

“BLACK WEEDS” AND “RED ROSES”

(A Study of Symbolism in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Marble Faun*)

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I. Symbolism in Hawthorne

Symbolism has been one of the most effective devices of literary expression. In American literature Hawthorne was, with Melville, one of the masters of the use of symbolism in the nineteenth century. In Hawthorne's works it is one of the dominant characteristics along with his use of the problem of sin as the theme. How many varieties of symbols did he use in his works to symbolize specific meanings? In how many works did he symbolize the problem of sin, and what kind of concept did he have about the problem in general? These are the questions which come to my mind. As an attempt to answer these questions even partly, this paper tries to examine the kind of symbols Hawthorne

used in *The Scarlet Letter*, using *The Marble Faun* in contrast and as a supplement to it. It also tries to find out what their nature is and the ideas back of them. In the conclusion I should like to make an attempt to determine which symbols are, and why they are, fundamentally significant for each of the romances. In this attempt I deliberately omit the problem of allegory, and any consideration of the symbolism represented by the four main characters in *The Scarlet Letter* except in cases in which other symbolism becomes involved. This has been a centre of controversy for many years among authoritative critics of American literature and I do not believe I could throw any new light upon it.

The Significance of Symbolism and the Problems of Sin in Hawthorne :

Each writer in the past who used symbolism used it in his own way. Therefore, before I proceed to examine the use and nature of Hawthorne's symbolism, it is necessary to clarify what symbolism meant in his particular case.

Partly because of innate inclination, and partly because of his Puritan heritage, from his early years, Hawthorne showed great concern about the problem of good and evil in human nature. But in his works we do not often see good and evil in the individual. The idea is almost always conceived in terms of problems in a social setting.¹

As to the form of his literary expression, for some reason or other allegorical expression was very natural to Hawthorne. Also, as Yvor Winters suggests, it was appropriate for many of the materials which Hawthorne drew from New England Puritanism. For to the New England Puritans thought and life were almost identical and therefore,

¹ This may sound contradictory to the fondness for solitude in his nature. But here is a bit of evidence to support the fact that he was aware of the importance of human relationships in society even in his youth. In the first issue of *The Spectator*, which was a hand-written weekly paper published by him with his sister in the summer of 1820, he says: "Man is naturally a sociable being. . . . It is only in society that the full energy of his mind is aroused. Perhaps life may pass more tranquilly, estranged from the pursuits and vexations of the multitude, but all the hurry and whirl of passion is preferable, to the cold calmness of indifference." (The original copies are kept at the Essex Institute, Salem, Mass., U.S.A.)

we may say that their life itself was allegory.¹

In literary form, allegory and symbolism have a close relationship. They can arise from the same type of thinking. Symbolism is an expression by which the author tries to establish a certain connection between two things or ideas where there is usually no connection. It is done by the operation of the connotation of the symbols used. Therefore, according to the difference of the connotation which each reader has, it is very likely that the idea which one reader gets may be different from that of another. The author has to lead the reader very carefully in the direction which finally leads to the desired definite idea. Allegory is a specific case of the use of symbolism. In allegory one visible symbol stands for a certain living idea. In the former the process of the operation of the connotation is important as well as the idea to which the reader is finally led. But in allegory the idea itself is important.

Now it is generally admitted that *The Scarlet Letter* is allegory with each of the four main characters standing for a definite idea. And yet, Hawthorne's allegory in *The Scarlet Letter* is not simple; it is complex, and imagery and symbolism play a great role in the romance, even if it is allegory in general. The other work, *The Marble Faun*, is partly allegory. Compared to the historical setting of *The Scarlet Letter*, the setting of *The Marble Faun* is the author's contemporary period. If the background of the former was favourable for allegory, the Italy of *The Marble Faun* was not. Therefore *The Marble Faun* is less allegorical than *The Scarlet Letter*.

When Hawthorne wrote allegory, the idea which the allegory represented was not a dead idea apart from the reality, as it is often in the case with minor writers of allegory. Matthiessen says:

Hawthorne's idealization was never at the cost of distortion of the 'usable truth' of his own surroundings, or of forgetting its superiority of nature over art. . . . 'The ideal' that Hawthorne wanted to project in art was 'the real'; not actually transformed into an impossible perfection, but actually disengaged from appearance.²

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¹ Yvor Winters, *Maule's Curse*, p. 4.

² F. O. Matthiessen, *The American Renaissance*, p. 264.

Through the help of "imagination" Hawthorne achieved the above mentioned literary process. He thought that when imagination was applied to actuality, the imagination projected the real, the ideal of that actuality, beyond the appearance. Thus, the imagination projected the spirit of the object. Very often, he compared the function of imagination to that of a mirror. Of course the projection through imagination is different from mere reflection. But when he used that comparison, he meant more than mere reflection. We have to keep it in our minds to interpret what he meant when he uses a mirror and its equivalents as symbols in the examples which appear later in this paper. From the above explanation it follows that the reflected vision of objects was of special importance to Hawthorne. This may explain, at least partly, why his symbolism is so full of vivid imagery.

Hawthorne's Method of Composing Symbolism :

When we read his *Notebooks* we realize that he had two ways of composing symbolism. Sometimes he started from a physical object and then proceeded to attach an appropriate idea behind it. Sometimes this method was completed into a novel or a tale, and sometimes remained just as notions. One example of this kind may serve :

Reflections in a Mud-Puddle ;—they might be pictures of life in a main-street of a city.¹

Apparently when he entered these lines in his *Notebooks* he had not a definite idea yet.

The second way of composition was that he had the idea first, and then later developed it into visible symbols. We know very well how the following entry developed into "Ethan Brand" with his stone heart :

The search of an investigator for the Unpardonable Sin ;—he at last finds it in his own heart and practice.²

In this second case, usually his suggestion of the meaning and the par-

¹ Randall Stewart (ed.), *The American Notebooks by Nathaniel Hawthorne*, p. 130.

² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

ticular imagery attached to it is repeated over and over again in the story itself that we are quite sure that we get the idea correctly. The scarlet letter *A* is the typical case. We notice that the first case, namely, first noticing the physical object and then trying to interpret the meaning behind it, exactly follows the pattern of mind which his Puritan ancestors had in trying to find out God's Will in all possible phenomena and incidents as symbols.

Whether it was his deliberate device or his sceptical nature, there is another characteristic in his method of the use of symbolism. Sometimes he does not suggest the definite meaning, or does not direct us readers in one direction so that we may make our own decision. He gives us various possible alternatives as to the possible interpretations of a symbol, and sometimes we are left puzzled. Moreover, even if this method is not used, since his symbolism is often complex, there are several instances in which I feel I am not sure of the meaning in my attempt to interpret symbolism in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Marble Faun*.

II. Symbols and Symbolism in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Marble Faun*

The Scarlet Letter, a Tragedy:

In the previous section I clarified the relationship between ideas and symbols. In both *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Marble Faun* the author is concerned with the idea of the problem of good and evil. However, in the former, it is good and evil in relation to society, and in the latter it remains as the problem within individuals. This difference at the start makes the whole difference in the characters of these two romances. This is the main cause why *The Scarlet Letter* is not only Hawthorne's best work, but it also belongs to world literature, while *The Marble Faun* does not. As this difference of the author's attitude toward the themes becomes the basis of my conclusion, before I proceed further it is necessary to make clear the direction of the ideas in which the author intended to write these two romances concerning the problem of good and evil.

In writing *The Scarlet Letter*, though Hawthorne himself was not conscious of doing it, his direction of writing was toward "tragedy." Matthiessen says of "tragedy":

The creation of tragedy demands of the author a master understanding of the relation of the individual to society, and more especially, of the nature of good and evil. He must have a coherent grasp of social forces, or, at least, of man as a social being; otherwise he will possess no conflict. For the hero of tragedy is never merely an individual, he is a man in action, in conflict with other individuals in a definite social order. . . .¹

I should like to proceed with my discussion from this point of view. What Hawthorne tried to do in *The Scarlet Letter* exactly follows what Matthiessen says of "tragedy." It deals not with the process of the sin of adultery and the sense of guilt in the sinners' individual hearts, but with the conflict of the sinners in the Puritan social order as the consequence of adultery. It is the social force of Puritan society that causes the conflict. Therefore in understanding *The Scarlet Letter*, "Society" is of vital importance.

On the other hand, we cannot call *The Marble Faun* "tragedy," however great the sense of guilt, the inward agony, in Miriam and Donatello. For in this romance their suffering has no necessary connection with the society in which they live. *The Marble Faun* tries to give one of the possible justifications of the existence of evil by showing it as a means of self-education.

In examining the symbols in these two romances, I have classified the symbols in two types; the first, those which are related to man in society, because society has special significance in Hawthorne and in *The Scarlet Letter*; the second, those which are related to man as individual, because the problem of good and evil which is the theme of the two romances is inevitably connected with man as individual.

Symbols Related to Man in Society:

As the background for *The Scarlet Letter* Hawthorne used the town of Boston of the latter part of the seventeenth century at the height of

¹ Matthiessen, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

its Puritanism. It was an ideal setting for an allegorical story. To begin with a historical setting is more favourable for allegory. Secondly but not less significant, as has already been stated, the life of the Puritan society at that time was really allegorical and consequently symbolical. So in this romance we find symbols referring to the structure of the Puritan society. However, on the higher level of abstraction some of these symbols could easily be applied to any human society in general.

As to the social background of *The Marble Faun*, in trying to be more realistic, Hawthorne chose contemporary Italy. A writer could make any situation symbolic, yet, as this romance is not intended to be allegorical, and as contemporary Italy is less favourable for allegorical expression, and the author's purpose is different, we find very few "social symbols" which attempt to symbolize society in *The Marble Faun*. Therefore in relation to symbols of society we find those for the Puritan society and those for society in general.

Symbols for New England Puritanism :

First I shall quote several passages from *The Puritan Mind* by H. W. Schneider so that we can understand the idea of the New England Puritanism of which Hawthorne dealt, and we shall see how the idea and the practical situation of society are symbolized by the author.

No one can live long in a Holy Commonwealth without becoming sensitive, irritable, losing his sense of value and ultimately his balance. All acts are acts either of God or of the devil, all issues are matters of religious faith; and all conflicts are holy wars.¹

Also :

... the mind of the Puritan was singularly unified and his imagination thoroughly moralized.²

This was the mental climate in which the Puritans lived.

1. The Prison in *The Scarlet Letter* :

The Scarlet Letter opens with the description of the prison door. On

¹ H. W. Schneider, *The Puritan Mind*, p. 51.

² *Ibid.*, p. 48.

the first level it reflects the emphasis of New England Puritanism on the idea that men are all sinners and deserve eternal punishment. On the second level, it suggests that sin accompanies man everywhere and at all times. The stern, cold, and hard characteristics of this idea which comes from the concept of a "wrathful God" is seen by the description of the prison door which is "heavily timbered with oak, and studded with iron spikes."

Then the author says that the founders of a new colony "have invariably recognized it among their earliest practical necessities to allot a portion of the virgin soil as a cemetery, and another portion as the site of a prison," or that "the rust on the ponderous iron work of its oaken door looked more antique than anything else in the New World," and that "like all that pertains to crime, it seems never to have known a youthful era." Here we can see Hawthorne's idea that sin and crime are as old as man; and that we are all imperfect, that "in the view of Infinite Purity, we are sinners all alike."

2. "Ugly weeds and beautiful roses":

The symbolism of ugly weeds and beautiful roses is so clear that it need hardly be explained. It supplements the idea behind the symbolism of the "Prison," "the black flower of civilized society." "Burdock, pigweed, apple peru, and such unsightly vegetation" which are "congenial in the soil that had so early born the black flowers of civilized society, a prison" symbolize all sorts of disagreeable evils in human nature.

The "delicate gems" of "a wild rose bush" symbolize "some sweet moral blossom" to show the pity and kindness of Nature to the unlucky criminals who go in and come out of the cold ugly prison door. There is no ambiguity in this symbolism. This combination of the "ugly weeds" and "beautiful roses" seems very suggestive of the fact that the Puritan society put too much emphasis upon pointing out these ugly weeds in their lives to the almost complete neglect of cultivating the beautiful roses, the sweet and tender nature of man.

Later in the book, several allusions to "the black flower" or "a

dark flabby leaf," and to "red roses" are made. When Dimmesdale asks Chillingworth where he gathered "those herbs with such a dark, flabby leaf," Chillingworth who is eager to grasp some evidence of Dimmesdale's sin, answers: "Even in the grave yard here at hand. . . . I found them growing on a grave, which bore no tombstone, nor other memorial of the dead man, save these ugly weeds, that have taken upon themselves to keep him in remembrance. They grew out of his heart, and typify, it may be, some hideous secret that was buried with him, and which he had done better to confess during his lifetime. . . . These black weeds have sprung out of a buried heart, to make manifest an unspoken crime."¹

When Chillingworth is asked by Hester at the beach to stop tormenting Dimmesdale, Chillingworth, who suggested to Dimmesdale that he make this "black flower spring out from his heart," in his turn, is the person who would "let the black flower blossom as it may" and would not forgive Dimmesdale, because by Hester's "first step awry" she "didst plant the germs of evil; but since that moment, it has all been a dark necessity." In the very last quotation there is no mention of a "black flower", but the verb "didst plant" is suggestive of the same imagery.

Further reference to red roses comes up in relation to Pearl, three times in the scene when she visits Governor Billingham's mansion with her mother. These are the cases in which Hawthorne does not explain his meaning thoroughly, and the red roses seem casually mentioned. The instances are as follows. The mother and daughter are in the garden. Pearl, seeing the rose-bushes, began to cry for a red rose, and would not be pacified. After they met the Reverend Wilson, in answer to his question, Pearl says her name is Pearl. "Pearl?—Ruby rather!—or Coral!—or Red Rose, at the very least, judging from thy hue!" says the old minister.

When the same old minister asks her who made her, Pearl, who is annoyed and irritated by the question, says that she was "plucked by

¹ *The Scarlet Letter*, p. 123.

her mother off the bush of wild roses that grew by the prison-door." Perhaps Hawthorne had a traditional idea in his mind of the arrival of a new baby. A new baby is picked up somewhere, usually from a plant of some kind or other. So Pearl was plucked from the rose bush. In this particular case the prison-door symbolizes Hester's sin of adultery, Pearl is the offspring of this sin. Yet, her existence itself is not evil, but rather an assurance of the good of human nature, the red roses. Therefore, the apparently childish and frivolous way of Pearl's words describes her origin and the significance of her existence very well.

In the comparison of the weeds and the roses, besides the imagery we get from the shapes and the colours of "black" and "red," which connote qualities, our further attention is naturally called to quantity. Weeds grow in abundance and with vigour, whether they are desirable or not, but roses grow only scantily.

3. "The Governor's Hall":

The description of the Governor's Hall symbolizes the character of the New England colony. "A folio tome" which looks like "the Chronicles of England," "a large pewter tankard" with ale, and the row of the portraits of Governor Billingham's ancestors symbolize the historical background of the new colony. The new shining suit of armour symbolizes the character of the new colony. It is shining with their religious fervour. Perhaps this shows the emphasis of the Puritans on the power of their will not only for their religious life, but also for the need of protecting themselves from the dangers of Nature and the savage Indians. The shining breastplate which reflects the Scarlet Letter *A* "in exaggerated and gigantic proportion" must be the code of morality of this new colony. According to Hawthorne's idea of the "mirror," it should reflect the soul of the object as it is, beyond appearance. But this mirror of the breastplate is "convex." Their moral attitude has been too biased to give a true reflection of the object, so that Hester's Scarlet Letter *A* becomes a distorted gigantic figure.¹

¹ A fuller discussion on Hawthorne's concept of a reflecting surface comes later.

4. The Crowd and the Scaffold:

As the "prison" has a double meaning, so does the crowd in the opening scene and the last scene of the romance; namely on the New England Puritan level and on the universal level. On the first level I include the Scaffold and the Election Day Procession in the last scene. On the second level, the Crowd stands for society.¹ As it has been stated, without society the problem of sin has no significance in *The Scarlet Letter*. The relationship between sin or sinning and society is the theme of this romance. This significance is easily visualized in the romance in terms of "isolation" or "solitude" which results from sin.

The first crowd scene naturally serves to determine the attitude towards sin of the society in which "religion and law were almost identical." The general attitude is represented by "a hard-featured dame of fifty," who says this kind of punishment which is given to Hester is not enough for her sin. But the author says, after explaining the function of the pillory, which is to be used for exposing Hester, "The very ideal of ignominy was embodied and made manifest in this contrivance of wood and iron. There can be no outrage, methinks, against our common nature,—whatever be the delinquencies of the individual,—no outrage more flagrant than to forbid the culprit to hide his face for shame; as it was the essence of this punishment to do." There were many ideas in New England Puritanism which Hawthorne did not like. And yet, he did not believe in the utter cold-bloodedness of New England Puritanism. Therefore "in Hester Prynne's instance, . . ., as not unfrequently in other cases, her sentence bore, that she should stand a certain time upon the platform, but without undergoing that gripe about the neck and confinement of the head, the proneness to which was the most devilish characteristic of this ugly engine." And yet, we can easily understand what kind of, and how much significance Hawthorne wanted to imply in the punishment on the scaffold.

Let me extend the interpretation of the symbolism of the crowd a little

¹ Mark Van Doren, *Hawthorne*, p. 160.

further. As the consequence of the first scaffold and crowd scene, Hester follows the law of order in society. Actually, as a punishment, it takes the form of isolation from society. This isolation, naturally, involves Pearl. "Mother and daughter stood together *in the same circle of seclusion* from society." (Italics mine) However this apparent seclusion from society is actually Hester's first step back to the society from which she was secluded. For to be secluded is the consequence of her obedience to the social order. Dimmesdale refused, within himself, to stand on the scaffold. As a consequence, in spite of his apparently belonging to society, he becomes spiritually more and more isolated from it.

As Dimmesdale did not stand on the scaffold the first time, later in "the Minister's Vigil" he has to stand on it, first alone, and then joined by Hester and Pearl. Why is this scene not enough, and why is the third and last scaffold scene necessary? This scene establishes the recognition of sin by Dimmesdale and the human relationship between the three, but there is not the crowd around him to bear witness to his confession. The consequence of sin should be dealt with in front of the crowd, in society. So the last scaffold scene is necessary in order that Dimmesdale may come into full contact with society and be released from spiritual isolation, even at the last moment. For the first time here, Dimmesdale's relationship is morally satisfactory both to God and man. The scaffold is the point at which the relationship between the sinners and society is determined. Without the crowd in front of it the scaffold platform does not function.

In the last crowd scene in the market place there are several points to mention. The first one is the symbol of seclusion. In the previous section when the author said, "Mother and daughter stood in the same circle of seclusion from society," it was a figurative speech. But here the author makes "a sort of magic circle" or a real secluded circle around Hester among the crowd with all kinds of people watching her and the letter *A* on her bosom. She can recognize all the same faces, among the crowd, which gathered at the same place seven years ago when she came out of the prison-door. She missed only one, who was the youngest, and the only compassionate one among the group.

At this point I would like to compare the significance of the crowd in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Marble Faun*. We can find in *The Marble Faun* in Chapter XXV, "The Bronz Pontiff's Benediction" a crowd scene similar to the Election Day scene in *The Scarlet Letter*. It is a market day in Perugia. After Donatello killed Miriam's mysterious model, following the sign of a glance from Miriam's eye, they lived apart for a long time, each suffering secretly in his and her own way in repentance of their mutual sin and of their love for each other. But today they meet again through the mediation of their friend Kenyon, at the crowded square in front of the Bronz Pontiff. What does this crowd mean to Donatello and Miriam? The author says:

It is not improbable that Miriam had planned this momentous interview, on so public a spot and at high noon, with an eye as the sort of protection that would be thrown over it by a multitude of eye-witnesses. In circumstances of profound feeling and passion, there is often a sense that too great a seclusion cannot be endured; there is an indefinite dread of being quite alone with the object of our deepest interest. The species of solitude that a crowd harbors within itself is felt to be preferable, in certain conditions of the heart, to the remoteness of a desert or the depth of an untrodden wood.¹

The psychology is very real. But symbolically the relationship between the sinners and the crowd is not that of necessity. They could meet in "the remoteness of a desert or the depth of an untrodden wood" if they would. Finally they are united into a sort of spiritual marriage, by the mutual sin, for their spiritual elevation. They stand hand in hand at the foot of the bronze statue of Pope Julius the Third, who looks as if he were giving his benediction to this newly united couple, and "these thousand eye-witnesses gazed so curiously at the unintelligible scene." This crowd is "unintelligible" in regard to what is happening. This is the characteristic difference between *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Marble Faun*. In *The Scarlet Letter* sin and the crowd was inseparable. Here the crowd has nothing to do with the sin. There is no struggle between the social force and the individuals. Towards the end of *The Scarlet*

¹ Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne* p. 774.

Letter, when Hester stands among the crowd of the Election Day in the "circle of seclusion" the scarlet letter *A* on her bosom attracts all the eyes of the hundreds and thousands of people on one spot. Each single eye is well aware of the meaning of the symbol. And that awareness of the meaning reaches its culmination when it goes through the letter *A* in such intensity that the people's eye scorch the bosom of the bearer of the letter like the rays of the sun through a burning lense. Yet Hester cannot move. We become almost breathless when we think of the tenseness of emotion between the bearer of the letter and the crowd. But in *The Marble Faun* it is to avoid the tenseness of emotion that Miriam has chosen this crowded spot for her interview with Donatello. Though it is not a relationship of necessity, and therefore does not appeal to the reader intensely, the crowd of *The Marble Faun* serves to impress us with the tremendous loneliness and aloofness of Miriam and Donatello in society. The two meanings of solitude and seclusion in both romances are of entirely different character.

In the procession on the Election Day in *The Scarlet Letter* I see, symbolized, the definite social structure and the character of that structure of New England Puritanism, namely the necessity of an army, and the importance of magistrates and divines.

Symbols Related to Man in Society in General:

This category will deal with those symbols which serve to suggest some kind of human relationship or general environment in which the actions of the two romances take place. The difference from the first category is that the symbolism which belongs to this category could be used in any similar situation. However, we have to keep in our minds that, since it is the characteristic of Hawthorne's symbolism to be complex, this classification is rather a vague one, and sometimes the referent of one symbol would overlap with another, as we have already seen in the previous section. Except "The Needle Work" and the mysterious sympathy between wicked or sinful souls, the symbols are all part of nature. "The Weeds and the Roses" could be classified here, were they not so closely connected with "prison."

1. Hester's Needlework :

“Needlework” in Hester is a tie of human relationship between herself and society. In her first taking up of her responsibility as a sinner in society, it is her needle that had to embroider the Scarlet Letter of her shame. When the confinement is over and she starts to live again in society, though in seclusion under the watchful eye of the Governor, it is her needlework again that enables her to make the only possible contact with society. As time goes on, when her life in society broadens, and she turns to charitable work, she can help the people directly and indirectly through her needlework. The last mention of her needlework is in the conclusion where the author suggests that she is embroidering her grandchild's baby garment. In this stage her needlework is neither a necessity to support her living nor a deliberate deed of charity for repentance, as it was in the former stage. But it is a spontaneous expression of her affection towards others, whether for the poor people, or for her grandchild. We can see clearly the stages of the spiritual development of Hester through the needlework.

2. Forest :

The forest in *The Scarlet Letter* (XVI, “A Forest Walk ;” XVII, “The Child and the Brook-Side”) is full of symbolism. Hester, having decided, no matter what sacrifice it may cost her, to tell Dimmesdale who Chillingworth is, goes to the forest to meet Dimmesdale ; for he is supposed to pass through the forest on his way home from his visit to the venerable Eliot who is the missionary to the Indians. She meets him, tells him who Chillingworth is, talks with him about their future plan and finally decides to flee from this new colony to the old world where they would be able to live in obscurity, probably without their past being noticed. In relation to New England Puritanism, the forest was a place which the Black Man haunts and in which witches meet. Therefore it is very congenial to the sinning souls. The gloomy forest is an appropriate meeting place for Hester and Dimmesdale.

Perhaps the meaning on a little higher level is summarized in the following passage :

. . . How dreary looked the forest track that led back to the settlement, where Hester Prynne must take up again the burden of her ignominy, and the the minister, the hollow mockery of his good name! So they lingered an instant longer. No golden light had ever been so precious as the gloom of this dark forest. Here, seen only by his eyes, the scarlet letter need not burn into the bosom of the fallen woman! Here, seen only by her eyes, Arthur Dimmesdale, false to God and man, might be, for one moment, true.¹

Here the forest stands for liberation. For it is only in society that they have to be conscious of their sin. They are relieved from the pressure of the "crowd." Therefore, even the gloom of the dark forest is sweet to them. This imagery is intensified when the author says:

The decision [of the flight to the old world] once made, a glow of strange enjoyment threw its flickering brightness over the trouble of his breast. It was the exhilarating effect—upon a prisoner just escaped from the dungeon of his own heart—of breathing the wild, free atmosphere of an unredeemed, unchristianized, lawless region.²

It is important to notice that the wood is free to the sinners because it is an "unredeemed, unchristianized, lawless region."

It seems to me that "the track" which is leading to the settlement should not be neglected. This free region is not complete liberation from the society to which they are obligated. This separation has not been forced upon them but has been chosen by their own free will. Moreover, though the sinners may think that they have escaped from society, they are still inevitably linked with the settlement by the track.

The sunbeam which temporarily, but abundantly, shines upon the two sinners when they think they are free from the restrictions of the social order, signifies their joy. But as the situation in which they think they are free is a false one, when the sinned parents are reminded by Pearl of their obligation as sinners in society, their joy fades away. Pearl, who in this case stands for conscience by pointing to Hester's breast from which the Scarlet Letter has been removed, would not come to them; and at that moment the sunshine fades away.

In some other places, as figures of speech, very frequently sun or sun

¹ *The Scarlet Letter*, p. 186.

² *Ibid.*, p. 192.

images are used to expose sin to society.

The last symbol in this category is the brook. It seems to me that it has several meanings, but some are ambiguous. The brook as a mirror is to be referred to later. The following is the illustrative passage :

“Let us not look back,” answered Hester Prynne. “The past is gone! Wherefore should we linger upon it? See! With this symbol I undo it all, and make it as it had never been.”

So speaking, she undid the clasp that fastened the scarlet letter, and taking it from her bosom, threw it to a distance among the withered leaves. The mystic token alighted on the hither verge of the stream. With a hand's breadth farther flight it would have fallen into the water, and have given the little brook another woe to carry onward, besides the unintelligible tale which it still kept murmuring about. But there lay the embroidered letter, glittering like a lost jewel, which some ill-fated wanderer might pick up, and thenceforth be haunted by strange phantoms of guilt, sinking of the heart, and unaccountable misfortune.¹

Again, later, when the “fateful interview” in the forest comes to a close,

. . . the melancholy brook would add this other tale to the mystery with which its little heart was already overburdened, and whereof it still kept up a murmuring babble, with not a whit more cheerfulness of tone than for ages heretofore.²

From these two passages, I gather that the brook in this situation means eternity, with all the stream of human destiny included in it. By trying to throw away the scarlet letter, Hester tries to escape from the limit of time and space of this world, because she thought it is within the limit of the time and space of this world that she has to suffer. But the consequences of sin which was committed within the limit of this world should be taken care of within the limit of this world. Therefore the scarlet letter would not drop into the stream, but would stay on the verge of the bank, and would reveal its intense force by reflection.

3. Sympathy between the persons or things of the same nature :

To use mysterious sympathetic attraction between persons or things of the same character is Hawthorne's favourite device to symbolize the

¹ *The Scarlet Letter*, pp. 192-193.

² *Ibid.*, p. 203.

nature of a person he wants to describe. In *The Scarlet Letter* when Hester passes the street, the scarlet letter on her bosom would give a strange throb as if it would tell Hester that the person who has just passed her has some kinship of secret sin with her, in spite of his or her innocent appearance. In "the Minister's Vigil" when Dimmesdale stands on the scaffold alone, first the Reverend Wilson passes close by. He does not notice Dimmesdale, because he is a pious and pure man and there is no kinship of character between them. On the other hand, Pearl, Hester and Chillingworth, all of them, seem to be drawn to the spot as if by a mysterious magnetic power, showing their inevitable relation to one another.

In the forest scene all the creatures of the forest gather around Pearl because of her wild, untamed character.

Among all of the instances of this kind of symbolism, the most pathetic and most vivid in imagery is Donatello's case in *The Marble Faun*. After he has committed the crime, he goes back to his castle in his native province. There, one day he proposes to show Kenyon his (Donatello's) unusual skill in summoning small creatures in the garden by whistling. However, when he whistles, the only creature which comes out is an ugly lizard. Seeing this, Donatello cries bitterly and says that all the innocent creatures which were his friends before know his sin and therefore are not friends any more and will not come out, except the ugly lizard. A young beautiful, Faun-like nobleman, crying in a new recognition of his loss of innocence, in his ancient garden, throwing himself on the grass with an ugly lizard close by! This is the kind of symbol which has no particular importance in terms of the meaning behind symbols, yet Hawthorne uses this device very cleverly to give the desirable atmosphere.

Symbols Related to Man as Individual :

What kind of symbols did the author use to express meanings related to men as individuals who moved around, struggled, and suffered in society? The themes of the two romances are the problem of good and evil in human nature. Therefore, the symbols treated in this

section are such as a mirror and portraits or sculpture reflecting the human soul, fire as the force of malice, and finally various kinds of symbols representing the heart as the centre of good and evil.

1. The Mirror:

The "mirror" holds a particular significance in Hawthorne's life and work. It is closely connected with his concept of imagination. In his Notebooks, the entry of September 18, 1842, is explicit of his concept of reflection. It is the record of his observation of the Concord River.

. . . I have never elsewhere had such an opportunity to observe how much more beautiful reflection is than what we call reality. The sky, and the clustering foliage on either hand, and the effect of sunlight as it found its way through the shade, giving lightsome hues in contrast with the quiet depth of the prevailing tints—all these were unsurpassably beautiful, when beheld in upper air. But on gazing downward, there they were, the same even to the minutest particular, yet arrayed in ideal beauty, which satisfied the spirit incomparably more than the actual scene. I am half convinced that *the reflection is indeed the reality* the real thing which Nature imperfectly images to our grosser sense. At all events, *the disembodied shadow is nearest to the soul.* (Italics mine)¹

Hawthorne was always concerned with reality. Also, from the above quoted passage it is evident that he liked the reflection, not simply because it was beautiful. He says, ". . . Nature imperfectly images to our grosser sense." Therefore I understand what he meant was that because of our limited experiences sometimes the perception of our senses is not as it should be. Instead of reflecting the object of our perception as it is, we may reflect it distorted through our own bias. This he did not like. If our perception be pure, and if it be without any prejudice, it will reflect life as it is. Moreover it will reveal only universal truth within the object. Therefore reflection is more real, or it is more true than the so-called reality. He does not mean he prefers the unsubstantial shadow of things, but he interprets the clear reflection as the essence of the things. He thinks further that an artist's imagination should be the reflecting surface; it should accept or perceive life as it

¹ *The American Notebooks op. cit.*, p. 170.

is, then project the spirit in a clearer image which is the truth and reality of life. With this concept of reflection in our minds we can examine the symbolism of the "mirror" and other symbols of the same sort.

The symbols which belong to this category are, besides actual mirrors and glasses, the bright shining breastplate of armour, human eyes, a brook, portraits and sculptures, and even memory. The instance of the shining breastplate in *The Scarlet Letter* is a little different in its character from Hawthorne's ordinary idea of a mirror, and has already been mentioned and discussed in relation to Puritanism.

The eye as a mirror for introspection is shown when Hester is enjoying her miniature in Pearl's eyes, and suddenly sees a "fiendlike" face in it. Why does she see it suddenly and unexpectedly? She hates Chillingworth with all her soul. Therefore, perhaps this "fiend-like" face is the unconscious revelation of her extreme hatred of Chillingworth.

In *The Scarlet Letter* an actual glass is used twice, and in both cases, the idea is very clear. The first instance is related to Dimmesdale. Being tortured by the sense of guilt, he keeps vigil and sometimes views "his own face in a looking glass, by the most powerful light which he could throw upon it. He thus typified the constant introspection. . . ." "His own face in a looking glass" is his own soul, and "the most powerful light which he could throw upon it" is his Puritan over-selfconsciousness of guilt.

The second instance is Chillingworth. This is not in a symbol, but in a symbolic expression. In the following two expressions, Hawthorne's suggestion that "reflection is the reality" and that "the disembodied shadow is nearest to the soul," is clear. When Hester pleads with Chillingworth on the seashore not to torture Dimmesdale any more, Chillingworth realizes that he has degenerated in his soul like a fiend.

The unfortunate physician, while uttering these words, lifted his hands with a look of horror, as if he had beheld some frightful shape, which he could not recognize, usurping the place of *his own image in a glass*. It was one of those moments—which sometimes occur only at the internal of his mind's eye. Not improbably, he had never before viewed himself as he did now. (*Italics mine*)¹

¹ *The Scarlet Letter*, p. 164.

When Chillingworth is conscious, he is always very cautious not to betray his inner malicious intention by the expression on his face. Several times it is mentioned that he quickly conceals his evil emotion when it is shown in a momentary expression. But he cannot deceive himself.

A rather extraordinary use of the mirror imagery is that of the use of memory by Hester on the scaffold in the opening scene, in which she sees her past—her native place in Old England, her parents, her happy girlhood days and the brief married life with her husband—as if she were looking at a panorama. This is not related either to good or bad, but it shows a part of the heart's function.

The use of the brook for the mirror imagery is a very natural one even to us. In *The Scarlet Letter* it is used in the Forest scene standing for Hester's conscience. The reflection of Pearl with her finger pointing to Hester's breast, and herself standing beyond the river symbolize that unless Hester takes the social responsibility of wearing the scarlet letter *A*, there could be no normal relationship between mother and daughter, because the significance of Pearl's existence lies only in relation to her mother's sin. Here too, the reflection of Pearl gives a clear and stronger impression than her real figure. In this case however, besides the finger-pointing reflection, the fact that Pearl is standing beyond the brook, and would not come to her mother should be counted in helping us understand the situation.

As a writer Hawthorne himself tried to exercise the power of imagination in revealing "reality" in literature. It was very natural for him to be interested in the exercise of the same function in other forms of art, in painting and sculpture. He treats this exercise as the background of his other romance, *The Marble Faun*. The title itself is expressive of the character of the romance. To begin with the Marble Faun symbolizes the innocent sinless man, whose existence is actually impossible in the real, sinful world.

Because of the characteristic of Italy, and particularly of Rome, and because the main characters are artists of some kind or other, from the beginning to the end *The Marble Faun* is full of appreciation and dis-

cussion of various kinds of fine arts. However, in my paper I shall only take up two instances which are relevant to the theme of the romance. In both cases the author's point is that the artists' sincerely passive attitude towards their models unconsciously reveals the souls of the model. Also, in both cases it is interesting to see that the artists themselves do not realize that they have revealed the souls of their models.

Here is a quotation which tells of the portrait, or rather a sketch, of Hilda. This is after she saw the crime of Donatello and Miriam:

The strange sorrow that had befallen Hilda did not fail to impress its mysterious seal upon her face, and to make itself perceptible to sensitive observers in her manner and carriage. A young Italian artist, who frequented the same galleries which Hilda haunted, grew deeply interested in her expression. One day, while she stood before Leonardo da Vinci's picture of Joanna of Aragon, . . . ,—this artist drew a hasty sketch which he afterwards elaborated into a finished portrait. It represented Hilda as gazing with sad and earnest horror at a blood-spot which she seemed just then to have discovered on her white robe, By many connoisseurs, the idea of the face was supposed to have been suggested by the portrait of Beatrice Cenci; and, in fact, there was a look somewhat similar to poor Beatrice's forlorn gaze out of the dreary isolation and remoteness, in which a terrible doom had involved a tender soul. But the modern artist strenuously upheld the originality of his own picture, as well as the stainless purity of its subject, and chose to call it—and was laughed at for his pains—“Innocence, dying of a blood-stain!”¹

Through the sincere passivity of the artist's imagination as a mirror, the young Italian artist caught the reality of Hilda's soul and reflected or projected it into a painting. Of course he did not know her actual problem but his imagination alone allowed him to interpret the nature of her problem correctly. So he named the picture “Innocence, dying of a blood-stain!” In the very same picture what does an ordinary picture-dealer see? To begin with “Innocence, dying of a blood-stain” does not make any sense to him. And he thinks that she has stabbed her lover overnight. He changes the name of the picture which, to him, seems to explain the picture: ‘The Signorina's Vengeance.’ “The grosser sense” cannot see the reality.

¹ *The Complete Novels op. cit.*, p. 780.

The second instance is the case in which the sculptor Kenyon's imagination reflects Donatello's character into an unfinished marble bust. The very interesting thing here is that when Kenyon was creating this bust, he was not actually modelling Donatello. "It was not the one which Kenyon had begun to model at Monte Beni [while he was visiting Donatello at his native castle], but a reminiscence of the Count's history, and of his personal and hereditary character."¹ In other words, in an ordinary sense, Kenyon did not copy the real. Rather, it was the "reflection" of the artist's imagination based on understanding the "Count's history, and of his personal and hereditary character." So ". . . strange to say, the face had an expression, and a more recognizable one than Kenyon had succeeded in putting into the clay model at Monte Beni."² The more peculiar thing about this bust is that this is an unfinished work. This is very significant. When Kenyon showed this bust to Hilda, she says, "There is a good deal of external resemblance, still, to the features of the Faun of Praxiteles, between whom and Donatello, you know, we once insisted that there was a perfect twin-brotherhood. But the expression is now so very different!"³ Further: "It gives the impression of a growing intellectual power and moral sense. . . . it is the Faun, but advancing towards a state of higher development."⁴

Hilda thinks that the reason for this remarkable success in the bust's expression is that it is in "an unfinished state." For here the important thing was "the process of growing spirit" caught in a process of creating art. "And accordingly, Donatello's bust . . . has ever since remained in an unfinished state." What would the same picture dealer who saw Hilda's portrait say if he were to see this bust? Surely he would say that an unfinished bust is worth nothing. Kenyon had been unsuccessful in trying to get the effect in his finished clay model, because he himself had not been able to see that it was, not a completed,

¹ *The Complete Novels, op. cit., p. 809.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

but a growing and developing quality in Donatello that he was creating. Now, unconsciously, he has created that quality in the process of creating. The soul was projected. This device of using pictures and sculptures to explain the characters in a work, if overdone, becomes artificial. Yet, it symbolizes the author's point of view clearly.

2. Fire:

Having examined how man's inner soul is revealed, or using Hawthorne's term, reflected, now we examine what it reveals, and finally how the inner soul itself is symbolized.

In *The Scarlet Letter* sin and malicious intention are symbolized over and over again by the imagery of fire, a gleam, or a heated iron. This is quite conventional hell-fire imagery. In relation to the scarlet letter some of the examples of this kind are as follows: "*the bale-fire of that scarlet letter blazing at the end of the path, . . .*"; ". . . seemed to drive its *hue from the flames of the infernal pit, . . .*"; "the scarlet letter threw a *gleam. . . .*, and which seemed to scorch into Hester's breast, as if it had been a red iron." (Italics mine)

Related to Chillingworth's malicious intention, we find such examples as these: ". . . , letting *the lurid fire* of his heart blaze out before his eyes;" ". . . a *light glimmered . . .*, turning blue and ominous like *the reflection of a furnace*, or let us say, like one of those *gleams of ghastly fire* that darted from Bunyan's awful doorway in the hillside." (Italics mine) In all of these examples we notice that heat, as well as light, from fire is important in the imagery.

Two exceptional uses of the symbolism of fire occur, one in *The Scarlet Letter* in the scene of the interview between Chillingworth and Hester in the prison, and the other in *The Marble Faun* as the burning candle in the Virgin's shrine of Hilda's tower. The latter case is to be treated in the next section in relation to Hilda's tower. In the interview scene Chillingworth speaks of the state of the loneliness of his heart before he married as follows: "My heart was a habitation large enough for many guests, but lonely and chill, and without a household fire, . . ." This fire means, evidently something very different from

the meaning of the first illustrations, the love and warmth of the household in comparison with the loneliness and chill. What different meaning and feeling can the same word "fire" give us!

3. The "heart" symbols:

Finally we are to examine the inner soul itself, or the heart, which is the centre of the problem of good and evil with which the author was most concerned. Hawthorne used varieties of symbols for heart imagery. In these romances, "habitation," "stream," "cavern," "mine," "grave or cemetery," "dungeon," and "tower" are used. In *The Scarlet Letter* when Chillingworth tries to search Dimmesdale's soul the verbs used are usually, "delve," or "dig" or "steal into," or some such verbs. In the development of the story the use of "chamber" is important. The first use is figurative:

He groped along as stealthily, with outlook, as a thief entering a *chamber* where a man lies only half asleep, or, it may be, broad awake—with purpose to steal the very treasure which this man guards as the apple of his eye. In spite of his premeditated carefulness, the floor would now and then creak; his garments would rustle; the shadow of his presence, in a forbidden proximity, would he thrown across his victim. (*Italics mine*)¹

This passage prepares the way for our understanding the same symbolism when it comes up a little later as a real symbol. Chillingworth stealing into Dimmesdale's room in his slumber, finally finds something on Dimmesdale's bosom. This time Dimmesdale did neither notice the creak of the floor, nor the rustle of the garment and let him into his deepest chamber.

Besides the "chamber" imagery, the variety is necessary to give appropriate imagery according to the diverse nature of the heart. "Stream" is used when Chillingworth tells Dimmesdale that it is better for a man to let flow what he has within his heart—particularly sin—like a stream.

The general idea implied in the use of "cavern" "grave," "mine," and "dungeon" is that sin is concealed or shut up in the depth of the

¹ *The Scarlet Letter*, p. 122.

heart, though, of course, there are slight differences of connotation in each symbol. Here I think it is better to quote the author himself as he explains the idea he had in the use of "cavern." In his *American Notebooks*, in the entry of August 23, 1838, he says:

The cave makes a fresh impression on me every time I visit it—so deep, so irregular, so gloomy, so stern—parts of its walls the pure white of the marble,—others covered with a grey decomposition, and with spots of mass, and with brake growing where there is a handful of earth. Then to stand and look into its depths, at various points, under the arch or elsewhere, and to hear the roar of the stream re-echoing up. It is like *a heart* that has been rent assunder by a torrent of passion, which has razed and roared, and left its ineffaceable traces; though now there is but a little rill of feeling at the bottom. (Italics mine)¹

Almost four years later, on June 1, 1842, he says:

The human heart to be allegorized as a cavern; at the entrance there is sunshine and flowers growing about it. You step within, but a short distance, and begin to find yourself surrounded by a terrible gloom, and monsters of diverse kinds; it seems like Hell itself. You are bewildered, and wander long without hope. At last a light strikes upon you. You peep towards it, and find yourself in a region that seems in some sort, to reproduce the flowers and sunny beauty of the entrance, but all perfect. These are the depths of the heart, or of human nature, bright and peaceful; the gloom and terror may lie deep; but deeper still is the eternal beauty.²

The great difference between the first passage and the second one is that in the second he sees eternal beauty in the part "deeper still." As far as *The Scarlet Letter* is concerned, the idea stated in the first passage is what he implies in the cavern imagery, yet the last part of the second passage is helpful to understand the author's philosophy in general.

Other important symbols are "grave" and "cemetery." The idea of burying is common to both of them. But the further implication is a little different. In both *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Marble Faun* "grave" symbolizes the centre of sin, therefore it has to be buried, but further the suggested idea is that it would be better if a man need not bury his heart because of sin. The illustrative passages are given from the two books. In *The Scarlet Letter* the passage which I have used to illustrate

¹ *The American Notebooks, op. cit.*, p. 56.

² *Ibid.*, p. 98.

the use of "a dark flabby leaf" serves for this purpose, too. (See Foot Note p. 9)

A short passage of the dialogue from *The Marble Faun* supports the same idea. Towards the close of the story when Kenyon anxiously asks Miriam and Donatello for the news about his missing sweetheart, Hilda, Miriam, jokingly, would not tell, but says:

"There are several reasons why I should like to play round this matter a little while and cover it with fancifull thoughts, as we strew a grave with flowers."

"A grave!" exclaimed the sculptor, "No grave in which your heart need be buried," she replied; "you have no calamity to dread."¹

At this time Kenyon cannot see what Miriam means by "grave." But later it becomes clear that by "grave" Miriam actually meant the situation which was coming to her very soon, and in which she and Donatello were to have, in different places, lives of repentance and atonement of their sin. Their hearts needed to be buried for atonement and purification. This second instance from *The Marble Faun* has a little more positive view in its meaning. For the burying of the heart is not for the concealment of sin, but for atonement and purification. When it comes to the cemetery imagery the author goes a step further. In the very beginning of *The Scarlet Letter* we find the cemetery mentioned in contrast with the prison. And at the very end, though there is no word "cemetery" mentioned literally, the grave of Hester is described as a part of the whole cemetery rather than an individual grave. Cemetery is the end of human destiny, whatever kind of life we may lead in our life time. However hard Hester struggled with her own soul and with the force of society there is complete peace in the graveyard. The problem of good and evil is hard to solve in human life. But in the cemetery there is complete reconciliation of good and evil, if not complete purification. Personally it is hard for me to believe in complete purification of sin in this way, though some kind of atonement could be possible. This idea of reconciliation is supported by a passage from *the Blithedale Romance* by Hawthorne. This is what Coverdale thinks

¹ *The Complete Novels, op. cit., p. 836.*

of Zenobia's grave. The meaning of the passage is significant for three reasons :

First, because Zenobia hated Hollingsworth; second, because she said to Coverdale "Tell him [Hollingsworth] he has murdered me!" with "the wild energy" and "the passionate shriek," and third, because her drowned body, when it was taken out of the river, bore such a horrible rigidity of final struggle.

But all this while, we have been standing by Zenobia's grave. I have never since beheld it, but make no question that the grass grew all the better, little parallelogram of pasture-land, for the decay of the beautiful woman who slept beneath. How nature seems to love us! And how readily, nevertheless, without a sigh or a complaint, she converts us to a meaner purpose, when her highest one—that of a conscious intellectual life and sensibility—has been untimely balked! While Zenobia lived, nature was proud of her, and directed all eyes upon that radiant presence, as her fairest handiwork. Zenobia perished. Will not nature shed a tear? Ah, No!—she adopts the calamity at once into her system, and is just as well pleased, for aught we can see, with the tuft of ranker vegetation that grew out of Zenobia's heart, as with all the beauty which has bequeathed us no earthly representative except in this crop of weeds. It is because the spirit is inestimable that the lifeless body is so little valued.¹

There is no hatred, no struggle, and no evil under the cemetery.

In all the above mentioned symbols of heart, the idea is related, more or less, to that nature of heart in which sin is concealed. There is one more symbol which has a different meaning concerning the heart. It is the "tower" in *The Marble Faun*. Both "Hilda's tower" with its doves and "Donatello's tower" with its owls are very famous. As a heart symbol "tower" suggests isolation of the heart from the outer world or friends. Therefore they soar high. However, the cause of isolation is very different in each case. Hilda's heart is isolated from the friends because this New England Puritan girl is so pure and does not know anything about sin, because she is utterly incapable of understanding, and sympathizing with the agony of sinful souls. She lives alone high up in purity, tending the light of the Virgin's Shrine in her tower and surrounded by doves. The light and the doves symbolize purity. When Donatello and Miriam pass under her tower after the

¹ *The Complete Novels , op. cit., p. 583.*

crime and when Miriam looks up at Hilda's tower, she opens its window, and leaning forward takes the posture of prayer. Miriam shouts, "Pray for us, Hilda; we need it!"¹ Immediately Hilda disappears and the window is closed. Yet Hilda, too, struggles because of the knowledge of sin. She changes as is symbolized by her portrait by the young Italian artist. Finally arriving at the full understanding of the mixed existence of good and evil in this world, she comes "down from her old tower" to join her friends.

Making a contrast with Hilda's tower, in the symbolism of Donatello's tower, the cause of isolation is his agony from the sense of guilt. So everything about the tower is gloomy and mysterious. The tower is called "The Owl's Tower" and is inhabited by the two gloomy owls. To Hawthorne an owl represented a lonely and dismal atmosphere. We understand it from what he wrote to Longfellow. When Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales* was first published, Longfellow kindly wrote a review of it in which he referred to Hawthorne's living in 'the lark's nest.'² In appreciation of his famous contemporary's review Hawthorne wrote back and said:

You would have been much nearer the truth if you had pictured me as dwelling in an owl's nest; for mine is about as dismal. . . . By some witchcraft or other—for I really cannot assign any reasonable why and wherefore—I have been carried apart from the main current of life, and find it impossible to get back again.³

To return to the tower itself the whole symbolism is too clearly stated through Kenyon's mouth.

" . . . your tower resembles the spiritual experience of many a sinful soul, which nevertheless, may struggle upward into the pure air and light of Heaven at last."⁴ When Kenyon and Donatello come down

¹ *The Complete Novels*, *op. cit.*

² Matthiessen, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

³ *Ibid.*

The latter part of the same letter is quoted by Dr. K. Ishida in his *A Study of American Literature* (the title, my translation), and he says that this letter may have been Hawthorne's letter of condolence upon Longfellow's loss of his wife.

⁴ *The Complete Novels*, *op. cit.*, pp. 735-6.

from the top of the tower, they find on the platform of the battlemented tower, a little green shrub in the place where there is scarcely any soil. Donatello says it has always grown there. It is hope in the human heart, which we should never lose however hard a situation we may have to face.¹

Concerning the heart symbols, in the end one more thing should be mentioned. There is certain distinction between the mirror imagery and the chamber or grave imagery. In the former, the inward sphere projects its reality into the outward imagery. Whereas in the latter, some outward element injects itself into the interior. It is interesting to know how the author differentiates the use according to the desired imagery.

III. Conclusion

In this paper, I have only attempted to trace those symbols which have clearly identifiable ideas back of them. Some of those ideas are temporarily significant in the romances as in the case of the Election Day Procession in *The Scarlet Letter*. The significance of others could be carried even outside the limit of these particular pieces of literature as in the case of heart symbolism. If I could broaden the limit and extend my interests to the symbolic expressions and begin to investigate even figures of speech, I could be able to find more significance in Hawthorne's symbolism. Even in my limited scope of attempt, for one thing, I can not miss the vividness in his imagery, in vision, including shape, colour and light, the feeling of cold and heat, and in sound. They all give us readers concrete ideas behind symbols. I think the reason why the imagery is thus concrete is because Hawthorne reduces almost all the imagery into his own experiential level. Reading his *Notebooks* would tell us immediately how most of the symbols are taken from his own experience. How many entries there are in which he describes in detail the sunshine and shadow through the foliage in the

¹ We find the similar symbol, though not exactly the same, in "XIX Alice's Posies" in *The House of The Seven Gables* by the same author.

gloomy wood! Over and over again he describes the beauty of flowers and other plants in their shape and colour. His experience with rivers and caverns has been treated in the previous section. The appreciation of art in Italy was his own experience, too. Even the historical Puritan background was not imaginary. By the careful study of old history and records of trials in New England he knew that the kind of punishment Hester was given was true before 1640. Yet he did not remain in his experiential level only. An idea is more important than symbols. In his ideas he tried to transcend his experience to reveal the universal truth of man. In his review of *the House of the Seven Gables* Herman Melville said:

. . . There is a certain tragic phase of humanity which, in our own opinion, was never more powerfully embodied than by Hawthorne. We mean the tragedies of human thought in its own unbiassed, native, and profounder workings. We think that into no recorded mind has the intense feeling of the usable truth ever entered more deeply than into this man's. By usable truth, we mean the apprehension of the absolute condition of present things as they strike the eye of the man who fears them not though they do their worst to him . . .¹

Melville calls this "the usable truth," which is "the apprehension of the absolute condition of present things." I think this is exactly what Hawthorne had in mind when he called "reflection" "the real," or "the disembodied shadow" of things. As *The Scarlet Letter* is allegory and *The Marble Faun* partly allegory, he expressed this usable truth through much use of symbolism, yet related to his experience.

Among the examples of symbolism I have treated in this paper, I think the most important are in *The Scarlet Letter* "the scaffold and crowd," "the needlework," and "the weeds and the roses." In *The Marble Faun* they are Hilda's portrait and Donatello's unfinished marble bust.

In Hawthorne, since the problem of good and evil should always be taken up in relation to society and the order of society, "the scaffold and the crowd" is very important. As has been stated this is the point in which the relationship between the law of society and the individual is established. Without the crowd, or society, the order of society has

¹ Quoted by Van Doren, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

no meaning. We have always to remember that our individual existence is linked to society and have to take our responsibility in it without evading it.

The needlework imagery runs through the whole *Scarlet Letter*, symbolizing types and characters of human relationship in society. First it symbolizes the relationship of shame on the one hand, and hatred or indifference on the other; then a mechanical relationship based on necessity; an apparently good relationship, but achieved by will power; and finally the happiest human relationship in which good deeds are done, not by will power, but spontaneously with free-will. Hawthorne puts great emphasis on man's free will. In *The Scarlet Letter* in the first crowd scene, through the mouth of one of the men, the author suggests that moral deeds should not come from the fear of the law, but spontaneously. In the conclusion of *The Scarlet Letter*, by the time Hester is embroidering for her grandchild, she is wearing the scarlet letter not because she has to wear it under the law, but because she is willing to do so. As the significance of her needlework changes, so does the significance of the letter *A*; or rather the reverse is true. And in this last state her repentance is genuine, too.

Being different from Milton, whose *Paradise Lost* had a great influence upon him, Hawthorne does not go back to the origin of evil. He starts his concern from the point that evil is deep rooted and grows all over the world in abundance. The good deeds of love and mercy, which spring from a good balance of "reason" and "passion" are rare. This is the reality of human life which he symbolized by the weeds and roses and which his Puritan ancestors could not understand. The imagery of "roses and weeds" is strewn underneath the whole story of *The Scarlet Letter*. In *The Marble Faun* Hilda's sad portrait signifies the first recognition of this fact in life. Hawthorn was not sure if man could ever attain the state of heaven. Some kind of sin could be instrumental for man's climbing higher as is suggested in *The Marble Faun*. Nevertheless that is not the only nor the final solution of the problem of good and evil. The saddest thing in life seems that the perfect reconciliation of good and evil is possible only in the cemetery where the

heart with good and evil may be buried. None can escape it. In *The Scarlet Letter* the imagery of the cemetery first appears, side by side, with the prison or sin, and continues to be at the very bottom of our consciousness right to the end. Since we do not and cannot know much about evil and since there is no solution about it, the most important thing while we are living is to realize that there are always "black weeds" and "red roses" in society and also within the heart of each individual, and we should live as brothers and sisters. If we have sinned, the important thing is not to blame the sinners as the Puritans used to do, nor merely be depressed by the sense of guilt, but to grow out of it as the idea is expressed in the unfinished marble bust of Donatello.

The Scarlet Letter which begins with the mention of the necessity of the cemetery in human society ends with the description of the cemetery, or rather with the description of the heroine's grave. Certainly the very closing phrase of a herald's wording, "On a Field, Sable, the Letter A, Gules" is most strikingly symbolic of the whole meaning of the romance. I feel as if I were looking at the phrase actually in front of my eyes. A sable field suggests to me the ugly black weeds. The letter A in gules has shifted the original meaning which is "gloomier than the shadow" to that of the beautiful red roses. Does not the coat-of-arms symbolize the pride of a family? The herald's wording tells us of the inevitable and unavoidable human destiny in which we have to strive, because of the co-existence of the ugly weeds and red roses and yet have the possibility of climbing higher and higher.

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