Fire, Flutter, Fall, and Scatter: A Structure in the Epiphanies of Hawthorne's Tales

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Lyrical epiphanies are typically the creative center, the imaginative climax, of Nathaniel Hawthorne's tales. But although his imagery has been clarified in various ways, no one has yet attempted to define a pattern that can unite Hawthorne's focal visionary moments and show its implications.[1] Hawthorne's epiphany pattern shows a form and dynamism of experience deeply rooted in this prose poet's psyche.[2] My method of analysis, a systematized, supplemented refashioning of Gaston Bachelard's phenomenology of elemental reverie (to be explained shortly), focuses on the form of the epiphanic experience as given in the texts of the tales. That formal structure, though richly varied, can be summed up as a cluster of four image-motifs: fire, flutter, fall, and scatter. It is a "descendental" moment of passionate, though always ambivalent,[3] fullness yielding to sudden disintegration.

With an inevitability suggesting unconscious origins, this vivid pattern of oneiric force repeatedly overwhelms, first with joy and then with disillusionment, Hawthorne's habitual, conscious concern with subtle moral distinctions. A Hawthorne epiphany, involving a scenario of startling and rapid collapse, brings in the motif cluster with a dreamlike insistence; the image pattern can arise apropos of nearly anything, and it may be seen by anyone, regardless of supposed moral standing. The narrator-persona may experience it, or else a major or minor character or a group or crowd. Mad scientist or guileless merrymaker, devoted craftsman or Faustian criminal—ministering maiden, ambitious youth, royalist or rebel—any perceiver or imaginer may see, undergo, or precipitate the fall and scattering. Yet the "descendentalism" of Hawthorne's epiphanic imagining does not show a merely dismissive response to our imaginative impulse to "transcend." Hawthorne may at first appear simply to rebut Emerson's Transcendentalist efforts to posit a trustworthy ideal or guiding principle (oversoul, spiritual laws, self-reliance): he certainly counters this uplifting tendency with a contrasting, downward-minded dualism. But without the initial creative-destructive or euphoric-ominous energy

Texas Studies in Literature and Language, Vol. 50, No. 1, Spring 2008

of fire, the motive power for an imaginative human life would seem inaccessible for him. The epiphanic descents and dispersals vary in mood and meaning—tragic or tragicomic, madly triumphant, whimsical, absurd, nightmarish, retributive—but all feel as fateful and unexplainable as being in a dream. An epiphany of Hawthornean hallucinatory power resembles a waking dream, arising as by dream logic. The epiphanic motif cluster is a pattern that morphs, as in the dream realm of Morpheus, from character to group to narrator within the body, or corpus, of the tales.[4]

The epiphanic formula I find in Hawthorne has psychoanalytic implications. It is very like the Lacanian "persistence of the letter," especially as developed by Lacan's disciple and systematizer Serge Lemaire. The chain or cluster of linked images in a dream, Freud had noted, gains visionary power from the intense emotional investment in its motivating, animating thought: "the *psychical* intensity of the elements in the dream-thoughts has been replaced by the *sensory* intensity of the elements in the content of the actual dream."[5] Looking in one of Freud's own dreams for "crossroad words" indicating an intense emotional juncture, Lemaire finds "*botanical, monograph, yellow,* and finally the series *pick, rip, tear.*" Generalizing further on the basis of more data, Lemaire finds a recurrent identity-formula: "the desire to pluck (*pflücken*), to tear away (*ent-reissen*), to reveal (*enthüllen*)," bespeaking a desire "*for a movement that goes beyond, a desire almost freed from the fascination of the object,*" shown by "hundreds of examples in Freud's work" of the "wish to transgress, in the literal sense of going beyond."[6] Analogously, in the dreams of his client Philippe, Lemaire finds another recurrent personal chain of signifiers that provides an analytical key or identity-formula for this imaginer: "Lili - thirst - beach - trace - skin - foot - horn." In Lemaire's view "the description of these singularities outlines something like the proper essence of each individual in his or her *most intimate self*"[7] (emphasis added).

The methodology of another psychoanalyst, Norman N. Holland, helpfully converges with that of Lemaire. Using Robert Waelder's "principle of multiple function" and Heinz Lichtenstein's "identity theme" concept, Holland notes, for instance, that the pioneering imagist H. D. "became the poet of hard, cold classicism," of "bristly pine trees and hedgehogs," in a "cosmic strategy" contrasting these life forms with imagery of "floods crashing and breaking" and "fantasies of a fiery world destruction."[8] We may formulate H. D.'s identity theme in crisp Lemairean fashion: hedgehog - bristle - pine - flood - fire.

In depth psychology, imaginings arise from the transformed remembrance of pleasures submerged into the unconscious, but Lemaire stresses in addition the "reciprocal relation of *jouissance,*" or nostalgically idealized preconceptual oneness-feeling, and "the letter," or metonymic chain of intense replacement-images. Repressed pleasure may engender the "letter" or dream image-cluster, but this imagery in turn leads back to *jouissance* "in

a movement of transgression of the literal articulation."[9] In other words, the dream image, or in my own literarily based research the epiphanic pattern, in part conceals the submerged forces of balked desire but through its ungovernable intensity also leads dramatically back to them. In this sense, too, Hawthorne's relentless repetition-plus-elaboration of his fire-flutter-fall-scatter is the paradoxical presentation of a fall that refuses to stay fallen: fiery glow and aery tremor, in each epiphany, make the metonymic imagination rejoice and thus may help justify emotionally to Hawthorne the less pleasant half of the dream image cluster, thereby stimulating ever-new elaborations of the pattern.

Lemaire finds it imperative to "avoid" any "closed explanation"[10] of dream-formulas such as he finds for Freud and for Philippe, and the same caution may be prudently applied to Hawthorne's epiphany pattern. Hawthorne's descendental motif cluster may well point to the feared/desired loss of the adoration he enjoyed among mother and sisters in a female household. But for my purpose, detailed biographical correlative data are not essential. Yet a couple of preliminary orienting exhibits, with strong autobiographical links, dramatize the Hawthornean dream logic underlying the pattern's recurrence.

"The Devil in Manuscript" points to autobiographical dream content as it shows us the narrator's visit to his alter ego or fantasized double, a writer with the flatteringly Shakespearean sobriquet of "Oberon."[11] Immediately we behold the two of them "seated by a great blazing fire, which looked so comfortable and delicious that I felt inclined to lie down and roll among the hot coals" (11: 170).[12] Yet the Hawthornean Oberon, troubled by having embodied in his literary work "the character of a fiend, as represented in our traditions and the written records of witchcraft," has resolved to "burn the manuscripts, and commit the fiend to his retribution in the flames" (11: 171). Fire is as infernal and retributive as it is comfortable and delicious. So is literature, perhaps: seventeen rejections of his manuscript have pushed Oberon toward disgust with his paper progeny. Writing even his best work has been but a "fever fit," yet his "ideas were like precious stones under the earth," a subterrene glow, and often "a delicious stream of thought would gush out upon the page at once," a sexually pleasant release of heat, one may feel—though immediately he cools it with an analogy of "water" (11: 174). Waking reality seems to mock the "dream" of creation, yet when Oberon prepares to toss the documents into a flame blazing "like Nebuchadnezzar's fire" (11: 175), we recall from the Book of Daniel a site of miracles, not mere destruction. As the fire gathers force, ambivalences accumulate:

> "They blaze," said he, *"as if I had steeped them in the intensest spirit of genius.* There I see my lovers clasped in each other's arms. *How pure the flame that bursts from their glowing hearts!* And yonder the features

> of a villain, writhing in the fire that shall torment him to eternity. My holy men, my pious and angelic women, stand like martyrs amid the flames, their mild eyes lifted heavenward. Ring out the bells! A city is on fire. See!—destruction roars through my dark forests, while the lakes boil up in steaming billows, and the mountains are volcanoes, and the sky kindles with a lurid brightness! All elements are but one pervading flame! Ha! The fiend!" (11: 176; emphases added)

The narrator had wanted to roll around in just such an elemental bliss. Billows, volcanoes, and heavens antiphonally proclaim an elemental sublimity. The italicized phrases equate it to poetic genius and emotional purity. Fire is the universal goodness and badness, sublime-demonic, the all-powerful amoral energy. Note that the final burning pages "threw forth a broad sheet of fire, which flickered as with laughter, making the whole room dance in its brightness" (11: 176). In addition to the ambivalent flame, we have been shown first gems, then lovers' hearts, and now laughter—three more Hawthornean epiphanic trademarks, as we shall see, not so pervasive as fire, yet repeatedly linked to it.

Fire leads to flutter, fall, and scatter. We observe "the whole mass" of incinerated manuscript "fluttering to and fro," offering the tremor theme; then the motif of a fall in the "dash of water from engines" as firefighters come to combat the flames that soon engulf the city; and finally the scatter, with a "crash of furniture thrown upon the pavement" (11: 177–78). The sequence is descendental, yet the initial fire is not exclusively or univocally lofty or laudable. The entire epiphany is ambivalent, a fall from a most equivocal height.

The import of the epiphany is glossed by Oberon as poet-preacher:

> At once, the truth flashed upon my friend. His frenzy took the hue of joy, and, with a wild gesture of exultation, he leaped almost to the ceiling of the chamber.
>
> "My tales!" cried Oberon. "The chimney! The roof! The Fiend has gone forth by night, and startled thousands in fear and wonder from their beds! Here I stand—a triumphant author! Huzza! Huzza! My brain has set the town on fire! Huzza!" (11: 178)

Oberon/Hawthorne is himself the epiphanist, the fiery visionary "Fiend"/"friend," setting the town, indeed, the world, aflame. "Here I stand" ("Hier stehe ich"), says the Luther-quoting literary heresiarch. He may be mad, or he may be the suddenly appearing "son of God" (Dan. 3: 25), surviving the Babylonian monarch's imposed purgation, along with the three mortals Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.[13] Fire is a daimon; it is damnation and exultation. Frenzy is joy. Destruction is creation. Epiphanies are ambivalent.

The ambivalence recurs in one of Hawthorne's own dreams, recounted in a letter of 16 May 1839 addressed to Sophia Peabody as "Mine own self" (15: 316):

> I dreamed that I had been sleeping a whole year in the open air; and that while I slept, the grass grew around me. It seemed, in my dream, that the very bed-clothes which actually covered me were spread beneath me, and when I awoke (in my dream), I snatched them up, and the earth under them looked black, as if it had been burnt—one square place, exactly the size of the bed-clothes. Yet there was grass and herbage scattered over this burnt space, looking as fresh, and bright, and dewy, as if the summer rain and the summer sun had been cherishing them all the time. Interpret this for me, my Dove—but do not draw any sombre omens from it. What is signified by my nap of a whole year? (it made me grieve that I had lost so much of eternity)—and what was the fire that blasted the spot of earth which I occupied, while the grass flourished all around—and what comfort am I to draw from the fresh herbage amid the burnt space? But it is a silly dream, and you cannot expound any sense out of it. (15: 317–18)

Again we see the four recurrent image-themes. Note the epiphanic *fire*, possibly year-long, and varied in the summer sun that seems to have been cherishing the grass and herbage "all the time" during the dream; the *flutter*-motif gently evoked by the use of "Dove" as a name for Sophia; the *fall*-theme indicated by the fire's life-threatening power to burn through the bedclothes; and the multiple sprinkling of grass, herbage, and implicit dew (for the scattered plants are "dewy"), preluded by the summer rain—two variants of the *scatter*-image. There is no set chronology of themes, however; the scattering, for example, does not follow the fire. We need to speak of a recurring theme cluster, by no means an invariable time sequence.

But apart from the indirectly introduced summer sun, one may ask whether the alarming fire has shown any positive value here: is it ambivalent as we might expect, or merely negative? Has it done anything but burn in a life-menacing way? Robert Milder's comment suggests a strongly pleasurable component to its inflaming activity, namely masturbation:

> A connoisseur of dreams, Hawthorne feigns puzzlement about this one and asks Sophia its meaning; but lest she pick up the hint of voluntary or involuntary sexual pollution—a prospect more disturbing, perhaps, for what it might imply about her innocence than for what it would disclose about his guilt—Hawthorne peremptorily waives the subject—"but it is a silly dream, and you cannot expound any sense out of it."[14]

Milder's interpretation also illustrates the expected pleasure-pain ambivalence of Hawthornean epiphanic fire, here an ardor that is both a heightened imaginative excitation and the prelude to the already implicit "fall" of putative guilt.

A dream-rooted motif pattern which, as I hope to show, can give an often hallucinatory intensity to a striking abundance of short story epiphanies must be regarded as rooted in Hawthorne's "most intimate self" (Lemaire's phrase), more intimate than his copious and complex moral pronouncements, ranging from the charmingly casual to the serious or somber. In his landmark essay, "Our Hawthorne," Lionel Trilling contrasted Henry James's portrayal of Hawthorne as playing with moral notions in a spirit of graceful artistic freedom to what Trilling considered the more modern view of Hawthorne as darkly Kafkaesque, an evoker of subliminal chthonic depths where no morality reigns. Trilling finds some truth in both of these differing appraisals. But I would also underline a similarity implicit in Trilling's description of his "James" and "Kafka" Hawthornes: they share an indifference to moral questions considered for their own sake.[15] My study will suggest that the yielding of discursive moral allegory to fateful oneiric epiphany is a large-scale phenomenon: only by a wide-ranging portrayal of Hawthorne's epiphanic achievement can one sense how pervasively the obsessional visionary pattern appears to sweep aside, to overwhelm, his delicately balanced moralizing (often equivocal, but sometimes more sharply defined: we are to sympathize with birthmarked Georgiana, to deplore Ethan Brand). My exhibits will show that these oneiric epiphanies, with their independently vivid, unconsciously rooted power, are in themselves wholly amoral, something that fatefully happens alike to the just and the unjust, the thoughtful and the heedless, or simply to the chance observer. And if it can be suggested, through a sufficiently broad and evocative survey, that Hawthorne in his best tales is—perhaps primarily—an epiphanist of intense power, we may well need to shift our sense of his most "intimate" poetic priorities.

The method of analysis to be used here is an amplified and systematized remaking of Gaston Bachelard's phenomenology of elemental reverie, as worked out in my *Patterns of Epiphany* (1997) and subsequent studies.[16] Bachelard's "reveries" are, in this view, equatable to anglophone critics' "epiphanies," and his emphasis on elements (earth, water, air, and fire) in such revelatory moments is equally central to my approach here. My method, like Bachelard's, is phenomenological literary criticism, focused on structures of experience perceived by the reader of the literary work. But unlike Bachelard, whose analyses tend to characterize groups of writers in an attempt to establish types of shared responses to a given natural element, I focus always on the individual author, seeking to establish features that will distinguish his or her recurrent epiphany pattern

from that of any other writer. This is important because one can view the distinctive epiphany pattern of an author as that person's unique and irreplaceable contribution to the legacy of human epiphanic perception.

I define an epiphany from two standpoints: subjective and objective. Considered subjectively, it is a literarily represented moment that the reader feels to be emotionally intense, mysterious (not rationally accountable), and expansive (meaning more than such a brief moment would seem to warrant). Such an epiphany may be described by a character directly or in free indirect discourse, or by a lyric poet or dramatist in any sort of literarily constructed voice. I have suggested that epiphany patterns have unconscious roots, but as presented in literary works they are, in varying degrees, processed consciously by the writer, and what I analyze is the epiphany as perceived by the attentive reader of the text. Part of the origin of the writerly experience perceived by the reader may be unconscious and thus powerfully dreamlike, but conscious processing alters and recrafts the material in all kinds of secondary elaborations and evolving variants—with suppressions and amplifications, too. We never get dream content "raw." Conscious or semiconscious attitudes reshape the presentation of epiphanic materials in an endless variety of moods—satiric, sardonic, parodistic, elegiac, nostalgic, tragicomic.

Objective formal components to be sought in epiphanies include elements (earth, water, air, and fire), patterns of motion (irrespective of what moves), shapes (often semigeometric), and colors or linked lighting effects. (Some epiphanists also value recurrent types of sound or silence, or aromas or odorlessness.) The components are first analyzed in a "paradigm epiphany" of exceptional vividness, completeness, and clarity; variants can then be studied in increasingly incomplete or fragmentary forms. The procedure works by analogy with the testing of a scientific hypothesis. All the objectively perceivable types of components listed above are things to look for; they may or may not be present or important in a given writer's visionary *oeuvre* or a given epiphany. The locating of a "paradigm" epiphany for a writer is an especially valuable methodological step, for if we can find an epiphany that clearly manifests the maximum richness of recurrent features, we can then more easily spot less complete variants of the pattern.

In Hawthorne's epiphanies, intimately interrelated motion patterns are central to the structure of fire, flutter, fall, and scatter. Though there is no "required" temporal ordering, the first two components mentioned are somewhat likelier to come early than the last two. We see many forms of fire-related light: glowing, flush, blazing, sparkling, flashing, glittering, shining, radiance. Closely bound up with this, simultaneous or quickly following it, is a fitfulness, fluttering, flitting, quivering, tremor or trembling, shivering, tottering, shuddering. The important component of a fall

leads to, or itself involves, a dispersal, sprinkling, scattering, shattering, tattering, fragmenting, crumbling, melting, or corrosion into, or sweeping away of, a multitude of dead or sundered objects. Because Hawthornean descendental motion frequently involves a transformation through two or more elements, they are intimately bound up with the motion. The upper glow is often fiery, the fluttering aery, and the fall and scattering windy, watery, or earthy, while the objects scattered may be related to water or earth. But these rough correlations are complicated when we look at recurrent semigeometric epiphany-objects of several kinds.

The high object that glows or flashes may be a fire:[17] burning tree, torch, bonfire. Or it may be rounded: face, flower, heart.[18] A color related to hearts, flowers, flushed faces, and flames is red, along with its compounds: pink, purple, orange. (Golden, silver, and white light relate to sun, moon, and stars.) The flashing or redly glowing object may be angular or squarish: flaming pyramid, flag or banner, handkerchief, or a rocky elevation with burning trees at its four corners. Fiery gems and jewels are prominent. An aery thing that flutters may be a feather or veil, or the spirit of May. Fire, too, trembles or quivers in fitful flickerings. Flashing may combine with fluttering (in a butterfly). A human body may shudder; body parts and expressions may quiver or tremble—a heart or a breath; an eyelid or a smile. A mountain may quake before an avalanche; an insect flits, with shivering wings.

As central as the rounded flower or heart is the very different motif of a long straight line, vertical or horizontal. Vertical lines appear in tree, pole, staff, scarecrow, ship's prow image, effigy, broomstick. Horizontal lines are found in branch, banner, ribbon, raised staff, sword, lance. A literal blazing fire is often linked to a long straight line, as with a torch or burning tree, while rounded shapes, as of hearts or flowers or faces, will show a less literally fiery glow or a more diffuse refulgence. Multiple objects scattered or sprinkled in the great descent are often small: tears, drops of water or wine; particles of wood, marble, calcium, or lime; straw, dust, ashes, cinders, insects, butterfly parts, showering sparks, whiffs of pox; even fragments of a "broken" laugh. Larger dispersed objects are tattered garments, rocks, snowdrifts and rubble, trees and their shadows, human bodies. Another prominent epiphanic shape is that of the recurring smile, a mild upward curve of the lip-line contrasting to all the downward motions. Sometimes the smile is varied as laughter (recall "The Devil in Manuscript"). An impulse to smiling self-parody often mitigates potential tragedy in Hawthornean epiphanic presentations.

One can see that possible psychoanalytic implications of the pattern, though all focusing on a descendental demotion, can easily accommodate both Freudian and Lacanian scenarios. A vision that shows the loss or fall of a fire that is so often linked to flowers, faces, and the radiant sun can in

part convey a nostalgically represented passionate-blissful union, now lost, with the Lacanian/Lemairean maternal Imaginary. But the abundance of phallic rods, trees, branches, and staves that trigger or accompany or presage a fire-fall can be read also in Freudian terms. In both the Freudian and Lacanian systems, the initial state of bliss is highly ambivalent, however idealized in nostalgia. Freudian pre-oedipal oceanic feeling or primal narcissism and Lacanian (Freud-derived) unity of (pre-)self and (pre-)mother in the blissful Imaginary are highly equivocal nirvanas, preventing focused growth—states where eros is profoundly compromised by thanatos. As in Hawthorne, a fall from such a condition is complex and multivalued.

After examining the paradigm epiphany in "The May-Pole of Merry Mount," I survey in Part I some relatively complete variants of it, then in Part II a variety of more fragmentary versions. Chronology is not crucial, for Hawthorne's epiphany pattern pervades his work.[19] So the sequence of presentation will be determined by close links in the details of imagery. Emphasis throughout the study will be placed on Hawthorne's preoccupation with the epiphanic descent and scattering of already ambivalent fiery intensities, whatever may be the real or fancied moral merits of the perceiver.

I

The "banner-staff" epiphany in "The May-Pole of Merry Mount" is the best orienting paradigm for Hawthorne's epiphanic achievement. Here we have not only the four most notable motion-centered components but also the fully developed supplementary features of hearts, flowers, faces, ribbons, and the glorious maypole itself. The descendental epiphany is more than a personal loss, it is a cultural one; in fact, nature herself appears darkened by the substitution of puritan Endicott's whipping post for the colorfully glowing maypole, so that by story's end we no longer view the natural brightness of "May, or her mirthful spirit" as she had fluttered or "flitted, with a dreamlike smile" (9: 54)—the epiphanic tremor and the epiphanic smile. The "venerated emblem" or maypole is a "pine tree" from whose top "streamed a silken banner, colored like the rainbow," and decorated all over with "ribbons" and with the "flowery splendor" of a "Golden Age" (9: 55). Abundant are the heart- and sun-colors of red, purple, and gold: the May queen and her betrothed, "the two airiest forms" ever found in a solider place than a "purple and golden cloud"—he with a "gilded staff," both of them with bright "roses" that "glowed" in their hair—felt the beginning of a descendental epiphany when "[n]o sooner had their hearts glowed with real passion" than "down came a little shower of withering rose leaves from the May-Pole" (9: 56–58). The glowing banner-staff is linked to flames and flowers—to "bonfires" and "garlands" thrown "into the flame" on St. John's Eve, to summer "roses of the deepest blush," to the "red and yellow

gorgeousness" of autumn, to the "cold sunshine" of winter (9: 60). Yet all this multifarious heart-fire, rosy redness, solar and floral radiance must fall and be dispersed as Endicott assaults the maypole with his paternal sword:

> It groaned with a dismal sound; it showered leaves and rose-buds upon the remorseless enthusiast, and finally, with all its green boughs, and ribbons, and flowers, symbolic of departed pleasures, down fell the banner-staff of Merry Mount. As it sank, tradition says, the evening sky grew darker, and the woods threw forth a more sombre shadow. (9: 63)

As the "glow" of the youthful pair is "chastened" while the maypole falls and the sun of the revelry sets, Endicott, who "smile[s]" (a faint echo of the epiphany-theme, for admittedly he "almost sighed"), decrees that the "youth's hair be cut" (9: 66), a final castratory scattering (as if maypole severing weren't enough) to serve as coda to the epiphanic dispersal of killed-off joys. Yet Hawthorne will not let us rest with the simple notion of a fall from Eden, or a banishment from the Tree of Life. Instead, he shadows the maypole with ambivalence. The Lord and Lady of the May were actually being married by the festival's English priest, who by the "riot of his rolling eye, and the pagan decorations of his holy garb," seemed "the wildest monster there, and the very Comus" of the "crew" of revelers in animal disguises—"some already transformed to brutes, some midway between man and beast, and the others rioting in the flow of tipsey jollity that foreran the change" (9: 56–57). If the Golden Age banner-staff implies polymorphous (or theriomorphic) perversity, it is in some sense fated to be outgrown.[20]

"Rappaccini's Daughter," a tale of the fire-fall epiphany of innocent Beatrice,[21] daughter of a crazed, blamable experimenter, is comparably, baroquely rich in Hawthornean epiphanic motifs. The fiery flower theme comes back from "May-Pole," and a fatal descent of the poisonous vapors the mad scientist has infused into that flower-source varies the epiphany theme of scattered flame. Right at the start, the "ruin" of a "wofully shattered" marble fountain in Beatrice Rappaccini's garden sounds the theme of fall and scattering. Her suitor Baglioni, hearing her voice, thinks of "deep hues of purple or crimson" (10: 94–97), for he sees the woman as herself a blood-hued heart-flower, "the human sister of those vegetable ones"; "[f]lower and maiden" are "fraught with some strange peril in either shape" (10: 97–98). Baglioni may be charged with arbitrarily linking Beatrice to the demonism that a clearer moral thinker would ascribe to her father alone, but his epiphanic rhetoric lends a pervasively ominous mood to his perceptions. The Gothic atmosphere accents the Hawthornean ambivalence of enchanting-portentous fires and flowers.[22]

As Baglioni sees her "glistening" ringlets "intermingled" with the "gemlike flowers" of a shrub, and as Beatrice places a gem-bloom "beside" her "heart," beautifully building up the epiphanic theme cluster of gem-glow-heart-flower, the crucial descent-to-a-sprinkling occurs in three stages. First, a "small orange-colored" reptile passes by, and "a drop or two of moisture from the broken stem of the flower descend[s] upon the lizard's head"; "contorted," the creature dies (10: 102–03). Next, as the epiphany gathers force and the fluttering or tremor-theme is added, we behold the death of a "beautiful insect" which "lingered in the air" and "fluttered about her head" until "its bright wings shivered" (10: 103). As the epiphany culminates, the final stage of fluttering-and-scattering occurs: a "swarm of insects," seen "flitting" in the "fatal" garden, "circled round Giovanni's head": he "sent forth a breath among them, and *smiled bitterly* at Beatrice as at least a score of the insects fell dead upon the ground" (10: 125; emphasis added). Beatrice now knows the full capacity of her "father's fatal science" (10: 128) to transmit from purple-red, heart-hued gem-flowers to humans the power to scatter death. Remarkably, the recurrent Hawthornean epiphanic smile can still appear on her crazed father's face as the insects die. Sensual hues and objects of passionate beauty have diffused multiple deaths. Beatrice, too, dies, for her suitor's medicinal antidote is fatal to one contaminated with its antibody ("as poison had been life, so the powerful antidote was death" [10: 127–28]). The victim, not the fanatical "scientist" perpetrator, dies in this amoral scenario.

In the highly ambivalent epiphany of "The Birth-Mark," a mad scientist tale like "Rappaccini's Daughter," guileless Georgiana's handlike facial mark is a glowing, flower-hued heart-fire resulting in horrible falls and fragmentations. Like Beatrice, Georgiana will suffer death by a mad male's hubristic science, a favorite Hawthornean plot-scheme for generating amoral epiphanies of retribution sadly visited upon victims. The mark is a "token of the magic endowments" that gave Georgiana "sway over all hearts," and whenever she blushed the mark gradually "vanished amid the triumphant rush of blood that bathed the whole cheek with its brilliant glow" (10: 37–38). But to her crazed husband's eyes, rather than glowing the ruddy radiance seemed "flickering" by the wood-fire; in a still more dreadful variant of the epiphanic fluttering or shivering motif, he even looks at the brilliant blood-glow with a "convulsive shudder" (10: 39, 44). Aylmer's curative treatment of his wife's flaw makes her fatal touch, "as by the agency of fire," disintegrate a flower with a "blight" that turns it "coal-black." Next he takes her "portrait" by "rays of light striking upon a polished plate of metal"; horrified to see a hand replace the cheek in the picture, Aylmer "snatched the metallic plate and threw it into a jar of corrosive acid" (10: 45), disintegrating her shining face as he had made her touch corrode flowers. Corrosive disintegration is an exceptionally malign

and horrid form of Hawthornean fragmenting and dispersal. In the epiphanic climax of elixir drinking, as Georgiana's senses are "closing over" her "spirit" like "leaves around the heart of a rose at sunset" (dazzling but falling heart-flower-fire!), Aylmer watches the glow change to a threefold flutter: "a slight irregularity of breath, a quiver of the eyelid, a hardly perceptible tremor through the frame" (10: 54). A "faint smile flit[s] over her lips" as she dies, and the "disastrous brilliancy" of the birthmark's "blaze" (10: 55) perishes as Aylmer's helper laughs. The epiphanic smile is ironic, the epiphanic laugh demonic. Georgiana's special beauty was her disfiguration; it was as fiery as the crazed cure. Ambivalence was there from the beginning, and it is intensified in the tragic end.

The protagonist in "The Artist of the Beautiful" is not so Gothically possessed as Aylmer, yet his idealized firebright epiphany embodies the source of its own destruction, his self-centered idealism. The mechanical butterfly created by a rather childlike, self-absorbed seeker of the Ideal, a fluttering, incandescent apparition to be scattered to sparkling fragments in the central epiphany, begins as a gemlike flame: "firelight glimmered around this wonder—the candles gleamed upon it, but it glistened apparently by its own radiance, and illuminated" the hand where it rested "with a white gleam like that of precious stones" (10: 470). In the climax, the glowing gemlike fire-creature trembles before its doom-descent:

> With a wavering movement, and emitting a tremulous radiance, the butterfly struggled, as it were, towards the infant [grandson of the artist], and was about to alight upon his finger; but, while it still hovered in the air, the little child of strength . . . made a snatch at the marvellous insect and compressed it in his hand. [As his wife screamed and his father-in-law laughed, the] blacksmith, by main force, unclosed the infant's hand, and found within the palm a small heap of glittering fragments,[23] whence the mystery of beauty had fled forever. (10: 475)

Fire, fluttering, descent, and fragmentation: Hawthorne's descendentalism could not be more powerfully, pithily expressed. But no stern morality is enforced: the so sadly deprived idealistic artist is narcissistic but not felt to be evil.[24] Rather, there was always an ambivalence at the core of the artist's epiphanic project; the child's instinctive violence that it called forth arose from the same heedless narcissism that first animated the artist to make it.

The moral indifference of the all-pervading Hawthornean descendentalism becomes particularly clear when we juxtapose "The Artist of the Beautiful" to "Ethan Brand": the artist of the beautiful sought an ethereal ideal, while Brand is a would-be Faustian criminal, but the Hawthornean epiphanic fall and dispersal comes equally to seekers of supernal beauty

and of ultimate evil. The fragmenting and scattering of Brand's satanically exalted self-image are adumbrated in the first paragraph as Bartram the lime-burner's son plays with "scattered fragments of marble" at the kiln (11: 83). The crazed Brand, whose surname means a burning stick, embodies the fire-heart-flower theme: "regardless of the fierce glare that reddened upon his face," he tells of having looked "into many a human heart that was seven times hotter with sinful passion than yonder furnace is with fire," but even that offense paled beside what "grew within" his "own breast"—the "bright and gorgeous flower" of the "Unpardonable Sin" he had sought and found (11: 89–90, 99). Epiphanic tremors next begin as the burning "fragments" of marble send up "spouts of blue flame" that "quivered aloft and danced madly" and an airlike hot "breath" arises; as the "wild and ghastly light" plays over his face, he jumps "into the gulf" (11: 99–100). Bartram "lift[s]" his pole—an epiphanic emblem recalling the fallen eponymous maypole—and as he lets it "fall upon" the "snow-white" skeleton with its marmoreally white heart, "the relics of Ethan Brand" are "crumbled into fragments" (11: 102). As the pole falls, the once fiery heart-flower is fragmented, its parts dispersed.[25]

As in "Artist of the Beautiful," the mystery of beauty is again fatally and amorally scattered upon the innocent[26] in "Lady Eleanore's Mantle." The Lady's admirer, the crazed Jervase Helwyse, "dreamed" that the lady's own "beauty was not dimmed, but brightened into superhuman splendor" precisely when a smallpox "contagion had lurked in that gorgeous mantle" which "threw so strange a grace around her" (9: 286, 284), introducing a striking example of Hawthornean ambivalence. Jervase, not hell-wise enough, failed to note the significance of an epiphanic heart-glow, tremor, smile, and fall as the Lady, with her "high" spirit and feverish ruddy "flush," seemed "on the point of sinking to the ground," though a tremulous "nervous shudder" might "arouse her energies," bringing a "bright" sarcasm or puzzling "smile" (9: 278–9). Realizing finally that it was not merely grace but "pestilential influence" that the lady had "scattered round about her" (9: 286), Jervase snatches her mantle and wraps her effigy in it for a "torch light" procession past plague-houses with bloody banners:

> the mob burned the effigy, and a strong wind came and swept away the ashes. It was said that, from that very hour, the pestilence abated, as if its sway had some mysterious connection, from the first plague stroke to the last, with Lady Eleanore's Mantle. (9: 288)

As the Lady, with hectic flush, had scattered plague-germs from her mantle, now her burning mantled effigy disintegrates into ashes to be "swept away." Twice, we view bright, heated beauty falling, scattered. The first

time, it caused a plague; the second time, it swept the plague away. The same thing that is responsible for blight and death offers cure and abatement. Equivocity resides, from the start, within the fire that is to fall.

The effigy-motif from "Lady Eleanor's Mantle" makes an amoral appearance to doom an innocent in the vivid epiphany of the fairy tale called "Feathertop." This time it is "as lifelike a scarecrow as ever was seen," in whose artificial body the "most important item" is an epiphanic pole, not a maypole this time but Mother Rigby's "broomstick" (10: 223–24). Linked to blood, heart, and fire is the creature's "plum-colored coat" with its "round hole" where possibly "the hot heart of some former wearer had scorched it through and through" (10: 225). Connected to aery fluttering are silk stockings "as unsubstantial as a dream" and "the longest tail-feather of a rooster" decorating the hat-top; the scarecrow even manages the requisite epiphanic "grin" (10: 225–26). Air turns more aery, fire more intensely flaming as the witch sends Feathertop out to a party at the Gookins': he gets the breath of "life" from smoking the "vapor" of her "pipe"; as he takes her "staff" it becomes a bright "gold-headed cane"; and the "star on Feathertop's breast," now "all a-blaze," has "scintillated actual flames" (10: 234–41). But however "unutterable" the "splendor" with which his "star, his embroidery, his buckles, glowed," as soon as the attractive hostess Polly Gookin sees him in a mirror she collapses "insensible" (10: 243–44).

The theme of descent-and-scattering reaches a climax when the traumatized Feathertop, so shocked by her reaction that he vows to "exist no longer," sinks in turn "upon the floor, a medley of straw and tattered garments," while the narrator moralizes that the pained lover may have scattered his resources too readily: why are "thousands of coxcombs" who are "made up of just such a jumble of worn-out, forgotten, and good-for-nothing trash, as he was" (10: 245), saved from descent and dispersal? But Feathertop, Mother Rigby explains, had "too much heart" to compete in a "heartless world" (10: 246). Gleaming creatures with too much heart must fall into an epiphany of fragments, reduced to a jumble of tatters and trash.[27] Though fanciful and half-jocular, the epiphany is not for children; the misery of "May-Pole" has, so to speak, infected it. The resulting ambivalence is felt as uncomfortable; it is a "problem" fairy tale.

The descent-and-dispersal epiphany that culminates "The Great Carbuncle" suggests the extreme fragility of all ideals, moral and immoral, true and false. The vision is artfully prepared by earlier epiphanic intimations of scatterings downward from the presence of the great, flaming, legendarily light- and heat-generating gem. A carbuncle is a mythic stone with the fabulous property of internal self-generated combustion. It is no more a rock than a fire.[28] As seekers approach the Carbuncle's abode, upthrusting "hills throw off their shaggy mantle of forest trees" (9: 150).

In another epiphanic dispersal-vista, pilgrims glimpse the gem "gleaming like a meteor, so that the shadows of the trees fell backward from it" (9: 152). This fire-source, though it "almost matched the sun," is so famously inaccessible that each seeker has "smiled scornfully" (9: 153) at the madness of the others' hopes to attain it, a nicely satiric Hawthornean treatment of the epiphanic smile theme. But all the questers' "thoughts now shrank affrighted"—dispersed, thrust back—from the inhospitable region of "*desolate sunshine* that rose immeasurably above them" (9: 159; emphasis added). For the dawning carbuncular "radiance," containing "brilliant particles" now "*interfused with the gloom*," produces on the climbers the "effect of a new creation" (9: 161; emphasis added). A divine *fiat lux*? Rather, it is a creation-and-destruction, a brightness blended with desolation and gloom, a Gothically ambivalent incandescence.

Most of the allegorical seekers fail to measure up to the ominous glory; the Cynic, for example, in an epiphanic fire-fall, later "perished in the great fire of London," into which he "had thrust himself" while trying to catch "one feeble ray from the blaze that was kindling earth and heaven" (9: 165). But when Matthew and his bride Hannah proved "so simply wise as to reject a jewel which would have dimmed all earthly things, its splendor waned": "the gem was loosened from the forehead of the cliff, and fell into the enchanted lake," whence a "wondrous light," dispersed and weakened now (its formerly "brilliant particles" scattered in the water), gleams visibly enough to make a bemused pilgrim of the narrator (9: 165). Hawthorne is always a believer in the fallen gem, in the sense that he perceives it in ever-varying forms. And its fallenness is always potential in the riddling desolate grandeur of its risen state.

A comparable crash and sundering come in the cataclysmic avalanche epiphany of "The Ambitious Guest," a culminating catastrophe that defies all attempts to draw a "moral," for it dooms innocent and "guilty" alike (if young pride can be reckoned a capital crime). The episode has a falsely promising beginning. "Up the chimney roared the fire" in the hospitable hut "and brightened the room with its broad blaze," while "a prophetic sympathy impelled" the tale's protagonist, a "refined and educated youth," to "pour out his heart before the simple mountaineers" (9: 324, 327). This heart-and-fire motif quickly grows insistent. In his "high" ambition, the guest feels a "glory" will "beam on all his path-way" so that posterity can "trace the *brightness* of his footsteps, *brightening* as meaner glories faded"; surely he will leave "a glorious memory in the universal *heart* of man" (9: 327–29; emphases added). But the shared good cheer seems threatened by the outdoor sounds of travelers, who persist in "singing and laughing," though "their music and mirth" come back "drearily from the *heart* of the mountain" (9: 330; emphasis added). Even as the family kept stoking the fire "till the dry leaves crackled and flame arose" so that "light hovered

about them fondly, and caressed them all," suddenly the "house, and all within it, trembled," an epiphany-motif that quickly attains apocalyptic urgency: "the foundations of the earth seemed to be shaken, as if this awful sound were the peal of the last trump" (9: 331–32). In their panicked flight, hosts *and* guest find they have "quitted their security, and fled right into the pathway of destruction" (9: 331–33). "Their bodies were never found" (9: 333). Bright, heart-fanning Fame is an avalanche-daemon, scattering, along with its drifts and rubble, "guilty" and guiltless with equal abandon.[29]

Two impressively elaborated epiphanic exhibits—"The Celestial Rail-Road" and "Earth's Holocaust"—appear in even more willfully allegorical settings, yet their oneiric vividness continues to overpower moral categories with visionary-fatelike force. The dream that culminates "The Celestial Rail-Road" shows a train ride in which Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* has been satirically envisioned as a devilish regress (to Hell or "Tophet," not to Heaven). In a witty attempt to edify the Age of the Steam Locomotive, the narrator-pilgrim's alarmed question, "Don't you go over to the Celestial City?" is answered in the negative with a superbly Hawthornean "queer smile":

> And then did my excellent friend, Mr. Smooth-it-away, laugh outright; . . . a *smoke-wreath* issued from his mouth and nostrils, while a *twinkle of lurid flame* darted out of either eye, proving indubitably that his *heart* was *all of a red blaze.* The impudent Fiend! To deny the existence of Tophet, when he felt its *fiery tortures* raging *within his breast*! I rushed to the side of the boat, intending to *fling myself on shore.* But the wheels, as they began their revolutions, *threw a dash of spray* over me, so cold—*so deadly cold,* with the chill that will never leave those waters, until Death be *drowned in his own river*—that, with a *shiver* and a *heart-quake,* I awoke. Thank Heaven, it was a Dream! (10: 206; emphases added)

Wit flees; flaming Apocalypse appears. The shiver and heart-quake, alarming tremors, are suitable reactions to an epiphanic scatter of deadly spray, whose chill is that of Death. Like the one in "Feathertop," the epiphany here is surprisingly vivid and sudden for a half-jocular tale, as if the memory of a nightmare had surfaced and startled the author.

"Earth's Holocaust" features, in its far grimmer cataclysmic epiphany, a worldwide Savonarolan bonfire of the vanities. This purifying ritual fails to redeem, for two good reasons. The human heart, as we might have predicted, remains unpurified; and, in addition, Hawthornean descendentalism afflicts the guilty and the innocent alike (as in "The Ambitious Guest"), making it impossible to draw a moral. The tale offers two epiphanic moments of fiery fall and fragmentation. First, when the "crown-jewels of England" are seen "glowing and flashing in the midst of the fire," the

whole conflagration "blaze[s] with a dazzling lustre, as if a star had fallen in that spot, and been shattered into fragments" (10: 385). The second moment begins with an interval of epiphanic smile and fiery scatter when a soldier with a "grim smile" expresses doubts about the project's value while the half-incinerated "works of Voltaire" go off "in a brilliant shower of sparkles" (10: 390, 395). The climactic dispersal comes as even Bibles are added to the bonfire:

> All these were flung into the fierce and riotous blaze; and then a *mighty wind* came roaring across the plain, with a desolate howl, as if it were the angry lamentation of the Earth for the *loss of Heaven's sunshine*; and it *shook the gigantic pyramid of flame*, and *scattered the cinders* of half-consumed abominations *around upon the spectators*. (10: 401; emphases added)

The wind, ironic voice of the earth which values God's own sun more than his worshipers do, shakes the fire pyramid, adding the theme of flutter. The falling, scattered cinders, unlike ashes, betoken impure combustion, contaminating the observers, or symbolizing their own besmirching by mistaken morality. The fiery scatter brought on by the outraged air is not redemptive—not a rising but a fall from heaven. Here, as in "The Celestial Rail-Road," epiphanic seriousness is leavened by authorial wit as Hawthorne makes his point that such a fire is one of deeply doubtful moral value.

It may be diverting to end this part on a whimsical note: the brief, quirky vision of "Wakefield" helps to show, with its unexpected comic note, the emotional variety of Hawthorne's epiphanic effects. Donning a wig "of reddish hair" that may remind one of a clown, Wakefield, the wife-abandoning recluse, at first is relieved whenever he escapes detection: "Right glad is his heart" when he reaches "the coal-fire" of his new lodgings (9: 135). But when this heart-fire theme comes back with force in the "twentieth year" of Wakefield's self-imposed reclusion, it quickly leads to a multiple fluttering or tremor (glimmer, fitful flash), then to a fall and sprinkling:

> Wakefield discerns, through the parlor-windows of the second floor, the red glow, and the glimmer and fitful flash, of a comfortable fire. On the ceiling appears a grotesque shadow of good Mrs. Wakefield . . . which dances, moreover, with the up-flickering and down-sinking blaze, almost too merrily for the shade of an elderly widow. At this instant, a shower chances to fall, and is driven, by the unmannerly gust, full into Wakefield's face and bosom. (9: 139)

Rather than stand "shivering," he assumes an epiphanic "crafty smile" and enters; but we do "not follow" this "Outcast of the Universe" any further

(9: 139–40). Perhaps the dispersal of chill drops has waked him from the field of dreams. For a purported universal outcast, the momentary retribution was brief and comical: the goal of the tale is to offer not a moral lesson but a *divertissement* with a quick and vivid shorthand epiphany.

II

In this final section I look at epiphanies that manifest the paradigm structure less completely than do those so far considered, yet are still memorable and striking. In epiphanies of this group, one or more of the formal components (fire, flutter, fall, or scatter) is lacking or attenuated. The biggest subgroup of epiphanies with an incomplete pattern contains those with the scatter-motif absent or only implied. Two less common categories lack respectively the vivid fire and the explicit fall. Yet the epiphanies we will examine are not necessarily to be devalued for their typological incompleteness. True, it may point at times to a partial weakening of vision. But the lack of one or another formal component can also heighten the imaginative drama of an epiphany by adding more mystery, intensifying our puzzlement, or piquing our curiosity. We will see this happen in such visionary triumphs as "The Minister's Black Veil" and "Young Goodman Brown."

"My Kinsman, Major Molineux," where a surreal, grotesque epiphany of cosmic proportions is amorally visited upon a confused, hapless youth, attenuates the scatter-theme, yet abounds in oneiric power. Fires fill young Robin's epiphany of a procession. It begins with the "redder light" that "disturbed the moonbeams" and with the "dense multitude of torches" concealing "by their glare whatever object they illuminated"; and it culminates with those torches blazing "their brightest" before the "tar-and-feathery dignity" of the Major (11: 227–28), who proves hardly to be the prestigious citizen Robin had pictured as his likely patron. Epiphanic flutterings, too, are everywhere, starting with the torch-fires themselves, whose "unsteady brightness" forms "a veil" Robin cannot see through; yet soon he notices that the "foam" hangs "white" on Molineux's "quivering lip," and that his "whole frame" is "agitated by a quick, and continual tremor" (11: 228–29). The procession's leader, "war personified," bears a "drawn sword," varying the epiphanic horizontal-rod motif. And when "the procession resume[s] its march," the Major's persecutors appear as "fiends" hellishly "trampling on an old man's heart" (11: 230). The motif of a smashed and fallen heart is clear, but what is fragmented or scattered? Only a stream of fiendish laughter is broken into bits: "there sailed over the heads of the multitude a great, broad laugh, broken in the midst by two deep sepulchral hems; thus—'Haw, haw, haw—hem, hem—haw, haw, haw, haw!'" (11: 229). Yet the metaphoric dispersal takes on cosmic range: not only does it appear to blend with the laughter of all who had

derided Robin that night, but Earth echoes it, and even the "Man in the Moon hear[s] the far bellow" (11: 230).[30] A valid variant of the Hawthornean epiphanic smile, the punctuated laugh yet seems a rather attenuated scatter. It's almost as if Robin were trying to laugh off his own hellish dream of a fevered, rabid father figure, mistakenly idealized and perhaps, more troublingly, unconsciously hated and contemned.

In contrast, "Egotism; or, the Bosom Serpent" is a weaker vision, compromised in part by a facile optimism. Here, an otherwise fine epiphany of brightness, tremor, and fall (with a perhaps implied but unmentioned scattering) brings ruin not to the egotist but only to his pride, a sanguine twist not wholly convincing. At first Roderick "glorie[s]" in his snake as if it were a sunny "divinity" that "marked him out from the ordinary" and lent him exalted "eminence" as he reclines in the "fleckered sunshine" by a "fountain." The snake's true hellishness is soon revealed in tremulous "writhings" that "testify his agony" (10: 274, 281–82). But when Rosina touches Roderick, a "tremor shiver[s] through his frame," and precisely "[a]t that moment," his friend sees "a waving motion through the grass" and hears "a tinkling sound, as if something had plunged into the fountain" (10: 283). The sunshine of a proud heart; flickerings, writhings, tremors; and a fall—the epiphanic pattern is complete, but only if we picture drops sprinkling up as the snake plunges. The good-hearted maiden with the rose-glow name seemingly makes Roderick's pride fall away. But one feels that a proud heart like Roderick's can hardly be so quickly cured. Here the attenuation of the epiphany pattern (even the "fleckered" sun is not an impressive fire) shows the writer's vision weakened.

Not pride but perhaps humility undergoes the epiphanic heart-fire fall in "The Great Stone Face." The "face" is a rock formation whose humanlike countenance—its expression as sweet as "the glow of a vast, warm heart"—would one day, it was prophesied, be duplicated in the "greatest and noblest personage of his time" (11: 28). But the heart-glow face is odd: "if the spectator approached too near, he lost the outline of the gigantic visage, and could discern only a heap" of huge "rocks, piled in chaotic ruin, one upon another" (11: 27), not heart but rubble. Ernest believes in the rock-face; he even sees an epiphanic "smile" there, with the rock-"angel" clothed in fire-related epiphanic hues of "gold and purple" (11: 37). And though several rival contenders, in their conceit, each think they have incarnated the warm glow of the rock-face, only Ernest, with his "glory" or halo "of white hair," is thought by many to embody the visage's true "likeness" (11: 48). Yet Ernest humbly denies this, hoping instead that "some wiser and better man than himself" will fulfill the prophecy (11: 48). Certainly three notably egotistic, self-promoting claimants have failed: the names of the first two, Gathergold and Blood-and-Thunder, hint that they have turned the yellow and red fire-colors of epiphanic potential into a

foolish parody, while the name of the third, "Stony Phiz," may suggest a deadening travesty of the carbuncle-rock itself. But though humility alone stands aloft and shines, the one who has it doesn't feel or see it. Ironically, when Ernest is thought to be the new form of the face, he is as "close" to it as one can get, so by the epiphany's carefully spelled-out logic, he should see not a face but a "chaotic ruin." Certainly we no longer hear about Ernest's view of the face after people start to think that his own has incarnated it. The epiphany, in tension with the "allegory," says, Get close to the heart-glow, and it falls into ruin, scattered to rubble.[31] Yet the weak point here is that we never see that scattering of the rock. Vision yields, in part, to cerebration and scholia.

"The Prophetic Pictures" is another scatterless epiphany, and this time the lack of that single image-theme betokens a notable falling off, possibly a sudden authorial repression of the moment's murderous power. Walter and Elinor Ludlow were painted by a portraitist who had magic skill to show their amorally fated descendental futures in their heated features. Revisiting his portraits some months after completing them, the painter sees a glowing epiphany as the figures now shine, illumined from within: "gleam[ing] forth" in "splendor," they seem "to throw a sombre light across the room, rather than to be disclosed by a borrowed radiance" (9: 181). But a nervous feverishness, too, begins as Walter's "moody" face is "animated" by "fitful flashes": shouting, "Die!" and "[d]rawing a knife," Walter "sustained" Elinor, "as she was sinking to the ground, and aimed it at her bosom," that is, her heart (9: 181). Yet the painter, "like a magician, controlling" the aery "phantoms" which he had evoked, separates them before any heart's-blood drops can be sprinkled, and Walter "relapse[s] from fierce excitement into silent gloom" (9: 182). We have seen the epiphanic glow, the nervous and unsteady flashes, and the raising of a sword followed by a fainting, the beginning of a fall. But the artist dispels the interrupted epiphany, and so does the narrator, appending a somewhat tautological lesson about the unavoidability of fate. The relapsing of Walter from frenzy to gloom mirrors what seems a frightened scattering of the author's own energies as he turns away from the fatefulness of his epiphany pattern. Rather than let fate work, he merely talks about it.[32]

"Old Esther Dudley," though similarly scatterless, is yet powerfully moving, imbued with a fine historical pathos. In her dramatic descendental epiphany of blazing, tottering, and a fall to death, the eponymous protagonist, an eccentric visionary, embodies the yielding of colonial to upstart republican power. She startles the townspeople "by a brilliant illumination of the Province House, with candles at every pane of glass, and a transparency of the King's initials and a crown of light in the great balcony window"; as she flourishes a huge key, her wrinkled face "gleam[s] with triumph, as if the soul within her were a festal lamp" (9: 298).

Yet spectators can only wonder what the soul-flame and "blaze of light" can "portend," for Esther is like an aery shade, "gliding about the chambers" as she rejoices in solitude (9: 298). Predictably "heart-broken" when she realizes that in greeting the governor she has welcomed a "traitor," Esther becomes what he has called her: a symbol of "the stately and gorgeous prejudices of the *tottering* Past" (9: 301; emphasis added). This epiphanic tremor leads to her fall when she collapses "beside one of the pillars of her portal" (9: 302), the pillar varying the maypole theme. As the key "fell from her grasp" and "clanked against the stone," Hancock's men prepare to "follow her reverently to the tomb of her ancestors" (9: 302). If no scattering is shown, Esther yet descends to join a dusty multitude.

Though no scatter is depicted in the epiphany of "Drowne's Wooden Image," we feel a high-blazing magical heart-life whose amorally inflicted, undeserved descent darkens the world. Drowne, an artist of the beautiful in the form of a ship-prow image carver, a "modern Pygmalion in the person of a Yankee mechanic," quietly but epiphanically "smile[s]" when complimented on the skillful construction of his beloved image for the "Cynosure" or North Star, betokening stellar fire (10: 311–12, 306). When the image apparently comes to life, a portentous shifty tremor is added to the heart-fire-flower glow: with many a "rich flower upon her head," a "broad gold" neckchain that "glistened," a face with a "brilliant depth of complexion," she makes her shining progress "with garments fluttering" in the breeze and with a "continually shifting" expression of "mirthful mischief" recalling the shifting "gleam upon a bubbling fountain" (10: 316–17).[33] The epiphanic "fluttering" or tremor perilously intensifies as she is "observed to flutter" her "pearl and ebony fan" with "such vehement rapidity" that it remains "broken in her hand" (10: 317). The pearls perhaps remain unscattered, but "traces" of the artisan's sprinkled "tears" appear on his "visage" when, seeming to awaken from "a kind of dream," he finds his Galatea is but wood: "'The world looks darker now that she has vanished,' said some of the young men" (10: 318). Drowne's heart-fire is sunken, his stellar world-sun dark.

"Endicott and the Red Cross" presents a short but strong (scatterless) epiphany of a fire-red emblem cut down by a puritan crusader recalling those who dashed the epiphanic maypole, though once again fanatical zealotry, no matter how glorified by imaginative courage, is no moral ideal to the urbane Hawthorne.[34] Indeed, this red-cross slasher is himself a fire-heart, though his own pride remains unhumbled: shining splendor and heart's blood combine in his "highly polished," "glittering steel" breastplate depicting the scene of a prayer-house, with the "blood" of a wolf's head, claimed for bounty, "still plashing on the door-step" (9: 434). When he hears of the hoisting of an English flag with a red cross that he considers idolatrously papistical, "blood glow[s] through" Endicott's "manly

countenance," the breastplate itself appearing "red hot, with the angry fire of the bosom which it covered" (9: 437), a fine collocation of heart, fire, and the banner-theme of "May-Pole." The flutter and smile components enter as a "sad and quiet smile flit[s]" over the face of mild Roger Williams (9: 439). The pole theme is varied as Endicott, "brandishing his sword," "thrust it through the cloth" and "rent the Red Cross completely out of the banner. He then waved the tattered ensign above his head" (9: 440). Though the redness of the cloth is torn out, it is not scattered; the tattering results from the cutting away only of the central emblem. A scattering may be implied, though, by the fact that wolf-blood still seems "plashing" on the prayer-house doorsteps of the awe-inspiring breastplate.

The effective (scatterless) epiphany of "The Grey Champion" resembles that of "Endicott and the Red Cross," in that both are historically retrospective portrayals of single-minded visionaries, quixotic yet intense. The equally fantastical and zealous protagonist of "The Grey Champion"[35] is less fiery than Endicott—probably because he is only the ghost of a puritan past—but as he leads a crowd who rage over the royal annulment of the Massachusetts Bay charter, he must face a wall of flames in the form of soldiers "with shouldered matchlocks, and matches burning, so as to present a row of fires in the dusk" (9: 12). As he emerges from that dusk, with "but a staff in his hand, to assist the tremulous gait of age," the theme of tremor accompanies the epiphanic staff. As the champion approaches holding the staff before him, the British commander, beholding the crowd "burning" with "hot lurid wrath," orders retreat, and then the spectral form "fade[s] from their eyes, melting slowly into the hues of twilight," into "empty space" (9: 17). This melting away (not quite a scatter) of a trembling vision from hot eye-fires is a moving descendental epiphany, bringing sadness after a moment of seeming victory.

Two epiphanies with attenuated or absent fires—"The Man of Adamant" and "Roger Malvin's Burial"—are highly effective despite this lack, for they dramatically convey what happens when the protagonist lacks a "heart," a motif so often allied to fire in Hawthornean vision. A dis-heartening epiphany built up in several stages of fatal descent-and-scatter appears in "The Man of Adamant." Here a zealous hermit's cave, with a "veil of tangled foliage about it," enters "into the heart of a rocky hill" (11: 62), betokening the rocky heartlessness of its tenant. Feathery fluttering and watery sprinkling are equally petrified here, as "icicles" had been "dripping down" for "unknown centuries," even "embalm[ing] little feathery shrubs" (11: 163). The next stage of this deadening sprinkling is the "deposition of calculous [calcareous] particles within" the warmthless hardening "heart" of the zealot. As the epiphanic climax begins, a maiden moved by "faith and love" stands before the mouth of the cave: though apparitional, she offers the missing fire in at least a diffuse manifestation, for

"the sunbeams bathed her white garment, which thus seemed to possess a radiance of its own" (11: 164–65). As the setting sun's light "still glorifie[s] her form," she scoops up the cave-fountain's water in a beech-bark cup, and the sad sprinkling has already begun when a "few tears mingled with the draught, and perhaps gave it all its efficacy" (11: 166–67). But the ireful hermit Digby "smote down the cup of hallowed water upon the threshold of the cave," scattering its contents; his "heart ceased to beat"; as darkness came the form of the spectral visitant Mary "melted into the last sunbeams"; and Digby's embalmed corpse will remain forever in spelaean solitude "unless an earthquake should crumble down the roof upon his head" (11: 167–69). Should that crumbling come about, it will add an earthly scattering to the watery sprinkling and radiant melting away of Mary Goffe's glowing aerial or spectral form at the cave entrance in a fourfold elemental dispersal. At least she tried to offer an intimation, however ghostly, of the cordial warmth so lacking in the heartless cave.

"Roger Malvin's Burial" is similarly deprived of a vital fire where it is sorely needed. That lack helps account for the strong pathos of its climactic dark epiphany when the fluttering of a bloodied handkerchief signals the descent, from the topmost tree-bough, of fragments scattering over the bones of a man who had been culpably abandoned. Roger's friend Reuben had gone for help when Roger was dying and had promised to return; his unexpiated failure to keep that promise may seem to be the tragic flaw leading, in horridly disproportionate retribution, to his unwitting shooting of his son on returning to the gravesite eighteen years later. The identifying "banner" Reuben had originally affixed to an oak sapling's branch to help him find Roger's death-site was a "handkerchief" made "bloody" by an arm wound Reuben had incurred (10: 343–44, 346). With the hope of "expiating his sin" and thus letting "sunlight into the sepulcher of his heart" to kindle a heart-glow (10: 356), Reuben returns to the now fully grown oak.[36] But no sunlight will enter, no fire will arise in that heart.

Reuben begins to "tremble" as he remembers "how the little banner has fluttered" on the bough—a twofold epiphanic tremor—for a "blight" has "withered" the now "dead" branch (10: 357). His wife mirrors the motif of tremulous fluttering (combined with the only briefly mentioned fire theme) as she begins to "tremble" by the "glowing fire" when she hears a shot (10: 358). Learning that Reuben has accidentally killed their son, with a "wild shriek" she falls "insensible" by the dead boy's side: "At that moment the withered topmost bough of the oak loosened itself in the stilly air, and fell in soft, light fragments" upon the mourners and upon Roger Malvin's bones (10: 360). Though Reuben's "sin was expiated" (10: 360), the penance required was grotesque. It has the irrational horror of tragedy, not of a moral tale.

In "The Minister's Black Veil," Hawthorne masters a notable challenge: although, instead of shining fire, a diametrically opposed black veil (remarkable for its aporetic[37] amorality) is the title-topic, he nonetheless stirs up a masterly flutter-fall-scatter-smile epiphany in two stages. Each part also offers spectral intimations of the absent fire, as if to remind us of what the enigmatic minister has possibly, perhaps vainly, sought. A glow, though always faint, is persistent—in gleams, glimmers, trembling flickers: "A sad smile gleamed faintly from beneath" Mr. Hooper's "black veil, and flickered about his mouth, glimmering" (9: 41). In the first stage of the tale's great epiphany, expectations of fire-gleam arise as Hooper, at a wedding, offers good wishes with the "pleasantry that ought to have brightened the features of the guests, like a cheerful gleam from the hearth" (9: 43). Cheer is needed, for strong epiphanic tremors have already begun: "the bride's cold fingers quivered in the tremulous hand of the bridegroom" (9: 43). Then, as Hooper raises the wine glass and sees his own form in the mirror, his "frame shuddered—his lips grew white—he spilt the untasted wine upon the carpet—and rushed forth into the darkness" (9: 44): shuddering, fall, droplet-dispersal, dark.

The second stage, the deathbed scene, begins with faint glimmers, faint smiles, and more tremulous shudders. Hooper "raise[s] himself in bed" and sits trembling or "shivering," his "faint, sad smile" still appearing "to glimmer" with vague light. Yet he feels that his fluttering veil has allowed him, paradoxically but sincerely, to show "his inmost heart" (9: 52), for his deepest conviction is that on "every visage" an enigmatic "Black Veil" is placed; thus, the enigma of his glimmering smile betokens his heartfelt belief. Yet when he explains this, a great scattering occurs, the sudden mutual dispersal of his hearers as Hooper falls. "While his auditors shrank from one another, in mutual affright, Father Hooper fell back upon his pillow, a veiled corpse, with a faint smile lingering on the lips" (9: 52). Heart, glimmer, shiver, fall, scatter, smile: a two-stage epiphany is complete in the only form Hooper can offer. But though the glimmers are desperately faint, the odd Hawthornean epiphanic smile accompanies them to the last. The vision cannot be called tragic, with its intimations of so peculiar a peace.

I conclude with the central vision of "Young Goodman Brown," an exhibit whose enigmatic fascination can be helpfully contextualized when we see it as a Hawthornean epiphany with no explicit indication of a "fall." As some of the ardent "votaries" in "The May-Pole of Merry Mount" had called the maypole "their religion, or their altar" (9: 60), so in the dire-bright witches' sabbath or *Walpurgisnacht* epiphany shown to Brown we may see that glowing festal emblem of fiery passion transformed and multiplied, with "a rock resembling an altar or a pulpit, and surrounded by four blazing pines, their tops aflame, their stems untouched, like candles

at an evening meeting," and with a "mass of foliage that had overgrown the summit of the rock" all "on fire," each "pendent twig and leafy festoon" in "a blaze" (10: 84). Rather than see an undifferentiated mass of incandescent heat, we view each individual twig and leaf outlined and surrounded in fire—something never seen in nature. Like the burning candle-tops of trees otherwise intact, this is magical, supernatural fire, corresponding, in its ambivalence, to the equivocal mood expressed by the town's many watchful and epiphanically tremulous faces "quivering to-and-fro, *between gloom and splendor*" (10: 84–85; emphasis added). The final phrase is telling. This fire is as glorious and resplendent as it is gloomy and menacing, a typically ambivalent instance of the always terror-based Burkean "sublime,"[38] as in the Miltonic Pandemonium of John Martin or the Dantesque Inferno of Gustave Doré.

Does one "fall" from such a moment?[39] It isn't shown that Goodman does. True, as a "cry of grief, rage and terror" is "drowned" and "fades" into "far-off laughter," Goodman Brown notices that the "pink ribbon" worn by his wife Faith has "fluttered lightly down through the air and caught on the branch of a tree" (10: 88). As the unhappy cry is drowned, so too the bannerlike ribbon (recalling "Burial" or "May-Pole") flutters down—another tremor to add to that of the quivering faces. As Goodman vainly summons Faith to resist seduction, a dark ghostly figure confirms him in his feeling of "a loathful brotherhood, by the sympathy of all that was wicked in his heart"; he learns that it will be his special endowment to know everyone's "secret deeds," to "penetrate, in every bosom, the deep mystery of sin, the fountain of all wicked arts" (10: 86–87). Then the epiphany moves to a final scatter, a sprinkle:

> he found himself amid calm night and solitude, listening to a roar of the wind which died heavily away through the forest. He staggered against the rock, and felt it chill and damp, while a hanging twig, that had been all on fire, besprinkled his cheek with the coldest dew. (10: 88)

The aspersions this horrid epiphany scattered on Goodman's love and "Faith" took the light from his heart; his kinfolk "carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone; for his dying hour was gloom" (10: 90). A cry was drowned, and a ribbon fell—but did Goodman?

Whether Goodman has "fallen" or not is the question to help us interpret what "moral" the epiphany may or may not reveal. Here "loathful brotherhood" is the key phrase. Goodman understands his kinship with the community under the aspect of loathsomeness. It's easy to view his subsequent universal disgust with sinful humans as a projection of what he doesn't want to admit he shares with them. If he has sublimated the

newly revealed fiery passion (to him, demonic wickedness) by massively projecting it onto everyone else in town, he has not fallen but risen in his own esteem. To "sublimate" is to make a passionate ("fiery") feeling rise as something different and purer (such as moral indignation). The superego rises with its purified progeny; the crestfallen id subsides. Moral betterment, or pathology? One can see Hawthorne (or "Oberon") smile as he samples the hundreds of articles written on this tale.[40]

The combined effect of the best epiphanies in Hawthorne's tales is rather like that of a meteor shower. A flower-gem-fire-heart-glow, then a flitting-tremor-flutter, a descent, a scatter. Ambivalence is there, always, from the start. Transcendent hopes are dashed, and often with a smile—of whimsy, madness, crafty glee, or sad bemusement. Observing the relentless recurrence of Hawthorne's epiphanic pattern will surely make us think anew about his fascination with the subtleties and difficulties of moral allegorizing and his peculiar persistence in the attempt. For at the most intense, inclusive moments of his imagining, Hawthorne sees the same descendental scattering revealed to nearly everyone on every moral or amoral level. Perhaps the same fate finds us all: an ambivalent and scattered splendor.

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NOTES

I would like to express deep gratitude to the reader at *TSLL* who helped me reconceive my thesis and strengthen the argument.

1. I have not found the word "epiphany" or its variants in the title of any study of the short stories published in the last forty years. Richard Harter Fogle pioneered systematic image study in *Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and the Dark* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1952) but limits his symbolic readings to a "broadly Christian scheme which contains heaven, earth, and hell" (p. 5). Many critics' comments on images are cited below.

2. The "key to the way we must read all Hawthorne's writing" is found in a narrator-persona passage (cited from "Earth's Holocaust") which is "romantic" but "also psychiatric," "Christian in its implications about the nature and role of the redemptive process," but "also . . . realistic," says Hyatt H. Waggoner, *Hawthorne: A Critical Study* (rev. ed. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1963), p. 23. I see Hawthorne's genius, rather, as that of an epiphanist, a prose poet of elemental visionary moments.

3. The pervasive ambivalence I discern as characterizing the pre-fall state in Hawthorne's epiphanies means that I do not see in Waggoner's terms the works he thinks of as "stories of the fall." An example is his summary of "My Kinsman, Major Molineux": "The innocence of this self-reliant and naive country boy proves inadequate to guide him to his destination through the mass of the city's streets,

but thanks to a kindly Providence, he finds he may rise, after his fall, without the help he sought"; see Waggoner, op. cit., p. 209. Robin's shattering epiphany of the Major is not even mentioned here.

4. By contrast, Hawthorne in his discursive authorial hints and interpolated comments often uses the word "dream" with a morally negative connotation, opposing it to the putatively clearer moral vision of day; see Jerry E. Herndon, "Hawthorne's Dream Imagery," *American Literature* 46 (1975), 538–45. But in discussing a dream of Hawthorne's (see below) I find it manifesting vividly the same recurrent pattern as do his literary epiphanies. Though he seems worried as to the moral that may be drawn from it, the dream vindicates his powers as epiphanist.

5. Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, trans. James Strachey and others (London: Hogarth Press, 1955–74), 5: 561–62, qtd. in Serge Lemaire, *Psychoanalyzing: On the Order of the Unconscious and the Practice of the Letter*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1998), p. 31.

6. Lemaire, pp. 32–33.

7. Lemaire, pp. 80–81.

8. Norman N. Holland, *Poems in Persons: An Introduction to the Psychoanalysis of Literature* (New York: Norton, 1975), pp. 59, 91 and passim.

9. Lemaire, p. 116.

10. Lemaire, p. 79.

11. "Oberon" seems autobiographical elsewhere also. "If—as seems likely—he himself was the Oberon of 'Fragments from the Journal of a Solitary Man,' there is some presumption that the 'morbid fancies'" the work contains "were Hawthorne's own imaginings at the age of 24—so that the special interest he took in the pathology of literary minds" would be "partially accounted for." "Hawthorne's personal experience must have contributed to the development of the solitary, self-indulgent, Faustian scientists, deluded by their own imaginings, who appear so often in his works." See Taylor Stoehr, *Hawthorne's Mad Scientists: Pseudoscience and Social Science in Nineteenth-Century Life and Letters* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1978), p. 73. The "Fragments," though, are epiphanically disappointing.

12. All citations (volume and page numbers in parentheses) refer to *The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, ed. William Charvat and others (Columbia: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1962).

13. For an excellent epiphany based primarily on this biblical episode see Flannery O'Connor's "A Circle in the Fire."

14. Robert Milder, "Hawthorne's Winter Dreams," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 54 (1999), 183–84.

15. Trilling notes that the darkness of Kafkan sensibility had not yet saturated our thinking deeply enough to motivate either Austin Warren (1938) or Newton Arvin (1946) to regard the darkly enigmatic "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" as worth including in their selected editions of Hawthorne. But just as, in a Kafka novel, the characters' "spiritual life" has "no discernible connection with morality," so likewise: "It is questions that Hawthorne leaves us with. It is, really, not at all clear why Young Goodman Brown must live out his life in sullenness because he refuses to sign the Devil's pact; nor is it clear why Robin must join the violent mob in laughter at his kinsman before he is his own master, and indeed it is not clear why being his own master is a wholly admirable condition." Thus, Hawthorne

"takes somber moral principles and makes them into toys—we have but to give to the idea of play the consideration it deserves to see that Henry James's description of his activity is not so deficient in justice as it seems." A whimsically or willfully riddling refusal to reach a "moral" despite often (bluntly or subtly) misleading allegorical talk is, for Trilling, what relates Hawthorne most convincingly to James's analysis and to Kafka's practice; see Lionel Trilling, "Our Hawthorne," *Hawthorne Centenary Essays*, ed. Roy Harvey Pearce (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1964), pp. 443, 450, 456–57.

16. See my *Patterns of Epiphany: From Wordsworth to Tolstoy, Pater, and Barrett Browning* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1997), pp. 1–21, for methodological theory treated in a context of Morris Beja, Robert Langbaum, Ashton Nichols, and, in particular, Bachelard. See also my "Failed Verticals, Fatal Horizontals, Unreachable Circles of Light: Philip Larkin's Epiphanies," *Moments of Moment: Aspects of the Literary Epiphany*, ed. Wim Tigges (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi Press, 1999), pp. 353–74; "The Aestheticist Epiphanies of J. D. Salinger: Bright-Hued Circles, Spheres, and Patches; 'Elemental' Joy and Pain," *Style* 34 (2000), 117–31; "'Controlled Panic': Mastering the Terrors of Dissolution and Isolation in Elizabeth Bishop's Epiphanies," *Style* 34 (2000), 487–511; "The Secretive-Playful Epiphanies of Robert Frost: Solitude, Companionship, and the Ambivalent Imagination," *Papers on Language and Literature* 53 (2002), 270–94; "Epiphany in Autobiography: The Quantum Changes of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 60 (2004), 471–80; "Rage and Reparation in the Epiphanies of Edward Thomas: Dark-Bright Water, Grating Roar," *English Literature in Transition 1880–1920* 47 (2004), 292–310; "Double Darkness, Border of Bonelight: The Problem of Solipsism in Howard Nemerov's Epiphanies," *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies* 6 (2005), 24–46; "Peace and Pathos in the Sea Epiphanies of Rupert Brooke: Contours of Narcissistic Desire," *English Literature in Transition 1880–1920* 48 (2005), 324–38. The abovementioned work edited by Tigges is a valuably diverse collection of contributions to a topic still often neglected. Focusing on Homer and Tolstoy, Paul Friedrich, "Lyric Epiphany," *Language in Society* 30 (2001), 217–47 opens up implications of epiphany study that are innovatively sociolinguistic.

17. Studying Hawthorne's "Fire Worship" (a slight piece that Melville admired) in view of Hawthorne's earlier interest in the fire veneration of the Zoroastrians, Millicent Bell concludes that fire was for him "an awe-inspiring force which combines terror and beneficence in one splendid and unapproachable essence"; see "Hawthorne's 'Fire Worship': Interpretation and Source," *American Literature* 24 (March 1952), 39. (Note: In Harvey Gable Jr., *Liquid Fire: Transcendental Mysticism in the Romances of Nathaniel Hawthorne* [New York: Peter Lang, 1998], the only liquid fire cited is in a metaphor by Gilles Deleuze [p. 19].)

18. John W. Shroeder, categorizing metaphors attaching to the word "heart" in the romances and tales, finds it called a "dwelling-place" (seven times), a "prison" (nine), a "hole or cavern" (six), a "place of burial" (five), a "lake, stream, or fountain" (eight), plus fourteen one-of-a-kind images. He concludes that the heart, the "guilty or guilt-inducing center," is ultimately presented in varied kinds of "burial images," "indicating the iron fatality anterior to crime and shame, the omnipresence of sin, and the kinship of guilt" in the "chain of humanity"; see "'That Inward Sphere': Notes on Hawthorne's Heart Imagery and Symbolism," *Publications of the*

Modern Language Association of America 65 (1950), 107, 117–18. I see the fatefulness of Hawthornean epiphany intimated here, and one may take the "burial" theme as related to the epiphanic descent-and-scatter. But generally Shroeder's method shows the limitations of considering words in isolation. The dazzling recurrent group heart-gem-glow-face-flower-flame-staff-smile goes unnoticed.

19. "As he himself acknowledged, Hawthorne did not improve steadily as a writer of tales." Some of his best work came surprisingly early: "'My Kinsman, Major Molineux,' 'Young Goodman Brown,' and 'The May-Pole of Merry Mount' were first published in 1832, 1835, and 1836, respectively," notes Terence Martin, "The Method of Hawthorne's Tales," Pearce, p. 8. The "essential" Hawthorne "soon found himself," observed Q. D. Leavis, "Hawthorne as Poet" (1951), *Collected Essays*, 2 vols., ed. G. Singh (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985), vol. 2, p. 35.

20. During the time of his Freudian allegiance Frederick C. Crews, in a formulation still worth considering, described the plot of this tale as "profoundly typical of Hawthorne's plots throughout his career: inadmissible fantasies are unleashed in an inhibited, decadent form and then further checked by a resurgence of authority"; see his *The Sins of the Fathers: Hawthorne's Psychological Themes* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), p. 25. Though the formulation may not do full justice to the visionary appeal of the passionate-maternal flushed faces and fiery flowers, there is nonetheless real merit to Crews's idea. I have sought to amplify it above by supplementing the Freudian censored id with the Lacanian unrecapturable Imaginary.

21. Beverly Haviland notes that Beatrice's eventual infection of Baglioni is not her fault; she knows nothing about contagion, having been raised in an isolated garden; see "The Sin of Synecdoche: Hawthorne's Allegory against Symbolism in 'Rappaccini's Daughter,'" *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 29 (1987), 293–94. Haviland's use of "allegory" to refer to metonymic symbolism not expressing transcendent verities (a non-Hawthornean usage learned from Paul de Man, who built on Walter Benjamin's thinking) accords well with my Lemaire-Lacan view of epiphanic formulas as recurrent metonymic chains.

22. Noting that domesticated flowers were notable mid-nineteenth-century "'metaphors of well-socialized femininity'" (as in John Ruskin's *Of Queens' Gardens*), Joel Pfister argues that the monstrous-flower theme, taken together with Beatrice's "fantasies of a gem-like brilliance" (10: 113), suggests Hawthorne's envious anxiety, as man and writer, about being "displaced by poisonous women who cultivate 'flowers' not 'ordinary.'" See *The Production of Personal Life: Class, Gender, and the Psychological in Hawthorne's Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1991), pp. 65, 67.

23. In "'A Small Heap of Glittering Fragments': Hawthorne's Discontent with the Short Story Form," *American Transcendental Quarterly* 8 (1994), 137–47, Kathryn B. McKee suggests that the phrase is an image of the author's own disappointment with the tales he wrote between spring 1844 and winter 1848–49.

24. Admittedly, we see in Owen a limiting "absorption with ingenuity for its own sake, preciousness." One notes here "Hawthorne's process of balancing attributes as he works toward his highly qualified, severely challenged endorsement of the artist," says John Caldwell Stubbs, *The Pursuit of Form: A Study of Hawthorne and the Romance* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1970), pp. 58, 60. Stephanie Fay, surveying criticism of both this tale and "The Prophetic Pictures," agrees with Stubbs: several

readings of the two stories "point out the differences between the narrators' assessments of the artists, generally positive but partial, and the narratives' fuller but less admiring characterizations"; see "Lights from Dark Corners: Works of Art in 'The Prophetic Pictures' and 'The Artist of the Beautiful,'" *Studies in American Fiction* 13 (1985), 15. A wonderful variant on the plot of "The Artist" may be found in Leskov's "Tale of the Squint-Eyed Lefty from Tula and of the Steel Flea"; an engaging introduction to Leskov's tales is Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov," *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. with introd. by Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1969), pp. 83–109.

25. Lightening the moralism of Ethan's retribution and leavening it with "black humor" is the fact that even though he has sought to deny both the community and Mother Earth, his corpse enriches the community with "an extra half bushel of good lime" and will probably enrich the earth as fertilizer, notes Charles Swann, *Nathaniel Hawthorne: Tradition and Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), pp. 61–62.

26. Many have found the "symbolism" of the tale "mechanical, objecting especially to Eleanore's own exposition of the moral before she dies" when she accuses herself of having been culpably "wrapped" in the "mantle" of "pride," says Edward Wagenknecht, *Nathaniel Hawthorne: The Man, His Tales and Romances* (New York: Continuum, 1989), p. 35. Her allegory would not impress any innocent Bostonians who had caught her pox.

27. This fairytale not only shows surprising epiphanic power, it is also, like "Wakefield," one of Hawthorne's subtlest pieces of metafictional playing with points of view; see Ellen E. Westbrook, "Exposing the Verisimilar: Hawthorne's 'Wakefield' and 'Feathertop,'" *Arizona Quarterly* 45 (Winter 1989), pp. 1–23.

28. Theodore Ziolkowski, "The Mystic Carbuncle: Transmutations of an Image," *Varieties of Literary Thematics* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983), pp. 34–85.

29. This would be my morally "deconstructive" reply to the claim that the "parable" proves "Providence" is "at heart benign, so long as we have faith, and love and serve one another"; see Sidney P. Moss, "The Mountain God of Hawthorne's 'The Ambitious Guest,'" *Emerson Society Quarterly* 47 (1967), 75.

30. Michael J. Colarucio's historic-contextual reading is psychologically astute also as he notes the ironic frustrations Robin encounters in seeking a "more tolerant surrogate for the loving but strict, ministerial father he has left behind"; see *The Province of Piety: Moral History in Hawthorne's Early Tales* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1984), p. 131.

31. James J. Lynch's treatment of the allegorical devices in the tale shows how systematically Hawthorne attempted to enforce a moral; see "Structure and Allegory in 'The Great Stone Face,'" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 14 (1960), 137–46.

32. Mary E. Dichmann also finds the talk about fate unsatisfactory but for a different reason; she thinks it fails to come to terms with the "problem" Hawthorne had raised of reconciling "the spiritual nature of artistic creation and the evil which may result from it"; see "Hawthorne's 'Prophetic Pictures,'" *American Literature* 23 (1951), 202. I see Hawthorne's answer, so far as there is one, in his recurrent "signature" epiphany—not a reconciliation but a fateful sequence: fire-glow, tremor, fall.

33. "This erotic representation of a woman has a powerful emotional effect on the whole town"; "forerunner of Beatrice Rappaccini," "disrupter of New

England culture," she is "contrasted with Drowne's usual pieces," "images made to preexisting stereotypical or allegorical designs." She may be Hawthorne's own self-addressed warning to avoid "moralistic or conventional generalizing tales"; see Alison Easton, *The Making of the Hawthorne Subject* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1996), pp. 157–58.

34. Here, as in "The Gray Champion," we find "a tension between a deference to nationalistic critical prescription on the one hand and Hawthorne's skeptical irony on the other"; Neal Frank, *Hawthorne's Early Tales, A Critical Study* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1972), p. 104.

35. G. R. Thompson treats this "rather slight narrative," which nonetheless "stands as the introduction to all editions of *Twice-Told Tales*," as a revealing test case of "the Hawthorne Question," for in "undercutting traditional romance" it representatively "announces not a simplistic American patriotism, but the dialogicity of the apparently monological works to follow"; see *The Art of Authorial Presence: Hawthorne's Provincial Tales* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1993), pp. 85, 94. My ambivalent phrase "fantastical and zealous" indicates agreement with Thompson. As regards social morals Hawthorne is inveterately dialogical, self-questioning, at odds with Claudia Johnson's emphasis on what she takes to be "the grand [monological] myth that shaped his work—the regenerative descent." In Hawthorne's religious tradition, she says, "From womblike, self-centered contemplation, an individual turned outward, joining with his fellows in the growth of society"; Hawthorne "shared" this "timeless moral concern"; see *The Productive Tension of Hawthorne's Art* (Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1981), pp. 9, 83. Hawthorne's epiphanies of descent are not regenerative and do not illustrate this concern.

36. John Samson points out that while the "Charter Oak of Hartford" symbolized colonial courage in defense of freedom, Malvin and Bourne are "less-than-heroic" fighters ("Hawthorne's Oak Trees," *American Literature* 52 [1980], 458–59). The fullest historical contextualizing of the tale is Colarucio, op. cit., pp. 107–30.

37. J. Hillis Miller's searching treatment of the story as centered upon the aporetic epiphany of the veil (see *Hawthorne and History: Defacing It* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991], pp. 66–103) does not deal with the motif-cluster analyzed here but leads me to ask, regarding Hawthorne's epiphanies generally, whether they may not all tend toward (moral) deconstruction. Indeed, all epiphanies—intense, mysterious, disproportionately expansive in meaning—deconstructively challenge categories.

38. "The keystone of Burke's aesthetic is emotion, and the foundation of his theory of sublimity is the emotion of terror." Edmund Burke helped "to spread the cult of romantic terror throughout the literature of the era that just precedes the rise of romantic art." See Samuel H. Monk, *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XIII-Century England* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1960), pp. 87, 100.

39. Colarucio, op. cit., pp. 287–304, analyzes limitations of the Calvinist language Brown uses to deal with questions of faith when this framework is applied to self-understanding. Samuel Chase Cole, in *Mesmerism and Hawthorne: Mediums of American Romance* (Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1998), pp. 41–45, suggests the pervasiveness of the language of mesmeric initiation as key to reimagining Brown's morally disorienting "trance."

40. "'Young Goodman Brown' is Hawthorne's most successful story" because here he is most "free" from the "editorializing" that mars other works, says Robert E. Moosberger, "The Woe That Is Madness: Goodman Brown and the Face of the Fire," *The Nathaniel Hawthorne Journal* 1973, ed. C. E. Frazer Clark Jr., p. 177. By 1976 it had generated "over 400" studies, but, reading a survey of these and others, one is struck by the simplistic debate as to whether Brown is "good" or "evil," or—still normatively dogmatizing—whether he attains "maturity" or not; see Lea Bertani Vozar Newman, *A Reader's Guide to the Short Stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1979), pp. 341–48. Michael Tritt appears correct in claiming he is the first to maintain, in "'Young Goodman Brown' and the Psychology of Projection," *Studies in Short Fiction* 23 (1986), 113–17, the thesis that Brown projects his self-loathing onto society.