

Space and Time: A Study of Nathaniel Hawthorne

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In the preface to *The House of the Seven Gables* (1852), Hawthorne states: "The point of view in which this tale comes under the Romantic definition lies in the attempt to connect a by-gone time with the very present that is flitting away from us" (II. 2)*. This connection of the past with the present is not only the basic conviction of his career as a writer but also the basic concept of his themes; a French critic points out that Hawthorne's themes are all direct functions of time (Normand 176). Dr. Johnson writes that "Time is, of all modes of existence, most obsequious to the imagination" (Mendilow 145). And speaking for all his contemporaries, Thomas Carlyle complains in *Sartor Resartus* (1833): "Our whole terrestrial being is based on Time, and built of Time; it is wholly a Movement, a Time-impulse; Time is the author of it, the material of it. [...] O Time-Spirit, how hast thou environed and imprisoned us, and sunk us so deep in thy troublous dim Time-Element, that only in lucid moments can so much as glimpses of our upper Azure Home be revealed to us!" (Carlyle 98).

The most important moment for Hawthorne is a timeless present. He describes the state of mind of a person half awake, half asleep in "The Haunted Mind": "You have found an intermediate space, where the business of life does not interlude: where the passing moment lingers, and becomes truly the present; a spot where Father Time, when he thinks nobody is watching him, sits down by the way side to take breath" (IX. 305). This true present is a moment when "Yesterday has already vanished among the shadows of the past; to-morrow has not yet emerged from the future" (IX. 305), and the "soul beheld its features in the mirror of the passing moment" (I. 190). Reality shows itself in the "narrow strip of sunlight, which we call Now" (IX. 179). This narrow now is not a moment cut off from time end eternity; rather, it might be called, in St. Thomas Aquinas'

term, *aevum*. Hawthorne marvels in *The Marble Faun* (1860) "that this our narrow foothold of the Present should hold its own so constantly, and, while every moment changing, should still be like a rock betwixt the encountering tides of the long Past and the Infinite To-come!" (IV. 411). But it is narrow and easily relinquished. "It is but a moment, comparatively, that anything looks strange or startling" (II. 241). Each moment is "destined to lose, after awhile, and to fade into the dark gray tissue, common to the grave or glad events of many years ago" (II. 241). This narrow now is also an "unpremeditated moment" (IX. 140), and the threshold of the universe. By stepping "aside for a moment, a man exposes himself to a fearful risk of losing his place forever. Like Wakefield he may become, as it were, the Outcast of the Universe" (IX. 140). Thus one who steps aside from time becomes an outcast of the universe, that is, becomes prey to death or to isolation. Hawthorne sees the past and the future as connected in a timeless present in the heart of man.

For one of Hawthorne's artists, art is the "image of the Creator's own," and as cited above, it brings the "faintly revealed Past to stand in that narrow strip of sunlight, which we call Now" (IX. 179). Likewise, for Hawthorne, art means the rediscovering of the lost world or a return through time to the origin of being. The artist has a sort of "home-feeling with the past" (I. 9). The spell of the past survives, and just "as powerfully as if the natal spot were an earthly paradise" (I. 11). For Hawthorne the personal past and the universal past have the same meaning: the past is the memory of the lost paradise; it is man's "inevitable centre of the universe" (I. 12). The past as the lost paradise necessarily involves the original sin that is contained within it. Thus the burden the past imposes upon Hawthorne is oppressive, while the riches he mines from it are irreplaceable.

The attempt to escape from the past, accordingly, becomes a typical motif in Hawthorne's works. In *The House of the Seven Gables* Holgrave struggles to escape from the past: "Shall we never, never get rid of this Past? [...]. It lies upon the Present like a giant's dead body!" (II. 182). Nevertheless, Phoebe and Holgrave, Clifford and Hepzibah can succeed in a new departure only through a "mystic expression that something within the house was consummated" (II. 286), not through the denial or the destruction of the past. This consummation symbolizes an eschatological consummation. Hawthorne's heroes must aim at this eschatological consummation in order to escape from the imprisonment of time. Hawthorne proposes a sense of time whereby man may be freed for the future by redemption of the past in the present, which might be called a *kairos* (as for *kairos*, see Tillich).

Hawthorne's imagination is a Christian imagination. "The Christian imagination is essentially an imagination of promise, an openness to the present because of the possibilities that it unfolds, a refusal to seek escape from the ravages of time through any subterfuge — either through nostalgia for the past or by flight into the timeless world of aesthetic or 'religious' experiences. The Christian imagination is grounded in history, aware of the irreversibility of time, anxious for the fulfillment of its dreams" (May 1). In analyzing Hawthorne's fiction we must direct our attention to the apocalyptic elements.

There is no time, however, which is purely abstracted from space. Carlyle states: "That the Thought-forms, Space and Time, wherein, once for all, we are sent into this Earth to live, should condition and determine our whole Practical reasonings, conceptions, and imagings or imaginings — seems altogether fit, just and unavoidable" (Carlyle 197). Time and space are coexistent dimensions of one phenomenon. Time without space (or space without time) is a mere sign without substance. As Hermann Minkowski, the great mathematician, said in 1908, we must say that "Henceforth, space alone or time alone is doomed to fade into a mere shadow; only a kind of union of both will preserve their existence" (Giedion 89). Any attempt to abstract time or space alone from a phenomenon will result in failure to seize the reality of the phenomenon. Time must involve spatiality within itself in order to maintain its temporality, and *vice versa*.

The problem of time in fiction, accordingly, must be dealt with in connection with spatial elements. For instance, David Madden states: "[...] the major mode of the novel is Time [...]. But it is a difficult problem to ground the form firmly in time, the medium in which it has its being. The problematic complexity of form in the novel is also involved, even in the simple description of a room" (Madden 64).

In the case of fiction, it is certain that the medium of expression — language — is a process. A time-art by its nature demands a period of time within which to be itself. The space-art on the other hand appears at first sight to be unaffected by problems of time both as regards content or subject matter and to the medium through which that content is apprehended. A. A. Mendilow states that "perception involves the perceiver as well as the percepta," and "criticism implies the criticizer as well as the work of art criticized" (Mendilow 23). Wyndham Lewis writes: "You move round the statue, but it is always there in its entirety before you; whereas the piece of music moves through you, as it were." (Lewis 174). When we look at a statue or drawing, however, we look at only one point of it in any one instance. But the other parts also enter our vision. That is to say, when we look at a statue, we perceive it by gazing at one point and compressing the whole into that point. Moreover, temporality is the very life of a space-art. The temporality expressed through movement in one moment gives life to the work. Without temporality or movement, a space-art could only express a world of illusion, grotesqueness, or death.

The same may be said of a time-art. Any literary work is a reflection of a cosmos. The medium of expression of a time-art is, indeed, a process, but the product is a synchronical unity. When one image or word evokes another, the two exist simultaneously; one is the past-in-present or future-in-present and the other is the present-in-present. A literary work is a spatio-temporal universe, or, a space-time continuum. In both modes, what reproduces meaning is the viewer's grasp of perspective.

What indicates the existence of time is neither clock nor time itself. A clock does tell us what time it is now but cannot show us the Bergsonian *durée*. A clock ticks away the time, but as soon as we begin to listen attentively to it, time itself disperses into meaningless dots.

We cannot help confessing, with St. Augustine: "What, then, is time? I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me; but if I am asked what it is and try to explain, I am baffled" (Augustine 264). Still, at least, we can say definitely that what reminds us of the existence or time, when we forget it, is not time itself. What indicates the existence of time is in many cases the changes that we perceive in the things that surround us; spatial elements indicate temporality. Space measures time. "At times we think we know ourselves in time, when all we know is a sequence of fixations in the spaces of the being's stability—a being who does not want to melt away, and who, even in the past, when he sets out in search of things past, wants time to 'suspend' its flight. In its countless alveoli space contains compressed time. That is what space is for" (Bachelard 264). Space is the dwelling-place of time.

Washington Irving describes this space-time relationship in "Rip Van Winkle" (1820). On waking from his long sleep, Rip looks around for his gun: "but in place of the clean, well oiled fowling piece he found an old firelock lying by and the stock worm-eaten" (Irving 776). This is the first sentence that suggests the fact that the whole twenty years has been to Rip but as one night. Irving describes the lapse of twenty years not through the temporal medium but through the spatial. This is not only a neat literary technique but is also the ordinary way of experiencing time at the ordinary human level. Irving goes on to describe the lapse of time through the spatial medium:

As he approached the village he met a number of people, but none whom he knew, which somewhat surprised him, for he had thought himself acquainted with every one in the country around. Their dress, too, was of a different fashion from that to which he was accustomed. They all stared at him with equal marks of surprise, and whenever they cast their eyes upon him invariably stroked their chins. The constant recurrence of this gesture induced Rip, involuntarily, to do the same, when to his astonishment, he found his beard had grown a foot long!

He had now entered the skirts of the village. A troop of strange children ran at his heels, hooting after him and pointing at his gray beard. The dogs, too, not one of which he recognized for an old acquaintance,

barked at him as he passed. The very village was altered; it was larger and more populous. There were rows of houses which he had never seen before, and those which had been his familiar haunts had disappeared. Strange names were over the door—strange faces at the windows—everything was strange. His mind now misgave him; he began to doubt whether both he and the world around him wore not bewitched. Surely this was his native village, which he had left but the day before. There stood the Kaatskill Mountains—there ran the silver Hudson at a distance—there was every hill and dale precisely as it had always been. Rip was sorely perplexed. "That flagon last night," thought he, "has addled my poor head sadly!"

It was with some difficulty that he found the way to his own house, which he approached with silent awe, expecting every moment to hear the shrill voice of Dame Van Winkle. He found the house gone to decay—the roof fallen in, the windows shattered, and the doors off the hinges. A half-starved dog that looked like Wolf was skulking about it. Rip called him by name, but the cur snarled, showed his teeth, and passed on. This was an unkind cut indeed. "My very dog," sighed poor Rip, "has forgotten me!"

He entered the house, which, to tell the truth, Dame Van Winkle had always kept in neat order. It was empty, forlorn, and apparently abandoned. This desolateness overcame all his connubial fears—he called loudly for his wife and children; the lonely chambers rang for a moment with his voice, and then all again was silence. (Irving 777–78)

Hawthorne also uses the same technique. For example, in "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" (1837), he describes the illusion of the fifty-five-year adverse current of time. Dr. Heidegger throws the rose that had blossomed five and fifty years before into the water in a vase:

At first, it lay lightly on the surface of the fluid, appearing to imbibe none of its moisture. Soon however, a singular change began to be visible. The crushed and died petals stirred, and assumed a deepening tinge of crimson, as if the flower were reviving from a death-like slumber; the slender stalk and twigs of foliage became green; and there was the rose of half a century, looking as fresh as when Sylvia Ward had first given it to her lover. It was scarcely full-blown; for some of its

delicate red leaves curled modestly around its moist bosom, within which two or three dew-drops were sparkling. (IX. 230-31)

To describe time in its own terms is possible in the field of philosophy or science, but it is impossible in the fictional world. Any abstract idea must be embodied in some concrete image in fiction, or else it would be meaningless. A writer, therefore, cannot but rely on space to describe time. For Hawthorne, too, time and space consistently correspond to each other.

Roy R. Male states, in his extremely stimulating study: "If a study of the house as symbol in American literature were undertaken, certainly one conclusion would be that the home has consistently represented, whether consciously or not, an attempt to build an integrated, functioning religious experience; a fusion of time and space, investment and speculation, past and present" (May 4). Here the home must be distinguished clearly from the house. A house is certainly possessed of the image of the home but it can also turn into the image of the labyrinth; for Holgrave, the house of the seven gables signifies a labyrinth. We must distinguish clearly between an image and the material from which the image is evoked.

Both home and labyrinth are significant images in Hawthorne's fiction. In "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" (1832) Robin starts his journey from his home in the wilderness to the labyrinthine city in search of his kinsman, Major Molineux. In his dream-like recollection he sees his family go in at the door, but "when Robin would have entered also, the latch tinkled into its place, and he was excluded from his home" (XI. 223). The "home" in Hawthorne is always an image of belonging, of inter-relatedness, while the "labyrinth" signifies the contrary — alienation, isolation, separation. Many of Hawthorne's characters call down upon themselves the destiny of permanent exclusion from home and endless confused wandering in "this labyrinth of darkness" (IV. 26).

When Hester Prynne stands on the scaffold, it is her paternal home that appears in her memory's picture-gallery as the image of her happy infancy. The image of home, for Hawthorne, relates to the image of the earthly paradise. The home is the *centre of the universe*, though it usually appears as the flickering reflection of a distant ideal. Hester now lives in a labyrinth: "It was only the

darkened house that could contain her. When sunshine came again, she was not there. Her shadow had faded across the threshold" (I. 161). The threshold is the threshold of the universe. It signifies the threshold between home and labyrinth, eternity and time. Hawthorne usually uses a door as an image of this threshold. Tobias Pearson asks Ilbrahim, "Was every door in the land shut against you, my child, that you have wandered to the unhallowed spot?" (IX. 73).

In "The Gentle Boy" (1832) as the country has only been settled for about thirty years, "the tracts of original forest still bore no small proportion to the cultivated ground" (IX. 70); the labyrinth bears no small proportion to the home. And a road penetrates the labyrinth towards the home, and is just emerging into an open space when Tobias hears the wailing of Ilbrahim. The road may be taken to signify the stream of time and the open space the present. There Tobias leaves the path, that is, the stream of time, and walks somewhat fearfully across the field, that is, the labyrinth. This is the dominant pattern which lies at the root of "The Gentle Boy", as in much of Hawthorne's fiction.

A careful reading of the story will show that one of its themes is the agonizing difficulty of finding a home. Tobias' journey in the wilderness symbolizes a quest journey for a home. He came to New England from an impure motive: he left his native land because he "had [...] found it difficult to provide for a wife and increasing family" (IX. 76). He left the Old World (the past) in search of a new home in the New World. Like Catherine, Ilbrahim's mother, however, Tobias too violates "the duties of the present life and the future" in the very act of "fixing [his] attention wholly on the latter" (IX. 85). The attempt to escape from the past to the future ends in the escape from the very present, for the past is an essential part of the present; on the night on which Ilbrahim dies, the voice of the wind comes "as if the Past were speaking" (IX. 96). When Tobias leaves the path into the field, Hawthorne implies that this is an escape from the present or from time. Thus Tobias becomes the outcast of the universe; he enters into the labyrinth.

Ilbrahim is a little outcast against whom every door in the land was shut: "He was a sweet infant of the skies that had strayed away from his home, and all the inhabitants of this miserable world closed up their impure

hearts against him [...]” (IX. 79). He was driven from the prison and became a wanderer in quest of a home and mother. When he hears Tobias’ word “home,” a thrill passes through his frame and the Pearsons’ affection makes him consider their home his; one dominant element of a home is love. Conversely, Ilbrahim becomes “like a domesticated sunbeam, brightening moody countenances, and chasing away the gloom from the dark corners of the cottage” (IX. 89). Love or familiar communication turns a place into a home. The absence of love always signifies a labyrinth. A labyrinth is symbolic of the world without the “magnetic chain of humanity” (XI. 99). Ilbrahim’s death is caused by a Puritan boy’s betrayal. After this event, at night and in his dreams, Ilbrahim cries, “Mother! “Mother!” as if her place, which a stranger had supplied while Ilbrahim was happy, admitted of no substitute in his extreme affliction” (IX. 93). In an extreme affliction, that is, in a labyrinth, the image of the home is connected with that of mother. This image of home-mother is the ultimate objective of Hawthorne’s protagonists.

Hawthorne, in this story, condemns both Quakers and Puritans because of their “enthusiasm”. He is always opposed to enthusiasm. Their enthusiasm, in “The Gentle Boy,” relies on a nonhistorical interpretation of history. Their trans-atlantic journey is motivated by a desire for the Promised Land but they mistakenly conceive the Promised Land to be a free space cut off from history. And, necessarily, such an attempt results in disillusionment: “They had left their native country blooming like roses, and like roses they had perished in a foreign soil” (IX. 76). In this story, America signifies another Hall of Fantasy. Hawthorne deals with this subject, later, in *The Blithedale Romance*, in which the settings are changed.

Home signifies the ordered world of time, that is, the earthly paradise, and labyrinth, the disordered world of time, that is, the fallen world. Hawthorne’s vision of the world can be seen in “Wakefield” (1835). Here he states that “Amid the seeming confusion of our mysterious world, individuals are so nicely adjusted to a system, and systems to one another, and to a whole, that by stepping aside for a moment a man exposes himself to a fearful risk of losing his place forever. Like Wakefield, he may become, as it were, the Outcast of the Universe” (IX. 140). Hawthorne’s universe contains several systems.

The world of man is one system and this system is formed and penetrated by the magnetic chain of humanity. This system of Hawthorne resembles Leibniz’s world of monads but is more pessimistic or tragic than the latter, because Hawthorne’s monad (man) may well become a literally windowless monad unlit by the light of God. This light of God or, in other word, eternity makes the system, a happy space, that is, a home. Man’s blindness to this light or eternity in the present makes the system disordered. The light of God produces the magnetic chain of humanity among windowless monads; the order of time is a ceaseless flow from the past through the present into the future, and eternity itself orders time. For Hawthorne, to be blind to the light of God or to eternity is to be sinful. And most of Hawthorne’s protagonists step aside from this order of time and become as a result outcasts of the universe; they come to live in a labyrinth.

The image of the labyrinth will be seen clearly in the garden of “Rappaccini’s Daughter” (1844). In this story everything must be considered in relation to the garden. As Frederick C. Crews points out, the focus of symbolic meaning in this story remains largely on the garden itself, which is not only the setting for most of the action but also a kind of moralized landscape reflecting the characters’ moods and obsessions (Crews 121).

In “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” as Angus Fletcher points out, “Hawthorne moves in two directions at once: while the action becomes increasingly restless and dramatic, the iconography settles into an increasingly sure interpretive pattern, so that by the close of the story we have a fixed idea of the particular contagion that is attached to Rappaccini’s garden.” The garden is shut in from the outer actual world and time keeps its distance from the garden; this garden is a *hortus conclusus* (Fletcher 83). Hence the contrast of the outer actual world, that is the city, and the inner world, that is the garden, must be considered in interpreting this story; the city is the desert of humanity and the garden is the Eden of poisonous flowers. Dr. Rappaccini is the creator of the garden, Beatrice the dweller in it, Giovonni the new comer to the garden, and Baglioni the dweller in the city; the garden represents illusion and the city reality. Giovanni is Hawthorne’s criterion for judging the two worlds.

Dr. Rappaccini is generally considered as an antago-

nist. But seen through the principle of the garden he is a true creator, a kind of God. It is true that “he cares infinitely more for science than for mankind” (X. 99). He is an awful man indeed. His ambition is to make his garden an earthly paradise. His idea is, like that of the artist in “The Prophetic Pictures” (1837), “the idea of duration—of earthly immortality” (IX. 173). He tries to abstract eternity from time. He tries to make the garden into a *hortus conclusus* and to give Beatrice perfect beauty and immortality. He has created the central shrub in his new Eden, and he presides over everything that happens between its Adam and Eve. But this is not to say that Dr. Rappaccini is identifiable with the Christian God. “He is a parody of divinity, a creator whose productions are ‘no longer of God’s making, but the monstrous offspring of man’s depraved fancy, glowing with only an evil mockery of beauty’ [(X. 110)]” (Crews 133–34). His sin is in striving to rival God. He is the God of an unnatural Paradise, his garden a perverted Eden. He is the God of the Garden cut off from the world of waking reality. Dr. Rappaccini is a daring rebel and blasphemer against God, a man of almost inconceivable presumption and pride (Fogle 99–100).

Giovanni, at first sight of the garden, notices the ruin of a marble fountain in its center. And “A little gurgling sound [...] made him feel as if the fountain were an immortal spirit that sung its song unceasingly and without heeding the vicissitudes around it, while one century embodied it in marble and another scattered the perishable garniture on the soil” (X. 94–95). The water of the fountain, though natural in contrast with the structure built by man to contain it, points beyond the ruins of time to the immortal. (Waggoner, 114) More exactly, as Richard Harter Fogle points out, the flowing water is eternity, the shattered marble is time (Fogle 233). The garden symbolizes time with which eternity intersects: the garden seems to Giovanni an earthly paradise. In a sense, however, the garden is Giovanni’s garden, the garden is usually described as seen through Giovanni’s eyes. The garden is an image of Giovanni’s state of mind: “he stared forth wildly from his inner world into the outer one” (X. 106). And it is in accordance with Hawthorne’s usual pattern of unmasking reality that it is in just such a state of mind that reality shows itself: in Giovanni’s insanity, the garden turns into an “Eden of poisonous

flowers” (X. 115), that is, a labyrinth. Thus the garden possessed two aspects: illusion and reality.

Beatrice too, like the garden, has a dual aspect. She is at once seductively dangerous and innocently pure-minded; though her “body be nourished with poison,” her “spirit is God’s creature” (X. 125). Beatrice’s poisonous body of illusion belongs to the world of labyrinth and her spirit created by God’s hand belongs to the world of home. In proportion as Giovanni enters her sphere, illusion grows gigantic. Reality, like the flowers in Giovanni’s hand, “wore the aspect of things that had been fresh and lovely yesterday” (X. 121). Beatrice’s influence upon Giovanni is in term of the images that she calls into his mind. She cries to Giovanni, “[I] dreamed only to love thee and be with thee a little time, and so let thee pass away, leaving but thine image in mine heart” (X. 125). Her magic, given her by Dr. Rappaccini, is to fix the present on the canvas of her heart. Beatrice’s heart is a dwelling of memories. There everything but memory must droop, as insects flitting through the garden fall dead upon the ground. Beatrice’s power is the power of the past. The past cannot exist as nothing but the past. The past as the past itself is a sheer illusion. And Beatrice signifies this sheer illusion. And so does the garden.

Is Beatrice an angel or a demon? One day Giovanni sees Beatrice in the garden and on that night he dreams of “a rich flower and beautiful girl” (X. 98). In his dream “Flower and maiden were different, and yet the same, and fraught with some strange peril in either shape” (X. 98). In a sense, Beatrice and the flowers in the garden are sisters. Both are extremely beautiful and terrible. Giovanni says to himself, “Am I awake? Have I my senses? [...]. What is this being? Beautiful shall I call her, or inexpressibly terrible?” (X. 103).

At their first meeting in the garden Beatrice says to Giovanni: “Believe nothing of me save what you see with your own eyes” (X. 111), and she adds “Forget whatever you may have fancied in regard to me. If true to the outward senses, still it may be false in its essence; but the words of Beatrice Rappaccini’s lips are true from the depths of the heart outward. Those you may believe” (X. 112). A fervor glows in her whole aspect and beams upon Giovanni’s consciousness like the “light of truth itself” (X. 112), and he seems to gaze through Beatrice’s

eyes into her transparent soul, and feels no more doubt or fear. Her spirit gushes out before him like a fresh rill that is just catching its first glimpse of the sunlight and wondering at the reflections of earth and sky which are flung into its bosom.

No sooner was Guasconti alone in his chamber than the image of Beatrice came back his passionate musings, invested with all the witchery that had been gathering around it ever since his first glimpse of her, and now likewise imbued with a tender warmth of girlish womanhood. She was human: her nature was endowed with all gentle and feminine qualities; She was worthiest to be worshipped; she was capable, surely, on her part, of the height and heroism of love. Those tokens which he had hitherto considered as proofs of a frightful peculiarity in her physical and moral system, were now either forgotten, or, by the subtle sophistry of passion, transmitted into a golden crown of enchantment, rendering Beatrice the more admirable by so much as she was the more unique. Whatever had looked ugly, was now beautiful; or if incapable of such a change, it stole away and hid itself among those shapeless half-ideas which throng the dim region beyond the daylight of our perfect consciousness. (X. 114)

Beatrice's goodness is of the spirit and therefore inherent; it is her corporeal identity alone which is evil. Though rather by the necessary force of Beatrice's high attributes than by any deep and generous faith on his part, Giovanni believes in her goodness. And this will be the cause of Giovanni's error.

Astonished by Baglioni and noticing his own poison, Giovanni's spirit becomes incapable of sustaining itself at the height to which the early enthusiasms of passion had exalted it; he falls down, grovelling among earthly doubts, and defiles therewith the pure whiteness of Beatrice's image. And Giovanni mutters: "She is the only being whom my breath may not slay! Would that it might!" (X. 122).

He rushed down, and in an instant, was standing before the bright and loving eyes of Beatrice. A moment ago, his wrath and despair had been so fierce that he could have desired nothing so much as to wither her by a glance. But, with her actual presence, there came influences which had too real an existence to beat once

shaken off; recollections of the delicate and benign power of her feminine nature, which had so often enveloped him in a religious calm; recollections of many a holy and passionate outgush of her heart, when the pure fountain had been unsealed from its depths, and made visible in its transparency to his mental eye; recollections which, had Giovanni known how to estimate them, would have assured him that all this ugly mystery was but an earthly illusion, and that, whatever mist of evil might seem to have gathered over her, the real Beatrice was a heavenly angel. (X. 122)

Beatrice is a fusion of "earthly illusion" and "heavenly angel." As the garden is made up of eternity and time, Beatrice too embodies the eternal and the temporal. But this temporality is not earthly reality but earthly *illusion*. Her corporeal existence itself is an illusion.

Dr. Rappaccini's sin is his attempt to destroy time in order to imitate eternity. His nonhistorical interpretation of history produces only illusions. On the other hand, Giovanni's sin lies in his blindness to illusion. Both sins have their root in enthusiasm.

[Beatrice] must pass heavily, with that broken heart, across the borders of Time—she must bathe her hurts in some fount of paradise, and forget her grief in the light of immortality, and there be well. But Giovanni did not know it. (X. 126)

Beatrice is the victim of Dr. Rappaccini's sciences: "where all things fade, how miserable to be one that could not fade!" (IX. 170). All illusions must droop into nothingness in the world of reality. Hawthorne deals with this reality-illusion theme again in *The Blithedale Romance* and there Beatrice is divided into two persons: Priscilla and Zenobia.

In "The Hall of Fantasy" (1843) Hawthorne describes more directly the illusion that results from the nonhistorical interpretation of history. The Hall of Fantasy, which exists in the same geographical region as the bonfire of "Earth's Holocaust" (1844) and the castle in the air in which the man of fancy holds "A Select Party" (1844), is, like Rappaccini's garden, insulated from the ordinary world. It is the "mystic region, which lies above, below, or beyond the Actual" (X. 173). The "universal passport of a dream" (X. 173) is required to enter there. "Its interior is a spacious hall with a pavement of white marble" (X. 172) and the whole edifice

gives “the impression of a dream, which might be dissipated and shattered to fragments, by merely stamping the foot upon the pavement. Yet, with such modifications and repairs as successive ages demand, the Hall of Fantasy is likely to endure longer than the most substantial structure that ever cumbered the earth” (X. 172-73). It is “a place of refuge from the gloom and chillness of actual life” (X. 178). The Hall is full of “Utopian inventions” (X. 178). It shows the “far-off gleam of the Celestial City” (X. 179).

The Hall is a “spacious hall” cut off from time. It is a product of the nonhistorical interpretation of history; there, space has superiority over time. The inventor says, “Standing in this Hall of Fantasy, we perceive what even the earth-clogged intellect of man can do, in creating circumstances, which, though we call them shadowy and visionary, are scarcely more so than those that surround us in actual life. Doubt not, then, that man’s disembodied spirit may recreate Time and the World for itself, with all their peculiar enjoyments, should there still be human yearnings amid life eternal and infinite. But I doubt whether we shall be inclined to play such a poor scene over again” (X. 184). But the narrator, surely Hawthorne himself, replies:

“Oh, you are ungrateful to our Mother Earth! [...]. Come what may, I never will forget her! Neither will it satisfy me to have her exist merely in idea. I want her great, round, solid self to endure interminably, and still to be peopled with the kindly race of man, whom I uphold to be much better than he thinks himself. Nevertheless, I confide the whole matter to Providence, and shall endeavor so to live, that the world may come to an end at any moment, without leaving me at a loss to find foothold somewhere else.” (X. 184-85)

And Hawthorne comments:

A thing so matter-of-fact as an invitation to dinner, even when the fare was to be nothing more substantial than vegetables and fruit, compelled us forthwith to remove from the Hall of Fantasy. As we passed out of the portal, we met the spirits of several persons, who had been sent thither in magnetic sleep. I looked back among the sculptured pillars, and at the transformations of the gleaming fountain, and almost desired that the whole of life might be spent in that visionary

scene, where the actual world, with its hard angles, should never rub against me, and only be viewed through the medium of pictured windows. But, for those who waste all their days in the Hall of Fantasy, good Father Miller’s prophecy is already accomplished, and the solid earth has come to an untimely end. Let us be content, therefore, with merely an occasional visit, for the sake of spiritualizing the grossness of this actual life, and prefiguring to ourselves a state, in which the Idea shall be all in all. (X. 185)

In Hawthorne’s world, “the root of human nature strikes down deep into this earthly soil” (X. 182) and any kind of reform which relies on a nonhistorical interpretation of history must end in disillusionment and is condemned by Hawthorne.

Seen in this way, the labyrinth turns out to be a kingdom of illusions. There, “Time [...] appears to have become a matter of no moment” (II. 271); time becomes a threatening disorder. The state of feeling which is experienced in a labyrinth is “a vague sense of ponderous remembrances; a perception of such weight and density in a by-gone life, of which this spot was the centre, that the present moment is pressed down or crowded out, and our individual affairs and interests are but half as real here as elsewhere” (IV. 6). “There is no window! [...]. An infinite, inscrutable blackness has annihilated sight! Where is our universe? All crumbled away from us; and we, adrift in chaos, may hearken to the gusts of homeless wind!” (II. 276-77). Hawthorne’s heroes are usually gusts of homeless wind in quest of what was once a home.

In a labyrinth, the power of illusion forces time to be out of joint. There the past and the present intermingle as in a feverish dream and then the past corrodes the present. Men struggle against the suffocating flood of the past. There is no love, no sympathy, no communication; men lose their hold on the magnetic chain of humanity, for there is no window. A window is the entry from the inner world to the outer world. A window, like a door, is the way to a home. It signifies the magnetic chain of humanity. At the window, Hilda’s doves close their wings. A bird is an archetypal image of escape from a labyrinth. And a light is seen through the window of Hilda’s room. A window is an eye of the house. A light coming from a window is God’s gaze. It is a “star of Hope [...] in

Heaven itself" (IV. 408); without light, men go astray into the "labyrinth of darkness" (IV. 26), just like Leibnitz's monads. And there is no window in Hawthorne's labyrinth; there is no bird, no light: it is the closed kingdom of illusion. If one were to step aside into a labyrinth, there would be no escape. To try to struggle loose from the power of illusion leads to imprisonment within illusions. And death awaits such a person.

Thus the images of home and labyrinth are spatial elements connected with the problem of time. There is no past separated from the present. The past can exist only in the present. In the present moment, each point of the past exists simultaneously with and independently from every other. There is a flow of time in the past. The connection between individual points of the past emerges only when each of them connects with the present. The succession of time is a flow from the past through the present to the future; it is a linear flow in which numberless moments form into an orderly line. It is the physical time of a clock; and it is meaningless to man. Actually, each moment exists pell-mell in our consciousness and the connection between the present and other individual moments is expressed in terms of time duration. The order of time, that is, the succession of time, results from this duration of time. Thus there exist in the present numberless moments which, though seemingly pell-mell, achieve order through duration and the succession of time; just as each piece of furniture finds its place in a room. As Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, in his posthumous *Citadelle* (1948), suggests that time might be considered as a room:

Et les rites sont dans le temps ce que la demeure est dans l'espace. Car il est bon que le temps qui s'écoule ne nous paraisse point nous user et nous perdre, comme la poignée de sable, mais nous accomplir. Il est bon que le temps soit une construction. Ainsi, je marche de fête en fête, et d'anniversaire en anniversaire, de vendange en vendange, comme je marchais, enfant, de la salle du Conseil à la salle du repos, dans l'épaisseur du palais de mon père, où tous les pas avaient un sens. (Saint-Exupéry 29)

Spatiality, which was given birth to by time itself, becomes the very life of time, and its frame. The present is an open space of time furnished by the past and the future. In describing such a present, Hawthorne uses spa-

tial images: a house in *The House of the Seven Gables*, a garden in "Rappaccini's Daughter," a town or city in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), *The Blithedale Romance*, and *The Marble Faun*, and so on. The passing moment is the dwelling-place of the world. And home and labyrinth are the two aspects of this microcosm. For Hawthorne, as for Owen Warland in "The Artist of the Beautiful" (1844), a minuscule, a narrow moment, opens up to an entire world. The miniature is one of the refuges of greatness.

The miniature, symbolic of the narrow now, functions as an important unifying element in many of Hawthorne's best stories. The butterfly, the birthmark, the Pyncheon house, and the scarlet letter are all miniatures, and these symbols become "what we might call 'time-filaments' which join all men—past and present—who are capable of experiencing these heartfelt values into a single 'magnetic chain of humanity'" (Clay 506). It is the symbolism given birth to by these symbols that lures Hawthorne into those byways of the spirit from which he is always rescuing himself by platitudes (Feidelson 2). Hawthorne states in "The Custom-House" that when he found the scarlet letter, his eyes "fastened themselves upon the scarlet letter, and would not be turned aside. Certainly, there was some deep meaning in it, most worthy of interpretation, and which, as it were, streamed from the mystic symbol, subtly communicating itself to my sensibilities, but evading the analysis of my mind" (I. 31). The ultimate design of Hawthorne's romance is to depict this "deep meaning" in the "mystic symbol." To begin with, he constructs "castles in the air" (II. 3) on the "neutral territory" (I. 36) between the actual and the imaginary where the "creatures of his brain may play their phantasmagorical antics, without exposing them to too close a comparison with the actual events of real lives" (III. 1). There in weaving the textures of the story he describes the "high truth" (II. 2) which lurks behind the "mystic symbol." "A high truth, indeed, 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 truer, and seldom any more evident, at the last page than at the first." (II. 2-3) Symbols, in Hawthorne's fiction, express the "truth of the human heart" (II. 1), "high truth," "eternal beauty" (VIII. 237), or the "mechanism of the universe"

(VI. 236). Moreover symbols have a function of their own in his world.

As in the case of the scarlet letter which opens up the territory of the past, symbols stimulate Hawthorne's imagination and through them he can manage to "connect a by-gone time with the very Present that is flitting away from us" (II. 2). As a time-filament, the symbol recalls the past from the grave to life: "[...] the past was not dead. Once in a great while, the thoughts, that had seemed so vital and so active, yet had been put to rest so quietly, revived again" (I. 27). Symbols vivify time. They flash a searchlight onto the present, that is, an open space of time furnished by the past and the future: "Thus, therefore, the floor of our familiar room has become a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other" (I. 36). This "neutral territory" is "an intermediate space [...] where the passing moment lingers, and becomes truly present" (IX. 305). Truth or Reality reveals itself in this neutral territory that has been created by the symbol. Hawthorne's entire effort as a writer is to create this neutral territory and to let Reality reveal itself there. Thus, in Hawthorne's fiction the symbol functions not only as a time-filament but also as an art-matrix. It has a synthesizing power.

"The Artist of the Beautiful" is the story of Owen Warland and his pursuit of the butterfly, which is the symbol here. Owen is a watch-maker but he is unfit to lead old blind Father Time along his daily course. One of his most rational projects is to "connect a musical operation with the machinery of his watches, so that all the harsh dissonances of life might be rendered tuneful, and each flitting moment fall into the abyss of the Past in golden drops of harmony" (X. 451). His ambition is to connect the past with the machinery of a watch. But such an artistic attempt cannot very well be practical. Moreover, practicality means coarseness for him and his artistic ambition is driven by the "love of the Beautiful [...]" which was as completely refined from all utilitarian coarseness, as it could have been in either of the fine arts" (X. 456). In his boyhood, Owen attempted to imitate the beautiful movements of Nature as exemplified in the flight of birds or the activity of little animals. His love of the beautiful urges him to create the beauty of

God's creature with his own hands.

Owen looks with singular distaste at the stiff and regular processes of ordinary machinery and cares no more for the measurement of time than if it were merged into eternity. He hates the mechanical process of time and he craves for what the butterfly is symbolic of. The Butterfly is the "creature of the sunshine" which has "a mysterious mission" (X. 466) for Owen. Just like the scarlet letter, there is a meaning behind its appearance. The butterfly signifies "a spirit, commissioned to recall him to the pure, ideal life" and when it takes flight his eyes follow "the winged vision, as if its airy track would show the path to heaven" (X. 462). And the chase of the butterfly is an apt emblem for the ideal pursuit in which Owen has spent so many golden hours. The butterfly which he pursues is not one of such "faded insects as flit among earthly flowers, but of those which hover across the meads of Paradise" (X. 470). It is "Nature's ideal butterfly," which is "realized in all its perfection" (X. 470). It is an embodiment of immutable beauty. It is an organism with a life of its own that rivals the living creatures of God's making. The butterfly is the symbol of the fact that life, beauty, and ideality are one. It is a miniature which reveals paradise or the eternal. Owen is a pursuer of the "eternal beauty" (VIII. 237).

In his pursuit of this beauty, Owen permits "Father Time [...] to stray at random through human life, making infinite confusion among the train of bewildered hours" (X. 457). Owen's ultimate goal is an object that has nothing to do with the duration of time. The mystery of the butterfly's flight across the "meads of Paradise" is portrayed in terms of the even greater mystery of the mind's power to travel in thought to a distant place and future time. While the pursuit of the beautiful implies an escape from time, in the perfect beauty of the butterfly the consideration of size is lost. "The Beautiful Idea has no relation to size, and may be as perfectly developed in a space too minute for any but microscopic investigation, as within the ample verge that is measured by the arc of the rainbow" (X. 450). The achievement of the beautiful implies an escape out of the spatio-temporal universe into some sort of eternal realm of essence. (Von Abel 33)

Hawthorne, however, is skeptical about Owen's achievement of the beautiful: "[...] would the Beautiful

Idea ever be yielded to his hand, like the butterfly that symbolized it? [...] Alas, that the artist [...] may not content himself with the inward enjoyment of the Beautiful, but must chase the flitting mystery beyond the verge of his ethereal domain, and crush its frail being in seizing it with a material grasp" (X. 458). But it is Owen's fortune, good or ill, to achieve the purpose of his life; he must attempt to "give eternal reality to his ideas" (X. 458), that is, to a spirituality symbolic of "the better sphere that lies unseen around us" (X. 466). The artistic talent is to give reality to "the beauty and the majesty which are compelled to assume a garb so sordid" (II. 41). The artist must abstract timeless elements from time. But he must do it within the sphere of time. The only field of the artist is "an available foothold between fiction and reality" (III. 2). While Hawthorne's world sometimes seems to have "little or no reference either to time or space," nature insinuates itself "into the midst of his fantastic imagery," making us feel that "we were yet within the limits of our native earth" (X. 92). Existing in a zone between the actual and the imaginary, Hawthorne's world contains objects which exist in time yet partake of immutable essence (Fossum 86). The butterfly is one of these objects which exist in time yet partake of immutable essence.

Owen, however, sees in the butterfly only the eternal. For him the butterfly is "a butterfly, which, elsewhere, had become a winged spirit, and was flying heavenward," and he himself has a strong desire to ascend "from earth to cloud, and from cloud to celestial atmosphere, to win the Beautiful" (X. 470). Thus Owen's pursuit of the butterfly is an escape from time through the symbol to achieve eternity. Like Aylmer, Owen tries to create a perfect butterfly without the slightest vestiges of time. Like the birthmark, however, the butterfly too is the bond by which eternity keeps itself in union with time. To try to remove the temporal elements from the butterfly would be to destroy its reality. The butterfly cannot exist without some vestiges of time. So when it rises upward to a higher sphere from the small hand of the baby, the ceiling bars the way and compels it to flutter down. The ceiling, the "earthly medium" (X. 475), is the boundary between heaven and earth.

Owen, the idealist and artist is a symbol of the imagination; he is the artist of the imagination. His goal is to

give reality to ideas which grow within the imagination and appear so lovely to it. Hawthorne often uses the mirror as a symbol of the imagination and it is "a kind of window or doorway into the spiritual world" (II. 281). Such a window, Hawthorne sometimes seems to believe, is art. Art and the symbol represent the power of the imagination to reveal the deeper, spiritual truth of things. The butterfly represents this deeper, spiritual truth, and, moreover, it tests the degree of artistic sensibility of each character by the degree of its radiance.

What the baby who crushes the butterfly is symbolic of must be considered. It is a baby born to Annie and Robert Danforth. Owen thinks that Annie is able to perceive the meaning of the butterfly, and in Owen's view, she is "the visible sphere in which the spiritual power that he worshipped, and on whose altar he hoped to lay a not unworthy offering, was made manifest to him" (X. 464). Annie is a spiritualized woman to Owen. Although actually there are no such attributes in Annie, in analyzing the representation of the baby in contrast with that of the butterfly, she must be considered to represent spirituality, since the baby is seen through Owen's eye rather than Hawthorne's own eye. Robert Danforth, on the other hand, is a blacksmith representing strength, an earthly monster which contrasts with spirituality. His "hard, brute force darkens and confuses the spiritual element" (X. 454) within Owen. So the marriage of Annie and Robert makes a fusion of spirituality and the earthly element.

Thus the baby represents the fusion of spirituality and the earthly element. To Owen, the baby seems "a little personage who had come mysteriously out of the infinite, but with something so sturdy and real in his composition that he seemed moulded out of the densest substance which earth could supply" (X. 468-69). Thus the baby signifies the well-balanced fusion of heaven and earth, eternity and time. While the butterfly tests the degree of artistic sensibility, the baby fulfills Hawthorne's criterion for the highest art, and thus constitutes a living reproach to Owen's flight into sheer spirituality. Through the baby's destruction of the butterfly, Hawthorne presents us with some principle to which the artist must be subject: "the reward of all high performance must be sought within itself, or sought in vain" (X. 473). And then Owen catches another butterfly. "When the artist rose

high enough to achieve the Beautiful, the symbol by which he made it perceptible to mortal senses became of little value in his eyes, while his spirit possessed itself in the enjoyment of the Reality" (X. 475). Owen, like Isaac Newton in *Biographical Stories for Children* (1842), discovers the well-balanced "mechanism of the universe" (VI. 236). For Hawthorne, art is a form of ethics, and moral consciousness and esthetic consciousness in him are closely interwoven.

Owen's intended goal is a type of total liberation from temporality. The butterfly is exactly symbolic of Owen's own vision. The dominant image of the butterfly is the image of flight. The butterfly flits about in the pattern of insects "which hover across the meads of Paradise, for child-angels and the spirits of departed infants to disport themselves with" (X. 470), and had there been no obstruction, "it might have soared into the sky, and grown immortal" (X. 475). The image of flight is of flight into the sky and signifies the desire for immortality; it signifies the desire to return home, that is, to eternity. Thus Owen's vision is of a liberation from time to eternity, or a desire for immortality. But such a vision is unpardonable for Hawthorne. In his later unfinished romance *Septimius Felton*, he states: "We have strongly within us the sense of an undying principle, and we transfer that true sense to this life and to the body, instead of interpreting it justly as the promise of spiritual immortality" (XIII. 13). The ultimate meaning of the butterfly is to teach Owen that the sense of an undying principle must be interpreted as the promise of spiritual immortality. The symbol not only signifies the fusion of time and eternity but also functions in such a way as to suggest man's ontological problems in the relationship between time and eternity. The symbol is the emblem of redemption, resurrection, rebirth. The artist must, then, maintain his position in the substantial present while simultaneously recognizing the importance of both temporality and eternity. The symbol creates the neutral territory, that is, the fusion of the past and the present, time and eternity. And necessarily, the artist can see eternity there. But he must not crave for eternity alone. An earthly immortality is the most miserable of fates; one of Hawthorne's heroines cries, "where all things fade, how miserable to be one that could not fade!" (IX. 170). Hawthorne's artist-scientist must see eternity *through* time; as an artist,

Owen must give his visions a location in time, and ultimately he discovers that time can be conquered only by living through it.

Thus art and morality cannot be separated in Hawthorne's world. In this respect, Jean Normand makes this point eloquently in the following passage:

When Hawthorne speaks as an artist, moreover, we find him showing no remorse in contradicting his inclinations as a moralist obsessed by the Adamic myth of purity: art becomes in his eyes the supreme value and the supreme instrument of salvation, even though it cannot expunge the primal stain, and despite the fact that it bears, even in its religious manifestations, the mark of the tempter. As for example, Guido Reni's painting of St. Michael. Art, the conquest of "overcome" man, is nonetheless a form of ethics. Moral consciousness and esthetic consciousness in the artist, whether Hawthorne or Baudelaire, are closely interwoven. The moral imagination's magic lantern and the screen of the poet's haunted mind both function in the same way, representing their images in the same light and in the same ambiguous atmosphere. The moral imagination, which is not the same as the narrower moral sense, proceeds in accordance with the esthetic method while the aesthetic imagination seeks for a moral basis. (Normand 278-79)

The symbol, as in the shape of the birthmark, the black veil, the scarlet letter, the butterfly, or the Pyncheon house, is the matrix of Hawthorne's art, and creates the neutral territory on which the symbol itself flashes two sorts of light: one is esthetic and the other moral. When the celestial letter gleams far and wide over all the muffled sky, it transmutes the everyday objects of the scene: "all were visible, but with a singularity of aspect that seemed to give another moral interpretation to the things of this world than they had ever borne before" (I. 154). Hawthorne never forgets that in the artist's universe it is beauty that is moral, not the converse.

What Owen grasps finally is the "enjoyment of the Reality" (X. 475), which lies beyond the symbol. The symbol does signify the Reality but, as itself, it is merely an icon. Hawthorne aims ultimately at this Reality, not the icon which signifies the Reality. This is Hawthorne's "moral" (II. 2) or "high truth" (II. 2). Hawthorne does really stick a "pin through a butterfly" (II. 2) but he, like

Owen himself, “had caught a far other butterfly than this,” (X. 475), an “artistic butterfly” (X. 474). Owen’s attempt is to struggle against time and this attempt is barred by space, that is, by the “earthly medium” (X. 475). In Hawthorne’s world, the “mechanism of the universe” or order depends on the balance of space and time.

* The parenthetically-enclosed volume and page numbers refer to *The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*.

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