though the evil may not be within her power or will. Beatrice's unanswered question is whose fault it is. "Oh, was there not," she asks Giovanni (speaking for her sisterhood in many Hawthorne tales), "from the first, more poison in thy nature than in mine?"

The two later stories resolve a portion of Brown's dilemma by making it clear that since woman's imperfection is physical, her spirit may triumph over "the gross fatality of earth"[13] in heaven. Hawthorne interrupts the story of "Rappaccini's Daughter" to point out that nothing is left for Beatrice but to "bathe her hurts in some fount of Paradise . . . and *there* be well" and that Giovanni would have been wiser to attach his faith to her future purity and thus to accept the bittersweet of mortality.[14] Lacking such a faith, Brown can neither fully accept nor fully deny his wife. Despite his compromise, however, his choice, in a way, is wiser than Aylmer's or Giovanni's. If his life is devitalized by doubt of human nature, his skepticism is restrained by a compulsion to live. He can continue in his generation only as previous generations have done, caught between the theological and marital ironies of his title "Goodman" Brown.

Hawthorne's "The Artist of the Beautiful"

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TOO MANY CRITICS of Hawthorne's "The Artist of the Beautiful" are trapped into discussing whether Owen Warland loses more than he gains in his artistic pursuit of an aëreal ideal. They balance the artist's spiritual achievement in the chilly atmosphere of isolation against his loss of wife, children, and wholesome commerce with society; predictably, they conclude that, though real enough, Owen's spiritual triumph involves a diminution of his humanity. As Rudolphe Von Abele puts it, "The sacrifice of life for art is an act of inverted Puritanism, of a sort about which Hawthorne simply could not be happy."[1] Mark Van Doren also emphasizes Haw-

[13] *Ibid.*, II, 69.
[14] *Ibid.*, II, 139, 145.

[1] "The Baby and the Butterfly," *Kenyon Review*, XV, 291 (Spring, 1953).

thorne's "ambiguity" and suggests that, instead of being altogether committed to Owen Warland's quest, "Hawthorne never quite persuades us to despise sensible men for the very practical reason that he is one himself."[2] Recently, in an excellent book on Hawthorne's view of the artist, Millicent Bell contends that Hawthorne ultimately rejects Warland's withdrawal from life for the sake of art: "One feels the results of a considerable humor working behind the exalted tone of the ideas presented, which inclines one to suspect that Hawthorne felt, like Annie 'a secret scorn' for the artist."[3]

It is my contention that Hawthorne need not be rescued from a conception of the artist as a man whose greatness can only be won by overly-refined withdrawal from contact with a gross world. I shall attempt to illustrate that Warland's success grows as much out of his involvement with society as from his work done in seclusion: the organization of Hawthorne's tale, as I see it, reinforces the idea that the faith without which the artist cannot create is nourished by struggle, self-scrutiny, and realistic recognition of his own inescapable limitations.

An examination of the structure of the story does not establish Hawthorne's primary theme as an equivocating evaluation of the reclusive artist's role in society.[4] True, Owen is contrasted with Danforth, a man who complacently hammers out part of the world's business in his forge. Yet Hawthorne's narrative focus is, except for a short introductory passage, always on Owen's development as an artist; the substance of the story is a rehearsal of the artist's alternating moods of faith and disillusionment ending in indisputable conviction. Owen's lapses from idealism to, in turn, "constructive" work, wine-bibbing, and cynicism symbolize a periodic inability to sustain belief in the existence of a realm of transcendent spiritual values. The immediate human causes of his waywardness—Peter Hovenden, Danforth, and Annie—constitute the imposing realities calculated to make the artist's efforts seem unsubstantial and even comical if not altogether unreal. The climax of the story, then, is reached when the artist, no longer troubled about

[2] *Hawthorne* (New York, 1949), p. 88.

[3] *Hawthorne's View of the Artist* (New York, 1962), p. 105.

[4] I agree with Leland Schubert's conclusion about the structure of the story in *Hawthorne the Artist: Fine Art Devices in Fiction* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1944), pp. 125-135. Unfortunately, Schubert is not concerned with relating structure to the subtleties of meaning or theme.

the necessity of proving the validity of a spiritual order that endows his creation with significance, contents himself with pure faith. External hostility and internal traumas have clarified his vision: he has learned, with not a little ensuing sadness, to see something enduring in a realm where art and life are subject to time and other destructive forces.

In "The Artist of the Beautiful," then, Hawthorne's method is to dramatize the stages of Warland's growth; each stage is cumulatively important, and only after all have been experienced can Owen possess the maturity and wisdom to surrender himself to his dream. Certainly, at the beginning of the story Warland cannot disregard the world's contempt for his activity because he himself is uncertain of the meaning of his search: after Danforth's early raillery, for example, he gives up his work and cries out, " 'It's all over—the toil of months, the object of my life. I am ruined!' " He also behaves with ludicrous extravagance when he condemns Annie for tinkering with his "little whirligig": " 'That touch has undone the toil of months and thought of a lifetime! It was not your fault Annie; but you have ruined me!' " But these jejune outbursts are not characteristic of the Owen who emerges at the end of the story. The phases he passes through are significant, but he does go beyond them; they measure the turbulence and internal pain that form an inevitable part of creation.

Once Hawthorne's technique is understood, it becomes apparent that Owen's triumph over himself need not be construed as "inverted Puritanism." Instead of advising a facile rejection of experience, Hawthorne shows that the artist arrives at faith through his encounters with and momentary acceptance of the alternatives to his dream. Owen's spiritual ascent is made possible partly by his descent from materialism to self-indulgent fantasy to the depths of a thoroughgoing negativism. The gradual rise of the artist, too, is accompanied by conversions too easily won and too easily lost. In the flights and failures which really make up his history, Owen is actively engaged in living; indeed, I would go so far as to suggest that his is an intense life of exploration and discovery. It finally takes a vivid sense of his own mortality to attach him unalterably to his great quest. In other words, he does not retreat into art because of psychological exhaustion; instead, he rises to a new life

through an annihilating recognition of the limited and mortal material out of which man must create.[5]

In the final analysis, Owen's life resembles a kind of pilgrim-artist's progress: he does not so much repudiate reality as refine upon and spiritualize it in order to reach a higher estate. Before the magnitude of his task, he often appears not only uncertain but "little" and inadequate. Yet, he is as right as Bunyan's Christian in setting out on his perilous journey. He must see through Hovenden's materialistic and time-bound sense: the old clockmaker would encourage his pupil to "flourish" in a spiritual desert where "everything was converted into a dream except the densest matter of the physical world." Moreover, the artist, intimidated though he may initially be by Danforth's muscular energy and bluff heartiness, must not be lured into a merely utilitarian occupation. For after all that can be said for Hawthorne's blacksmith, he rather flatulently boasts of his strength as if it were the ultimate virtue. Finally, the artist must not be deflected from his quest by Annie, who begins by inanely tinkering with his work and ends by according it a "secret scorn." Obviously, then, Owen progresses through a world which makes him appear foolish, androgynous, and impractical as he searches for a finer spiritual ideal than prevails in his immediate society.

I believe that Hawthorne's "last word" about Owen supports my reading of "The Artist of the Beautiful." In the long finale, Hawthorne no longer dwells upon Warland's petulance, indecision, or self-imposed exile from humanity, but presents the artist as moving, with composure and undiminished affection for his old friends, into Danforth and Annie's quite ordinary household. Owen's work of art is not a treasure to be kept in secrecy and privately admired; it is, rather, presented as a belated wedding gift to the friends who, though they greet him with broad teasing, will discover that he has undergone a remarkable change.

Since the final judgment of Warland's odyssey must depend on what it has made of him, our last view of him is dramatically crucial. Up to this moment, he has been in imbalance and even derangement. Like anyone else in conflict, he has contrasted unfavorably with those around him who live safely and comfortably. Haw-

[5] Edward H. Davidson, *Hawthorne's Last Phase* (New Haven, 1949), pp. 72-73, examines the effect that the certainty of death had on Hawthorne's thinking.

thorne's management of the closing scene in "The Artist of the Beautiful" suddenly reverses the action. The artist has now created the marvelous butterfly, an emblem of "the intellect, the imagination, the sensibility, the soul of an Artist of the Beautiful." In fact, as the butterfly makes its flight, Warland's triumph is unconsciously acknowledged by both Annie and her husband. In exclaiming "'Well, that does beat all nature!'" the blacksmith innocently and with unconscious wisdom associates Owen's creation with the supernatural. Moreover, Annie's nagging question as to whether the butterfly is "alive" demonstrates that her former assurance about the "real" is now imperiled. Unfortunately, Annie's question is finally answered by her own "secret scorn—too secret, perhaps, for her own consciousness and perceptible only to such intuitive discernment as that of the artist."

Unmistakably, in the resolution of his story, Hawthorne shows that Owen has achieved more wisdom and serenity than Hovenden, Annie, and Danforth possess. He takes pains to contrast the artist's earlier excitability with a new self-possession based on attainment and insight; Annie and her husband, however, now betray doubt, naïveté, and limited imagination. Hawthorne even goes so far as to have Warland silently patronize his friends for not recognizing the great *material* value of the butterfly, a value which "Annie and her husband, and even Peter Hovenden, might fully have understood, and which would have satisfied them that the toil of years had here been worthily bestowed":[6]

> Owen Warland might have told them that this butterfly was, in truth, a gem of art that a monarch would have purchased with honors and abundant wealth. . . . But the artist smiled, and kept the secret to himself.

Yet, Owen's essential superiority is most apparent when Annie's child destroys the "marvellous insect." Instead of shouting "ruin" as he had done on two previous occasions, Warland "looked placidly at what seemed the ruin of his life's labor, and which was yet no ruin." It is Annie who now screams and Danforth who rushes to the child to save the butterfly. The artist, who "had caught a far other butterfly than this," had discovered a spiritual realm that sanc-

[6] This seems to me to contain Hawthorne's sneer at the triumvirate which rejects the artist more completely than he ever rejected them.

tions man's effort to rise above the merely practical and material. Unlike Hovenden, who has no faith in anything but a "material existence," and Danforth and Annie, who live on innocent good terms with the world, Owen "earns" his serenity by internal conflict, loss, and ultimate dedication. Of course Hovenden's scornful laugh is never silenced; but it can no longer bewilder the artist, whose "spirit possessed itself in the enjoyment" of a greater "reality."

Yet, in order to place the artist's success in perspective, it is necessary to come down from the heights and to observe him as he tells his amused friends that he has reached his goal. Far from being demonstrative or vindictive, he makes his announcement with "a momentary triumph in his eyes and a smile of sunshine, yet steeped in such depths of thought that it was almost sadness." When Owen re-enters the world of Danforth and Annie, he comes from a long journey, with a sad and yet reassuring knowledge. Hawthorne's mingling of sunshine and depth, triumph and sorrow, in his description of Warland compels us to see the artist not as a bodiless spirit but as a human being who is prepared to accept with tranquility the fragility of even the most spiritualized matter; for, after all, the human body as well as the butterfly is almost pathetically unsubstantial. The artist has learned to view life *sub specie aeternitatis;* he has not locked himself up in a lofty and exclusive spiritual tower.

Ellen Glasgow's Letters to the Saxtons

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ELLEN GLASGOW first became acquainted with Eugene F. Saxton during the seven years (1910-1917) he served on the editorial staff of Doubleday, Page and Company, and her friendship with him and with his wife continued after Saxton became head of the editorial department of Harper and Brothers in 1925.[1] Five of Miss Glasgow's letters to the Saxtons, written over a span of twelve years,

[1] I wish to thank Mr. John Cook Wyllie, Librarian of the Alderman Library, for bringing these letter to my attention, and Mr. Oliver Steele of the School of Engineering, Department of English at the University, for information about Ellen Glasgow's career.