Landscape in Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*

Abstract

It is argued that the house of the seven gables landscape is a potent physical manifestation of the nineteenth-century residential design ideals, that it is a representation of the interactive relationship between humans and landscape, and that it is an embodiment of the Pyncheons' perceptions.

The examination of the role landscape plays reveals that this landscape consists in mediation and integration, and that it forges a reciprocal relationship between architecture and site. Even though the building materials are local and the house form is borrowed from England, the house plan demonstrates integration between the landscape design and the site, alignment between the house and the existing landscape, the marriage of the house form and function, and the confluence of the inside and outside.

The discussion demonstrates that the house landscape presents a different landscape perception, that humans and landscape are friends, and that landscape which has a temporal dimension is innovatively used by Hawthorne who, attaching a number of values to it and reckoning with its modern understanding that often emphasizes its conceptual and cultural significance, employs novelty to emphasize its value in a gripping romance that rejects the familiar for the unfamiliar and the sublime.

In the first half of the nineteenth century writers and artists alike were concerned with the American landscape. Numerous artists, of whom members of the Hudson River School were ones, expressed their belief in the harmony between nature and humans. Influenced by the European romantic landscape painting, these painters created artworks showing an “almost religious reverence for the magnificence of the American wilderness”. ¹ Largely led by the work and writings of Thomas Cole, they also created vast, awe-inspiring scenes showing the “unrestrained and even threatening characteristics of the American wilderness” ² Writers, likewise, reflected a parallel attitude in their writings that glorified nature and celebrated individualism. To take an example, Ralph Waldo Emerson, a transcendentalist, wrote in 1836 an essay titled *Nature: Addresses and Lectures* in which he comments on the relationship between humans and nature. Another transcendentalist, H.D. Thoreau, a close associate of Emerson, called for preserving the wilderness in an essay written before his death in 1862. Echoing these writers, Washington Irving and James Cooper...
Nathaniel Hawthorne as an Artist: The Use of Color in The House of the Seven Gables. He argues that Nathaniel Hawthorne is fascinated with colors, that color plays a great role in The House of the Seven Gables, and that he uses colors in a number of ways indicative of his skill and creativity.

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use woods as settings for their stories and a source of inspiration for their characters. This landscape used by these writers became more "emphatically associated with natural, non-urban scenery" during the Enlightenment. In the Romantic Period the worship of nature and of the Sublime in it pushed landscape "into remoter retreat from signs of developed civilization" The Romantics believed that nature was the "inherent possessor of abstract qualities such as truth, beauty, independence, and democracy". Wild nature, thus, became a source of national pride "as the root of character traits for a unique national identity".

The idea of wilderness

The idea of wilderness is "deeply engrained in the American psyche." "Rugged, mountainous, verdant landscapes" are held to be an expression of American national identity. The obstacles presented by the wilderness are thought of as fostering the "beloved American traits of independence, ingenuity, pragmatism, and resourcefulness". In addition to this, the natural resources of the wilderness make the country rich and help powerful businessmen with amassing overwhelming fortunes by exploiting them. In a sense, powerful businessmen become millionaires by exploiting the wilderness, an act that is in stark contrast with the call for maintaining the wilderness as the wellspring of American nationalism. These two attitudes represent two contrasting views of nature. However, this complex relationship with nature has been maintained, and this same story about the importance of nature for the country has been told by art. Thomas Moran, an artist, uses his keen observations of the west "to transform it into the promised land of America". Accompanying two geological surveys to the west, he provides "powerful images of the American west". For his painting "The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone," the Congress allocates ten thousand dollars, which is an indication of the importance of the land of West and of the "federal endorsement of wilderness" as the source of American nationality.

In addition to painters, writers also tell the story of nature and its relationship with man. In The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne demonstrates that humans and nature are inseparable, and that humans are part of nature and enveloped by it. Aiming at literary distinction, Hawthorne employs an established literary form, the romance, and adapts concepts from British aesthetic philosophy (the notion of novelty and the descriptive theory of the sublime), with the purpose of providing an instance of "American romance" and building an argument for a native literary voice. In the preface to The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne explains for over two pages this issue of novelty that was linked via the philosophical discourse of the aesthetic to the impact a work can have on the minds of its audience. "Novelty" was not only the "preeminent buzzword but also perhaps the most universally legitimate value of eighteenth-century criticism". Burke wrote about it at length in his
philosophical *Enquiry* in which the first section is entitled “Novelty”. It was also clear across the 18th century aesthetic theory that “a work of art could spur the imagination only if it was delivered by something novel”\(^\text{14}\). In a treatise written in 1716, Sir Richard Blackmore claims that novelty is the parent of admiration which engages the attention and so prepares and opens the mind to “admit” the force of the poet’s sentiments, and receive from them deep impressions\(^\text{15}\). By contrast, the familiar or the customary “tends to produce in the reader a psychological state of indifference akin to the physiological state of lethargy (Clery 28)\(^\text{16}\). The customary seems to be the enemy of sublimity as John Baillie explained in his 1747 Essay on the Sublime\(^\text{17}\). To Kant, the sublime brought one closer to God because it emphasized one’s smallness in His presence\(^\text{18}\).

### The sublime and the marvellous

The sublime as well as the marvellous is at the centre of Hawthorne’s attention in *The House of the Seven Gables*. To give delight and convey his message, Hawthorne claims in the preface that “when a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume had he professed to be writing a Novel”\(^\text{19}\). While the novel “is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man’s experience”\(^\text{20}\), the romance “has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer’s own choosing or creation”\(^\text{21}\). These arguments occurring in Hawthorne’s preface to *The House of the Seven Gables* demonstrate the writer’s adoption of novelty to produce a romance and, thus, “to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material”\(^\text{22}\). As regards the fashion, Hawthorne may “manage his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights and deepen and enrich the shadows of the picture”\(^\text{23}\). Moreover, he will be wise to mingle the Marvelous rather as a slight, delicate, and evanescent flavor than as any portion of the actual substance of the dish offered to the public\(^\text{24}\). Concerning the material, Hawthorne argues that “this tale comes under the Romantic definition” in its “attempt to connect a bygone time with the very present that is flitting away from us”, and that “[i]t is a legend prolonging itself, from an epoch now gray in the distance, down into our own broad daylight, and bringing along with it some of its legendary mist”\(^\text{25}\). It becomes clear that the business of romance is to excite the attention and direct it to some useful end. To achieve this end, a sufficient degree of the marvellous is required as well as “enough of the manners of real life” to give an air of probability to the work; and “enough of the pathetic to engage the heart in its behalf”\(^\text{26}\).

### The house as a focal point.
The first sentence of the novel establishes the House as a focal point. It is like a close-up shot that focuses the viewer's eyes on the "rusty wooden house, with seven acutely peaked gables, facing towards various points of the compass, and a huge, clustered chimney in the midst". This house stands "half-way down a bystreet of one of our New England towns". Even though this house is situated on a bystreet, it is in focus and at the centre of the reader's attention. Before Colonel Pyncheon built this house, he sought for a suitable site. While searching, the Colonel's eyes fell on an "acre or two of earth" which Mathew Maule, a man hanged for witchcraft, "had hewn out of the primeval forest to be his garden ground and homestead". To satisfy his desire, Colonel Pyncheon, a man of great power, "asserted plausible claims to the proprietorship of not only this site chosen by Maule but also of "a large adjacent tract of land, on the strength of a grant from the legislature". Having done this job, Colonel Pyncheon chose an architect called Thomas Maule to build the house. When the plan had been prepared, Colonel Pyncheon "dug his cellar, and laid the deep foundations of his mansion, on the square of earth whence Matthew Maule, forty years before, had first swept away the fallen leaves". The value of this house plan lies in its showing property lines, location, utilities, walks, drives, and topographic features. According to this plan, the first landscape area is the public one that is "visible from the front of the house and street". This area contains the walks, drive and front entrance. In The House of the Seven Gables, "the principal entrance... was covered by an open porch, with benches beneath its shelter".

This open porch is culturally significant. The cultural significance of the front porch lies in "its connection to nature and the land surrounding it" and throughout "the history of our nation Americans have idealized nature and land". Despite this attitude, Americans have conquered nature by "building towns and cities, clearing forests, and otherwise civilizing the land". These quotations reveal two opposing ideals compromised by the front porch which "connected human control, in the form of the house, to nature and the wilderness outside it". This porch, in essence, "served as a vital transition between the uncontrollable out-of-doors and the cherished interior of the home". As far as the house interior is concerned, the principal entrance door leads to a "handsomely furnished room of moderate size, somewhat darkened by curtains". Facing this door is the Pyncheon Elm, which, "in reference to such trees as one usually meets with, might well be termed gigantic ... It gave beauty to the old edifice, and seemed to make it a part of nature".

**The relationship between humans and nature**

As far as nature is concerned, the relationship between humans and nature is probably at the center of Hawthorne's attention. This argument is intensified by the Americans' queries and debates reflected in the nineteenth-century art. In a painting titled "The Connecticut River near Northampton", for instance, Thomas Cole visually...
recorded in 1836 the tension between savagery and civilization. Like these painters, Hawthorne, whose wife was a painter, might have chosen to address this issue. Accordingly, he might have made use of perspective, the same way photographers do, to emphasize the value of nature represented by this elm tree which appears to be bigger because it is closer than other objects to us. The size of the tree is probably meant to show the importance of nature in the greater scheme of things. It may also suggest that nature is too powerful to be governed. This tree that is part of nature is contrasted with the house and its architecture that both represent the development of the human mind or civilization. The house and the tree that are juxtaposed may be viewed as representing the marriage of nature and civilization, the harmony between nature and humans. The Elm tree itself is depicted as “throwing its shadow from side to side of the street, overtopping the seven gables, and sweeping the whole black roof with its pendent foliage.” Depending on the image Hawthorne constructs of this tree, two arguments can be made. The first argument is that nature won’t disappear for the sake of civilization and that both of them won’t be in perpetual tension as some Americans claim, but they will be in harmony. This image shows nature extending its arms to provide the shade humans need, and to maintain its connection with them via “its pendent foliage,” which seem to envelope humans, fostering a sense of neighborliness. Furthermore, this image also contrasts nature with humans. Nature is projected against a backdrop of blackness represented by the “whole black roof” of the house. The second argument is that nature is benign and humans are evil. Despite these evils of humans, nature is still keen on maintaining its connection with them. Nature’s interest in maintaining connection is hinted at by the “pendent foliage”. Besides, this image also challenges the predominant view of nature as a savage wilderness and an impediment to civilization.

Hawthorne’s placing the elm tree at the front of the house occurs for two reasons. Firstly, he probably wants Americans to give priority for nature over other concerns due to its being a place humans can turn to for escape from their too-much-ness and a refuge that humans should recover to save themselves, in fulfillment of Henry David Thoreau’s argument, “In wildness is the preservation of the world.” Secondly, Hawthorne’s placing and underlining the unusual size of the elm tree and its wide circumference is perhaps intended to show that this is a site where one feels insignificant and experiences awe. “When seen at its best the Elm is a very large tree, even exceeding 120 feet in height, and 40 or so feet in girth, though seldom over 100 feet high or 30 feet round.” When one considers one’s size in relation to that of this tree, one is certain to feel insignificant. This state parallels that of astonishment in which, according to Burke, “motions are suspended, with some degree of horror.” This passion of astonishment is also invoked by, Burke argues, “a successive disposition of uniform parts in the same line.” It is this repetition that gives rise to sublimity. This argument is true of the exterior of the house of the seven
gables that was ornamented with "quaint figures, conceived in the grotesqueness of a Gothic fancy, and drawn or stamped in the glittering plaster, composed of lime, pebbles, and bits of glass, with which the woodwork of the walls was overspread." This sublimity is also reflected by the seven gables that "pointed sharply towards the sky, and presented the aspect of a whole sisterhood of edifices, breathing through the spiracles of one great chimney." Sublimity also lies in "the many lattices with their small, diamond-shaped panes" that "admitted the sunlight into hall and chamber." It is interesting to note that the latticework and fences of the house define property lines and provide privacy.

Regarding the repetition of lattices, this act is highly significant. This number of lattices gives rise to sublimity and invokes the passion of astonishment which is symptomatic of a person's encounter with the sublime, a discourse that has been at the center of the attention of intellectuals since the first century and has been preoccupying the minds of Longinus, Edmund Burke, Immanuel Kant, Arthur Schopenhauer, Martin Heidegger, Sigmund Freud, and Jean-Francois Lyotard. Hawthorne, likewise, is concerned with the sublime in *The House of the Seven Gables*. He uses certain words and phrases in his description of the house of the seven gables such as steep, shades, dim, overhang, precipice, and overtop to suggest sublimity. Hawthorne also claims that the single elm tree arises above the whole black roof. This statement provides a powerful gothic image of vertical sublime in nature. Moreover, he maintains that a large, dim looking glass used to hang in one of the rooms. Hawthorne adds that the looking glass was fabled to contain within its depths all the shapes that had ever been reflected there. As long as we are inside the house, let's examine the stairs and the "dusky, time-darkened passage" Hepzibah steps into before she enters a "low-studded room," "with a beam across the ceiling, paneled with dark wood, and having a large chimney piece, set round with pictured tiles." A quick look at the looking glass and the stairways reveals that they both give rise to the events that move the plot. In other words, the landscape, that is not solely limited to what is seen, provides material conditions of the possibility of aesthetic novelty and the gothic plot elements Hawthorne uses. These two images also provide us with the indication that the American landscape does not only inspire us but also effectively authors an American literature.

**Landscape as a reflection of our tastes, our values, and our aspirations**

Landscape as such also reflects "our tastes, our values, our aspirations, and even our fears in tangible, visible form." Moreover, man-made things, be they small or great, "provide strong evidence of the kind of people we are, were, and will be." In this
way, landscape becomes something of an autobiography, a historic document demonstrating the interaction of humans and all that they have been doing to "alter the face of the earth." In line with this argument, the house of the seven gables architecture represents an expression of the Pyncheons' encroachment upon the landscape and attempt at framing their place in nature, and the house plan itself is an embodiment of their conception of their own place within the larger landscape. Hawthorne makes it clear that the house defines the Pyncheons' social worth. In his description of this house, he argues that people invited to Colonel Pyncheon's ceremony looked, upon approaching, "upward at the imposing edifice, which was henceforth to assume its rank among the habitations of mankind." Hawthorne adds that "it arose, a little withdrawn from the line of the street, but in pride, not modesty." Reflecting upon the change becoming of the landscape, Hawthorne claims that the street in which the house "upreared its venerable peaks has long ceased to be a fashionable quarter of the town, so that, though the old edifice was surrounded by habitations of modern date, they were mostly small, built entirely of wood, and typical of the most plodding uniformity of common life." In Hawthorne's argument, we notice that the house of the seven gables is contrasted with the small houses surrounding it and which are much smaller than it is. It can be also noticed that the landscape keeps changing and that a parallel change becomes of the garden, "which undoubtedly had once been extensive, but was now infringed upon by other enclosures, or shut in by habitations and out buildings" standing on another street.

As regards using wood, a non-living material, it "has been used in many ways in North American buildings, serving as skeleton, skin, ornament, and even the entire building." It requires less maintenance than living materials that may require watering, trimming, etc. The house itself is framed of "oaken timber" whose use was not due to its abundance, but, as Kimball argues, to "the perpetuation of English custom where the need for abandoning it was lacking." This house roof is also covered with wood shingles. This roof "preserves the structure of the house, imparts much of its architectural character, sheds the rain, shades from the sun, and buffers the weather." Despite these advantages, wood is not fire-resistant, and wood shingles that were fashionable often require more maintenance than other roofing options. These wood shingles constitute an exterior covering of the house and an American "replacement for the baked clay tiles or slate used in the old world." The house of the seven gables is marked by being wood-framed and wood-covered. The landscape plan of this house seems to consist of three areas as follows: firstly, a public area that sets off the house, makes it attractive, and blends it into the surrounding area through landscaping. An elm tree frames this house, provides background, creates a transition from open areas to the house itself, and leads "a visitor's eye to the entrance." In this area the doorway is the focal point. Secondly, a living area located behind the house where there is a garden "surrounded by a
fence” and a well. Protection from the sun here is achieved by shrubs that also provide shade and “a feeling of privacy and enclosure”66. The value of this garden lies in its integrating the house into the landscape in which vegetation seems to be made up mostly of shrubbery, flowers, and trees growing in the surrounding primeval forest out of which Mathew Maule “had hewn” an “acre or two of earth” “to be his garden ground and homestead”67. This area is the most important one to be developed as “it provides an area for family activities and extends the living area from the house into the landscape”68. Thirdly, a service area that is usually found to the rear or side of the property and contains such items as garbage cans, clothes lines, compost heap, tool shed, storage shed, etc.69.

Relevant to this plan is the single brick chimney that constitutes an important part of the house structure. This chimney “makes the house economical to heat”70. Like wood, brick is a non-living material, and its use in the chimney “shows that there was a vast supply of clay for making bricks, and that brick layers were available.”71. In addition to these materials, other building materials, such as stone, plaster, lime, pebbles, and bits of glass are used in building the house because they are “durable materials” and can be easily worked out into different shapes”72. These building materials are of great value. In addition to their being local, economical, and durable, they hint at the intimate relationship between the house and landscape. All these materials come from landscape which is a source of natural materials. Furthermore, using these materials in building the house of the seven gables provides us with the indication that humans are resourceful, skillful, and capable of harnessing the landscape to achieve their own objectives. Considering this act by looking at landscape from another perspective, we notice that landscape is productive. It produces these materials without which building becomes an impossibility. This landscape is a doer. It has been understood that the house of the seven gables is “withdrawn from the line of the street”73. In a sense, there is space between the street and the house entrance. Those who sit here, be they insiders or outsiders, unimpededly relax and feel relieved during this exposure to the landscape. Studies have demonstrated that nature scenes “reduce negative emotions such as fear, anger and sadness”74. These studies also show that views of nature “produce positive physiological effects such as reducing muscle tension and blood pressure”75. A demonstration of this argument is Phoebe’s peeping out of the window of her garden 76, gathering some of the most perfect of the roses, and giving to Clifford a “small crimson” rose which she describes as the “most perfect of them all”77. Taking the flower from Phoebe, Clifford thanks her arguing that it “has done” him “good” and that it “makes” him “feel young again”78. Clifford’s response clarifies the healing effect that landscape has.

**Landscape and its impact upon humans**

Hawthorne provides us with pieces of evidence showing that the house of the seven
gables design reckons with landscape and its impact upon humans. Hawthorne maintains that Phoebe slept, on the night of her arrival, “in a chamber that looked down on the garden of the old house”, and that the chamber “fronted towards the east, so that at a very reasonable hour, a glow of crimson light came flooding through the window, and bathed the dingy ceiling and paper hangings in its own hue”\(^7\). This argument is significant for two reasons. For one, this argument confirms a practice implemented by people in American culture and probably other cultures. As a general rule, people design their houses in a way that lets sunshine in, so that the sun’s rays can pour health into the rooms and the whole house. For another, this argument underlines a parallel practice in this culture. Hawthorne indicates that Americans are keen on placing gardens near to their houses. The window of the chamber where Phoebe has slept overlooks the garden, which is the best view on which she can feast her eyes and feel at ease. The garden is in stark contrast with the Pyncheons’ house. While the garden entertains, invigorates, and energizes its visitors, the house sickens its inhabitants and confines their freedom. This argument is best demonstrated by Clifford and Hepzibah who live in the house and claim that they are prisoners unable to flee, and that their jailer had but left the door ajar in mockery, and stood behind it to watch them stealing out \(^8\). Even though the garden is contrasted with the house, it is the garden itself that integrates the house into the landscape.

**Associating characters with landscape**

This integration between the house and landscape is furthered by associating characters with landscape and its elements. Phoebe, for instance, is connected with sunlight that “stands for a new life in the house”\(^8\). Concerning the sun, it is symbolic of the most vital aspect of life: an ultimate wholeness\(^8\). Being sun-like, Phoebe “empowers Clifford, Hepzibah, and Holgrave”\(^8\). This connection Hawthorne makes between Phoebe and the sun is meant to emphasize the role she plays in the family mansion as “a catalyst for change”\(^8\). Phoebe changes people for the better. Clifford and Hepzibah are the ones most impacted by Phoebe. Clifford is associated with a grey cloud which hints at his spiritual decay or the corruption of his morality. Just as Phoebe changes people, so does the moon “which had long been climbing overhead... now began to shine out, broad and oval in its middle pathway”\(^8\). Phoebe’s influence is not limited only to people; she influences the house as well. The house was run down and Phoebe’s arrival changed it for the better. For this reason, the “grime and sordidness of The House of the Seven Gables seemed to have vanished since her appearance there; the gnawing tooth of the dry-rot was stayed among the old timbers of its skeleton frame; the dust had ceased to settle down so densely, from the antique ceilings, upon the floors and furniture of the rooms below”\(^8\). Sordidness, rot and dust make this place unhealthy, which makes people within sick both in soul and body. Andrew J. Downing, a landscape architect, argues in support of this view,
claiming that houses significantly impact the health of their inhabitants, “Particularly in matters of heat, ventilation, “atmosphere”\(^{87}\).

It is clear that Hawthorne uses landscape elements for characterization. In view of Phoebe’s role, she is likened to the sun. She is the heart of the family. She impacts other characters, especially Clifford, Hepzibah, and Holgrave. While Clifford’s image is “a thin gray cloud, through which rays of sunlight sporadically break”\(^{88}\), Hepzibah is likened to a storm, which is not only an expression in the landscape but also a sum of aspects that give moral or emotional meaning to it. In the allegorical mode, the storm may represent death, evil, or damnation. The storm-like Hepzibah seems to epitomize evil for she is not “merely possessed with the east wind, but to be, in her very person, only another phase of this gray and sullen spell of weather - the east wind itself, grim and disconsolate, in a rusty black silk gown, and with a turban of cloud wreaths on its head”\(^{89}\). Such a character does make the house more cheerless than it is. This character seems to be in stark contrast with Phoebe who makes the house inhabitants cheerful and hopeful. Similarly, Phoebe is in contrast with all those around her. She is good-natured, loving, and kind-hearted. When she first meets Jaffrey Pyncheon, the latter essays to show his affection for her by attempting to kiss her, but she withdraws. Phoebe's genuine kindness can be easily contrasted with the facade of kindness Jaffrey puts on. Moreover, Phoebe's good deeds are opposed to Jaffrey's wrong doings. While Phoebe is thoughtful, Jaffrey is thoughtless. The image Hawthorne constructs of him emphasizes his association with a "gray adamantine rock" which is symbolic of his coldness, rigidity, and moral corruption. In addition to these landscape elements, Hawthorne dwells on the moon that is symbolic of change. When Phoebe and Holgrave meet in the garden, they both talk about the moon, the charm lying in its light, and the impact it has upon them. Reflecting upon the moon, Phoebe claims that she is "sensible of a great charm in this brightening moonlight"\(^{90}\), that she loves "to watch how the day, tired as it is, lags away reluctantly, and hates to be called yesterday," and that she "never cared much about moonlight before"\(^{91}\). This argument probably hints at the change becoming of her, the growth of her affections for Holgrave who is also ready to change, which is indicated by his denouncing the past and marrying Phoebe.

This past denounced by Holgrave lives into the present. The house of the seven gables itself "stands for the past and serves as a dual container,"\(^{92}\) housing “both the Pyncheons of the present and those of the past”\(^{93}\). The house architecture and design represent the taste and values of Pyncheons at that time. The past is inscribed on the walls of the house “that is founded on sin and that has been inhabited by sinners”\(^{94}\). These sins of the Pyncheons “ seem to be symbolized by the seven gables of the house”\(^{95}\). This house that is part of the cultural landscape becomes something of a document preserving historical information. In other words, cultural landscape made by humans grows to be a reservoir of historical information. This argument is
supported by J.B. Jackson's contention that "landscape is history made visible". Echoing Jackson, Laurence Olivier claims that the past is omnipresent in the landscape we inhabit and that the present is made up of a series of past durations, which makes the present multi-temporal.

**Using landscape to rewrite the history of America**

Displeased with Puritans and their bigotry, Hawthorne is probably using landscape this way to rewrite the history of America and highlight its tragedies and injustices. Just as the history of the United States consists in "settling, building homes, domesticating land, and defining space", so does the history of Pyncheons who, aiming at self-definition, build the house of the seven gables which mirrors not only their tastes, memories, aspirations, and sins but also their perceptions of landscape and conception of their own place within the larger landscape. Furthermore, the house gables which point sharply towards the sky probably hint at Hawthorne's expectations of success that is manifest in his "striking a balance between the architecture of the house and that of the Pyncheons". Whereas the architecture of the house is an amalgamation of "pragmatism on the one hand and reassuring architecture allusions on the other," and achieves "maximum performance" and "perfect attunement to the landscape" that are at the root of American architecture, the Pyncheons' architecture hinges on Phoebe whom Hawthorne "probably intends to be the embodiment of all that is good and perfect in life". Exercising a positive influence upon the house inhabitants, hens, and flowers, Phoebe infuses a new life into the house, becoming its heart, the sturdy structure of the family, and the container housing its spirit. Acting as a door, Phoebe offers Clifford and Hepzibah "an entrance to a new life, a great opportunity for change". Marked by her generosity of love, she clearly sees Clifford, Hepzibah, Holgrave, and Jaffrey Pyncheon, and loves them as they are. This treatment shows her colors and gives color to the family whose members are opposed to change.

Just as Phoebe's presence gives color to the family and animates it, so do the landscape colors that activate it and emphasize its central role. The moon's "silvery beams", Hawthorne maintains, "were already powerful enough to change the character of the lingering daylight". The influence of these beams is that they "softened and embellished the aspect of the old house". In a sense, the silvery beams of the moon changed the house appearance for the better. The moon is a doer, a bringer of change. Contrasted with this impact of the moon upon the house is that of the wind which "now comes boisterously from the northwest, and, taking hold of the aged framework of the Seven Gables, gives it a shake, like a wrestler that..."
would try strength with his antagonist. This howling northwest wind whose clamor animates the lonely house “has swept the sky clear,” making the moon beams “Fall aslant into the room,” where Judge Pyncheon, whose inward self is “alternately a gray adamantine rock and a heavily brooding cloud, endued with a cold” opposed to his “outward sultry warmth”, was sitting so quietly in an old chair. This grey color used in connection with Judge Pyncheon hints at his moral corruption and spiritual decay, that both underline not only his own wrong doings but also his family members’, which makes poor Hepzibah go mad in defense of her brother and angrily describe him as being the one “diseased in mind, not Clifford.” Another point worthy of being mentioned is Judge Pyncheon’s association with an adamantine rock which is a mark of his being unyielding. This state of being relentless is the fruit of superiority that renders the superior, being diseased in mind, blind to reality and unready to listen to others.

It is this disease in mind that constitutes the root of all evils inscribed on the landscape mosaic. The landscape elements, be they physical or cultural, contribute uniquely to the whole marked by beauty and harmony. The landscape beauty is manifest in its fruit-trees, shrubbery, forest trees, flower bushes, water (represented by the well), storms, clouds, the sun, the moon, and the house architecture that integrates the house into the landscape; this beauty is contrasted with the Pyncheons’ enormities. It may be said that the landscape mosaic marked by its beauty and harmony is representative of light that Hawthorne always contrasts with darkness represented by the Pyncheons’ sins.

It may also be said that it is the duty of humans to find ways of living harmoniously with the landscape emblematic of beauty and harmony. By acting this way humans can maintain their humanity as well as a healthy state of existence.

Notes

1 Art, Artists and Nature: The Hudson River School: Brief History, p.1

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2 Ibid., p.1


4 Ibid., p.6
5 Joshua Johns, Nature and the American Identity, p.3
6 Ibid., p.3
7 CR M: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship, p. 1
8 Ibid., p. 1
9 Joshua Johns, Nature and the American Identity, p.4
10 Ibid., p.5
11 Ibid., p.5
12 Ibid., p.5
13 Ezra Tawil. "New Forms of Sublimity," p. 6
14 Ibid., p. 6
15 Blackmore, p.9-185.
18 Kant, 1987.
19 Hawthorne, The House of the Seven Gables, p.15
20 Ibid., p.15
21 Ibid., p. 15
22 Ibid., p. 15
23 Ibid., p.15
24 Ibid., p. 15
25 Ibid., p. 15
26 British critics often used the language of exploration in general, and the image
repertoire of the New World discovery narrative in particular, in order to convey the aesthetic experience of the sublime.

27 Hawthorne, The House of the Seven Gables, p.19

28 Ibid., p. 19

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