

## Hawthorne and History

Yoshitaka Aoyama

T. S. Eliot, in 1918, stated that "The only dimension in which Hawthorne could expand was the past, his present being so narrowly barren. It is a great pity, with his remarkable gift of observation, that the present did not offer him more to observe" (161). We can say that all the creative writings of Hawthorne, in some sense, take their materials out of the past, or history. In Hawthorne's hierarchy history seems to be superior to art. In "The Old Manse" he states:

I took shame to myself for having been so long a writer of idle stories, and ventured to hope that wisdom would descend upon me with the falling leaves of the avenue; and that I should light upon an intellectual treasure in the old Manse, well worth those hoards of long-hidden gold, which people seek for in moss-grown houses. Profound treatises of morality; – a layman's unprofessional, and therefore unprejudiced views of religion; – histories, (such as Bancroft might have written, had he taken up his abode here, as he once purposed,) bright with picture, gleaming over a depth of philosophic thought; – these were the works that might fitly have flowed from such a retirement. In the humblest event, I resolved at least to achieve a novel, that should evolve some deep lesson, and should possess physical substance enough to stand alone. (X. 4-5)\*

Again, in "The Custom-House" he states in a deprecatory, yet facetious, way:

Doubtless, however, either of these stern and black-browed Puritans would have thought it quite a sufficient retribution for his sins, that, after so long a lapse of years, the old trunk of

the family tree, with so much venerable moss upon it, should have borne, as its topmost bough, an idler like myself. No aim, that I have ever cherished, would they deem otherwise than worthless, if not positively disgraceful. "What is he?" murmurs one gray shadow of my forefathers to the other. "A writer of story-books! What kind of business in life, – what mode of glorifying God, or being serviceable to mankind in his day and generation, – may that be? Why, the degenerate fellow might as well have been a fiddler!" (I. 10)

We can see in these quotations that despite his pride in his career as an artist he seems to inherit some of the Puritan prejudice against art. But the books of religion seemed to him a little too rigid and he thought "There appeared no hope of either mounting to the better world on a Gothic staircase or of flying thither on the wings of a modern tract [of religion]" (X. 20). He tossed aside all the sacred part of the whole dusty heap of literature in the garret of the old manse, and felt himself none the less a Christian for eschewing it. And then he resolved to achieve "a novel, that should evolve some deep lesson" (X. 5) and tried, with the aid of genius, to melt "many ages into one," and thus to endow it with "something permanent" (X. 21). His ideal is to achieve a story that is on a par with the historical writings. In this vein, we can, or are apt to, assume that the past or history itself has a specific meaning in his works, or that the historical works are the inevitable products of his pen: that he was born a historical romancer. Michael J. Colacurcio in *The Province of Piety: Moral History in Hawthorne's Early Tales* (1984)

correctly presents Hawthorne as "our first intellectual historian" (3), engaged in moral reinterpretation of New England history.

Many critics have discussed the subject of Hawthorne and history. A little less than fifty years ago, Roy Harvey Pearce attempted to establish the well-established sense of Hawthorne's concern for the past, and John W. Crowley's "Hawthorne's New England Epochs" is a convincing statement on Hawthorne's view of history. Joshua David Bellin credits Hawthorne's "insights into the constructiveness of history" in "Apostle of Removal: John Eliot in the Nineteenth Century" (31). In *The American Historical Romance*, Dekker sees the formative conflict in Hawthorne's thought as between the Puritan past and the Democratic present. In *Fictions of the Past*, Alide Cagidemetro expands on the old and New Historicist work of many recent critics to identify a modernist Hawthorne in the forefront of constructing the modern historical consciousness. Susan Misruchi in her *The Power of Historical Knowledge: Narrating the Past in Hawthorne, James, and Dreiser* and Steven Frye in *Historiography and Narrative Design in the American Romance* discuss Hawthorne's historical fiction. In *Fiction and Historical Consciousness* Emily Miller Budick posits that American historical romances insist on the reality of history and society in order to cast doubt on the mind's autonomy and to force the imagination to consider something outside itself. *A Historical Guide to Nathaniel Hawthorne*, published in 2001 as a guide for college students, contains a bibliographical essay by Leland S. Person on "Hawthorne and History".

Georg Lukács tries to shed real light on the phenomenon of the historical novel and defines it as an "artistic demonstration of historical reality": "The historical novel therefore has to *demonstrate* by *artistic* means that historical circumstances and characters existed in precisely such and such a way. What in Scott has been called very superficially 'authenticity of local colour' is in actual fact this artistic demonstration of historical events in their intricacy and complexity, in their manifold interaction with acting individuals" (45). Such a

definition is a necessary result of his Hegelian historical criticism. Oscillating between a fatalistic law-conforming conception of all social occurrence and an over-estimation of the possibilities of conscious intervention in social development, Lukács sees, after Hegel, a process in history, a process propelled, on the one hand, by the inner motive forces of history and, on the other hand, extending its influence to all the phenomena of human life, including thought. He sees the total life of humanity as a great historical process. So he praises Scott because "Scott represents simultaneously the historical necessity of this particular individual personality and the individual role which he plays in history" (50). To Lukács, reality consists of "the concrete (i.e. historical) significance of time and place, to social conditions and so on" and of the "spatio-temporal (i.e. historical) character of people and circumstances." (18)

No critic armed with only such weapons, however, can see anything in the world of Hawthorne; since Hawthorne's neutral territory appears only when the concreteness of time and place disappears. The world of Hawthorne is a world elsewhere. While the historical critics are apt to regard the phenomenon as reality, many nineteenth-century American authors regard it as a synonym for appearance. Richard Poirier states:

The books which in my view constitute a distinctive American tradition within English literature are early, very often clumsy examples of a modernist impulse in fiction: they resist within their pages the forces of environment that otherwise dominate the world. Their styles have an eccentricity of defiance, even if the defiance shows sometimes as carelessness. Cooper, Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, Hawthorne, Mark Twain, James – they both resemble and serve their heroes by trying to create an environment of "freedom," though as writers their efforts must be wholly in language. American books are often written as if historical forces cannot possibly provide such an environment, as if history can give no life to "freedom," and as if

only language can create the liberated place. The classic American writers try through style temporarily to free the hero (and the reader) from systems, to free them from the pressures of time, geology, economics, and from the social forces which are ultimately the undoing of American heroes and quite often of their creators. What distinguishes American heroes of this kind from those in the fiction of Mrs. Wharton, Dreiser, or Howells is that there is nothing within the real world, or in the systems which dominate it, that can possibly satisfy their aspirations. Their imagination of the self [. . .] has no economic or social or sexual objectification; they tend to substitute themselves for the world. (5-6)

And he goes on to say, "The greatest American authors really do try, against the perpetually greater power of reality, to create an environment that might allow some longer existence to the hero's momentary expansions of consciousness" (15).

Indeed Hawthorne's fiction seems to "have little or no reference either to time or space"; however, "a breath of Nature, a raindrop of pathos and tenderness, or a gleam of humor, will find its way into the midst of his fantastic imagery, and make us feel as if, after all, we were yet within the limits of our native earth" (X. 92) or of history. Hawthorne's ideas of history are intricately bound up in his work with his universal images of man and the conscious historical artist is present in Hawthorne as in no other nineteenth-century novelist. Yet historical evidences have little significance in Hawthorne's fiction. They serve as a mere "foothold between fiction and reality" (III. 2). What meaning, then, does "history" have in his "historical" works?

Hawthorne often compares the current of history with the stream of a river; for example, the Concord is described as "the most unexcitable and sluggish stream that ever loitered, imperceptibly, towards its eternity, the sea" (X. 6). This "slumbering river has a dream picture in its bosom. Which, after all, was the most real—the picture, or the original?—the objects palpable to our grosser senses, or their apotheosis in

the stream beneath? Surely, the disembodied images stand in closer relation to the soul" (X. 22). History, seen through Hawthorne's imagination, has "a dream picture" in its bosom and Hawthorne surely turns his eyes to these "disembodied images" alone; he weaves his tapestry out of "the texture of a dream" (III. 32). He sees the "picture" alone because it stands in close relation to the soul and the divine reality. On the other hand, the "original" palpable to his grosser senses "takes away not only my scanty faculty, but even my desire for imaginative composition, and leaves me sadly content to scatter a thousand peaceful fantasies upon the hurricane that is sweeping us all along with it, possibly, into a Limbo where our nation and its polity may be as literally the fragments of a shattered dream as my unwritten Romance" (V. 4).

History or the past is the fit dimension in which Hawthorne is able to expand. He thinks that "Romance and poetry, like ivy, lichens, and wall-flowers, need Ruin to make them grow" (IV. 3). He needs history because "The present, the Immediate, the Actual, has proved too potent for me" (V. 4). In other words, Hawthorne must always put a distance between the outer world and himself. This distance alone enables him to create a romance concerning the socialist community at Brook Farm. The passage of several years creates enough distance between author and event. He cannot help shrinking from the raw materials. And history itself is, for him, another raw material and so he must turn it into a dreamed history. The dreamed history is the temporal version of his "neutral territory" (I. 36). Hawthorne retreats from "The Present, the Immediate, the Actual" to his "haunted mind" (IX. 307).

In "Sights from a Steeple", for example, Hawthorne climbs up a steeple above the earth: "Here I stand, with wearied knees, earth, indeed, at a dizzy depth below, but heaven far, far beyond me still. O that I could soar up into the very zenith, where man never breathed, nor eagle ever flew, and where the ethereal azure melts away from the eye, and appears only a deepened shade of nothingness! And yet I shiver at that cold and solitary thought" (IX. 191). Within such a "magic circle of my solitude" (IX. 453)

he can see the whole world, all of history, from which he has just retreated.

How various are the situations of the people covered by the roofs beneath me, and how diversified are the events at this moment befalling them! The new-born, the aged, the dying, the strong in life, and the recent dead, are in the chambers of these many mansions. The full of hope, the happy, the miserable, and the desperate, dwell together within the circle of my glance. In some of the houses over which my eyes roam so coldly, guilt is entering into hearts that are still tenanted by a debased and trodden virtue, – guilt is on the very edge of commission, and the impending deed might be averted; guilt is done, and the criminal wonders if it be irrevocable. There are broad thoughts struggling in my mind, and, were I able to give them distinctness, they would make their way in eloquence. (IX. 196)

In another sketch, "The Toll-Gatherer's Day", Hawthorne withdraws into the tollhouse and observes the thronged thoroughfare of history. In its calm solitude he feeds a musing spirit on all that he has seen and felt.

Methinks, for a person whose instinct bids him rather to pore over the current of life, than to plunge into its tumultuous waves, no undesirable retreat were a toll-house beside some thronged thoroughfare of the land [ . . . ]. But there are natures too indolent, or too sensitive, to endure the dust, the sunshine, or the rain, the turmoil of moral and physical elements, to which all the wayfarers of the world expose themselves. For such a man, how pleasant a miracle, could life be made to roll its variegated length by the threshold of his own hermitage, and the great globe, as it were, perform its revolutions and shift its thousand scenes before his eyes without whirling him onward in its course. If any mortal be favored with a lot analogous to this, it is the toll-gatherer. (IX. 205)

The world turns its axis before his eyes.

Now look at the scene, and it presents an emblem of the mysterious confusion, the apparently insolvable riddle, in which individuals, or the great world itself, seem often to be involved. What miracle shall set all things right again?

But see! the schooner has thrust her bulky carcass through the chasm; the draw descends; horse and foot pass onward, and leave the bridge vacant from end to end. "And thus" muses the toll-gatherer, "have I found it with all stoppages, even though the universe seemed to be at a stand." The sage old man! (IX. 211)

The old toll-gatherer sees the "whole life's pilgrimage" in a "day's journey" (IX. 209).

Again, Hawthorne notes:

When, therefore, the yearning for seclusion becomes a necessity within me, I am drawn to the sea-shore, which extends its life of rude rocks and seldom-trodden sands, for leagues around our bay [ . . . ]. Surely here is enough to feed a human spirit for a single day. Farewell then, busy world! Till your evening lights shall shine along the street – till they gleam upon my sea-flushed face, as I tread homeward – free me from your ties, and let me be a peaceful outlaw. (IX. 451-52)

There Hawthorne is startled "by the sense that human life was within the magic circle of my solitude" (IX. 453). "There is a magic in this spot. Dreams haunt its precincts, and flit around me in broad sunlight, nor require that sleep shall blindfold me to real objects, ere these be visible" (IX. 459). "If your imagination be at all accustomed to such freaks, you may look down into the depths of this pool, and fancy it the mysterious depth of ocean." (IX. 457)

Within such a lonely chamber commanding a view of the whole of history, Hawthorne fashions his dreamed history and finds a wisdom in it. The most desirable mode of existence for Hawthorne is that of "a spiritualized Paul Pry, hovering invisible round man and woman, witnessing their deeds, searching into their hearts, borrowing brightness from their

felicity, and shade from their sorrow, and retaining no emotion peculiar to himself" (IX. 192). The toll-gatherer utters "the maxims of a philosophy which he has found in his own soul, but knows not how it came there" (IX. 210). These maxims of a philosophy are the "thoughtful moral" around which Hawthorne's "fanciful story" (IV. 3) always unfolds. But the maxim of a philosophy is not depicted in a direct way. It is a "high truth" that when "fairly, finely, and skillfully wrought out, brightening at every step, and crowning the final development of a work of fiction, may add an artistic glory, but is never any more evident, at the last page than at the first" (II. 2-3). Hawthorne's tracks go round and round, and are confusedly intermingled, as if we found a labyrinth upon the level beach" (IX. 454). And "One huge rock ascends in monumental shape, with a face like a giant's tombstone, on which the veins resemble inscriptions, but in an unknown tongue. We will fancy them the forgotten characters of an antediluvian race; or else that nature's own hand has here recorded a mystery, which, could I read her language, would make mankind the wiser and the happier. How many a thing has troubled me with that same idea!" (IX. 455). This idea is "the infinite idea of eternity" (IX. 460) which pervades Hawthorne's soul. But he describes it in a mysterious way: "Pass on, and leave it unexplained" (IX. 455).

Hawthorne's magic circle of solitude is well be called "a wayside Paradise" (IV. 435). As the Concord "loitered, imperceptibly, towards its eternity, the sea" (X. 6), Hawthorne's dreamed history is directed to the wayside paradise. Thus, at the end of his "solitary joys" (IX. 462) the infinite idea of eternity pervades his soul.

But stay! A little speck of azure has widened in the western heavens; the sunbeams find a passage, and go rejoicing through the tempests; and on yonder darkest cloud, born, like hallowed hopes, of the glory of another world, and the trouble and tears of this, brightens forth the Rainbow! (IX. 198)

Now the old toll-gatherer looks seaward, and discerns the light-house kindling on a far island, and the stars, too, kindling in the sky,

as if but a little way beyond; and mingling reveries of Heaven with remembrances of Earth, the whole procession of mortal travellers, all the dusty pilgrimage which he has witnessed, seems like a flitting show of phantoms for his thoughtful soul to muse upon. (IX. 211-12)

Hawthorne always views the world from his wayside paradise. George E. Woodberry states: "He looks only at the soul; all outward distinctions of rank and place, fortune, pride, poverty, disappear as unconcerning things; he sees all men as in the light of the judgment day" (157). In this respect, all the works of Hawthorne are historical. He is one of "Time's errand boys" (XI. 329).

Moreover, we, Time's errand-boys as afore-said, feel it incumbent upon us, on the first day of every year, to present a sort of summary of our master's dealings with the world, throughout the whole of the preceding twelvemonth. Now it has so chanced, by a misfortune heretofore unheard-of, that I, your present petitioner, have been altogether forgotten by the Muse. Instead of being able (as I naturally expected) to measure my ideas into six-foot lines and tack a rhyme at each of their tails, I find myself, this blessed morning, the same simple proser that I was yesterday, and shall probably be tomorrow. (XI. 329-30)

As in the case of the four "legends of the Province-House," history is "the ingenious tale-teller" and Hawthorne "the humble note-taker of his narrative" (IX. 271); "The tale itself is a mere sketch, with no involution of plot, nor any great interest of events, yet possessing, if I have rehearsed it aright, that pensive influence over the mind, which the shadow of the old Province-House flings upon the loiterer in its court-yard" (IX. 291).

For Hawthorne history is not only a treasure-house but also a space in which the light of God "beams through the gates of Paradise and shows us glimpses far inward" (X. 28). There are two sorts of history in Hawthorne's world: human history and divine history. Human history consists of "men's accidents." Hawthorne states in "Chiefly War

Matters": "No human effort, on a grand scale, has ever yet resulted according to the purposes of its projectors. The advantages are always incidental. Man's accidents are God's purposes. We miss the good we sought, and do the good we little cared for" (XXIII. 431). Or he states, in *Life of Franklin Pierce*, concerning the problem of slavery:

[. . .] there is still another view, and probably as wise a one. It looks upon Slavery as one of those evils, which Divine Providence does not leave to be remedied by human contrivances, but which, in its own good time, by some means impossible to be anticipated, but of the simplest and easiest operation, when all its uses shall have been fulfilled, it causes to vanish like a dream. There is no instance, in all history, of the human will and intellect having perfected any great moral reform by methods which it adapted to that end; but the progress of the world, at every step, leaves some evil or wrong on the path behind it, which the wisest of mankind, of their own set purpose, could never have found the way to rectify. Whatever contributes to the great cause of good, contributes to all its subdivisions and varieties; and, on this score, the lover of his race, the enthusiast, the philanthropist of whatever theory, might lend his aid to put a man, like the one before us, into the leadership of the world's affairs. (XXIII. 352)

The process of human history is incidental and is governed by divine history, since "Men's accidents are God's purposes."

Time rules over Hawthorne's world; every story has a specific beginning and end. The span of time within a story is one *whole* history; and every story has its own *kairos*. "Time is not immortal. Time must die, and be buried in the deep grave of eternity [. . .]. He hath an appointed office to perform. Let him do his task" (XI. 336).

Thus we must see how Hawthorne's view of history is related to biblical typology. Michael Davitt Bell observes that after *The Scarlet Letter* Hawthorne's historical themes become increasingly theoretical

and he becomes interested in understanding the nature of time. He goes on to say:

"Past" can have two rather different meanings, and it is important to distinguish between them. In the objective historical sense the "past" is a collection of facts of historical record or inference. In the subjective historical sense the "past," like the "beauty" of associational aesthetics, is a matter of individual imaginative experience. It is this latter sense that concerns us here. When Hawthorne presents the "past" as being immaterial, he is referring not to the past itself but to the idea he has of it in his mind. The contrast between the immaterial past and the material present, then, is simply an extension of the central aesthetic distinction between association and object of perception – between reverie and reality. (200-201)

In "Old Esther Dudley" we find a "decayed past" which "had once been a reality, but was now merely a vision of faded magnificence" (IX. 294). And Bell points out: "To say that Esther is no longer a 'reality' but a 'vision' is to say that she has passed into the dimension of subjective history, in which the past is indeed a 'vision' rather than 'reality'" (205). Bell is right; Hawthorne does not intend to recreate the historical reality but he intends to discover moral truth through the historical narratives. History functions not only as the material but as the structure in Hawthorne's works; *history* means *story*. Bell, however, starts from a conviction that "American historians in the early nineteenth century were seeking types, not of the coming of Christ, but of the triumph of 'liberty'" (8) He failed to notice the relationship between Hawthorne's view of history and the biblical view of it. As Lois Zamora's chapter on "The Myth of Apocalypse and the American Literary Imagination" in *The Apocalyptic Vision* treats Hawthorne as a key figure, for Hawthorne human liberty is won only with the coming of Christ.

M. H. Abrams summarizes the distinctive attributes of the Christian pattern of history: "it is finite; it has a clearly defined plot; it is providential; it is right-angled; and it is symmetrical" (35). Or, as

John R. May puts it:

[. . .] time is not cyclic, and this is the uniqueness of Judaeo-Christianity in the perspective of world religions. It has accepted the irreversibility of time, the terror of history. It sees the value of the historical hour for salvation. Moreover, since the Incarnation of Christ took place in history, history has shown itself capable of sustaining hierophany in a much more profound sense even than God's revelation of himself to the Hebrew people in the events of the covenant. In the Incarnation, according to Christian belief, God himself became event for man in history. So any Judaeo-Christian expectation of an end to the world would obviously have to come *in* history, even if it would mean the end of time and of history. (12)

It is vital that Hawthorne's story is designed as one whole history. This wholeness of history is often allegorized into the mystical number of seven: the "seven" years in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Blithedale Romance*; the "seven" generations in *The House of the Seven Gables*: or it is allegorized into spatial dimension as the house of the "seven" gables or the seven-gemmed bracelet in *The Marble Faun*. Until now, however, few Hawthorne scholar seems to have called attention to the typological meaning of the number seven. For example, James X. Folsom states:

Discussions of the plot of *The House of the Seven Gables* have been, generally speaking, neither so ingenious nor so numerous as those of *The Scarlet Letter*, though Leland Schubert has found a complex proto-Joycean numerology in the novel which he does not feel is totally convincing.

The facts are that *The House of the Seven Gables* does fit a pattern, and the number seven seems to be more than casually significant. There are seven principal characters: Hepzibah, Clifford, Jaffrey, Phoebe, Holgrave, Uncle Venner, and Ned Higgins. (If we want to push matters a bit, we can count seven characters from the

past who wield a strong influence over the present: the original Maule, the builder Maule, the carpenter Maule; Alice; Colonel Pyncheon, the storekeeper Pyncheon, and Gervayse Pyncheon.) The twenty-one chapters of the novel can be divided structurally into three parts of seven chapters each.

This is perhaps not directly referable to the conception of "plot" at all; yet if the chapters of the novel can be divided structurally in any way which has meaning other than merely dividing twenty-one by seven, there must be some plot reference of some kind. Schubert mentions that the division is into three parts of seven chapters each, with the accent upon the *seven*. If we, on the other hand, put the accent upon the *three*, we have a three-act structure for *Seven Gables* close to that which Schubert finds in *The Scarlet Letter*. (98)

Hawthorne does not take up the number seven at random. On the contrary, he chose it in order to convey some deep meaning. Generally the number seven implies several meanings such as the following: holiness, consecration; completion, a complete cycle, perfection, fulfillment, safety, rest; purification; initiation (to completeness); luck; wisdom; time; indefinite number; feminine; inverted holiness, and so on (Cf. De Vries 415-16). The number seven also has a good stock of Biblical meanings; it is the number of expiation, sacrifice, trial and punishment (Butler 39). Moreover, it is a key apocalyptic symbol (May 38). "You will be banished from the society of men; you will have to live with the wild beasts; you will feed on grass like oxen and you will be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass over you until you have learnt that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will" (Daniel 4: 25). And St. Augustine states:

Now if the epochs of history are reckoned as "days", following the apparent temporal scheme of Scripture, this Sabbath period will emerge more clearly as the seventh of those epochs. The first "day" is the first period, from Adam to the Flood; the second from the Flood

to Abrahams. Those correspond not by equality in the passage of time, but in respect of the number of generations, for there are found to be ten generations in each of those periods.

From that time, in the scheme of the evangelist Matthew, there are three epochs, which take us down to the coming of Christ; one from Abraham to David, a second from David to the Exile in Babyron, and the third extending to the coming of Christ in the flesh. Thus we have a total of five periods. We are now in the sixth epoch, but that cannot be measured by the number of generations, because it is asked, "It is not for you to know the dates: the Father has decided those by his own authority." After this present age God will rest, as it were, on the seventh day, and he will cause us, who are the seventh day, to find our rest in him.

However, it would be a long task to go on to discuss each of those epochs in detail. The important thing is that the seventh will be our Sabbath, whose end will not be an evening, but the Lord's Day, an eighth day, as it were, which is to last for ever, a day consecrated by the resurrection of Christ, foreshadowing the eternal rest not only of the spirit but of the body also. There we shall be still and see; we shall see and we shall love; we shall love and we shall praise. Behold what will be, in the end, without end! For what is our end but to reach that kingdom which has no end? (1091)

Thus Hawthorne's "history" allegorized into the number seven is to be interpreted in relation to the Christian concept of history. In the strictest sense, Hawthorne's history is the biblical history which presents in its innermost nature the revelation of God to men; or the biblical history determines Hawthorne's history.

Man's history begins with the Fall. His state of fallenness or of being in original sin is, for Hawthorne, the primary condition of man: man is a limited being. Man's mortality is caused by the

original sin but in Hawthorne's world man often fails to notice the existence or nature of it. The original sin has a double meaning: it is, like Georgiana's birthmark, the "sole token of human imperfection" (X. 56); and yet, at the same time, it signifies "the bond by which an angelic spirit kept itself with a mortal frame" (X. 55). In the Christian view of history, man's history comprehends three crucial points: the Fall, the First Coming, and the Second Coming. And in Hawthorne's view of history, the Coming of Christ, the sufferer of men's sin, is the most vital point. The Coming is usually preceded by man's initiation into the world of evil and the knowledge of sin. Man's history is a history of sin and suffering, and to notice this fact is the first step in man's coming to faith in Christ. So man's history is seemingly dark and sad. And Hawthorne condenses this whole history into a history allegorized by the number seven. But this is not all; time "hath an appointed office to perform" (XI. 336).

History has its end as well as its beginning and, in Hawthorne's works, the catastrophic death plays the part of the end of a whole history: Dimmesdale's death in *The Scarlet Letter*; Judge Pyncheon's death in *The House of the Seven Gables*; Zenobia's death in *The Blithedale Romance*; Hilda's symbolical death in *The Marble Faun*. It is an eschatological death. And after the death follows the marriage, for time is open, not closed: Hester and Dimmesdale's marriage in heaven; Phoebe and Holgrave's marriage; Priscilla and Hollingsworth's marriage; Hilda and Kenyon's marriage. Hawthorne images the consummation of all things in the celebration of a sacred marriage, that is, in the apocalyptic marriage at the end of history. Abrams states:

The deep-rooted Scriptural image of marital union representing God's reconciliation with His Redeemed people and with the land, the city of Jerusalem, and the holy temple helped to justify the hotly disputed inclusion of the Song of Songs in both the Jewish and Christian Biblical canon, by pointing the way to interpret its songs of sexual passion and union as an allegory signifying the love and marriage of the Lord to Israel, or of *Christus*



to *Ecclesia*, or any of a large number of alternative relationships. (45)

Thus seen, Hawthorne's dreamed history or subjective history is a *Heilsgeschichte*.

\* The volume and page numbers given in brackets refer to *The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*.

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