



## Nathaniel Hawthorne's Conception of Time in *The House of the Seven Gables*

### NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE CONCEPTION DE TEMPS DANS LA MAISON AUX SEPT PIGNONS

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#### Abstract

Dwelling on his theme that the sins of the past have a bearing upon succeeding generations, Nathaniel Hawthorne, in *The House of the Seven Gables*, interfuses the past with the present to renew time and unlock potentialities for renewal to be actualized in the future.

The discussion shows that the past lives into the present, that the Pyncheons, especially Clifford and Hepzibah, change through the course of time, that time keeps passing by and cannot be denied, and that the future constructed via incorporating the past into the present becomes an American territory.

This newly-constructed territory is ruled by democracy; it is also marked by a unified conception of time consisting in synthesizing the linear and cyclical temporalities. Humans in this place are love-bound and bent on honoring democratic ideals, such as equality, freedom, justice, etc.

**Key words:** Generations; Interfuse; Ineffable; Irreversible; Linear; Cyclical; Temporality; Construct; Comprise; Natural rhythms; Conception; Course of time

#### Résumé

S'attarder sur son thème que les péchés du passé ont une incidence sur les générations futures, Nathaniel Hawthorne, dans la maison aux sept pignons, interfuses le passé et le présent de renouveler de temps et de déverrouiller les potentialités de renouvellement d'être actualisé à l'avenir.

La discussion montre que la vie passé dans le présent, que le Pyncheons, surtout Clifford et Hepzibah, le changement à travers le cours du temps, ce temps garde passait par là

et ne peut être niée, et que l'avenir construites à travers l'intégration le passé dans le présent devient un territoire américain.

Ce territoire nouvellement construit est régi par la démocratie, elle est aussi marquée par une conception unifiée de temps consistant à synthétiser les temporalités linéaires et cycliques .. Les humains dans ce lieu sont l'amour lié et courbé sur le respect des idéaux démocratiques, comme l'égalité, liberté, justice, etc.

**Mots-clés:** Générations; Se mêler; Ineffable; Irreversible; linéaire; cyclique; Temporalité, Construire; Comprendre; Rythmes naturels; Conception; Cours du temps

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#### INTRODUCTION

Humans have been wrestling with the problem of time regarded to be ineffable. The history of the philosophy of time documents this struggle of humans to use time as a base of reference necessary for coming to grips with human experience. The difficulty lying in this human struggle is how to use words to express certain mental states. Commenting on this difficulty and the ineffability of time, St. Augustine (1927) argues in *Confessions*(XI, p.14): "For what is time?... I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me; but if I am asked what it is and try to explain, I am baffled" (as cited in Ricoeur, 1990, p.xi). In another work of his, *City of God*, Augustine also argues in support of the linear concept of time, and condemns ancient Greek cyclic time as a superstition. This argument of Saint Augustine also inspired Thomas

Mann (2011), a German writer, who sees time as a mystery, something that cannot be defined clearly. In his novel, *The Magic Mountain*, he states, "What is time? It is a secret, lacking in substance and yet almighty". Like Augustine, Mircea Eliade (2007) claims in *Youth Without Youth*: "What do we do with time? ... Time, the supreme ambiguity of the human condition." Focusing on the same idea, Elizabeth Grosz (2004) claims, in *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely*, that "[time] is neither fully present, a thing in itself, nor is it a pure abstraction ... it contains no moments or ruptures and has no being or presence, functioning only as continuous becoming" (p.5).

Following Grosz's steps, Paul Ricoeur (1990) summarizes the argument of skeptics that "time has no being since the future is not yet, the past is no longer, and the present does not remain" (p.7). In a sense, time does not exist. This non-existence of time also constitutes the focus of Alice Walker (1990) in *The Temple of My Familiar*, where she claims, "an old photograph, an old letter, or a scent from time that otherwise [does] not exist" (p.245).

Emphasizing the same state, John Zerzan (1994) holds in "Time and its Discontents" that "[m]odern physics even provides scenarios in which time ceases to exist, and, in reverse, comes into existence" (1994). All these arguments demonstrate humans' different attitudes about time marked by irreversibility. Whereas some people claim that time is linear, others contend that it can be circular in terms of its relationship to natural rhythms, such as days, months, seasons, years, and epochs. Opposed to this view is the one adopted by people who see time as a "refreshing river", as "constituting the ultimate problem of evil" (Griffin, 1986, p.2), and "as a dotted line progressing from past to future" (Fludernik, 2003, p.119).

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## HAWTHORNE'S TREATMENT OF THE THEME OF TIME

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Reckoning with these attitudes, Hawthorne (1962) treats of the theme of time in *The House of the Seven Gables*, which offers a vivid window into the nineteenth-century American conception of time, and bears the mark of its author's use of different times, such as the objective time, cyclical time, linear time, biological time, etc.. As regards the objective time of the romance, it comprises the period of nearly two centuries. It is the story of Colonel Pyncheon who cheats Matthew Maule out of his land, accuses him of wizardry, and takes the site of the house from him. This misdeed brings about an awful curse that keeps befalling the succeeding generations of Pyncheons who constitute the focus of Hawthorne's romance that retains a chronological order manifest in Hawthorne's delving into his own family history which demonstrates that his grandfather presided over the seventeenth-century

Salem witch trials in which Matthew Maule was charged with witchcraft and hanged. Before dying, Matthew Maule cursed his enemy, Colonel Pyncheon, from the scaffold, arguing, "God will give him blood to drink" (p.22). Hawthorne's arranging events according to their order of occurrence provides an indication of chronology, of a linear temporality represented by clear structures such as a beginning and an end. Colonel Pyncheon's evil deeds at the beginning have determined the end. These misdeeds have given rise to the curse that impacted descendants and stifled their development. As long as time is linear, these misdeeds cannot be reversed; the curse itself cannot be reversed either.

### Linear Temporality

As far as linearity is concerned, the linear temporality shows that time keeps marching on from the past, through the present, to the future, and not in a reverse way; Documenting this continuity, Hawthorne skillfully shows how the past lives into the present and impinges upon it. Holgrave, one of Hawthorne's characters, wonders, "Shall we never, never get rid of this past?" which "lies upon the present like a giant's dead body!" (p.171). Like Holgrave, Clifford holds that the past is a "course and sensual prophecy of the present and the future" (pp. 235-236). Clarifying the connection between the past and the present, Fogle maintains in the "Introduction of *The House of the Seven Gables*" that the present is subtly interfused with the past" (p.8). In his description of Hepzibah's character, Hawthorne holds that she, "for above a quarter of a century gone by, has dwelt in strict seclusion" (p.41). Similarly, Hawthorne argues, "Efforts, it is true, were made by the Pyncheons, not only then, but at various periods for nearly a hundred years afterwards, to obtain what they stubbornly persisted in deeming their right" (p.30). These two examples show that the past and present are woven, which means that they co-exist. To demonstrate this co-existence, Hawthorne uses several devices of which one is the house itself that is a container of the memories of the Pyncheons of the past and today's Pyncheons. Another device is the map; a third one is the portrait; a fourth one is the elm tree. In addition to showing the coexistence of the past and present, these devices blur the relationship between them.

### Cyclical Temporality

Central to this conception of time is Hawthorne's treatment of the theme of sin that outlives sinners and affects succeeding generations. This view of sin evinces a cyclical conception of time which consists in believing that life events repeat themselves. This same conception marks the way we view life. While we think of time as a line, we experience it as consisting of cycles, an experience that is also supported by the way, J. Hillis Miller (2003) argues in "Time in Literature", our lives are structured. We talk about five days of work and two days of rest throughout most of the year (pp. 86-97). Arguing in support of this

view is Clifford who claims: "... all human progress is in a circle; or, to use more accurate and beautiful figure, in an ascending spiral curve. While we fancy ourselves going straight forward and attaining, at every step, an entirely new position of affairs, we do actually return to something long ago tried and abandoned, but which we now find etherealized, refined, and perfected to its ideal" (pp. 235-236). This argument demonstrates that Clifford does not see time as a straight line. Rather, he sees it as a spiral. For this reason, his conception of time is cyclical. He sees time as circular in terms of its relationship to natural rhythms, such as days, months, seasons, years, and epochs. He does not see time as linear because, in response to the horrors of his experience in prison, his sanity wears thin and his weakened mind creates a kind of temporality that denies the linear flow of time. Clifford's timeline ceases to be linear and the force of recollection grows to be so strong that he takes himself to be traveling in time. Describing Clifford, Hawthorne maintains, "Continually, as we may express it, he faded away out of his place; or, in other words, his mind and consciousness took their departure, leaving his wasted, gray, and melancholy figure – a substantial emptiness, a material ghost – to occupy his seat at table" (p.106). Hawthorne adds, "Again, after a blank moment, there would be a flickering taper- gleam in his eyeballs. It beckoned that his spiritual part had returned, and was doing its best to kindle the heart's household fire, and light up intellectual lamps in the dark and ruinous mansion, where it was doomed to be a forlorn inhabitant" (p.106). This depiction of Clifford probably implies that this is the rational response to something as horrifying as jail. Clifford has been reduced to a "wasted, gray, and melancholy figure... a material ghost" (p.106).

### Rejecting the Present

This transformation into a ghost is not only imposed from without, it is also felt within. It also seems to be the fruit of seclusion and reluctance to plunge down into the parade of life in the street. Commenting on the impact of their way of life, Clifford, addressing his sister, claims, "We are ghosts! We have no right – no right anywhere, but in this old house" (p.169). Clifford and his sister, Hepzibah, have both insulated themselves against the present which is, to them, as burdensome as the past. Denying time, they both refuse to accept the collapse of aristocracy at present. Tenacious of her identity as an aristocrat, Hepzibah, for instance, is having trouble with accepting the idea of working at the cent-shop to earn her living. Similarly, Clifford equally rejects "the idea of personal contact with the world" (p.156). The reason underlying Hepzibah and Clifford's rejection of the present is probably their being blinded by their aristocracy, their holding themselves to be superior to others. This superiority with its concomitant privileges informs their rejection of any change. This consciousness of their place makes them realize that

they have rights only in the house with the seven gables where they have been maintaining their illusions and living in the past which Hawthorne reconstructs by using the portrait of Colonel Pyncheon, a map, cups, and photographs. Whereas the photograph represents a cultural and historical evidence, the map and the portrait represent cultural memory. These objects make the past palpable throughout the novel. They show not only how the past lives into the present but also how it impinges upon it. Some of these objects have become boring. Fed up with one of them, the portrait, that has been hung on the wall for a long time, Clifford asks Hepzibah, his sister, to take it down. Addressing his sister, he wonders, "Why do you keep that odious picture on the wall?... I have told you, a thousand times, that it was the evil genius of the house – my evil genius particularly! Take it down, at once!" (p.111). Instead of taking that picture down, Hepzibah determines to cover it with a "crimson curtain" (p.111), which shows that she is a past-oriented person who respects her ancestors and old people. As for Clifford's asking her to take the portrait down, he seems to have remembered unhappy moments when he got unfair treatment. Obsessed with the crippling effects of those unhappy moments, he cannot focus on the present or future. He gets stuck in anger about all that has happened. He is unable to do anything about that. Clifford's dwelling too much in the past precludes his having the time or perspective to engage the present or prepare for the future. He keeps criticizing, condemning, and complaining about people who have done him wrong. He is not even worried about life necessities which he has relegated to Hepzibah who tells him about their financial troubles. She makes it clear to him that they are starving, and that they'll have a hard time leading a better life than that they have led.

### Future Orientation

Unlike Hepzibah, Phoebe is a future – oriented person. She looks forward, driven by her optimistic attitude toward life. She also keeps up a positive image of herself and of her surroundings amid difficult circumstances. Being a catalyst for change, Phoebe offers, AL-Shalabi(2010) maintains in "The House as Container: Architecture in *The House of the Seven Gables*," "Clifford and Hepzibah an entrance to a new life, a great opportunity for change that sweeps them despite insulating themselves against time and uncertainty by keeping the past alive"(pp. 117-118). She also provides, AL-Shalabi adds, "a clear window through which they can see beyond the windows of the mansion" (p.118). Undaunted by Hepzibah's treatment, she makes sacrifices by devoting some of her time to Clifford whose illusions of aristocracy are to blame for his rejecting "the idea of personal contact with the world" (p.156). Despite this stand, she changes him for the better by sitting with him in the garden, giving him a flower (p.110), and reading poems. Much more important than this is that she gives him an "affectionate regard,

because he [needs] so much love, and [seems] to have received so little" (p.137). By virtue of this love, she helps Clifford regain his social intercourse after living secluded for a long time. Similarly, she also exercises a parallel influence on Hepzibah who has been isolating herself from other people in the community, rejecting change, and maintaining a pessimistic attitude about life. Phoebe acts this way probably out of her belief that future is in the family, and that doing a good job with family members builds the base for it. Driven by her optimism, she continues to trust people and expect the best. She also takes chances and tries new ideas. She contacts Holgrave who is a Maule and an adversary of the Pyncheons. She meets him, talks to him, and gives him a piece of advice. While sitting together, they both plan for their marriage which is significant in many ways. Firstly, this marriage represents the balance between the head and the heart. Secondly, such a love-based marriage gives us an insight into the value of love that is an important recipe for life, civilization, and happiness. Thirdly, this marriage can be interpreted as being indicative of the ability to make a new beginning, which is a marker of, Hisao Tanaka (2004) argues in "Modes of 'Different' Time in American Literature" "the attitude and faith of the majority of American people" (p.78). Fourthly, Holgrave and Phoebe are two representatives of democracy. Unthreatened by the past, they are planning to start afresh, looking forward not backward. This choice made by both of them is due to their time orientation solely responsible for their being different from others on various occasions.

### **Detachment from Time**

In stark contrast with this image of Phoebe and Holgrave is Hawthorne's image of the Pyncheons whose portrayal shows that their characteristics are passed on from one generation to another. These Pyncheons seem to have fixed traits that do not change from time to time (pp. 120-121), and Hawthorne's depicting them this way probably hints at his attempt to express certain arrested traits in time, and give the illusion of their being "frozen". Hawthorne is perhaps trying to create a sensation of time-freezing and a sense of detachment from time. This type of sense creates a state of stasis which Fr. J. Hoffman (1965) associates with the vision of Edenic past (pp. 4, 24-27). According to Hoffman, this stasis is a state of innocence connected with the journey of American personality from innocence to experience, and it is represented by the static traits probably related to the Pyncheons' endeavor to cleanse themselves of the stains of American civilization, and to get away, Porter (1981) argues in *Seeing and Being*, from society, history, institutions, and bonds of any kind (xiii). These static traits can be also interpreted as being indicative of the state of non-change which Hawthorne is probably advocating as the solution for the miseries of humans who are trapped in time and are so preoccupied with it that the word "time" has become, Zimbardo (2008)

maintains in *The Time Paradox: The New Psychology of Time That Will Change Your Life*, the most popular noun in the English language, "even trumping sex" (p.43). Moreover, the Pyncheons' maintaining certain traits is likely meant to show their rejection of the Christian view of time as being linear and reflective of the technological progress.

### **Biological Time**

As far as stasis is concerned, the Pyncheons' maintaining certain characteristics runs counter to biological time that affects humans during their lifetimes. This variety of time is accompanied by changes which occur as a result of ageing. To take an example, there are changes that become of the female body and limit the woman's chances of getting married. This argument holds true of Hepzibah whose "features" have become "harsh with age and grief" (p.131). Ageing has made her uglier, and, consequently, "a grief to Clifford" (p.131) because he is marked by "his invincible distaste for her appearance" (p.131). In contrast with Hepzibah, Judge Pyncheon is old, but his age does not stop him from getting married. He has married "three wives" whom he has sent "to their graves" (p.120). He has also "wedded" "a single wife" and "lost her in the third or fourth year of their marriage" (pp. 120-121). These two characters exemplify the changes that become of humans due to ageing. In other words, these changes are imposed upon humans. Hepzibah and Judge Pyncheon who have changed have both unwillingly changed via ageing. Were they given the choice, they might not choose to change. While Hepzibah, in particular, may hold this type of change to be unwelcome, she approves of a parallel change in her standard of living. After the collapse of aristocracy which she denies for a time, she accepts the possibility of changing her future as well as her brother's and bringing about progress in their standard of living. Out of this consciousness, she agrees to work at the scent-shop attached to the house. This choice is the fruit of her realizing that they are poor, and that they will starve unless she works at the cent-shop. Such a choice reflects her fear of poverty and longing for luxury and prosperity. It also impacts her future life.

### **Gendered Temporality**

The additional value that can be attached to this choice is that it reflects the gendered temporality of the nineteenth-century America. Hawthorne shows that males are responsible for production and profit, those aspects of the culture associated with the new historical consciousness of the time. Judge Pyncheon, for instance, studied law, and after many years, attained a "judicial situation in some inferior court, which gave him for life the very desirable and imposing title of judge" (p.35).

Then he "served a part of two terms in Congress, besides making a considerable figure in both branches of the State legislature" (p.35). Holgrave, similarly, earned



his living as a schoolmaster, a "salesman in a country store" (p.165), an editor, a peddler, a "public lecturer on Mesmerism" (p.166), and a daguerreotypist. Like Holgrave, Hepzibah is a breadwinner, and supports her brother, Clifford. Hepzibah's becoming a breadwinner is something that is not in harmony with the role expected of her. Similar to other women, she is expected to be busy with reproduction, and the labors of bearing and rearing children. As long as she is unmarried and her brother needs much care, she looks after him the same way a mother does. This job of Hepzibah ties her to an older temporal order, that of nature and its laws, and accounts for, Elizabeth A. Campbell (2003) contends in *Fortune's Wheel: Dickens and the Iconography of Women's Time*, the association between cyclicity and "women's time" (p. xxiii, 253). Reiterating Campbell's argument, Aharon Kellerman (1989) claims, in *Time, Space, and Society: Geographical Societal Perspectives*, that "[cyclical] time, which has been a basic characteristic of traditional societies, may be interpreted as feminine time" (p.61). Kellerman (1989) adds that "women more than men experience biological and interrelated psychological cycles in their lives" (p.61). These cycles are related to cyclical temporality that coexists with the linear temporality and complements it.

### Coexistence of Linear and Cyclical Temporalities

This coexistence of the linear and cyclical temporalities means that we live with a paradox. We experience linear time as consisting of cycles, and talk about life that can be subdivided into cycles. Not only do these linear and cyclical temporalities representing two different aspects of western perception of time coexist, but also complement each other. Arguing in support of this view, David Knights (2006) contends, in "Passing the Time in Pastimes, Professionalism and Politics: Reflecting on the Ethics and Epistemology of Time Studies," that within the cyclical demands on a person there are linear sequences, such as meal times, school attendance, and children's bed times that operate simultaneously with and as constraints on non-linear conceptions of time (p.7). Although these two temporalities seem to be contradictory, they complement each other. They both conceive of time as a sequence where the past and future are connected. Whereas linear time ties in with the idea of progress that things get better and better through the course of time, and conceives of time as a sequence in which the past leads to the future, the cyclical time view depicts a sequence showing a recurring pattern of events in which the past and the future are connected. Despite this similarity, they are different in their signification. While the linear time reflects progress and the movement forward, the cyclical provides a sense of continuity and integrity.

Apart from these values, Hawthorne's use of these two temporalities is significant. He uses the linear time, on one hand, for his detailed account of the history of the

Pyncheons whose ancestor is the founder of the seven-gabled house that was built on a piece of land belonging to Matthew Maule whom Colonel Pyncheon charged with witchcraft and arranged for his being executed. This awful death of Matthew Maule means that the site of the seven-gabled house has become the property of the Pyncheons whose influential acquaintances help them with defending their claims. Hawthorne's employment of the linear time that is irreversible suggests that what's done is done and cannot be undone, and that there is no turning back. Hawthorne also suggests that human life is short, and that death is a certainty. To convey this idea, he gives a detailed account of the death of Colonel Pyncheon who did his utmost to own the land and build the house on it. Despite his power, Colonel Pyncheon couldn't do anything against his terrible death that stunned his family members as well as neighbors. This tragic event that marks a boundary in time drives the plot. On the other hand, Hawthorne suggests that there is another way to characterize time. He shows how sins outlive sinners and impact succeeding generations. By treating this theme, Hawthorne implies that time is also cyclical in nature, a characteristic that is manifest in the cyclical nature of the Pyncheons, their rise and fall. He also comments on the nature of hens that have risen and have also begun falling, a change manifest in their degeneration and becoming "scarcely larger than pigeons" with "a queer, rusty, withered aspect, and a gouty kind of movement, and a sleepy and melancholy tone throughout all the variations of their clucking and cackling" (p.92). This pattern of rise and fall is also reflected by the collapse of aristocracy. Furthermore, it is reflected by the succeeding generations of the Pyncheons impacted by the sins and Maule's curse and of whom, it can be said, each generation represents a cycle. The Maules also represent similar cycles. These generations of the Pyncheons and the Maules have paved the way for the appearance of Phoebe, a descendant of the Pyncheons, and Holgrave, a descendant of the Maules, who no longer view each other as adversaries. They meet together and agree on getting married. This union of Phoebe and Holgrave is probably intended by Hawthorne who seems to be saying that cyclical time provides us with the hope that misfortunes can be reversed. This marriage also suggests a circle that is symbolic of regeneration, rebirth, and renewal.

As far as circularity is concerned, Hawthorne employs the circle motif, allying the Pyncheons with the daily cycle of sunrise and sunset. Using the sun in connection with the house itself, Hawthorne argues, "Thus the great house was built. Familiar ... as it stands, in its rusty old age, it is therefore only the more difficult to imagine the bright novelty with which it first caught the sunshine" (p.23). This sunshine signifies the beginning of life in the seven-gabled house. Hawthorne adds, "The early sunshine \_\_\_ as fresh as that which peeped into Eve's bower while she and Adam sat at breakfast there \_\_\_ came twinkling

through the branches of the pear tree, and fell quite across the table”(p.102). Hawthorne also uses the sun with the elm tree and the cent-shop attached to the house. He claims,“...The sunshine might now be seen stealing down the front of the opposite house, from the windows of which came a reflected gleam, struggling through the boughs of the elm tree, and enlightening the interior of the shop more distinctly than heretofore”(pp. 49-50). “Sunshine” here also marks the birth of a new day and the start of a new life for Hepzibah at the cent-shop where she works to earn her living. As for the elm tree mentioned, it stands for life, and its rings of growth that are circular record the Pyncheons’ lives and parallel their generations. In addition to using the sun in connection with the house and the elm tree, Hawthorne uses it in connection with his characters. Telling Phoebe about Clifford, Hepzibah contends that “[he] has had but little sunshine in his life \_\_ poor Clifford” (p.104). Emphasizing the same idea that “sunlight” stands for happiness and life, Hawthorne maintains, “But, as the sunlight left the peaks of the Seven Gables, so did the excitement fade out of Clifford’s eyes. He gazed vaguely and mournfully about him, as if he missed something precious, and missed it the more drearily for not knowing precisely what it was ”(p.149). Hawthorne also makes the necessary connection between Holgrave and Phoebe on the one hand and the sun on the other. The rationale for this connection is Phoebe’s role. She infuses a new life into the house the same way the sun does. Being sun-like, Phoebe empowers, Al-Shalabi (2010) contends in “The House as Container: Architecture in The House of the Seven Gables,” “Clifford, Hepzibah, and Holgrave”(p.16). Phoebe’s connection with the sun, Al-Shalabi adds, “is meant to reflect her role in the family mansion as a catalyst for change”(p.16). Regarding Holgrave’s connection with the sun, he is a daguerreotypist, and it is his job to make paintings from sunlight. Hawthorne’s using the sun that is circular this way is perhaps meant to emphasize the cyclical nature of time as well as the presence of the natural world in the romance, a job that is further consummated by the detailed description of flowers in the garden, shrubs, birds, and the elm tree in front of the house.

### **Interfusing the Past with the Present**

This act of fusing the natural and physical worlds together equally parallels Hawthorne’s weaving the linear time and cyclical time, and interfusing the past with the present. By virtue of the last act, incorporating the past into the present, Hawthorne unlocks the potentiality for renewal, constructing the future as an American territory.

In a sense, Hawthorne uses time as a medium for creating a new arena where America can expand in time just as it has expanded in space. Emphasizing this use of time, John L. O’Sullivan (1839) claims, in “The Great Nation of Futurity,” that time is the medium for an effusive nationalism in which the future itself will

become an American territory(pp. 426-430). O’Sullivan believes that America is qualified to extend through time for God has given it the mission of spreading democracy throughout North America(pp. 426-430). Arguing in favor of this contention, Kaplan(2002) maintains, in *Gale Encyclopedia of US Foreign Policy: Nationalism*, that the US, despite its flaws in the past and the present, can expand in time in view of the qualities associated with American nationalism, mainly “an open society, a mobile society, and above all a society divinely favored” (p.14). These qualities are markers of strength, and qualify the US to shoulder the responsibility of passing on its system of government to other countries. Commending these qualities, Kaplan adds that they “remain a force in America as long as the nation-state system of governance prevails among the peoples of the World”(p.14). These nation-states, according to Opello(2004), are expected to be “the basic building blocks of the global order” (p.2) for the foreseeable future.

### **Future as an American Territory**

As far as futurity is concerned, Hawthorne shows that Americans’ faith in the future constitutes the motive underlying their actions. Just as religious faith motivates missionaries, so does faith in the future motivate Phoebe and Holgrave in *The House of the Seven Gables*. They are both optimists; they are also marked by their faith in the future, and have a strong sense of success. Being future-oriented, they focus on their future life together, taking advantage of the love relationship binding them, and dismissing the past problems between their families. They meet together, and plan for getting married. They make this choice to build some secure footing after witnessing the horrors of the curse befalling the Pyncheons. This choice itself demonstrates that they both look to the future after overcoming the problems of the past related to land property. It also shows that they have created their own recipe for a happy future life. Moreover, the choice to get married represents a present investment that will help them with growing into the future. This growth renders them superior to others, and makes it easy for them to spread their world views. Similarly, America itself can easily grow into the future via making so many investments in technology, which certainly empowers the country. In this way, the “far-reaching” and “boundless future” becomes, O’Sullivan holds, “the era of American Greatness”(p.17). Underlining this idea, O’Sullivan(1839) adds, “The expansive future is our arena, and for our history. We are entering on its untrodden space”(p.17). O’Sullivan’s declaration indicates that Americans are working on making future their own territory. When this job is done, it’ll be a great achievement that sets the US above other nations. However, America itself has already jumped the gun, and has really begun working on imposing its claims pertaining to, Howard Zinn (2005) argues, bringing “civilization, or democracy, or liberty

to the rest of the world, by violence if necessary," upon other nations, capitalizing on the notion of American exceptionalism that consists in its having the right, whether by divine sanction or moral obligation, to play this role.

This role that America has been playing sets it apart just as the Declaration of Independence does. Whereas America takes itself to be a divine-favored country and acts in accordance with this belief, the Declaration of Independence sets Americans apart because it is based on equality and a new untried form of government. It is a democratic government that honors diversity, pluralism, liberty, equality, and justice. It is a successful democracy that depends, Fukuyama (2006) contends in *The End of History and the Last Man*, "in large measure on the existence of a genuine political community that agrees on certain basic shared values and institutions" (2006). This present form of government can live into the future territory, constructed by integrating the past into the present, where the US can demonstrate its superiority to other nations by maintaining the necessary balance between its claims and actions, treating other nations equally, defending the rights of all humans, and promoting certain values of which love, justice, and equality are ones. The value of this love is that it binds people in this democracy, brings about happiness, negates selfishness, gives rise to peace and prosperity, and grows into the future, securing a happy and peaceful life. As regards equality, it is a necessity in this new territory because it leads to the absence of grievances and injustices that both give birth to violence which does all peoples harm. Equality is also the root of satisfaction, sacrifice, and development. This argument is also true of justice.

### Unified Conception of Time

In addition to equality, this democracy is also marked by a unified conception of time. This unity is both possible and desirable because time, Burrell (1992) argues in "Back to the Future: Time and Organization", can hardly be described as being only linear or cyclical, but it can be thought of as a combination of both of them. Time is not completely linear; it's not completely cyclical either.

When events occur, they do not do so in a straight line. They succeed each other randomly. When we also discuss the everyday lives of men and women, we cannot focus solely on linear time or cyclical time because they use time differently according to their life situations. Therefore, the best thing to be done is to synthesize these two temporalities so that time becomes spiral-like. The spiral itself is a line that turns on itself, shares, Cooper (1982) claims in *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols*, "the symbolism of the labyrinth" (p.156), and has a special significance to human beings. The human history is like a spiral. Looked at from a psychological point of view, the spiral symbolizes the process of transformation, and represents spiritual growth. In *The House of the Seven Gables*, the spiral

has a personal meaning for Clifford. It symbolizes his role as a member of a class distracted by the collapse of aristocracy, and left drifting into an uncertain present. Crippled by restlessness, he as well as his sister, Hepzibah, flees the house, and goes on a journey by train on which he meets a few men, and talks to them about railroads that he describes as being "the greatest blessing that the ages have wrought out for us. They give us wings; they annihilate the toil and dust of pilgrimage; they spiritualize travel" (p.236). After a while, he argues, "Let us alight, as the birds do, and perch ourselves on the nearest twig" (p.241). Becoming the master and leader, he "[leaves] the car, and [draws] Hepzibah along with him". They both start gazing drearily about them. At a little distance, they see "a wooden church, black with age, and in a dismal state of ruin and decay, with broken windows, a great rift through the main body of the edifice" (p.241). They stand on the platform, raise their hands to the sky, and ask God to take mercy on them (p.242). These quotations reflect Hepzibah and Clifford's spiritual growth indicated by their spiral journey by train which White holds to be a "vehicle of freedom and a new, spiritualized faith" (p.50). This journey has led to their going to church.

### CONCLUSION

I have shown that Hawthorne treats of the impact of sin upon succeeding generations, that a theme of this sort necessitates the use of different times, that time is ineffable, that time keeps passing by and cannot be denied, that time brings about changes, that time is irreversible, that time-orientation affects people's choices, that time is used differently by males and females, and that Hawthorne uses time as a medium to construct a new territory. I have also demonstrated that Hawthorne integrates the past into the present to renew time and construct the future as a new American territory ruled by democracy whose people are love-bound and equal. This future territory is also marked by a unified time resulting from synthesizing the linear and cyclical temporalities into a spiral. Moreover, I have remarked that Americans' faith in the future is the motive underlying their present actions, and that present investments lead to growing into the future.

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