is "larger than most women" (20) and brimming with health. While Priscilla elicits pity and an impulse for protection from Coverdale, around Zenobia he feels the strength "influence breathing out of her" (19).
Hawthorne's confluence of breath with influence suggests the Latin *inspirare*: when Zenobia breathes upon Coverdale, he finds his doubts and fears "driven back into [his] inner consciousness" (22). Like the anima she represents, Zenobia holds a numinous quality which makes Coverdale imagine her as "an enchantress" (43) able to "revive faded [flowers] by her touch" (22). Since Coverdale has previously described himself as a flower, it is clear that if he were able to enter into a true relationship with Zenobia it would signify successful integration with his anima and the maturation of himself as both a man and poet.

However, Zenobia's hearty embrace of life proves too much for Coverdale, and in defense of his fragile psyche he projects on to her the mother archetype. After she serves the newcomers their first meal for example, he compares Zenobia to both Eve and Pandora, both considered the original woman and mother of their respective cultures. It is Zenobia, along with Hollingsworth, who attends to Coverdale while he is confined to bed, bringing "water-gruel" (31) to sustain him through his illness. He sees in her "a certain warm and rich characteristic" (19), which he does not associate with other women and which suggests he sees her as maternal. Holland also points out that while Coverdale is under the influence of the Great Mother archetype, he views his leafy hermitage retreat in the forest as an expression of that complex (21). His description of the hermitage is also reminiscent of Zenobia, with the former having been created by a vine "of unusual size and luxuriance" (91) which "had caught hold of three or four neighboring trees, and married the whole clump with a perfectly inextricable knot of polygamy" (91).

Likewise, Zenobia is the center of Coverdale's little clique at Blithedale, drawing attachments from himself, Priscilla and Hollingsworth, with Westervelt being the possible fourth. I would also suggest the "inextricable knot of polygamy" refers to both the sexual tension among the group as well as the uneasy unity the characters experience as projections of Coverdale's psyche. Holland further suggests that Coverdale is possessed by a negative mother complex, and I believe this is because of the double projection Coverdale has forced upon Zenobia. As a projection of his anima, she represents the possibility of sexual and creative maturation for Coverdale. However, the prospect of this terrifies Coverdale, so he infantilizes the relationship and instead projects the mother archetype onto Zenobia, creating something of an incestuous desire for her. We can interpret this only as an expression of Coverdale's immaturity, fear, and psychic deficiency.
Zenobia's expression as a mother archetype can be seen most clearly in her relationship to Hollingsworth, upon whom Coverdale projects both the father archetype and the shadow archetype. Zenobia fulfills the role of the mother primarily through her romantic attachment to Hollingworth, most notably in those instances when Coverdale sees him in a fatherly way. Jung describes the archetypal father figure as the "informing spirit," whose job it is to initiate his heir "into the meaning of life." As the father figure "explains [life's] secrets according to the teachings of old" he becomes "a transmitter of the traditional wisdom" (P&A 123). Although he is just a few years older, Hollingsworth attempts to influence Coverdale by exhorting him to examine his life's path. "Have you nothing to do in life," (41) he inquires while giving "more than brotherly attendance" (40) to Coverdale in his sick-bed. Hollingsworth will later attempt to persuade Coverdale to be "a man of sobriety and earnestness" and to find "purpose in life" through the realization of his own philanthropic vision (131).

As he does with Zenobia, Coverdale projects onto Hollingsworth a kind of parental exclusivity, proclaiming, "there could not be two such men alive" (41). The two often discuss philosophical matters, and Hollingsworth reacts vehemently to some of the more radical notions Coverdale has acquired from books. Hollingsworth's ideals are founded upon tradition, which has him beginning each day with prayer, inspiring in Coverdale "a deep reverence" (38) for the man. As he listens to Hollingsworth lecture on his vision, Coverdale declares, "No other speech of man has ever moved me like some of those discourses…. [A] thousand hearers might have been the richer for them" (110). The younger man is influenced by the elder, and by his tradition-based beliefs. These also lead Hollingsworth to espouse conservative roles for women, and to advocate for a life of hard work for men. "There is at least this good in a life of toil, that it takes the nonsense and fancy-work out of a man, and leaves nothing but what truly belongs to him" (62). In the same vein, he critiques Coverdale's vocation as a poet, which suffers once he begins laboring in the fields. He says "If a farmer can make poetry at the plough-tail, it must be because his nature insists upon it; and if that be the case, let him make it, in Heaven's name" (63). This home-spun, traditional wisdom Coverdale holds as his ideal offers him insight into his own nature, much like what we would expect from Jung's archetypal father.
However, Coverdale's romanticized notion of Hollingsworth as wisdom-bearer does not last very long. Coverdale soon notices that both women characters are romantically attracted to the philanthropist, so he becomes suspicious and jealous of Hollingsworth. He starts to see Hollingsworth's pursuit of his vision as self-serving rather than self-sacrificing. Coverdale begins to withdraw from Blithedale and its community members, spending more time alone in the forest.

In my solitude, I often shuddered at my friend. In my recollection of his dark and impressive countenance, the features grew more sternly prominent than the reality, duskier in their depth and shadow, and more lurid in their light; the frown, that had merely flitted across his brow, seemed to have contorted it with an adamantine wrinkle. (67)

The more he withdraws physically, the more Coverdale mentally projects his shadow upon Hollingsworth, moving from demonization of the man's features to condemnation of his character.

"Mankind, in Hollingsworth's opinion," thought I, "is but another yoke of oxen, as stubborn and stupid, and sluggish, as our old Brown and Bright. He vituperates us aloud, and curses us in his heart, and will begin to prick us with the goad stick, by-and-by [...] Hollingsworth's heart is on fire with his own purpose, but icy for all human affection." (93)

By projecting his shadow onto Hollingsworth, Coverdale assigns to him the vituperative judgment of others that has plagued his own narrative for the length of the novel. He remains ambivalent toward Hollingsworth, unable to claim the jealousy that inspires this projection, yet incapable of outright antipathy toward his father-figure.

On one of his excursions to the forest, Coverdale meets a new character upon whom he will cast his shadow. As Jung explains, this is "that dark half of the psyche which we invariably get rid of by means of projection … by burdening our neighbors – in a wider or narrower sense –with all the faults which we obviously have ourselves" (P&A 29). Those
parts of the self to which the conscious will not admit become repressed in the unconscious, finding expression in our perception of others who may resemble our rejected aspects. For Coverdale, this shadow presents itself in the character of Westervelt; unsurprisingly, he and Coverdale share many attributes.

Coverdale encounters Westervelt only when he secludes himself from the community of Blithedale farm, whether in the forest, or in the city. At these times, he is invariably immersed in fear and struggling with doubt about the Blithedale project, engaging in a cynical interior monologue about the people he knows there. It is at just such a moment that he first encounters Westervelt, to whom he feels an immediate aversion: "My dislike for this man was infinite," Coverdale complains (157). Westervelt is connected to and inquires after the three people Coverdale is closest to at Blithedale, drawing further parallels between the two men and increasing Coverdale's antipathy. Like Coverdale, Westervelt finds Zenobia's name "appropriate to her splendid qualities" (86) while he attributes Priscilla's wan appearance to "bad air, lack of out-of-door exercise" (89). He describes Hollingsworth as a "holy and benevolent blacksmith" (87), who is "a rough, cross-grained, well-meaning individual," even if he is "rather boorish in his manners" (87). This assessment is startlingly close to Coverdale's thoughts about the actual blacksmith, whom he believes to be "endowed with a great spirit of benevolence" (52) despite his "ungracious habit" (36). At first, Coverdale finds Westervelt's description of Hollingsworth amusing and the two men laugh together. Later, Coverdale realizes how cynical Westervelt is and recoils from him:

It was through [Westervelt's] eyes, more than my own, that I was looking at Hollingsworth, with his glorious, if impracticable dream, and at the noble earthliness of Zenobia's character, and even at Priscilla, whose impalpable grace lay so singularly between disease and beauty. The essential charm of each had vanished […] yet [Westervelt's] tone represented that of worldly society at large, where a cold skepticism smothers what it can of our spiritual aspirations, and makes the rest ridiculous. I detested this kind of man, and all the more, because a part of my own nature showed itself responsive to him. (94)
While Coverdale seems to acknowledge that in his more pessimistic moments he views his Blithedale friends in the same light as does Westervelt, he cannot own up to holding such opinions himself, in spite of the fact that he expressed the same kind of thoughts prior to meeting Westervelt. Instead, he blames the other man for negatively influencing him, projects his own inner thoughts and qualities, and then feels hostility toward Westervelt precisely because "part of [Coverdale's] own nature showed itself responsive to him." Coverdale can only manage to believe that he has fallen under the influence of a man of bad character; he cannot admit the faults as his own.

Not only do the two men think alike, they look alike as well. They are both "a little under thirty" (85) and "as handsome a man as ever [one] beheld" (85). Westervelt is "well and fashionably dressed" (86), just as Coverdale is himself when in the city, away from the farm. Westervelt's "well-ordered foppishness" (86), is evidenced by his "gold chain" (86), and his careful attention to sartorial detail. Coverdale writes that he had never seen "a smoother or whiter gloss than that upon his shirt-bosom, which had a pin in it, set with a gem" (86). This description is recalled on the day Coverdale takes his leave of Blithedale, "dressed in a coat" (126) and wearing "a satin cravat, too, a white vest, and several other things that made me seem strange and outlandish to myself" (126). Their appearance is similar, because Coverdale could be said to be possessed by his own shadow while away from the farm. This may be why Zenobia reacts to Coverdale while he is thus attired with the same belligerent attitude with which she treats Westervelt. As Coverdale says his good-byes, he asks Zenobia to speak genuinely, but she rebukes him, making special note of his clothing: "By no mean … especially when you have just resumed the whole series of social conventionalisms, together with that straight-bodied coat" (130). When he sees Zenobia in town, Coverdale is struck by her "eyes which…were shooting bright arrows, barbed with scorn" (145). While dressed in his own foppish garb, Coverdale's shadow is in possession of his psyche.

If Westervelt can be said to function as Coverdale’s shadow – which possesses Coverdale most completely while he is in the city – then we may understand Coverdale’s previous relationship with his anima more fully through Westervelt's connection to the Veiled Lady. As noted above, she represents Coverdale's anima – a connection to which is vital for him as a poet. It is thus noteworthy that when Priscilla appears as the Veiled Lady
(her most striking presentation as an anima figure) she is under control by Westervelt who is acting as hypnotist. Clearly, Coverdale’s integration of his anima is weak, and subject to incapacitation by his shadow. Since his vocation is that of poet, it would seem Coverdale must have at least a token relationship with his anima, but even he acknowledges the connection is tenuous when he admits his own work is second-rate. Coverdale intuits that he needs a stronger tie to his creative anima in order to improve his work, but he seems unsure how to best achieve this. In fact, he says as much to Zenobia when he arrives at Blithedale. Coverdale tells her he hopes to find there the inspiration to "produce something that shall really deserve to be called poetry – true, strong, natural, and sweet" (14). What he discovers instead is that he needs to connect to his anima in order to achieve the kind of integration necessary to create the kind of work he wishes he could produce.

Ultimately, the task of integration proves too difficult for Coverdale, and he fails. This is made clear by the troubled relationship shared by Westervelt and the Veiled Lady, which serves as an analogy for Coverdale’s relationship to the creation of poetry. Westervelt, whom as we’ve seen earlier has no belief in spiritual matters, uses his intellectual cunning to hypnotize Priscilla into acting as the Veiled Lady. He then exploits her publicly for the sole purpose of earning money and gaining renown. In a similar fashion, Coverdale uses his wit and intellect to produce second-rate verse, which falls far short of the "true, strong" poetry he wishes he could produce, but never will as long as he fails to self actualize. Coverdale’s impotency pervades the novel and is especially notable at points where his inactivity stalls the plot, or drives destruction in the narrative. Coverdale's failure to proclaim his love for Priscilla for example, causes them both to miss the opportunity to connect and to resolve the relationship with the anima archetype. Prior to his return to Blithedale, Coverdale has a dream which hints that this would have been the one outcome that could have afforded him success.

In those [dreams] of the last night, Hollingsworth and Zenobia, standing on either side of my bed, had bent across it to exchange a kiss of passion. Priscilla, beholding this – for she seemed to be peeping in at the chamber-window – had melted gradually away, and left only the sadness of her expression in my heart. There it still
lingered, after I awoke; one of those unreasonable sadnesses that you know not how to deal with, because it involves nothing for common-sense to clutch. (141)

Hollingsworth and Zenobia, projected here as parent figures, lean over Coverdale to kiss – recalling their attendance to him in his sick-bed. While some read Priscilla's reaction as hurt at Hollingsworth's rejection, Coverdale's response to Priscilla suggests that her sadness comes from his inability to reach out and claim her. Coverdale is unable to deal with his own emotion because "it involves nothing for common-sense to clutch," and this is the source of Priscilla's sadness, which is of course his own.

Coverdale's final opportunity to integrate his anima and claim Priscilla for himself comes at the last showing of the Veiled Lady, near the end of the novel. When Westervelt challenges the crowd to break the spell over Priscilla without touching her, Coverdale simply watches the spectacle without interfering. Hollingsworth, however, rescues her with "the whole power of his great, stern, yet tender soul, [in] his glance" (184) and from that moment, he breaks his engagement with Zenobia in favor of Priscilla. Coverdale's inaction results not just in the loss of Priscilla, but also of the chance to integrate his own anima. Jenna Silber Storey et al. read Coverdale's failure to commit to Priscilla as a refusal to accept the "burden" of "moral agency" and an attempt to avoid any engagement that requires of him any effort at self-actualization. "His unconsummated love for Priscilla," they write, "is merely a poet's love, the love of a type, rather than an individual" (159). The irony here of course, is that it is precisely his insistence on privileging "poetic love" (160) over commitment and integration which ultimately prevents Coverdale from realizing his full potential as a poet.

Holland is correct that Coverdale remains caught in the archetype of the *puer aeternus*; throughout the narrative, he projects his psychic contents onto his Blithedale companions without being able to reconcile their dualities, or his own. Although Blithedale recognizes they "dwelt in a profounder region" (178) within him, he never quite arrived at the sort of maturation necessary to complete his own individual growth. The best he can do is remember their profound impact: "The more I consider myself as I then was, the more do I recognize how deeply my connection with those three had affected all my being"(178). Still, while he intuits the general importance of that time, he is unable to see that he
projected his own psychic conflicts onto his compatriots as a defense mechanism, and that his inability to individuate is what cost him his life’s purpose. In a poignant moment, completely lacking in self-awareness, Coverdale explains far more about himself than he will ever realize. "Nature thrusts some of us into the world miserably incomplete," he muses, "on the emotional side" (95).
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