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The Sin of Synecdoche: Hawthorne's Allegory against Symbolism in "Rappaccini's Daughter"

The romantics' elevation of symbolism at the expense of allegory has distorted critical judgments and canon making for nearly two centuries. Allegory deserves to be reconstructed in an American context.

Two volumes of collected essays published in 1981, the English Institute's *Allegory and Representation* and the Harvard English Studies volume *Allegory, Myth, and Symbol*, give ample evidence of the exciting variety of ways in which this genre, often considered moribund during the past two centuries, can rise again where least expected.[1] Much of this recent work has been devoted to the great Renaissance allegories, but the history of allegory's fall from favor has necessarily focused on the romantics, particularly Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whose distinction between the fancy and the imagination, the mechanical and the organic, was allegory's undoing in the minds of his followers, if not in his own.[2] Paul de Man has changed our way of reading post-Renaissance writers, particularly Rousseau, by detecting the presence of allegory in the work of the preromantics, or Pascal, for example, and by disputing the hegemony of the romantic symbol in nineteenth- and twentieth-century texts. In his essay "The Rhetoric of Temporality," de Man describes the bad conscience of the "symbolic style" which seeks to evade the "conflict between a conception of the self seen in its authentically temporal predicament and a defensive strategy that tries to hide from this negative self-knowledge" by asserting the superiority of the symbol over allegory.[3] The reconsideration of texts conventionally recognized as allegories and texts (romantic and otherwise) in which allegory is a present, though repressed, contender with symbolism has deconstructed the opposition, "symbolism/allegory," that has been used to justify so many canonical preferences. The return of this repressed genre to conscious critical attention has, naturally, some unexpected consequences. An alternative to the romantics' bad conscience may be a conscious and tormented celebration of

unending ambivalence, such as we find in the work of America's greatest allegorist, Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Hawthorne knew that his "inveterate love of allegory"[4] compromised his popular appeal immensely, and yet he persisted in using it to provide himself with narrative devices and structures. He could rely on his audience being familiar with the models for "The Celestial Railroad" and "Egotism; Or, the Bosom Serpent," even if they did not appreciate his modern tales. His choice of allegory was aesthetically anachronistic, to be sure, but more important, it went against the spirit of every message of hope for a better world that the audience of the utopian 1840s yearned for and devoured. Hawthorne used allegory to attack the American version of romantic symbolism, transcendentalism, because he saw how vicious idealism could be in practice. His villains—Alymer, who wants to efface his wife's birthmark; the minister who wants to efface his face with a black veil; Ethan Brand, who wants to make his mark by discovering the Unpardonable Sin; and Roger Chillingsworth, who wants to make his mark on Arthur Dimmesdale—have long been recognized as characters whose idealizing heads have repressed their sympathizing hearts. What has not been recognized is how Hawthorne uses allegory to deconstruct the hierarchical relation of the ideal and the real that was essential to romanticism and that had been, in the past, essential to allegory as well. He valorizes the real world as the necessary antidote to any imagined ideal world, and yet he does not choose realistic, representational narrative as his weapon to attack idealism. Mimesis would be powerless against symbolism: they both, at their extremes, would deny, or at least obscure, the difference between text and life. Allegory makes this difference and, indeed, does not exist without it.

Straining against its historical origins as a philosophical and theological mode of affirming the existence and superiority of an ideal world, Hawthorne's allegory first affirms the traditional distinction between the ideal and the real, but then refuses to reconcile them at the expense of the real simply because the real is deeply flawed. He will not reconcile this tension by eliminating the other—the real—either in the mind, art, or the afterlife. The sense of irresolution that characterizes so many of his texts is inescapable for good reason.[5] Hawthorne does not want the readers to lose their conscious and questioning selves in a satisfying mimetic illusion anymore than he approves Alymer ignoring the difference between an ideal beauty and a real wife. His allegory's artifice, which has so often vexed his readers, keeps this difference sensuously as well as intellectually present in the experience of reading. Furthermore, the traditional antimimetic artifices of allegory, such as personification,

the topos of the journey or procession, the use of emblems, and so forth, also force the reader to remember that the author has not created his art by sheer self-reliance. The teller of *Twice-Told Tales* looked for the origins of his art, not within himself or within "the living power and prime agent of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM," but in a tradition that would always be temporally prior to his own act of creation. The characteristic heterogeneity of allegory, in which text and life are recognized as different, does not depend on the synchronic ideal/real distinction for its generic definition, but upon diachronic sequence. Allegory gave Hawthorne a pretext for writing. Hawthorne made allegory do, however, what none of his illustrious predecessors had done when he valorized the real world, ambivalent about it as he might have been. Thus he irritated many of his readers because they recognized allegory, but could not make sense of it according to the tradition in which the ideal was by definition a better world. The reader's frustration is the mark of Hawthorne's success at defeating the quest for an organic, harmonious, ideal whole.

Many of Hawthorne's readers did not appreciate his success. It is not surprising that Edgar Allan Poe, the darling of the *symbolistes*, would say in a review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, "In defence of allegory . . . there is scarcely one respectable word to be said"; or that Henry James, whose faith in consciousness qualified all other doubts, would confess in his critical biography of Hawthorne, "allegory, to my sense, is quite one of the lighter exercises of the imagination."[6] Nor is it surprising, in retrospect, that other twentieth-century critics would insist that Hawthorne was a "symbolist" or "a mythmaker" when these qualities were required for membership in the canon.[7] All of these various efforts to evade or repress the originality of Hawthorne's allegory share a disinclination to allow that Hawthorne's ambivalence, or pessimism, or sense of sin —however his negativity is characterized—might be essential to his art, that heterogeneity is the mark of the allegorist, the sign of his fallen condition, and something that cannot be overcome or reconciled either in an organic whole or by a dialectic. This fallen and doubled condition might be filled with suffering, but it would still be preferable to committing the Unpardonable Sin, which is, in moral and thematic terms familiar to Hawthorne scholars, the development of the intellect at the expense of the heart and the consequent violation of the sanctity of the human heart; in epistemological terms, it is the willful ignorance of the difference between self and other and/or text and life; and finally, in moral and rhetorical terms, it is the sin of synecdoche, in which, according to Coleridge's definition of the symbol, the part symbolically and organically

stands for the whole, effacing, for the believer, the difference between the sign and the signified.[8]

The symbolical and synecdochical sinner whom Hawthorne distrusted above all was the mild-mannered "transparent eyeball" in whose manse he dwelt: Ralph Waldo Emerson. The Oversoul in which all differences are reconciled would be anathema to Hawthorne; the egotism of a man who responded to the request that he give charity, "Are they *my* poor?"[9] would be a bosom serpent worthy to be Godzilla's mate. The belief that differences could be reconciled in an organic whole did not, for Hawthorne, promise celestial harmony, but rather the horror of monsters, the corruption of nature, the adulterous hybrids that only idealizing men in their will to power are capable of producing. Better that differences be preserved than that nature be violated by uniting dissimilar things.[10]

Living in the Old Manse and enjoying Emerson's hospitality, Hawthorne made his attack indirectly, that is to say, allegorically, and nowhere more brilliantly than in "Rappaccini's Daughter," where he takes on Dante, Genesis, and Emerson among others, but gives himself the last word twice, once inside the story with Baglioni's rhetorical question, which trope, as de Man says, rhetorizes grammar such that our reading "end[s] up in indetermination, in a suspended uncertainty that is unable to choose between two modes of reading";[11] and once outside the story in his "translator's preface." To make the choice of one reading over the other would be fatal to our continued existence as Hawthorne's audience.

The allegorical nature of "Rappaccini's Daughter" is announced by Hawthorne in the "translator's preface" to "*Beatrice; ou la Belle Empoisonneuse*," where he notes that M. de l'Aubépine's "very name is unknown to many of his own countrymen, as well as to the student of foreign literature." The "translator" explains that this is because "as a writer, he seems to occupy an unfortunate position between the Transcendentalists (who, under one name or another, have their share in all the current literature of the world), and the great body of pen-and-ink men who address the intellect and sympathies of the multitude." Since he can please neither one group nor the other, "he must necessarily find himself without an audience." What has doomed him is "his inveterate love of allegory, which . . . steal[s] away the human warmth out of his conceptions." Having been warned that we may not like Aubépine's antimimetic productions, the "translator" allows that "if the reader chance to take them in precisely the proper point of view, [they] may amuse a leisure hour as well as those of a brighter man; if otherwise, they can hardly fail to look excessively like nonsense" (91–92).

It is the responsibility of the readers to take this text as what it

is, and no fault of the author if they miss the point by looking for something that is not there. Allegory is not just in the writing, but in the reading. The author cannot prevent those readers inclined to understand the world metaphorically or typologically from reading the text as if it "look[s] . . . like" something it is not and being disappointed because it makes no sense.[12] Other readers, with the "proper point of view," the one appropriate to the text, will be amused and thus likely to continue reading, as any author would wish.

In order to have "precisely the proper point of view," of course, the reader must first know French, not in order to read the story, which has been "translated" by M. de l'Aubépine's admirer, but in order to know how to read parts of the preface, which have been translated from English to French. M. de l'Aubépine, we are told, has written a number of works collected in "*Contes deux fois racontées*," including "*Le Voyage Céleste à Chemin de Fer*" and "*L'Artiste du Beau; ou le Papillon Mechanique.*" Once we know that "aubépine" is "hawthorn," and if we are part of an "isolated clique" that knows both French and Hawthorne's tales, then we can read this preface as Hawthorne's joke at his own expense.

Hawthorne seems to have had second thoughts about this preface and omitted it from the 1846 and 1851 editions of *Mosses from an Old Manse*, though he restored it in the 1854 and subsequent editions.[13] Standard editions in print today most often choose to omit it, perhaps because the 1846 texts of the stories are considered authoritative, in spite of the note on the title page of the 1854 edition that it has been "Carefully Revised by the Author."[14] Hawthorne's vacillation about whether the preface should be a part of the text enacts his distrust of the audience that might not have "precisely the proper point of view." The current editorial preference for his unprefaced text, the "real story," is revelatory of the prejudices against allegory in our time. The ironic preface grates against the poignant story of Beatrice that follows it.

Hawthorne may describe his own literary reputation (or lack thereof) quite accurately, but when he claims that M. de l'Aubépine is "voluminous" and "continues to write and publish with as much praiseworthy and indefatigable prolixity, as if his efforts were crowned with the brilliant success that so justly attends those of Eugene Sue," he exaggerates, to say the least. The "translator" mentions that "*Le Voyage Celeste à Chemin de Fer*" alone is "3 tom."; "*Le Culte du Feu*" is "a folio volume of ponderous research into the religion and ritual of the old Persian Ghebers"; "*L'Artiste du Beau*" is "5 tom. 4to." [*sic*], and so on.

This preface seems intent on illustrating a variety of ways in

which two levels of meaning can coexist and differ: there is translation; there is the discrepancy between the author's and the reader's points of view; the discrepancy between readers who will be amused and those who will think this allegory nonsense; and there is irony. In each instance, the meanings must exist simultaneously in order for the readers to know that they must interpret what is being said, and—very important—so that they may draw on various kinds of knowledge necessary for interpretation. The text cannot be read as a self-referential closed system of meaning: one has to know (1) French; (2) the titles of Hawthorne's other tales; (3) the length of these works. In more general terms, one must know another language than the one being written, and one must have read other texts. The preface thus proposes a certain kind of relationship between interpretations that are made possible by synchronic knowledge (the equivalences of translation) and those that are made possible by diachronic knowledge (the temporal experience of reading). By bringing both paradigmatic and syntagmatic structures into play, Hawthorne uses the preface to illustrate the relations of tropes in his allegory and as a prolegomenon to the allegory "proper." M. de l'Aubépine's "unfortunate position, between the Transcendentalists (who, under one name or another)," paradigmatically "have their share in all the current literature of the world" and the "pen-and-ink men," who syntagmatically "address the intellect and sympathies of the multitude," can now be understood as the position of the allegorist who must negotiate between metaphor, which can substitute "one name [for] another," and metonymy, which would substitute the means of production, "pen-and-ink," for the producer. The play between metaphor and metonymy is not, however, perfectly balanced or fair. In spite of allegory's inescapable definition as "extended metaphor," it is the metonymic, syntagmatic knowledge of Hawthorne's other work and his irony about his limited production that is necessary here to get the joke: just knowing French will not do. "The proper point of view," the more complex interpretation of the piece, will depend on recognizing the metonymic connections as finally more important than the metaphoric; otherwise the preface would just be translation, and not self-commentary. The originality of Hawthorne's allegory is thus structural as well as moral, and the tension between metaphor and metonymy is the rhetorical equivalent of Hawthorne's deconstruction of allegory's traditional hierarchy of the ideal and the real.

Hawthorne also announces the allegorical nature of his tale by naming his heroine Beatrice, but not only Dante lurks behind this tale: The Garden of Eden and Shakespeare's star-crossed lovers also contribute to its generation, as do Beatrice Cenci, the *Gesta*

Romanorum, Milton, Spenser, Keats, Hoffman, and Ovid.[15] Hawthorne alerts the reader to the correspondences between his tale and other texts, but none of them serves as a code or dogma is supposed to for allegory, either as a structure or a key to interpretation. If we read Hawthorne's text against Dante's or the Bible or Shakespeare's, we can detect similarities between certain topoi or characters, but they seem to lead nowhere after a while because other correspondences intrude to disrupt any single meaningful correlation. Nevertheless, the interpretation of the tale cannot proceed until these correspondences have been recognized and the quest for the one and only true secret of his composition has been repeatedly frustrated. A few brief examples will suffice to illustrate this frustration which Hawthorne scholars have so often experienced without knowing how to interpret it.[16] The temporal priority of these texts, their historical anteriority, makes them sources of the tale, though the tale's meaning is not derived from them. They are pretexts, not subtexts.

Teased by the references to Dante, the educated reader cannot miss seeing that Hawthorne is proposing a correspondence so close as to be almost an identity between Beatrice and Beatrice. When our hero Giovanni first meets her, he asks if she would "deign to be [his] instructress" (111) and explain the true nature of the world in which she dwells. So does Dante's Beatrice guide him in Paradise. Before Giovanni first enters the Garden, however, he has already stepped beyond good and evil: "It mattered not whether she were angel or demon; he was irrevocably within her sphere, and must obey the law that whirled him onward, in ever lessening circles, towards a result which he did not attempt to foreshadow" (109). If this Beatrice is leading him simply onward and inward, not upward, then there appears to be no hierarchy and no possibility of salvation as the goal of his journey.

Indeed, his journey has gotten off to an inauspicious start as the housekeeper, "his withered guide[,] led him along several obscure passages" (109). This Vergil does not illuminate these passages by her interpretation except in Hamlet's sense: "I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying." Serving only as a go-between, a translator, she leads Giovanni beyond the "old edifice" (93) in which his edification has begun, but from which he cannot be educated. The spatial relations of Giovanni's elevated tower window, the garden below, and the overgrown passage between them suggest a journey from civilization and isolation through the unconscious, back to nature; at the same time, however, entering the house has placed him in an ambiguous position between art and history, the imagined and the real: on the edifice are "the armorial bearings of a family long since extinct" but one of whom,

"perhaps an occupant of this very mansion," Giovanni recalls, "had been pictured by Dante as a partaker of the immortal agonies of his Inferno" (93). Giovanni's own fate will be a terrestrial repetition of his illustrious predecessor's damnation, but the repetition is limited by mortality, whereas the original partook of immortality.

The reader's quest for correspondence is also thwarted by Giovanni's not being the Dante figure in the tale, except as he is the lover of Beatrice: he is not the hero and narrator of his own adventure; he is not seeking salvation; he is not connected to any political party. The references to Dante's poem invite us to seek parallels that leave us in dead ends. The caravan of tenors and vehicles that one imagines extending the metaphor as it processes from Alpha to Omega has lost their driving, ordering principle and wander through a desert devoid of signs, but filled with mirages.[17] Rappaccini is not Dante either, since he is described as "beyond the middle term of life" (95). Baglioni, as we shall see, is an inept artist, so neither can he be the hero of the tale. Beatrice alone is worthy of her precedent, and then only if we consider only her spiritual being. This is Giovanni's fatal error.

This pattern of provoking and frustrating the reader who is trying to read the tale allegorically is repeated when the text suggests that it is a version of Genesis. The narrator asks, "Was this garden, then, the Eden of the present world?—and this man, with such a perception of harm in what his own hands caused to grow, was he the Adam?" (96). But if Rappaccini is Adam, who on earth are the others? Is Beatrice Eve or is her absent mother Eve? Does the fall from the fallen world defy gravity? Is Giovanni the serpent who has, as Beatrice, dying, says, "more poison in thy nature than in mine?" (127). We can strain to construct an allegorical reading that makes the tale correspond to the Fall only by distorting it in ways that give allegory a bad name. The stench of corrupt patristics rises from this reading.

If Genesis, as the story of our origins, has any relevance here, it must be, again, that the repetition has a difference that makes all the difference. Rather than being expelled, Giovanni is trapped in this garden; rather than being tempted by forbidden knowledge, Beatrice has unwittingly lured Giovanni to his doom; rather than breed a race of sinners, Beatrice takes her life, thwarting the male trinity of her father, his rival, and her lover. There are many inversions of the sacred text, but none proclaims itself as the key that makes all the others fall into place so that we might perhaps say this is a story, not of the Fall, but of redemption. Putting the texts side by side in this way, we can see that the Dantesque allegory of salvation and the biblical story of the Fall provide complementary

models for Hawthorne's allegory, but that neither of them is a reliable guide to the values of the tale. Nor is any other of the many "sources." In fact, the vertical axis that correlates the Ascension and the Fall by opposition seems to be hypostatized just as the attempt to read by correspondences is short-circuited. The problem of interpretation signals a reorientation of metaphysics: the values of this allegory will only be found if we continue reading.

The references to *Romeo and Juliet* alert the reader to the possibilities of another way to look at relationships between texts. Rather than standing as *signe* does to *signifié*, "Rappaccini's Daughter" follows Shakespeare's play as, again, a repetition with a difference. This time it is "Romeo" who is in the balcony; "Juliet's" father who would lure her lover to his daughter, not forbid him access; and she alone who dies by the poison that would be an antidote to any other. Although this relation between the two texts could be described generally as intertextuality, this term ignores their temporal relationship. De Man proposes that the reference of a sign to a precedent is characteristic of the allegorical sign itself:

> The relationship between the allegorical sign and its meaning (*signifié*) is not decreed by dogma. . . . We have, instead, a relationship between signs in which the reference to their respective meanings has become of secondary importance. But this relationship between signs necessarily contains a constitutive temporal element; it remains necessary, if there is to be allegory, that the allegorical sign refer to another sign that precedes it. The meaning constituted by the allegorical sign can then consist only in the *repetition* (in the Kierkegaardian sense of the term) of a previous sign with which it can never coincide, since it is of the essence of this previous sign to be pure anteriority.[18]

It is the syntagmatic axis of combination, the contiguity of metonymic relations, that matters because it is along this axis that we discover the differences between the values of Genesis or Dante or Shakespeare and those of Hawthorne. The differences are what make it possible to recognize the incompatibility of a story of the Fall and redemption, or the story of star-crossed lovers, with a story in which there is nothing but the here and now. The similarities that allow us to perceive the differences between these signs do not point to a common denominator or add up to some new whole: identity and totalization are not the ends of allegory. Differences must be recognized and respected lest one fatally misread the text. The tale dramatizes the fatality of misreading by showing how each of the

misreaders—Giovanni, Rappaccini, and Baglioni—errs by failing to respect differences in two ways, both of which are characteristic of the symbolist at work: he reads the world synecdochically, taking the part as a symbol of the whole; and, seeking to create new organic wholes, he mixes heterogeneous things and creates monsters.

The problem of reading, of interpretation, in the tale centers on the enigma of Beatrice: What kind of being is she? Is she pure? Is she contagious? Is she good? Is she evil? The difficulty is that she is all these things, depending on whether one takes these descriptions literally or figuratively, whether one considers her visible body or her invisible soul, her effects or her intentions. The problem is metaphysical and moral, but it is also epistemological: How does one know what she is? What is evidence? The reader must not underestimate the difficulty facing the three male readers: Beatrice is, after all, unique. There has never been anyone quite like her. Of course, that is the way every lover feels about his beloved, so Giovanni's conventional idealization of her is almost unremarkable.

Even after Giovanni has seen her touch wither fresh flowers and her breath slay a flying insect, then seen her cross herself and sigh over its death, he still refuses to believe the evidence of his senses: "here it could not be but that Giovanni Guasconti's eyes deceived him" (103); "there could be no possibility of distinguishing a faded flower from a fresh one at so great a distance" (104). In spite of experience, he chooses to see only the good, and he transforms the evil into good as many a devoted swain has done before him:

> She was human: her nature was endowed with all the 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, transmuted 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 change, it stole away and hid itself among the shapeless half-ideas, which throng the dim region beyond the daylight of our perfect consciousness. (114)

Transmute the evil into good or repress it into the unconscious. This is the law of Giovanni's love and his interpretative method: "He seemed to gaze through the beautiful girl's eyes into her transparent soul, and felt no more doubt or fear" (112). When it works, he feels good.

Giovanni is able to ignore the evidence of his senses because he has a particular way of looking at the world. After his initial disturbing vision of the garden, Rappaccini, and Beatrice, he looks at the garden again in the fresh morning light:

> He was surprised, and a little ashamed, to find how real and matter-of-fact an affair it proved to be, in the first rays of the sun, which gilded the dew-drops that hung upon leaf and blossom, and, while giving a brighter beauty to each rare flower, brought everything within the limits of ordinary experience. The young man rejoiced, that in the heart of the barren city, he had the privilege of overlooking this spot of lovely and luxuriant vegetation. It would serve, he said to himself, as a symbolic language, to keep him in communion with Nature. (98)

As a Coleridgean synecdochical symbol of Nature,[19] the garden is good because Nature as a whole is good if you look at in the right way:

> as the eye is the best composer, so light is the first of painters. There is no object so foul that intense light will not make beautiful. And the stimulus it affords to the sense, and a sort of infinitude which it hath, like space and time, make all matters gay. Even a corpse has its own beauty.[20]

Not Baudelaire, but Emerson, has provided Giovanni with a philosophy by which he can transmute the "frightful peculiarity in her physical and moral system . . . into a golden crown of enchantment." As Emerson writes in "The Over-Soul":

> There is a difference between one and another hour of life in their authority and subsequent effect. Our faith comes in moments; our vice is habitual. Yet there is a depth in those brief moments which constrains us to ascribe more reality to them than to all other experiences. For this reason the argument which is always forthcoming to silence those who conceive extraordinary hopes of man, namely the appeal to experience, is forever invalid and vain. We give up the past to the objector, and yet we hope.[21]

Any experience that teaches us to doubt or fear can be ignored because it is only our ignorance of the ideal that makes us believe in the real:

> The problem of restoring to the world original and eternal beauty is solved by the redemption of the soul. The ruin or the blank that we see when we look at nature, is in our own eye. The axis of vision is not coincident with the axis of things, and so they appear not transparent but opaque. The reason why the world lacks unity, and lies broken and in heaps, is because man is disunited with himself.[22]

Once the soul is redeemed, the axes will coincide, as Giovanni's do already when he is able "to gaze through the beautiful girl's eyes into her transparent soul, and [feel] no more doubt or fear" (112); or when he looks into the garden at "the ruin of a marble fountain, sculpted with rare art, but so wofully [*sic*] shattered that it was impossible to trace the original design from the chaos of remaining fragments" and notices only the "cheerfully" gurgling water which "made him feel as if the fountain were an immortal spirit, that sung its song unceasingly, and without heeding the vicissitudes around it" (94). The symbolical language of Nature is sung to those who favor an imagined ahistorical animism and who do not heed the chaos of reality whose original design cannot be known. The "axis of vision" simply obliterates the "axis of things" when they coincide. This is transcendentalism at work.[23]

Hawthorne's critique of Emerson, in whose ancestral Old Manse he was living at the time that he wrote and published "Rappaccini's Daughter" in 1844, is directed against those texts that had won Emerson his popularity on the lyceum circuit. Knowing Emerson personally, Hawthorne saw that this "man without a handle,"[24] as Henry James Senior called him, was not dangerous himself, but the vehemence of Hawthorne's attack, indirect as it might be, reveals his sense that this particular form of idealism was pernicious because it effaced the evil to which it should merely have been opposed. The charge that Emerson was simply oblivious to evil has been vigorously challenged, especially by Harold Bloom, in recent years, but clearly Hawthorne could not, in this 1844 tale, be concerned with the subtleties and equivocations of Emerson's greatest essay, "Experience," written that same year. The danger was not Emerson himself, but how others used his rhetoric to justify their own selfish ends under the guise of idealism. Believing in the purity of Beatrice's soul, Giovanni ignores her corrupt body and thus precipitates her doom and his own. Believing that his daughter would rather be feared than loved, that absolute power subsumes all desire, Rappaccini, like many other Hawthorne scientists, uses her as the means to achieve his ideal: the invincible woman who would obey him. The problem is, of course, that the effacement cannot be com-

plete. Beatrice cannot be made all body or all soul to please her lover or her father: as long as she lives, she must be heterogeneous.

In their effort to make her be only the part that each of them desires according to his ideal, the two men do not succeed in homogenizing her, but rather in perverting themselves by mixing those things that cannot and should not be mixed. Rappaccini's plants are described as "unnatural" and "unearthly":

> Several, also, would have shocked a delicate instinct by an appearance of artificialness, indicating that there had been such commixture, and as it were, adultery of various vegetable species, that the production was no longer of God's making, but the monstrous offspring of man's depraved fancy, glowing with only an evil mockery of beauty. They were probably the result of experiment, which in one or two cases, had succeeded in mingling plants individually lovely into a compound possessing the questionable and ominous character that distinguished the whole growth of the garden. (110)

Likewise, Rappaccini is an unnatural father who pollutes his daughter's innocence.[25] Giovanni's "subtle sophistry of passion," which allows him to transmute Beatrice's corruption into her glory, is also adulterous, a mixture of passions:

> It was not love, although her rich beauty was a madness to him; nor horror, even while he fancied her spirit to be imbued with the same baneful essence that seemed to pervade her physical frame; but a wild offspring of both love and horror that had each parent in it, and burned like one and shivered like the other. (105)

Following this analysis, typical of Hawthorne's profound insight into the psyche, the narrator suddenly intrudes, the rhetoric shifts abruptly, as if the contemplation of this perversion was at last too much to bear: "Blessed are all simple emotions, be they dark or bright! It is the lurid intermixture of the two that produces the illuminating blaze of the infernal regions" (105). Evil is not the opposite of good, but the confusion of the two, the blending of differences that should be recognized and respected. Idealism, especially Emerson's idealism, as it was popularly understood, is suspect because it pretends to eliminate heterogeneity not just in theory but in experience itself. Transcendentalism, symbolism, idealism were not the leisure-time amusements of the theoried class of Concord; they were real dangers if people believed them and acted on them

and set out to follow the promptings of their various oversouls to purify life of undesirable elements. In Hawthorne's hands, allegory becomes the bête noire of symbolism by deconstructing the false, idealistic metaphysics on which symbolism is based. Allegory's attack is only successful, however, if it does not rely on simple correspondences between different levels of meaning. In the hands of an incompetent, even decadent, and self-interested allegorist like Baglioni, it does not maintain the double axes of interpretation. Bad allegory is worse than none at all, as we see by the consequences of Baglioni's method of interpreting the story of Alexander as if it corresponded exactly to the present situation. Beatrice pays with her life for his artistic incompetence.

The contrast between Baglioni and Rappaccini as the representatives of two different kinds of scientists has often been noticed and characterized in different ways. The conflict between allopathic and homeopathic medicine that was raging in Massachusetts in the 1840s clearly informs Hawthorne's portrayal of the methods of Rappaccini, who believes, as Baglioni explains to Giovanni, "that all medicinal virtues are comprised within those substances which we term vegetable poisons" (100), and those of Baglioni, the allopath, who respects "the good old rules of the medical profession" (120) and uses antidotes to cure illness.[26] This contrast between the two doctors has also been read as a kind of allegory of the controversies between the transcendentalists and the Unitarians, between faith and reason, between miracles and commonsense empiricism.[27] Clearly Giovanni is caught between these two methods. On the one hand, he believes that "there is something truer and more real, than what we can see with the eyes, and touch with the finger." But, on the other, "He resolved to institute some decisive test that should satify him, once and for all, whether there were those dreadful peculiarities in her physical nature, which could not be supposed to exist without some corresponding monstrosity of soul" (120).

Although the contrast between faith and doubt, between spirit and matter, between miracle and empirical seems absolute, it is crucial to recognize that all these positions are based upon a metaphysics that presupposes a correspondence between body and soul: either both are good or both are evil.[28] This "rationalist tradition in which reason and faith support each other" is obviously central to Western metaphysics, but it is the orthodoxy against which heresy defines itself, in this case: "a fideist tradition in which they [faith and reason] do not [support each other]."[29] As Robert Daly explains, "The basic assumption of fideism is that truth is dual, that truths about matter are within the purview of philosophy and can be arrived at through reason but that truths about spirit are within the

purview of theology and can be arrived at only through faith." By the fourteenth century, the center of fideism—which had been introduced to European thought by the Moslem Averroës in the thirteenth century—was Padua, the setting for Hawthorne's tale, where, in fact, the "black-letter tracts on both sides [are] preserved" (100). Indeed, the ancestor whose escutcheon Giovanni had recognized as belonging to a dweller in the *Inferno* is perhaps Averroës himself (canto 4, l. 144).[30]

Hawthorne's attraction to a philosophical tradition in which truth is considered as dual can readily be understood as another expression of his validation of heterogeneity, as is his preference for allegory over mimesis. However, a dangerous mixture of art and life is not the exclusive province of mimesis: allegory, if used improperly, is also potentially fatal. Giovanni's crisis and decision to test Beatrice is precipitated by Baglioni's retelling of the tale of Alexander and the poisonous maiden.

At first Baglioni tells the story, holding it like a mirror up to nature, as if he expects Giovanni to see himself immediately as the character corresponding to Alexander and Beatrice as the poison woman, "as lovely as the dawn, and gorgeous as the sunset," whose "breath [was] richer than a garden of Persian roses" (117).[31] But Giovanni refuses to read the story in this way and dismisses it as a "childish fable," hoping to discourage Baglioni's insistence by his rebuke: "I marvel how your worship finds time to read such nonsense, among your graver studies." Indeed, as Hawthorne has warned us in the "translator's preface," allegory can "look excessively like nonsense" if not taken from "precisely the proper point of view." Neither Baglioni, who has had to read and interpret the story before he retells it, and whose motives in telling it are a dangerous, adulterous mixture of scientific curiosity and the desire for revenge against Rappaccini; nor Giovanni, whose "many contending emotions" suspend him between "a thousand dim suspicions, which now grinned at him like so many demons" and "a true lover's perfect faith" (118), is capable of the "proper point of view." Not only is each guilty of the sin of synecdoche when he sees only that part of Beatrice that suits his purpose, but each also is adulterated as a reader because he wants to resolve her differences into a harmonious whole. Allegory cannot be used and interpreted simplistically as a set of correspondences, as Baglioni would use it for his own purposes: "That old fable of the Indian woman has become a truth, by the deep and deadly science of Rappaccini, and in the person of the lovely Beatrice" (119). Nor can it be dismissed as nonsense. Allegory is neither morality in fancy dress, nor is it completely irrelevant to life.

By constantly provoking the readers to recognize that they are reading a text that needs to be interpreted in various ways simultaneously rather than a text that soothes them with the illusion that life and art and all other oppositions can be reconciled, Hawthorne's allegory enacts its own belief that heterogeneity must be preserved. Baglioni believes in the principle of correspondence so absolutely that he can send a fatal antidote to Beatrice in "a small, exquisitely wrought silver phial" made by "the renowned Benvenuto Cellini" without realizing that the antidote this beautiful object contains would be poison to her because she really *is* different from any other mortal. His penchant for detecting similarities, for being a facile and self-serving allegorist, has blinded him to her difference. But, of course, he does not pay the price of his mistake or even accept the blame. In the last line of the text, he "called loudly, in a tone of triumph mixed with horror . . . 'Rappaccini! Rappaccini! And is *this* the upshot of your experiment?'" (128). His rhetorical question leaves us, as de Man says, "in a suspended uncertainty that [is] unable to choose between two modes of reading,"[32] one in which we would actually try to answer the grammatical question and the other in which the questioner does not want or expect an answer, since he is indifferent to it. Baglioni tries to efface his own guilt behind this rhetorized grammar. The romantic bad conscience has the last word in this text.

It does not occur to Baglioni that Beatrice has killed herself, but then we have already seen him misread her by failing to perceive her difference. Why should he even consider that this girl has understood what no one else has: that she can escape these men who all misunderstand her? She alone knows that while her body is corrupt, her spirit really is pure. Her heretical, fideist understanding of her heterogeneous self gives her a way to escape these idealists, these synecdochical sinners who would take a part of her, but not all. Having finally learned about contagion *by experience*, she chooses death rather than yield to any of these versions of herself which pretend to unify and harmonize her being while they actually fragment her by taking the part for the whole. To be as misunderstood as she is is no life at all. One can hardly blame her for wanting to define herself, even if that definition means her death.

It is interesting, however, to note how often critics have failed to see that Beatrice finally defines herself in opposition to the men who would destroy her. Many have blamed her either as a perfidious woman, luring her lover to his doom;[33] or as an ungrateful daughter who "reject[s]" her "most protective of fathers," who only "erred, as many fathers do . . . [and] commits the ancient error of fathers; he tries to live for his daughter, to give her the benefit of his experience

and thus to keep her from making her own experiments with human nature."[34] In one critic's eyes: "The only real poison in the story is that of misconception. Giovanni is the victim of a number of rumors which he allows Lisabetta, Baglioni, and Beatrice to foist upon him."[35] The myopic misogyny of these readings is significant, however, not just as even more evidence of how the monolithic voice of patriarchy can fail to distinguish between the victim Beatrice, who is said to have "locked herself into a prison,"[36] and Giovanni, who might have known better than to get too close to poison. This reading is of a piece with the failure to distinguish the oddity of Hawthorne's allegory, namely, his deconstruction of the hierarchy of the ideal and the real upon which the tradition of allegory has depended. In both cases the critics would efface the oddity, the otherness, so as to reestablish a homogeneous world in which the symbolic method reigns either as a literary genre or as a mode of perception. This critical bias becomes a moral problem when it has real consequences in the world.

Of course Beatrice has infected Giovanni, but can she be said to be guilty? How in the world could she know, even if she knows that she is poisonous, that she is also contagious? She has never met anyone before whom she could contaminate. She has no experience of the real world. This very obvious point is more important than it appears at first.

The association of contiguity, contamination, and the real is not accidental, but revelatory of Hawthorne's valorization of metonymy in his allegory. When Roman Jakobson originally associated metonymy and realism, he was concerned only with mimetic descriptions and the way in which prose is "forwarded essentially by contiguity."[37] Since Jakobson wrote his seminal essay, metaphor and metonymy have become what Hans Kellner calls "inflatable tropes" that can be understood as "figures of words," "figures of thought," "figures of comprehension," and "figures of discourse."[38] The analysis of metonymy as a trope whose "association by contiguity" has, however, always remained elusive because contiguity seems to mean so many things. No wonder critics prefer to detect metaphor with its (comparatively) monolithic "association by similarity," a predilection Jakobson noted as a sign of "contiguity disorder"[39] and which we have been calling the sin of synecdoche. One reason it has been difficult to analyze metonymy, Hugh Bredin has recently suggested, is that theorists have insisted that the relations on which metonymy relies are necessarily linguistic. What if, instead, "metonymical relations are relations between things, not between words"?[40] This proposal may offer "precisely the proper point of view" on the problem of analyzing metonymy:

> A metonymy neither states nor implies the connection between objects involved in it. For this reason, it relies wholly upon those relations between objects that are habitually and conventionally known and accepted. We must *already know* that the objects are related, if the metonymy is to be devised or understood. Thus, metaphor creates the relation between its objects, while metonymy *presupposes* that relation. That is why metonymy can never articulate a newly discovered insight, why it lacks the creative depth of metaphor. Metonymy is irresistibly and necessarily conventional.[41]

If, then, metonymy is the figure of discourse that dominates Hawthorne's allegory, we can reevaluate the importance of Beatrice's isolation from the world. Without the conventional knowledge gained by social experience, the fragmented knowledge gained by faith, reason, or experiment cannot be integrated properly.

Raised in a garden that was conceived by the same idealistic man of science that she was, Beatrice has had no opportunity to acquire common knowledge. During her first conversation with Giovanni, she asks "questions indicating such seclusion, and such lack of familiarity with modes and forms, that Giovanni responded as if to an infant" (112–113). She suffers from a fatal "contiguity disorder," since she too can only detect similarity. She is twin to the shrub at the center of the garden: "at the hour when I first drew breath, this plant sprang from the soil, the offspring of his science, of his intellect, while I was but his earthly child" (123). All she can perceive are correspondences, as does Giovanni, who so readily notes the "analogy between the beautiful girl and the gorgeous shrub . . . a resemblance which Beatrice seemed to have indulged a fantastic humor in heightening, both by the arrangement of her dress and the selection of its hues" (102). Deprived of any social connections, she cannot acquire the experience that she would need to know that she is contagious. As soon as she learns this truth, she understands her own heterogeneous, temporal nature and finds a new voice. When Giovanni tells her of Baglioni's antidote, she demands it and "add[s] with a peculiar emphasis: 'I will drink—but do thou await the result'" (126).

Beatrice makes her one and only conscious and moral decision in the world when she ends her life. Her acceptance of mortality is a rejection of idealists who surround her.[42] Hawthorne's valorization of metonymy, contiguity, and reality does not lead to resolution of the conflicts of life: it simply provides an opportunity, "taken from precisely the proper point of view," to see that a flawed and limited life is all we have. As de Man says, "the prevalence of allegory

always corresponds to the unveiling of an authentically temporal destiny."[43] Even Beatrice's death is foretold in curiously temporal terms: "She 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!" (126). Immortality is a place beyond time in which injury can be soothed, even healed, but this is hardly an orthodox vision of the afterlife in which the pure soul is freed from the corrupt body, a destiny that would seem to do justice to Beatrice at last. Hawthorne is reluctant to imagine that the heterogeneity of body and soul is dissolved even by death.

So deeply does Hawthorne distrust the impulse toward unity that he refuses even to be recognized as the authoritative origin of his tale: he invents his other self, M. de l'Aubépine. De Man understands this strategy as the allegorist's defense against symbolism:

> Whereas the symbol postulates the possibility of an identity or identification, allegory designates primarily a distance in relation to its own origins, and renouncing the nostalgia and the desire to coincide, it establishes its language in the void of this temporal difference. In so doing, it prevents the self from an illusory identification with the non-self, which is now fully, though painfully, recognized as a non-self.[44]

The pain of this recognition is masked as irony: Hawthorne's inflation of his slight tales to works in many volumes bespeaks both a discomfort with and a bemusement at his earthly achievement. Baglioni's rhetorical question, "And is *this* the upshot of your experiment?" might well be Hawthorne questioning himself about the value of his art.

Far from being the last word, however, Baglioni's question is only the end of the text, which is always already framed by the preface. As yet another instance of his deformation by translation, Hawthorne ends the preface by noting that this story was recently published in "*La Revue Anti-Aristocratique*," whereas in fact it was published in *The Democratic Review*. Rebelling against the aristocratic, hierarchizing, transcendental power of the symbol, Hawthorne gives his work to the people: "This journal . . . has, for some years past, led the defence of liberal principles and popular rights, with a faithfulness and ability worthy of all praise" (93). His praise is for the other by whose means he is read by what audience he has. This is not just modesty on Hawthorne's part but a just appreciation of the difference between his art and the life it honors and distrusts. His allegory is an attack on the pestilence of symbolism; it is

for others to defend the principles on which his art rests, if they so desire. Deeply pessimistic about his chances of being appreciated himself, Hawthorne nevertheless offers his readers a bargain: if they will accept his *compère*'s "inveterate love of allegory," he will be the interpreter. As de Man recognizes, after analyzing a passage in Proust, "we can no longer believe the assertion made in this passage about the intrinsic metaphysical superiority of metaphor over metonymy. We seem to end up in a mood of negative assurance that is highly productive of critical discourse."[45] By provoking us to disagree with each other about what the story means, about what its sources are, about whether it is allegory at all, Hawthorne has produced a critical discourse in which differences must be preserved because there is no possibility of agreement. We cannot be saved by the symbol from our temporal destiny, disagreeable as that destiny may be. This lack of resolution can only be frustrating to the readers, but unless they want to follow Beatrice across "the borders of Time," it is inescapable. To rejoice in this condition would be perverse, but to deny it would be fatal. One celebrates the continuity of life, its temporality, by keeping in mind that truths are many, not one. Accepting ambivalence and disagreement as inevitable, perhaps one is then fit to be a member of the audience Hawthorne imagined, not because it would be perfect and understand everything: he imagined it because it is real.

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Notes

1. Stephen J. Greenblatt, ed., *Allegory and Representation: Selected Papers from the English Institute, 1979–80*, n.s., no. 5 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981). Morton W. Bloomfield, ed., *Allegory, Myth, and Symbol*, Harvard English Studies 9 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

2. Edwin Honig, *Dark Conceit: The Making of Allegory* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1972), 45–54.

3. Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," in *Interpretation: Theory and Practice*, ed. Charles S. Singleton (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969), 191.

4. Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Rappaccini's Daughter," in *The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 16 vols. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1963–85), 10:91. All further references to this work appear in the text.

5. The yearning for one truth that will end the irritation of uncertainty pervades Hawthorne criticism is spite of general acknowledgment that ambivalence is Hawthorne's keynote. For a recent example of this frustration, see Watson Branch, "From Allegory to Romance: Hawthorne's Transformation of *The Scarlet Letter*," *Modern Philology* 80.2 (1982): 145–60, in which he concludes that "by admitting the

double nature of *The Scarlet Letter* . . . with its double mode of allegory and romance . . . we can begin to comprehend the double meanings of the book and to reconcile readings so contradictory that they seem underivable from a single work" (160).

6. Edgar Allan Poe, "Hawthorne's 'Tales,'" in *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. Edmund Clarence Stedman and George Edward Woodberry, 10 vols. (New York and Pittsburgh: Colonial, 1903), 7:25. Henry James, *Hawthorne* (London: Macmillan, 1879), 62–63.

7. Charles Feidelson, Jr., *Symbolism and American Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953). Hugo McPherson, *Hawthorne as Myth-Maker: A Study in Imagination* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969).

8. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Miscellaneous Criticism*, ed. T. M. Raysor (London: Constable, 1936), 30; quoted in Honig, 46. Coleridge writes that the symbol is "always itself part of that, of the whole of which it is representative."

9. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance," in *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 12 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1903), 2:52.

10. In his essay "Hester's Labyrinth: Transcendental Rhetoric in Puritan Boston," in *New Essays on "The Scarlet Letter,"* ed. Michael J. Colacurcio (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), David Van Leer argues persuasively that both the rhetoric of the Puritans and that of the transcendentalists enact "a false objectivization of the ineffable, what we have come to call the reification of the mental: the treatment of minds, souls, and thoughts (vague concepts though they be) as if they were real objects that we understand as we understand tables." The unreliability of the narrator of *The Scarlet Letter*, who mixes the rhetorics of seventeenth-century Calvinism and nineteenth-century romanticism, results from this "idolatry" of the spiritual common to both the Puritan and the transcendentalist, who are "alike commited to a dangerously mechanistic model of the continuity between world and mind, body and soul: The narrator's sun and the Puritans' stars speak the same pseudospiritual materialism." The confusion of dissimilar things is present "for Hawthorne, [in] Emerson's collapse of the thought-act dichotomy into thought-as-action—the hypostatized 'American Scholar' or 'Man Thinking'—[which] is exactly the disastrous corporealization that lies at the heart of the materialization of the spiritual" (84–85). Van Leer's perception that the rhetorical figures reveal metaphysical beliefs is, to my mind, both acute and accurate.

11. Paul de Man, "Semiology and Rhetoric," in *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 16.

12. In his essay "'The Woman's Own Choice': Sex, Metaphor, and the Puritan 'Sources' of *The Scarlet Letter*," in *New Essays on "The Scarlet Letter,"* Michael J. Colacurcio argues persuasively that the interpretive predilections of the Puritans produced a confused and confusing sexual politics, for all of their effort to make the woman's position in marriage the analogue for the individual's relation to ecclesiastic and political authority. "Any symbol system that turns out to be all tenor and no vehicle will not only produce awkward allegories, but may result, more seriously, in an impoverished vocabulary of life. And so it may well have been with the Puritans, those inveterate symbolizers of sex. . . . Possibly their metaphors obscured rather than redeemed their own sexual life" (118). Colacurcio concludes that "evidently the allegory [of submission as salvation] works better for men than for women, whatever John Milton may have thought. And evidently it is easier to be a woman allegorically than really. . . . Hester 'endures' (in Faulkner's sense) to rethink the problem of Hawthorne's 'sources' in a world where even the best made metaphors eventually reveal themselves as such. Even if this means only that new ones must be made, in the space that always separates the soul from any supposable

object of its own desire" (128–29). Colacurcio's sense that metaphors are necessary to human beings' conceptualization of their experience, even if they are inadequate to express the whole of it, accords with the principle of semiotics that confirms the coexistence of any system of metaphor and metonymy. It is only when metaphors are mistaken synecdochically for the whole system that the rich and various "vocabulary of life" is threatened.

13. In the original publication of the tale in the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* (December 1844), the table of contents lists it as "Writings of Aubépine" and the title "Rappaccini's Daughter" appears only in the text itself, dividing the preface from the story. The tale's double nature, or Hawthorne's ambivalence, is evident typographically in the running heads: the left reads "Writings of Aubépine" and the right, "Rappaccini's Daughter." The usual practice of the *Democratic Review* was to have identical running heads.

14. The most important of these editions, because it was the standard college textbook of American literature for many years, is *The American Tradition in Literature*, ed. Sculley Bradley, Richmond Croom Beatty, and E. Hudson Long, rev. ed. (New York: Norton, 1956, 1957, 1961). A popular inexpensive paperback edition, *Hawthorne's Short Stories*, ed. Newton Arvin (New York: Vintage, 1946), also omits the preface.

15. For an annotated listing of the major source studies by someone who recognizes their limitations, see Robert Daly, "Fideism and the Allusive Mode in 'Rappaccini's Daughter,'" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 23 (1973–74): 26–27n.

16. Honig describes the reader's frustration as rising from Hawthorne's failure to extend his metaphors as allegorists should: "Hawthorne's use of analogy does not permit the possibility of extension; it does not budge beyond itself, but remains fixed at the threshold of the story. . . . It does not move the reader except painfully" (127). He assumes that this pain is indicative of artistic failure: "The crude analogy, like the crude personification, does not lend itself to transformation, whereby it becomes credible and active on several levels of meaning. Instead, unable to move on any level, it negates the allegorical function it was created for—to make the fiction imaginatively self-sufficient" (128). Honig's critical criteria—"transformation," credibility, and "self-sufficiency"—may be more appropriate for realistic fiction or romantic poetry than for Hawthorne's allegory, although, of course, he is right that not all of Hawthorne's allegories are equally successful by any standard.

17. My allegory about illusions about allegory recalls, nonetheless, images of processions in Hawthorne's other stories such as *The Celestial Railroad, The Intelligence Office, My Kinsman, Major Molineux*, among others. The most comprehensive study of this motif is found in Arne I. Axelsson, *The Links in the Chain: Isolation and Interdependence in Hawthorne's Fictional Characters*, Studia Anglistica Upsaliensis 17 (Uppsala: Universitat Biblioteket, 1974). Angus Fletcher, in his classic work, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964), makes the point that ritual processions and progressions are one mode of allegorical action; contagion, as in "Rappaccini's Daughter," being the other.

18. De Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," 190.

19. In "The Rhetoric of Temporality," de Man describes Coleridge's conception of the organic symbol: "Its structure is that of the synecdoche, for the symbol is always a part of the totality it represents" (176).

20. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature," in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Robert E. Spiller et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 1:12–13.

21. Emerson, "The Over-Soul," *Complete Works*, 2:267.

22. Emerson, "Nature," *Collected Works*, 1:43.

23. Developing his criticism of "pseudospiritual materialism," Van Leer proposes that "by collapsing everything together, Hawthorne challenges not only our spiritual terminology, but also the fundamental mind-body dichotomy that underwrites it. The Puritans, Hester, Dimmesdale, and the narrator all, in their different ways, pursue essences—the truth behind the appearance, the meaning behind the signs. Yet Hawthorne suggests that this whole notion of fundamentalism—of inmost Mes and lives within life—may be spurious, not true essentialism but only partialism with delusions of grandeur" ("Hester's Labyrinth," 84). Hawthorne's critique of the sin of synecdoche is obviously not unique to "Rappaccini's Daughter," but informs his masterpiece as well.

24. Henry James Senior to Ralph Waldo Emerson, New York, 3 October 1843, in Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, 2 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1935), 1:51.

25. Oliver Evans, "Allegory and Incest in 'Rappaccini's Daughter,'" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 19 (1964): 185-95.

26. M. D. Uroff, "The Doctors in 'Rappaccini's Daughter,'" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 27 (1972): 61-70.

27. Michael J. Colacurcio, "A Better Mode of Evidence—the Transcendental Problem of Faith and Spirit," *Emerson Society Quarterly* 54 (1969): 12-22.

28. Van Leer explores this metaphysical presupposition as it informs *The Scarlet Letter*'s seventeenth- and nineteenth-century theological and (pseudo)scientific sources of theories of mind-body relations (see "Hester's Labyrinth," 75ff.).

29. Daly, 26.

30. Ibid., 22.

31. Hawthorne's source for this story was Thomas Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* as is evident from his *American Notebooks*, ed. Claude M. Simpson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 184.

32. De Man, "Semiology and Rhetoric," 16.

33. Margaret Hallissy, "Hawthorne's Venomous Beatrice," *Studies in Short Fiction* 19.3 (1982): 231-39. Although Hallissy is primarily concerned with exposing the way in which inadequate understandings in the past of how poisons actually worked on the body led to the association of women and their sex with danger to men, she appears to believe in miracles: "Beatrice's pure spirit has transformed the venomous substance into remedy" (238).

34. Uroff, 68-69,

35. Lloyd Spencer Thomas, "'Rappaccini's Daughter': Hawthorne's Distillation of His Sources," *American Transcendental Quarterly* 38 (1978): 183.

36. Ibid., 179.

37. Roman Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language: Metaphor and Metonymy," in *European Literary Theory and Practice*, ed. Vernon Gras (New York: Delta, 1973), 127.

38. Hans Kellner, "The Inflatable Trope as Narrative Theory: Structure or Allegory?" *Diacritics* 11 (1984): 14-28.

39. Jakobson, 127.

40. Hugh Bredin, "Metonymy," *Poetics Today* 5.1 (1984): 52.

41. Ibid., 57. See also Hugh Bredin, "Roman Jakobson on Metaphor and Metonymy," *Philosophy and Literature* 8.1 (1984): 89-103, and Peter Schofer and Donald Rice, "Metaphor, Metonymy, and Synecdoche Revis(it)ed," *Semiotica* 21.1-2 (1977): 121-49, in which they argue that tropes are relative and that "according to the historical period in which a text is read, the cultural background and even the psychology of the reader, some tropes change their nature (the class to which they belong) and consequently their meaning. . . . For the reader of any period, a

certain amount of cultural background is often necessary to identify and/or understand a trope" (144).

42. Van Leer concludes his analysis of *The Scarlet Letter* by placing a similar emphasis on the importance of conventionality—social and linguistic—as the means by which things like the scarlet letter signify: "Meaning is less denied than its nature defined and delimited; and the book serves not to deconstruct all meaning but to question a specific notion of meaning as a special kind of thing. . . . The problem, then, is less meaning than the false belief that meaning itself has a meaning. And what we have been calling the book's 'materialist' approach to language is more simply its sense of language's conventionality. . . . The attempt to escape the customary simply misrepresents how life and society, even meaning and language, work. . . . [T]he rejection of reality is itself not imaginative, but only a disreputable local moment in the history of thought. And time, not truth, is the inevitable condition of existence" ("Hester's Labyrinth," 86–88).

43. De Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," 190.

44. Ibid., 191.

45. De Man, "Semiology and Rhetoric," 16.