The presence and use of gothic elements in the tales and romances of Nathaniel Hawthorne

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THE PRESENCE AND USE OF GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN THE 
TALES AND ROMANCES OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

Chapter                      Page

I. GOTHICISM AND THE GOTHIC REVIVAL        1

II. HAWTHORNE'S EQUIPMENT FOR THE GOTHIC      19

III. BASIC GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN THE FICTION OF HAWTHORNE 31

   Early Tales        32
   Historical Sketches 39
   Moral Tales and Allegories 48
   Romances             59
   Abortive Romances    71

IV. HAWTHORNE'S USE OF GOTHIC DEVICES        76

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION                  95

BIBLIOGRAPHY                               98
Emerson, finding it impossible to read through any of Hawthorne's stories, remarked that "Hawthorne rides well his horse of the night." Later Emerson's son stated that his father "could not read Hawthorne because of the gloom of his magic mirror." In making a comparison of these two characters, Hawthorne and Emerson, Julian Hawthorne writes:

My father was Gothic. Emerson was Roman and Greek. But each profoundly original and independent.

This statement is important and pertinent to the purpose of this study; for in this remark of Julian Hawthorne are two words—"Gothic" and "original"—basic to the findings of the present study. Indeed, in the tales and romances of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Gothicism and originality are inseparable as Siamese twins. Yet, to the writer's knowledge, no intensive and comprehensive study of Hawthorne's use of the Gothic elements in relation to his artistic temperament has been made. It is true that N. F. Doubleday's "Hawthorne's Use of Three Gothic Patterns" is scholarly, useful and pertinent to this study. So also is Jane Lundblad's "Nathaniel Hawthorne and European Literary Tradition." But these two valuable works are merely spring boards for the aims and goals of this paper.

This study—"The Presence and Use of Gothic Elements in the Tales and Romances of Nathaniel Hawthorne"—has two objectives: first, to point out stock Gothic elements and devices in Hawthorne's tales and romances; secondly, to show how Hawthorne uses these Gothic devices. In order to meet

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1 Julian Hawthorne, Hawthorne and His Circle (New York, 1905), p. 68.
3 Julian Hawthorne, op. cit., p. 68.
these two general purposes, it was deemed expedient, first, to define
the meaning of "Gothic" with respect to literary art, to trace the rise
of Gothicism in England, and to give a brief analysis of the chief works
of the outstanding eighteenth century English progenitors of the Gothic
novel. The second chapter treats of Hawthorne's background and tempera-
ment with respect to his natural and circumstantial predilection for the
Gothic. The stock Gothic conventionalities, as discovered in his tales
and romances, are pointed out and discussed in the third chapter. How
Hawthorne uses these Gothic conventions as means for his artistic and
moralistic purposes constitutes chapter four. From the facts revealed
in these four chapters, the conclusion is clear: That Hawthorne's tales
and romances are heavily saturated with Gothicism and that in these tales
and romances Gothic devices are artistically used to make more impressive
the true nature, causes, and consequences of good and evil, of sin and
repentance.

In the preparation of this study, the writer has received assistance
that was indispensable. However, it is impossible for her to acknowledge
her indebtedness to all those teachers, colleagues and authors who in
some way or other have influenced her and have helped to shape her thought.
But from this number, she must single out four: (1) The Librarian of
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talent.
CHAPTER I

GOTHICISM AND THE GOTHIC REVIVAL

Inasmuch as Hawthorne has employed in his tales and romances many techniques of the Gothic machinery, it is expedient to determine what is Gothicism and those elements that are peculiar to it. Therefore, this chapter has a two-fold purpose. The first is to clarify the meaning and to trace briefly the rise of Gothicism and, the second, to delineate the basic features of the Gothic novel by discussing summarily the contents, methods and purpose of certain outstanding writers of the genre. In doing this, we may better understand and evaluate the Gothic elements in the fiction of Hawthorne.

Thus, we turn back to the eighteenth century when classicism "in its self-restraint, its objectivity and its lack of curiosity" was in full bloom and observe that, near the middle of the century, there was a gradual revolt against classical art. This reaction resulted into a new movement in literature termed Romanticism in which the literature, especially that concerning medieval life and civilization, is usually characterized by

an excess of sentiment, by over lavish decoration, a strong sense of color and a feeble sense of form, an attention to detail, at the cost of the main impression, and a consequent tendency to run into the exaggerated, the fantastic and the grotesque.2

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Of this romantic literature, Phelps points out three qualities: "Subjectivity, Love of the picturesque, and a Reactionary spirit." He explains that in the first quality the aspiration and longing of the writer is manifest; in the second, the element of strangeness added to beauty is dominant; in the third, there is always reaction to whatever has preceded.

The Medieval revival was one of the leading phases of the Romantic reactionary spirit. In pointing to this fact, Beers makes this statement:

Monkery, feudalism and superstitions began to reassert their claims upon the imagination. Ruined castles and abbeys, coats of mail, illuminated missals, manuscript romances, black-letter ballads, old tapestries, and wood carvings acquired a new value.

For an understanding of these old customs and art, men felt the need to learn the old English language and to make glossaries in order to translate the old manuscripts which were discovered.

A few men, antiquarians, were foremost in making various researches into the past. This gave rise to such publications as "Tyrwhitt's edition of Chaucer (1775-78); the collections of Medieval romances by Ellis (1805), Ritson (1802), and Weber (1810); Nares and Halliwell's 'Archiaio Glossary' (1822-49), Carter's 'Specimens of Ancient Sculpture and Paintings' (1780-94), Scott's 'Demology and Witchcraft' (1830), Hallam's 'Middle Ages' (1818), Meyrick's 'Ancient Armour' (1824), Lady Guest's 'Mabinogion'.

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2 Ibid., pp. 4-5. See also William Edward Simonds, A Student's History of English Literature (New York, 1921), pp. 303-304.
By about 1760 creative writers and anthologists began to use or collect medieval themes, one of the first on such themes being the "Hermit," which appeared constantly. But the first epoch-making book was Thomas Percy's "Reliques of Ancient Poetry; Consisting of Old Heroic Ballads, Songs and Other Pieces of our Earlier Poets" published in three volumes in 1765. The book is a collection of old ballads that had long since been in oblivion. The revival of these ballads stimulated a reform in the literary taste of the people and encouraged men of genius to utilise their talent in this vein. Following the publishing of these ballads, Percy brought to the Englishman's attention in 1770 a translation of the Norse mythology; the original work was "Introduction a l'Historie de Dannemare" published in 1755 by Paul Henri Mallet. The work included also a translation of the first part of the Younger Edda, with an abstract of the second part of the Elder Edda, and version of Runic poems. But before the appearance of Percy's translation, Thomas Gray had become familiar with the original and the result of his study was his two poems, "The Fatal Sisters" and "The Descent of Odin."

Being an antiquarian, Gray had also planned to write a history of the origin of English poetry which was finally executed by Thomas Warton, one

2 Henry A. Beers, op. cit., p. 186.
of the pioneers—along with his brother Joseph—in the medieval revival.

Warton's study, "The History of English Poetry from the Twelfth to the Close of the Sixteenth Century," did much to further the interest in medie-

valism. This work was published in three volumes, respectively 1774, 1777, 2

1781. The fragment of a fourth volume was issued in 1790.

Other noted studies of Medieval lore were the translations of Ossian by MoPherson and the Rowley Poems by Thomas Chatterton. The first was the transcripts of Gaelic poems taken down from the recital of old people in the Highlands. According to Beers, "The result of the researches was 'Fingal an Ancient Epic Poem in Six Books: Together with several other poems composed by Ossian the son of Fingal.'" The Rowley Poems were com-

posed in obsolete language and alleged not only to have been copied from a contemporary manuscript in Canynge's Chest but to be the work of Thomas Rowley, a secular priest of Bristol, who flourished about 1460.

In an effort to popularize the Gothic revival, Bishop Hurd made im-

portant and pertinent criticisms of the "Gothic" in his "Letters on Chi-

valry and Romance" (1762). Hurd's purpose was to prove that the themes of Gothic manners and fiction were more extraordinary for poetry than the classic. In Letter VI, he says that Gothicism furnished the poet with finer scenes and subjects and thinks "for the more solemn fancies of witch-

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2 George Saintsbury, op. cit., pp. 583-84; Henry A. Beers, op. cit.,

3 pp. 205-206.

4 Ibid., p. 309.

4 Oliver Elton, op. cit., pp. 95-115; see also Henry A. Beers, op. cit.,

pp. 348-49.
craft and incantation, the horrors of the Gothic were above measure striking and terrible."

Before this time the term "Gothic" was in disrepute. It was synonymous with barbarous and was an epithet which applied derogatively to medieval art, philosophy, or social order. However, as Longueil thinks, Bishop Hurd's "Letters" had an ameliorating influence on the use of the term and Walpole's story "launched 'Gothic' on its way as a critical term in prose fiction."

Besides the poets who tried to recapture various scenes of medieval life in verse were the romancers. And it was they who used the Gothic machinery for the novel or the tale of terror in which the delineation of character is subordinated to the manufacture of incidents meant "to curdle the blood, screw the nerves and shake the heart."

The first Gothic novel was published in the sixth decade of the eighteenth century and created a great sensation, finally becoming the vogue in literature. This type of novel with "its unexpected incidents and situations, the supernatural phenomena and the unfamiliar surround-


ings" remained the fad until long in the nineteenth century and was destined to reach other lands. This new genre had its origin in *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole.

In the development of the story, Walpole devised and innovated a pattern for the Gothic novel. In the first place, he gives the story as a translation from an old manuscript printed in the black-letter in Naples in the year 1529 and found recently in the library of a Catholic family. Next, the story has its setting in Italy in the eleventh or twelfth century. Thirdly, the action takes place in a medieval castle with a black tower, a haunted gallery, trap-doors, dark corridors, vaults, and a subterranean passage leading to the Church of St. Nicholas. In these three respects, as well as in others, Walpole out and established the basic pattern for the Gothic.

In the gloomy atmosphere of this setting, Manfred, Prince of Otranto, who had obtained his estate by false claims and brutality and who diabolically wished to continue his posterity, meets his nemesis, as well as his son, Conrad, who is mysteriously crushed on his wedding day by an enchanted helmet. The gruesomeness of the story is enhanced when Manfred, on his son's death, immediately attempts to seduce Isabella, the bride-to-be of his son. She escapes to the church assisted by an unusual young peasant who appeared at the castle. The pious friar Jerome comes to warn Manfred of divine visitations for his dark deeds and discovers that the

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3 Ibid., p. 17.
young peasant is his own son whose execution the prince had ordered. A stranger knight with his train arrives to claim Otranto as his own; during his search for Isabella, he is seriously wounded in a combat with Theodore. Then the discovery is made that he is Isabella's father. Being thwarted in his efforts to unite the two families through his marital arrangements so that he will retain the land, Manfred slays his daughter, Matilda, through mistaken identity, thus receiving his retribution that had been foretold. So much for the bare outline of this fantastic story.

Just what was Walpole's purpose in writing this type of fiction?

Walpole's object in composing the story was to paint such a scene of domestic life and manners during feudal times as might have actually existed and to so weave in the supernatural that it would appear authentic and consistent with the superstitious beliefs of the middle ages. To achieve this purpose, he gives us a plot full of blood chilling incidents; one crisis precipitates another as shown by the following details: The helmet which crushed Conrad was reported by the peasant to resemble that on the statue of Alfonso the Good. Manfred becoming suspicious of the peasant has the fellow imprisoned under the helmet. As Manfred attempts to seduce Isabella in his chamber, the moon shines into the opposite window and the plumes of the fatal helmet rise to the height of the window, wave backwards and forwards in a tempestuous manner accompanied with a hollow and rustling sound. The portrait of his grandfather behind him on the wall utters a deep sigh, heaves its breast, quits its panel and bids Manfred to follow in the gallery where it enters a chamber whose door is

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slammed by an invisible hand. Isabella in making her escape through the dark subterranean passage to the church is terrified by the uncanny noises as she rushes along only to be horror stricken as a gust of wind extinguishes her light as she reaches the trap-door. A faint stream of moonlight glimmers over the lock, and the peasant having miraculously escaped from his confinement is concealed in the passage and aids her. She gets through the door just before Manfred arrives. He questions the young man; his servants rush to tell him of the apparition of a giant clad in armor in the gallery. The young peasant, Theodore, serenades Matilda during the night. They fall in love. He is to be executed; the friar comes to shrieve him and learns that he is his son. To stay his execution Friar Jerome is to return Isabella. As he goes, the trampling of horses is heard. Manfred observes that the plumes on the helmet are agitated and nod thrice as if activated by some invisible wearer. Being terrified, Manfred grants Theodore's life, receives the message "from the knight of the gigantic sabre"; instead of accepting the challenge, he welcomes the stranger knight and his retinue. Isabella's flight from the church is announced; all go in search for her. Matilda frees Theodore from the black tower, gives him a suit of armor, a sword and directs his escape. He discovers Isabella in the forest, hides her in a cave, wounds the stranger who faints from the loss of blood. The knight revives, identifies himself as Isabella's father, Frederick, and tells how the hermit of the woods of Joppa directed his search for her.

Such is the chain of some of the hair-raising events that follow in rapid causal succession in the novel. In doing this, Walpole inevitably places the reader into all kinds of tensions and complexes. Fears, chills,
horrors, condemnation, praise—all are experienced in fitful doses. Yet Walpole's use of the miraculous, of the terrible, of the supernatural is not plausible. The situations and their causes are ridiculously impossible and fantastic. But an interesting point to note is the fact that, though the story bristles with horrors and brutality, the characters are generally fearless and impassive.

As it has been said, Walpole is accredited with being the originator of the Gothic novel, giving it its name and its machinery. Let us elaborate on this point, since subsequent writers of the genre are so greatly indebted to Walpole. In the first place, Walpole was appropriate in using the term Gothic, for his novel gives a semblance of medieval life with its customs and manners. Secondly, he uses the Gothic castle with all of its accessories and medieval machinery and beliefs: crime, intrigue, revenge, combats, blood, armor, works of art, magic, ghosts, uncanny noises and various supernatural phenomena. Thirdly, he employs effectively climatic conditions: the moonlight, blasts of wind, strikes of lightning, thunder and earthquakes. Fourthly, he peoples the story with the following characters: a villain, a sinister gentleman; the wife, a weak woman; two beautiful daughters; the hero—dark, handsome, melancholy, passionate and mysterious—Byronic; a monk, a man of the church; a hermit, who is a wizard; knights in armor, and superstitious servants.

The foregoing features became the literary trappings with other improvisations for the Gothic novel; and *The Castle of Otranto*, perhaps the

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2 Caroline P. E. Spurgeon, *op. cit.*, xix-xx.
first modern work of fiction which depends for its interest on the incidents of a chivalrous age, became the prototype of that class of novel which was largely responsible for the rise of the Gothic school. The eminent fictionists of this school were Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, William Beckford, Matthew Gregory Lewis, and Charles Robert Maturin. Of this group, Mrs. Radcliffe was foremost in emulating Walpole. It was she who set the pace for the Gothic romance. In using the machinery which Walpole had designed, she made one exception; she did not call forth ghosts to move among "flesh and blood personage"; yet she employed the weird and the mysterious.

Mrs. Radcliffe's fourth and most widely read book, The Mysteries of Udolpho, is an excellent example of her art as the narrative is filled with many "highly wrought scenes of horror." In the story, Emily, the heroine, a beautiful and highly sensitive young girl, is carried to Italy and cruelly imprisoned in a castle which is partly in ruins. There in a gloomy atmosphere, where everyone is possessed with superstitious fears, Emily is terrified with many horrors, but she surmounts all vicissitudes; in the end she is happily married to her young and handsome lover.

Mrs. Radcliffe's technique in exciting terror is unique. Her contrivance, unlike Walpole's, is the non-use of the supernatural in which the results are more frightening than those in The Castle of Otranto. She cleverly sets up a situation to give it the appearance of the supernatural,
holding the reader in suspense, only to reveal later that the instance proceeded from natural causes, as when Emily is constantly hearing music in the evenings. The first occasion was at La Vallee, then at the chateau of the Marquis de Villeroi and at Udolpho; on each occasion there are speculations as to the cause, each implying the supernatural. Finally it is revealed that the music is performed by persons known. It is Du Pont who plays Emily's lute at La Vallee; he also plays music and sings French songs when he is permitted to leave his prison cell at Udolpho; Agnes straying from the convent is responsible for the music in the air around the chateau of Villeroi. Thus as the reader goes on, he finds that there is really no strange or unusual phenomena in the novel; everything is explicable and possible.

Her second device is her use of vivid and awe-inspiring scenes to enhance the terror in her story. The scene depicting Emily's approaching Udolpho is a striking example of Mrs. Radcliffe's descriptive powers:

Towards the close of day the road wound into a deep valley. Mountains, whose shaggy steeps appeared to be inaccessible, almost surrounded it. The sun had just sunk below the top of the mountains...but his sloping rays...streamed in full splendour upon the towers and battlements of a castle that spread its extensive ramparts along the brow of a precipice above....Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle... for, though it was now lighted up by the setting sun, the gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark gray stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object. As she gazed the light died away on its walls leaving a melancholy purple tint, which spread deeper and deeper....

Her third innovation is her use of sentiment. Throughout the story Emily sheds tears and often faints.

Mrs. Radcliffe's purpose in writing the story is to create a mind set so that the reader will experience the fear and the wonder felt by the characters in the story. She has utilized the features employed by Walpole, but her situations of terror emanate from natural causes. She adds the description of romantic scenery to the Gothic tale and combines sentiment with the romance. Her characters are conventional.

The next Gothic writer, William Beckford, ventured into another domain when he composed Vathek an Eastern Romance with its magicians, subterranean gods, dwarfs and genii. In the story, the Oriental setting, scenery and costumes are vividly portrayed. In depicting the incidents of the story, the powerful imagination of the author creates the most ghastly horrors. The tale abounds in outrages. One of the most atrocious acts is the sacrifice made by Vathek of the fifty most beautiful young boys in his kingdom to the accursed Giaour. And another instant of cold cruelty is the strangling of the faithful subjects whom the abominable Princess Carthis had placed by her mute one-eyed Negresses in the flames.

On the other hand, the story captures the Oriental atmosphere realistically, as the Palace of Perfumes which consists of various halls where different perfumes which the earth produces were kept perpetually burning in censers of gold. Flambeaus and aromatic lamps were here lighted in open day. But the two powerful effects of this agreeable delirium might be avoided by descending into an immense garden, where an assemblage of every fragrant flower diffused through the air the purest odours.

Beckford has made ample use of the Gothic machinery in Vathek, creating a grotesque fantasy. His object is to portray horrors in a magnifi-

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cent setting. His story, then, has two distinguishing features: Beckford's vivid imagination and his picturing of the Oriental scene.

A fourth product of the Gothic is The Monk, by Matthew Gregory Lewis, which is surely the most shocking of the Gothic novels. The story takes place in Madrid at the time of the Spanish Inquisition, and gives undoubtedly an exaggerated picture of the debauchery, hypocrisy and the use of sorcery as practised by some of the high officials of the medieval church. No one is more highly esteemed and yet more guilty of committing atrocities than the Monk, Father Jerome of the Capuchin Church or the Prioress, Mother St. Agatha of the adjoining convent.

The story is developed through the device of interlocking two major plots. A most pious and devout monk, one whom all the populace idealise for his piety and nobleness, proves to be the most hideous villain. Not only does the lustful friar violate Antonia's person for his carnal desires, but he commits murder twice to conceal his identity with crimes. In the end he escapes his punishment from the Inquisition by selling his soul to a demon only to learn the most tragic and ironic import of his crimes: It was his sister whom the monk ravished and then stabbed to death; he also murdered his own mother.

The author follows the pattern for the Gothic novel in the composition of his narrative; but his object is to portray the greatest, the most inhumane horrors, to effect in the reader the greatest shocks. He does not rationalize his ghostly phenomena, and his "monk" is the most diabolical of men. If Lewis has not added a feature, it can be said that he used no reticence in his pictures. One of his most loathsome descriptions is given

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Harold Williams, op. cit., p. 120.
when Agnes relates the story of her confinement in the subterranean cavern of the convent:

Sometimes I felt the bloated toad, hideous and pampered with the poisonous vapours of the dungeon, dragging his loathsome length along my bosom; sometimes the quick cold lizard aroused me, leaving his slimy track upon my face; and entangling itself in the tresses of my wild matted hair. Often have I awaking found my fingers ringed with the long worms which bred in the corrupted flesh of my infant. At such times, I shrieked with terror and disgust; and while I shook off the reptile, trembled with all a woman's weakness.¹

Of The Monk, Tuckerman says that Lewis carried the story beyond "the verge of absurdity and wild melodrama," and it is the product of his distorted imagination in which "endless horrors are mingled with gross violations of decency."²

The last Gothic novel for discussion is Melmoth the Wanderer, by Charles Robert Maturin. This is a masterpiece of terror and mystery. Melmoth, an unusual character, has some means of power which enables him to continue his "posthumous and preternatural existence," and was seen "in various and distant parts of the earth within a time in which no power merely human could be supposed to traverse them...his marked and fearful habit was everywhere to seek out the most wretched, or the most profligate of the community among which he flung himself..."³

The structure of the story is involved, containing six stories which finally dovetail. John Melmoth, after the death of his uncle, finds a

² Bayard Tuckerman, op. cit., p. 275.
³ Charles Robert Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer (London, 1892), II, 275.
manuscript which is a record of Melmoth the Wanderer's travels. Moncada
gives the history of his life from which he digresses to tell "The Story
of Immalee." Within this narrative the mysterious stranger tells to Imma-
lee's father two stories, "The Tale of the Guzman Family" and "The Lovers' Tale." Then "The Story of Immalee" is resumed and finished. Each story
is linked as in each the mysterious stranger whom everyone fears carries
on his search. Only those unfortunate victims of adverse circumstances
knew his object. But no one—not Stanton in his cell, Moncada in the pri-
son of the Inquisition, Walberg when the poverty of his family had driven
him insane, nor Elinor or Immalee in her hour of trial—would exchange
destinies with Melmoth the Wanderer. Regardless of the suffering of each,
not one would forego his misery for the fearful and fearless existence of
Melmoth. He finally ceases his wanderings and comes home to die; after a
terrific struggle, a demon carries away his body and soul. Only his hand-
kerschief is left.

Maturin's narratives are a development of a succession of sensational
incidents and mysterious occurrences which he has calculated to excite
terror in the reader's mind. His method is skillfully and delicately per-
formed; therefore when he pictures the horrors practiced in the monastery
by the monks, the reader is not shocked but anxious. The following inci-
dent from Moncada's story is an example of the writer's method:

I awoke one night, and saw my cell in flames. I started up in
horror, but shrank back in perceiving myself surrounded by de-
mons, who, clothed in fire were breathing forth clouds of it
around me. Desperate with horror, I rushed against the wall
and found what I touched was cold. My recollection returned,
and I comprehended that these were hideous figures scrawled in
phosphorous to terrify me.¹

¹ Ibid., I, 268.
The author's treatment of the story is well explained by his own statement as quoted by Edward Wagenknecht:

If I possess any talent it is that of darkening the gloomy and deepening the sad; of painting life in extremes and representing the struggles of passion when the soul trembles on the verge of the unlawful and unhallowed.

No sadder picture could he have painted than that of the slaying of Juan, Moncada's brother, at the time Moncada made his escape from the monastery, of the tragic ending of the marriage of the beautiful young girl of nature, Immalee, and the eccentric Melmoth, nor the exploitation of Elinor's heart in "The Lovers' Tale."

In the foregoing discussion, Gothicism was explained as an outgrowth of a phase of the Romantic movement. As men became curious about the life and customs of the Middle Ages, the Gothic revival was initiated. It was also pointed out that Horace Walpole was the originator of the Gothic novel, inventing the Gothic machinery; but it was Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, who set the precedent for the new type of fiction. She combined sentiment with the weird and mysterious, created an atmosphere by effective romantic description, and achieved plausibility in her terrifying incidents. The Gothic tale was made highly fantastic and grotesque by Beckford; Lewis added shocking, indecent horrors to the genre while Maturin contributed psychological insight.

From the five Gothic stories discussed the following list of stock Gothic conventionalities may be made:

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The conduct of the monk of the Middle Ages, life in the monastery and the convent, and the power and influence of the Inquisition are themes treated in detail in the Gothic novels of Mrs. Radcliffe (The Italian), M. G. Lewis (The Monk), and C. R. Maturin (Melmoth the Wanderer).
1. Manuscript:
(a) Author tells the story second hand. (b) One of the characters of an introductory story gives an account of his experience or, better still, produces an old manuscript where the happenings were written down. Supposing the manuscript unreadable, he may evade difficult or inexplicable passages. (c) The whole work may be passed off as a translation.

2. The Castle:
(a) Has gloomy background, numerous secret cabinets, corridors, labyrinthine network of subterranean passages. (b) Transformed into convent, abode of an alchemist, or erudite inventor of some miraculous fatal elixir.

3. The Crime:
Mysterious or illicit or incestuous love and at times perpetrated by a person of holy orders.

4. Religion:
One or several characters have some kind of ecclesiastical tie or are actually priests.

5. Italian:
Villain is usually Italian. The villain has pledged himself to the devil or is tempted by him and finally claimed by him. Sometimes the villain is a Spaniard.

6. Deformity:
Another attribute of the villain. (dwarf)

7. Ghosts:
May be real spirits of a supernatural kind or may be false ghosts—viz., phenomena that seem supernatural to the beholder, but are afterwards rationally explained.
8. Magic:
Witches and sorcerers. Enchanted objects, magic potions, amulets, etc.

9. Nature:
Use of natural phenomena to serve terrifying purpose—deep darkness, rain falling, wind blowing, lightning flashing, thunder rolling, the pale glimmer of moonlight.

10. Armored knights, equipment and retinue:
Armors, shields, helmets, etc.

11. Works of Art:
Pictures come to life, roll eyes, speak—statues act. Mirrors are used to reflect.

12. Blood:
Abundance in some way.

Time and place never constitute any impediment to the most incredible coincidences and encounters. At the end of the story there is always the conferring of liberation and rewarding of virtue.

It was the primary purpose of this chapter to set forth briefly the main features of the Gothic novel as it sprang from the romantic soil of the late eighteenth century into the genius and mind of Walpole and his followers. This chapter, then, in describing and listing the conventions and machinery of the Gothic novel, serves as a springboard for a clear understanding and observation of the Gothic elements in the tales and romances of Nathaniel Hawthorne. The next chapter will deal with Hawthorne's readiness and natural endowment for the Gothic.

Jane Lundblad, op. cit., pp. 81-88.
CHAPTER II

HAWTHORNE'S EQUIPMENT FOR THE GOTHIC

The Gothic novel, a type of fiction discussed in the preceding chapter, attained its culmination in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It was this body of literature that fascinated the boy Hawthorne as he grew up during the hey-day of the Gothic novel. On one occasion, he wrote to his sister Elizabeth:


And again he wrote:

I admire Godwin's novels and intend to read all of them.

Though some of the fiction Hawthorne referred to in the foregoing passages do not belong purely to the Gothic pattern, all of them deal in some way with the strange, the weird, the magical, the past. As a boy Hawthorne's recreational reading was greatly in this type of fiction, a sort of reading interest which may raise a natural question: What was Hawthorne's equipment—environmental, intellectual and temperamental—for fiction of the Gothic pattern? This chapter, then, is an attempt to answer such a question in order to understand the presence and quality of Gothic elements in his tales and romances.

As is well known, Hawthorne, with his Puritan background, emerged as a great writer of national character who, liking the weird and mysterious, made use of the supernatural to secure the effects of wonder and awe that he desired. One is prompted to look backward to the stern and hardy an-

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1 Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife (Boston, 1885), I, 105. Subsequent references to this book will be entered by title only.
2 Newton Arvin, Hawthorne (Boston, 1929), p. 16.
cestors of the author for evidences of this particular aptitude. In the search, one finds on the paternal side no talent, no approval of a writer of romance by these early progenitors who were among the first settlers of Massachusetts. Hawthorne has very aptly stated their opinion in his imaginary conversation between his forebears:

'What is he?' murmurs one gray shadow of my forefathers to the other. 'A writer of story books! What kind of a business in life—what mode of glorifying God, or being serviceable to mankind in his day and generation—may be? Why, the degenerate fellow might as well have been a fiddler!'

For two centuries the Hawthornes, people of strong physique and robust brain—bold, stern and lonely minded—continued to pursue their various professions and occupations: William Hawthorne, magistrate; John Hawthorne, judge, while others were farmers and adventurers of the sea. It was this last occupation in which Hawthorne's father—"a silent, reserved, severe man, of an athletic and rather slender build, and habitually of a rather melancholy cast of thought"—was engaged, and whose unfortunate lot it was to succumb to a fever at Surinam in 1805.

The impression of this misfortune, no doubt, lingered in the boy's mind. A few years later, at nine years of age, he suffered an accident

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1 Julian Hawthorne (ed.), The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne (New York, 1900), I, 12. All subsequent references to this work will be made under the title Works without naming the editor.
2 Ibid., viii. See also Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, p. 36.
4 Ibid., p. 19.
5 Newton Arvin, op. cit., p. 9.
6 Henry James, Hawthorne (New York, 1880), p. 11.
and remained lame for weeks. Not being able to participate in an active life, Hawthorne began to delight in and exercise his imagination. One of his greatest pleasures was to tell stories to his sisters, Elizabeth and Louisa. These were long stories of fantastic voyages "of glorious and stirring adventure." He was always the hero and ended each account by saying, "and I shall never come back." The sea faring and adventurous spirit of his father, his own personal lameness, two willing sisters to listen to him—all must have been favorable soil for a growing imagination.

On the other side of his lineage were the Mannings, who were "disposed toward introspectiveness and religious morbidity," as is seen in both Hawthorne and his mother—a refined, sensitive and cultured woman. As it is well known, upon the death of her husband the young mother went into seclusion as a form of mourning and continued it until her death. This retirement was forced upon the children; and there was a cold, isolated and distant, though loyal, relation between mother and children. When Hawthorne's mother's life was slowly ebbing away, he recorded in his notebook the following statement:

At about five o'clock, I went to my mother's chamber and was shocked to see such an alteration since my last visit. I love my mother; but there has been, ever since my boyhood, a sort of coldness of intercourse between us, such as apt to come between persons of strong feelings if they are not managed rightly. I did not expect to be much moved at the time...I kept filling up, till for a few moments, I shook with sobs...and surely it was the darkest hour I ever lived.

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1 Hildegarde Hawthorne, Romantic Rebel (New York, 1932), p. 31.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Hawthorne and His Wife, p. 36.
5 Works, xviii.
But Hawthorne was mentally an active and robust child with a highly sensitive and fanciful nature. Separated from normal, human relationship, he delved voraciously into books—particularly romantic ones. He memorized many passages from Shakespeare, for example, merely from hearing them read; and at the age of six he went about declaiming a famous line from "Richard III":

My Lord, stand back and let the coffin pass!

He became an avid reader of the writers of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. According to Warren, among Hawthorne's earliest favorites were Shakespeare, Milton and Pope. He bought with his own money "The Faerie Queen" and cherished it and "Pilgrim's Progress." He was partial to Thomson's "The Castle of Indolence," which encouraged him in his own fancy. Other favorite readings of Hawthorne were Addison's "Spectator" and Johnson's "Idler." Arvin places on his list "St. Leon," "Caleb" and many other Gothic novels. Yet his greatest discovery was the novels of Sir Walter Scott, and from them Hawthorne learned how to romanticize history which he later did in The Scarlet Letter and his historical tales. In 1820, the year in which Ivanhoe was published, Hawthorne wrote again to Elizabeth concerning his reading:

I shall read the "Abbott"...as soon as I can hire it; I have read all of Scott's novels except that. I wish I had not

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1 Newton Arvin, op. cit., p. 10.
3 Hildegarde Hawthorne, op. cit., p. 29.
4 Newton Arvin, op. cit., p. 16.
that I might have the pleasure of reading them again.

This testimony, and others that can be cited, shows that growing up during the full flowering of the Romantic movement, Hawthorne's mind, a very impressionable one, became steeped in the current literature.

Later Hawthorne's attention, as pointed out by Arvin, turned to history and the literature of travel. He read intently of his own country, Felt's "Annals of Salem," Cotton Mather's "The History of Haverhill," and "More Wonders of the Invisible World" and others. Among his favorite travelers were Herodotus, Mandeville and Hakluyt.

As has been mentioned before, at the age of nine Hawthorne suffered an injury to his foot; and his prolonged lameness caused him to become very despondent. Many days he entertained himself with his reading, but many times the book was open and he brooded. Once he wrote to his Uncle Robert saying,

...it is now [sic] four weeks since yesterday since I have been to school and I don't know but it will be four weeks longer before I go again.

Such was his dark outlook. In fact, it seemed that he did not want to recover. It was his Uncle Robert, from Raymond, Maine, who, observing Hawthorne's appearance, recommended a change of air, and suggested a visit in Maine. Mrs. Hawthorne moved her family to the small village along the shore of Dingley Bay. Hildegarde Hawthorne gives a most vivid description

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1 Ibid.
2 Ibid., p. 39.
3 Ibid.; see also Austin Warren, op. cit., pp. 480-497.
4 Hildegarde Hawthorne, op. cit., p. 29.
5 Ibid., p. 33.
...a part of Great Pond...Sebago Lake...with fourteen green islands scattered over it....Beyond the water blue hills lay along the horizon.

Behind both houses other hills rose nobly, covered with forest to the dominating, rugged peak called Rattlesnake Mountain on the northeast. About a mile away to the west Thomas Pond joined to Sebago by the creek running between the two houses. It was the forest primeval that spread its mighty mantle backward from the shining water...Huge pines and balsam-spruces filled the air with their fragrance, murmured together their immemorial music.1

Here in this wild and impelling natural atmosphere, Hawthorne was free to lead a romantic and carefree life. In this "weird and woodsy" country, there was time to meditate; his introspective habits blended with his solitude. Here his reading, although unsystematically pursued, was continued according to his taste and inclination. Of his life at Sebago Lake, he says:

I lived in Maine like a bird of the air, so perfect was the freedom I enjoyed. But it was there I first got my cursed habits of solitude.2

However, this period of solitude may be considered as a formative stage in the development of his creative talent. Already there were indications of Hawthorne's bent towards authorship. He readily put his thoughts into rhyme, and on one occasion confided to Elisabeth how easy it was for him to write verse. Always there was a great secrecy about this unusual tendency, as he did not wish his mother to know of his compositions. Once he wrote a poem on the tragic death of an unfortunate couple who perished in the blizzard of 1819, which he showed to Bill Symmes, his confi-

1 Ibid., pp. 34-35.
2 Jane Lundblad, op. cit., p. 33.
3 Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, p. 106.
dant. Bill, admitting that Hawthorne often showed him poetry which he wrote, thought it was "terrible pretty"—especially the ghost stories told in verse. Though these fanciful exercises might be insignificant in literary quality, they are indicative of Hawthorne's talent and adaptation for creative art. At sixteen he and Louisa organized the Pin Society; for one year they published a weekly journal for their own enjoyment, in which the themes of their articles varied. On one occasion, Hawthorne attempted something in a more serious vein:

O I have roamed in rapture will
Where the majestic rocks are piled
In lovely stern magnificence around

And all my soul in transport owned
There is a God, in Heaven enthroned. 2

This inclination to write became an obsession. More and more Hawthorne had no interest for any other kind of employment. On Hawthorne's return to Maine from school in Salem, his Uncle Robert asked,

Made up your mind what you're going to be, Nat?

Hawthorne did not admit that he was still writing poetry, nor that he highly esteemed the writers of books; hesitantly he answered,

No...Ma'am says she wants me to be a pastor, but I don't think I will. 4

Just before his departure for Bowdoin College, he expressed his greatest desire to his mother in a letter:

Oh that I was rich enough to live without any profession!

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1 Hildegarde Hawthorne, op. cit., pp. 45-46. See also Austin Warren (ed.), Nathaniel Hawthorne (Atlanta, 1934), lxviii.
2 Hildegarde Hawthorne, op. cit., pp. 51-52. See also Henry James, op. cit., p. 21.
3 Hildegarde Hawthorne, op. cit., p. 45.
4 Ibid.
What do you think of my becoming an author, and relying for support upon my pen? Indeed, I think the illegibility of my writing is very author-like. How proud would you feel to see my works praised by the reviewers as equal to the proudest productions of the scribbling sons of John Bull. ¹

Years later Hawthorne did get this praise. Writing in *The Anthenaeum* (June 15, 1850), H. F. Chorley says:

We rate him among the most original and peculiar writers of American fiction. There is in his works a mixture of Puritan reserve and wild imagination of passion and description of the allegorical and the real, which some will fail to understand and which others will positively reject—but which to ourselves, is fascinating and which entitles him to be placed on a level with Brookden Brown and the author of "Rip Van Winkle."²

However, before this and similar encomiums were bestowed upon Hawthorne, there were many days of gloom and despair. Having grown up in a home where there was an extremely small amount of social intercourse and being free to roam alone in the wild forest of Maine, where he cultivated the habit of solitude, Hawthorne naturally became shy and reserved and was not aggressive in making social contacts. In the meantime, he spent four years at Bowdoin College. His melancholy habits made it difficult for him to make the proper social adjustments with ease and facility; yet he made the acquaintance of a few important students, several of whom were to play major roles in life and to perform worthy missions in the life of Hawthorne. It was, for example, Franklin Pierce, a classmate, who, as President of the United States, appointed him to the consulship in Liverpool. Horatio Bridge was the one who detected Hawthorne's genius and

² Jane Lundblad, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
⁴ Edward Mather, *op. cit.*, p. 246.
constantly encouraged him to write. Later it was Bridge, who was responsible for his first literary success. When Hawthorne wrote to Bridge saying,

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*I am a doomed man and over I must go,*

Bridge made possible the publication of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales.* Henry W. Longfellow, although he had not been in Hawthorne's immediate circle, wrote a glowing review of the book.

As shy and retiring as Hawthorne was, he had, however, a charming personality and was the center of attraction among his friends; but there was always that mysterious air about him that his friends could not penetrate. Of him Gilley said:

2

*I love Hawthorne, I admire him: but I do not know him.*

3

*He lives in a mysterious world of thought and imagination which he never permits me to enter.*

This statement is illuminating. It not only throws light upon Hawthorne's personality but upon a mental endowment—a predilection for the mysterious—which equipped him well for an absorbing interest in Gothicism.

4

At the end of his college days, Hawthorne had not chosen a profession. He returned to his home on Herbert Street and found that his sister Elizabeth had become a recluse and kept to her chamber just as his mother did.

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3 Edward Mather, *op. cit.*, p. 73.


5 Edward Mather, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-55.
Hawthorne kept to his room also, leaving the house only after twilight. Then he sought the nearest route to his destination, always making observations, but never wishing to be seen. At this time, he began to study assiduously the early histories of his native land which became the sources for much of his fiction.

For eleven years Hawthorne remained in seclusion—reading, writing, publishing little, destroying much; but in spite of his many disappointments, he had faith in himself and believed that he was predestined to be a great American writer. According to Lundblad, Hawthorne, in his fantastic tale, "A Select Party," appears as the genius that had long been awaited. When the stranger appears, the question is asked,

_Do you know him? Do you know him?_

The answer is:

_He is the representative of Posterity—the man of the age to come._

His seclusion was not in vain; for in it his literary career was developed. Overton says that not one of Hawthorne's selections owes its origin to chance. He spent those "long and lonely years in arduous apprenticeship to writing" and emerged an artist. Of his seclusion in his room in Herbert Street, Hawthorne wrote in 1832:

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2. Jane Lundblad, op. cit., p. 28.
3. Works, II, 64.
4. Ibid.
In this dismal chamber
Fame was won.¹

This "dismal chamber" and other factors in his life—hereditary, circumstantial, and volitional—all shaped Hawthorne into a natural Gothicism.

In this chapter, it was pointed out that Hawthorne was a descendant of a strong and sturdy lineage. Both the paternal and maternal ancestors possessed substantial character traits, and many of these qualities may be observed in Nathaniel. It was also noted that his father's death, his mother's grief and his own lameness occurring in his early years were certainly influences encouraging the development of the meditative, the imaginative and the fanciful. In fact, his solitude and melancholy were cultivated both as a result of his environment and as a result of his temperament.

Moreover, possessing a highly imaginative mind and being a lover of the fanciful, it was Hawthorne's good fortune to be born during the time of the Romantic movement—a movement compatible with his temperament and

¹Henry James, op. cit., p. 51.

James quotes a revealing passage from the Note Book of 1840:

Here I sit in my old accustomed chamber, where I used to sit in days gone by....Here I have written many tales—many that have been burned to ashes, many that have doubtless deserved the same fate. This claims to be called a haunted chamber, for thousands upon thousands of visions have appeared to me in it. And some few of them have become visible to the world....So much of my lonely youth was wasted here, and here my mind and character were formed; and here I have been glad and hopeful, and here I have been despondent....But living in solitude till the fullness of time was come I still kept the dew of my youth and the freshness of my heart.... Ibid., p. 52.

Julian Hawthorne says that his father's "genius was purified and fortified by his years of lonely vigil." Works, I, xv.
taste—and to be reared in an environment where he could revel in his fantasies and ghostly adventurous dreams.

Indeed, the spirit of the time was a complement of the spirit of the man. Lundblad comments that

The mysterious, the ghostly atmosphere appeal to kindred depths in the human soul and there are few authors belonging to the generation that grew up during the golden age of the Gothic novel, who have escaped being consciously or subconsciously impressed by the potent if somewhat ridiculously pathos.

Hawthorne was not one of those authors who escaped the influence of "the mysterious, the ghostly atmosphere" of fiction of his generation. As More adds, Hawthorne's very first attempt, Fanshawe, "is interesting if only to show at the very outset the author struck the keynote of his life's work." "The hero," which might easily be a picture of Hawthorne, "is the conventional student that figures in romance wasted by study and isolated from man by intellectual ideals."

It, therefore, seems quite clear that Hawthorne's home environment and personal temperament—always toward the gloomy and the melancholy, the fantastic and the ghostly, the solitary and mysterious—fitted well the literary-time spirit of his age; and the Gothic in Hawthorne was as much a part of him as it was a part of his age. It is no mere figure of speech when Hawthorne remarked that everytime he wrote his best things, "the devil...got into his ink pot."

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1 Jane Lundblad, op. cit., p. 81.
3 Austin Warren (ed.), Hawthorne, xv.
CHAPTER III

BASIC GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN THE FICTION OF HAWTHORNE

Gothicism, a literary vogue of Hawthorne's time, had a double appeal for him. Hawthorne's propensity for the weird and ghostly, for the miraculous and supernatural was not the sole determinant that guided him in weaving Gothic elements into his compositions, but also the great public demand for the Gothic. Indeed, as it has been stated before, Hawthorne's environment, his personal temperament and the influence of the current trends in literature were factors that tended toward fitting him competently for his use of the Gothic machinery. It is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that this machinery saturates nearly all of Hawthorne's tales; for, as Wilbur Cross asserts,

Nearly all of the Gothic machinery of Walpole, Mrs. Radcliffe, and Godwin is to be found in this Puritan: high winds, slamming doors, moonlight and starlight, magic and witchcraft, mysterious portraits, transformation, malignant beings, the elixir of life, the skeleton, the funeral, and the corpse in the shroud. To these were added as time went on, mesmerism and clairvoyance.¹

These Gothic features, together with those cited previously, will be discussed in this chapter with respect to their presence and prevalence in the fiction of Hawthorne. For a systematic procedure, those works we shall consider may be classified under five heads: namely, (1) early tales, (2) historical sketches, (3) moral tales and allegories, (4) romances, and (5) the abortive fiction. Each story discussed will, in turn, be treated in relation to setting, mood or atmosphere, chief Gothic incidents in the

¹ Neal F. Doubleday, "Hawthorne's Use of Three Gothic Patterns," College English, VII (1946), 250.
² Wilbur L. Cross, op. cit., pp. 163-164.
Early Tales

While a student at Bowdoin College, Hawthorne formulated the design of his becoming an author by profession. Here the verse of his boyhood days was discarded for prose. It was here also that he wrote his first tales called "Seven Tales of My Native Land," with the motto from Wordsworth, "We are Seven." However, Hawthorne destroyed most of these tales. Of them he writes:

They fed the flames; thoughts meant to delight the world and to endure for ages, had perished in a moment, and stirred not a single heart but mine.

These early stories are imbued with the same type of horror and ghastliness found in the Gothic literature of the eighteenth century. They show, as has been stated by More, that in their composition, Hawthorne struck the keynote of his art. Again, in speaking of these tales, Hawthorne says,

My pen...was driven by stronger external motives and a more passionate impulse within...

From this group of stories burned by the author, "Alice Doane's Appeal," "An Old Woman's Tale," and "The Hollow of Three Hills" were saved.

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1Hawthorne and His Wife, I, 123-124.
2Ibid., p. 124.
3Edward Mather, op. cit., p. 52.
4Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Alice Doane's Appeal," Hawthorne's Works (New York, 1900), XVI, 227. All subsequent references to the stories in this edition will contain the title of the story under the title Hawthorne's Works. The name of the author will be dropped.
5Paul E. More, op. cit., p. 28.
7Elizabeth L. Chandler, "A Study of the Sources of the Tales and Romances Written by Nathaniel Hawthorne Before 1853," Smith College Studies in Modern Languages, VII, No. 4 (July, 1926), 1-54.
These three stories are weird; and in each are found ghosts, wizards or witches.

Let us first briefly examine "Alice Doane's Appeal," according to the five aspects already mentioned.

Setting: The setting of "Alice Doane's Appeal" is Gallow Hill, "the field where Superstition won her darkest triumph," the spot where the witches were hanged.

Atmosphere: Hawthorne casts an intense melancholy air over this site whose worthless and "deceitful verdue" will "permit nothing to vegetate." As the narrator trods over "the dust of the martyrs," he finds nothing more prominent than "the decayed stumps of two trees" and "the rocky substances of the hill."

Incidents in Plot: The plot of "Alice Doane's Appeal" is this: A young man escorts two young women to gloomy Gallow Hill, and taking a manuscript from his pocket reads a tale of horror. In this tale, a wizard, who is also a dwarf, cunningly tempts Walter Brown to seduce his unknown sister to "guilt and shame," but Walter is slain by his twin brother.

Characters: Walter Brown and the Wizard are Gothic in character. Brown's evil character had been strengthened and rendered prominent by a reckless and ungoverned life. Therefore, he was susceptible to the treachery of the wizard,

a small, gray, withered man, with fiendish ingenuity in de-

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1 "Alice Doane's Appeal," Hawthorne's Works, XVI, 224.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 226.
4 Ibid., p. 231.
vising evil, and super-human powers to execute it.

Devices: In this story, Hawthorne uses several elements related to the Gothic. There is the stock Gothic use of a manuscript. The setting has a morbid and gloomy atmosphere. There is a double crime: one of incest is implied; and the other, murder. For atmospheric effects, there is a romantic description of a moonlight night. To create horror in the reader, the author has “both sinful souls and the false spectres” to arise, and “revel in the discovery of a complicated crime.” Walter Brown is a fiendish villain; the wizard is deformed.

The next story, “An Old Woman’s Tale,” is concerned with ghosts.

Setting: This story takes place in a small village in the valley of the Connecticut River.

Atmosphere: Hawthorne gives this little phantom town a ghostly atmosphere as he describes the old, dilapidated dwellings half hidden in a grove of elm and walnut trees.

Incidents in Plot: An old woman, knitting in the chimney corner, tells a ghost story, a legend of her native town in which everyone sleeps for an hour every fifty years, and the ghosts of all the inhabitants return.

Characters: Perhaps the storyteller, a toothless, withered, and aged woman, might be considered Gothic in appearance.

Devices: The story, though lacking in the use of an abundance of Gothic machinery, has a sinister air created in the appearance of numerous ghosts.

1 Ibid., p. 227.
2 Ibid., p. 238.
3 Ibid., p. 239.
The third story to survive the flames is "The Hollow of the Three Hills," a story of a witch.

Setting: The scene of this story is in a deep hollow in the midst of three hills, which was once the resort of the Power of Evil and his plightest subjects; and here at midnight or on the dim verge of evening, they were said to stand round the mantling pool, disturbing its putrid waters in the performance of an impious baptismal rite.\(^1\)

Atmosphere: The author creates a gruesome atmosphere around this scene as he describes the dwarfed pine tree, brown grass, decayed and mouldering timber beside the pool of "sluggish green water."

Incidents in Plot: In the story a witch meets a sinful young woman in this dismal spot. Enfolding the girl's head in her black cloak, the witch tells the lady of all the misery and suffering which she has caused her family.

Characters: The witch is an unusual phantom, because she, through her art of sorcery, paints in words the dark deeds of the young woman.

Devices: There are two chief Gothic devices employed: the gruesome setting and witchcraft. This story, "The Hollow of the Three Hills," according to Poe, is "an excellent example of the author's peculiar ability."\(^2\) Poe remarks that Mr. Hawthorne has wonderfully heightened his effects by making the ear in place of the eye, the medium by which fancy is conveyed.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Hollow of the Three Hills," *Twice-Told Tales*, ed. Robert Harriet and Robert W. Bruere (New York, 1919), p. 235. All subsequent references to the stories in this edition will contain the title of the story under the title *Twice-Told Tales*. The names of the editors and the author will be dropped.

\(^2\) The quotation is from a note by Edgar A. Poe on "The Hollow of the Three Hills," *Twice-Told Tales*, p. 234.

\(^3\) Ibid.
Another early tale, a shadowy ghost story, is "The White Old Maid."

**Setting:** This story begins and ends in a spacious up-stairs bedchamber, which is furnished with antique furniture.

**Atmosphere:** The ghostly light of the moon falling between the silken curtains, the slight waving of the fringed curtains, the moving of the shadowy figures in the room, and the presence of the pale "corpse in its burial clothes" constitute a ghostly air in the room.

**Incidents in Plot:** The tale is about two beautiful young women, one of whom becomes known as the "Old Maid in the Winding Sheet." They make a pact over the dead body of their lover in this somber room. The token of their agreement is a curly lock of the dead man's hair. Finally the women meet at the appointed time in the same place. Their corpses, one holding the mouldy lock of hair, are found by the clergyman.

**Characters:** The "Old Maid," whom a "taint of insanity" has affected, appears always in a winding sheet. Because of her fondness for the dead, the inhabitants of the town deemed her a part of every funeral, as she comes gliding like a ghost behind every procession. The clergyman sits with the first corpse in the chamber; he discovers the last two there.

**Devices:** The story is Gothic in mood, setting and characters. The haunted mansion, the moonlight, corpses, ghosts, shrieks, and the look of mouldy hair are features to bring out the preternatural atmosphere. The "Old Maid" is characterized as a real ghost. A clergyman, sometimes a stock character in the Gothic tale, has a minor role in the story.

Of all the stories in the "Early Tales," " Fanshawe," however, best

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illustrates Hawthorne's interest in and use of the Gothic. Hawthorne does not only follow the Gothic pattern in this story, but "Fanshawe" contains almost the major plot elements and character portraits in Melmoth the Wanderer by Maturin. For example, the heroine in each story is left in care of a guardian by her father, who is engaged in a commercial enterprise. The plot of each story turns on a letter concerning the father's business. Hawthorne names one of his characters Melmoth. Maturin's Melmoth stares and kills with a glance; Hawthorne's "Fanshawe turned calmly, and fixed his eyes on the stranger. 'Retire, sir,' was all he said." Maturin's Melmoth hurls himself over the precipice; Hawthorne's villain falls from the precipice as he attempts to reach the top. These are some of the similarities in the two stories.

Now for the story of "Fanshawe," which is about a beautiful young girl who is misled by a vicious villain.

Setting: The setting of the story is the campus of Harley College which is

in an ancient though not populous settlement of a retired corner of one of the New England states.

Atmosphere: The author secures the solitude and gloom he wishes by the selection of this secluded, solitary spot, with its wild profusion of vegetation.

Incidents in Plot: Ellen, a beautiful girl, who is left in care of a guardian, Mr. Melmoth, is visited clandestinely by a stranger. Induced

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2 "Fanshawe," Hawthorne's Works, XVI, 44.
3 Ibid., p. 1.
to take a wild midnight ride with him during a storm, she is finally rescued by the young student, Fanshawe, and her seducer plunges from a precipice to his death.

Characters: Fanshawe is the solitary student, who, seeking after knowledge, deemed himself unconnected with the world, unconcerned in its feelings, and uninfluenced by it in any of its pursuits.¹

He has a penetrating stare that wields power over the villain. The angler, who has evil designs on Ellen, poses with a forged letter as a messenger from her father. The angler's deeds mark him as a malicious villain.

Hugh Crombie, a worldly man with fine talent, is an accomplice in the angler's crime.

Devices: The lonely and remote setting affords a weird atmosphere for this wild tale. The plot of the story turns on the letters concerning the fortunes of Ellen's father. A mystery is created by the appearance of a "small white hand" in a dark corridor of Crombie's inn. Ellen's forced flight occurs at midnight during a storm. The death scene of the widow and the reaction of the mourners add to the gloom of the story. The villain's fall from the precipice is a scene of horror. Fanshawe possesses a piercing, supernatural stare and commanding voice. The angler is a vicious character; so is his accomplice Hugh Crombie.

These early stories, the first published examples of Hawthorne's art, show clearly that he definitely catered to and was influenced by the current literary hunger for the ghostly, the ghastly—in short, for the Gothic. But this influence, as has been seen and will be seen later in this study, was very much to his liking, talent and temperament. Indeed,

liking the fantastic and the mysterious, Hawthorne, in these early tales, made use of such Gothic machinery as the manuscript, letters, crime, revenge, intrigue, seduction, gloomy romantic scenery and setting, magic, supernatural phenomena, terrifying climatic conditions, yawning graves, ghosts, the diabolical villain, witch, wizard. For the love motif, he uses the conventional pattern: The beautiful young girl is persecuted by a vicious villain but is finally rescued by her young, handsome lover. Melodrama, heightened by the ghostly and ghastly, typifies these early tales of Gothic atmosphere and incidents.

Historical Sketches

Hawthorne's fondness for history, and especially for that of the New England section, led him to find in it a wealth of material to serve as a basis for his tales. He took from this source particular names, places and incidents and made them immortal in his fiction. For example, he has written sketches of such characters as John Endicott, a stern Puritan leader and Sir William Phips, Governor of Massachusetts; he has featured the places, Boston and Salem, in his tales and romances; he has dramatized the Salem witch trial and the Boston Massacre. His predilection for romance caused him to cast over these sketches attributes of the supernatural. He has Oberon to say in "The Devil in Manuscript":

...I could believe, if I chose, that there is a devil in this pile of blotted papers. You have read them, and know what I mean,—that conception in which I endeavored to embody a fiend, as represented in our traditions and the written record of witchcraft. O, I have a horror of what was created in my own brain and shudder at the manuscript in which I gave that dark idea a sort of material existence.  

These spectral qualities which Hawthorne has added to the bare facts of history have enhanced the events and made them memorable.

1"The Devil in Manuscript," Hawthorne's Works, III, 240.
Perhaps the best physical description of Hawthorne's fiend is given in "My Kinsman, Major Molineux." This ghostly figure has a forehead with double prominence, a broad hooked nose, shaggy eyebrows, and fiery eyes, and on one side of the face blazed an intense red, while the other was black as midnight, the division line being the broad bridge of the nose; and a mouth which seemed to extend from ear to ear was red or black, in contrast to the color of the cheek. The effect was if two individual devils, a fiend of fire and a fiend of darkness, had united to form this infernal visage.

But instead of this grotesque figure created in this story, Hawthorne often alludes to the Black Man (one whom the Puritans called the 2 Principle of Evil) in his tales or uses the Evil One. Of the many Puritan customs and ideas which Hawthorne has embodied in his tales, perhaps none is more fascinating than the superstitious belief in witchcraft.

In this group of tales, the first story for discussion is one of Hawthorne's finest stories, "Young Goodman Brown," in which he emphasizes how the power of witchcraft captivates Goodman Brown.

Setting: The scene of "Young Goodman Brown" is set in the deep, dark forest near the Salem village.

Atmosphere: The density of this forest furnishes an atmosphere of terror and horror. The "dreary road" passing through the woods was darkened by all the gloomiest trees of the forest, which barely stood aside to let the narrow path creep through and closed immediately behind. It was all as lonely as could be; ...the traveler knows not who may be concealed by the innumerable trunks and the thick boughs overhead.

Incidents in Plot: The plot of the story is this: Young Goodman Brown, leaving his wife, Faith, goes into the thick forest to observe the witches'
Sabbath. In this dense growth of trees and underbrush, he meets the Evil One and the witches; observing the strange phenomena staged, he is finally bewitched.

Characters: As Goodman Brown travels through the woods, his fellow traveler is "in grave and decent attire"; the only remarkable thing about him was his staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake, so curiously wrought that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle.1

Goody Cloyste is there

all anointed with the juice of smallage, and cinequefoil, and wolf's bane--Mingled with fine wheat and the fat of a new born babe,2 to ride her broomstick, which cannot be found. Martha Carrier, "a rampant hag, had received the devil's promise to be queen of hell." Upon leaving the forest, Goodman Brown becomes "a stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a despondent man."3

Devices: The setting of this story is appropriate. In this deep, dark forest, Hawthorne cleverly creates terror and horror through his many illusions. The false impressions and the deceptive appearance of things are terrifying. For example, the traveler's staff seems to be a serpent; the wet leaves become withered as soon as he touches them. Trees burn but are not consumed.

The whole forest was peopled with frightful sounds--the creaking of the trees, the howling of wild beasts... while sometimes the wind tolled like a distant church bell...4

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1 Ibid., p. 163.
2 Ibid., p. 165.
3 Ibid., p. 172.
5 Ibid., p. 169.
Voices of people known are heard, but the persons cannot be seen. The devil and the witches are in their favorite haunt.

The next story, "The Maypole of Merry Mount," although conspicuously barren of the Gothic machinery, has a ghostly air. The story is about a festivity.

**Setting:** The story takes place in the village of Merry Mount around the maypole.

**Atmosphere:** There is a ghostly air as the people are masked.

On the shoulder of a comely youth uprose the head and branching antlers of a stag; a second, human in all points, had the grim visage of a wolf; a third, still with the trunk and limbs of a mortal man, showed the head and horns of a venerable he-goat. Such were the colonists of Merry Mount.

**Incidents in Plot:** The cutting of the maypole is the main incident of the story. The inhabitants of Merry Mount have their May day celebration around the Maypole. In a nearby village dwell stern Puritans who disapprove of this merriment; so the governor and religious leader, John Endicott, "with his keen sword," cuts down the maypole.

**Characters:** "These were Gothic monsters though perhaps of Grecian ancestry."

**Devices:** Gothic machinery is not used in the story, but the masks worn by the holiday revelers create a ghostly air.

"The Grey Champion" is another story that has only a slight tinge of the Gothic. This trace of the Gothic is found in one of the characters of the story.

1 Ibid., p. 108.
2 Ibid.
Setting: The story takes place in a street in Boston.

Atmosphere: There is a tenseness in the air; a sort of unrest and dread is felt among the crowd.

Incidents in Plot: This story is of the early New England days when the settlers were often pressed by a tyrannical governor. On this particular occasion as Governor Edmund Andros, with his militia, rides through the street to impress upon the people his power, an aged and unknown figure in an old Puritan dress comes forth and makes a prophecy.

Characters: This valiant figure cries out:

I am here, Sir Governor, because of the cry of an oppressed people hath disturbed me in my secret place, and beseeching the favor earnestly of the Lord, it was vouchsafed me to appear once again on earth.1

Devices: No Gothic machinery is used. The Grey Champion has preternatural qualities, however.

"Drowne's Wooden Image" is another story which has only slight traces of the Gothic.

Setting: The story takes place in Boston where Drowne's woodwork shop is located.

Atmosphere: Mystery shrouds the shop as Drowne craves this particular image.

Incidents in Plot: The story is of a Boston wood carver who makes a figure head for a ship. The wooden image was said to come alive.

Characters: As Drowne fashions this figure, it is said of him that he has gone mad, and thence has come this gleam of genius.2

1 Ibid., p. 158
Drowne has sold himself to the devil.

Devices: The wooden image becomes animated. The woodcarver has unusual talent.

The "Legends of the Province House" forms one of the most interesting series of Hawthorne's New England tales. The first in this group is "Howe's Masquerade."

Setting: Province House, "the mansion of the old royal governors of Massachusetts," is the setting of the story.

Atmosphere: There is an eerie and uncanny feeling among the guests. The strange music heard fills all with wonder and some with apprehension.

Incidents in Plot: During the siege of Boston, Sir William Howe gives a masquerade ball to maintain the morale of "the officers of the British army and the loyal gentry." Near midnight a pageant of masked characters descend the stairs; the last figure being shrouded, his half covered countenance causes consternation in the governor's heart. As this figure reaches the door, he is seen to stamp his foot and shake his foot. It is reported that the governor performed in a similar manner when he left Province House for the last time.

Characters: The mysterious dignitaries in the pageant create a Gothic atmosphere.

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1 Ibid., p. 285.
2 "Howe's Masquerade," Twice-Told Tales, p. 277.
3 Ibid., p. 284.
4 Ibid., p. 281.
Devices: In this story Hawthorne uses the sinister funeral march, the flickering of the lamplight and a phantom procession to create an air of ghostliness.

The next story is "Edward Randolph's Portrait," a legend of a picture which "has been an heirloom in the Province House from time immemorial."

Setting: The setting of the story is Province House.

Atmosphere: There is a feeling that evil is foreshadowed. The governor is warned that

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if you meddle with the devil, take care of his claws.

Incidents in Plot: The story is told of this black, mysterious picture, an original and authentic portrait of the Evil One, taken at a witch meeting near Salem, and that its strong and terrible resemblance had been confirmed by several of the confessing wizards and witches at their trial in open court. It was likewise affirmed that a familiar spirit or demon abode behind the blackness of the picture and had shown himself at seasons of public calamity to more than one of the royal governors.3

One of the royal governors to incur the wrath of the Evil One in the picture was Governor Hutchinson. As the governor was signing an order for British troops to land, Alice Vane "snatched away the sable curtain that concealed the portrait." The horrible countenance of the picture fell upon the governor. Later the governor, dying, grasps for breath and complains that he is choking "with the blood of the Boston Massacre."

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1 "Edward Randolph's Portrait," Twice-Told Tales, p. 299.
2 Ibid., p. 304.
3 Ibid., p. 299.
4 Ibid., p. 306.
5 Ibid., p. 308.
Characters: Alice Vane beckoned to the picture and cried,

Come forth dark, and evil Shape!
It is thine hour.\(^1\)

It is implied that she has supernatural powers.

Devices: The animated picture and the ebullition of blood are two Gothic features used by Hawthorne in this story. Alice Vane is said to have a strange art.

Another legend is that of "Old Esther Dudley," whose character of the same name remained the last Loyalist inmate of Province House.

Setting: This story occurs in Province House.

Atmosphere: The story opens with a gloomy air. The governor, leaving Province House, says to Esther: "This is an evil hour for you and me." And the atmosphere grows ghostlier as Esther lives more and more in the past.

Incidents in Plot: When Sir William Howe, the last royal governor, was leaving Province House, he left there the last Loyalist, Old Esther Dudley. Living alone, Esther's greatest delight is to dress in her antique costumes, stand before the mirror and call forth the phantom guests of her gay days in this house.

Characters: "Esther Dudley appears to have grown partially crazed."

As she gazed in the blurred mirror

the gray and withered lady moved her ashen lips, murmuring half aloud, talking to shapes that she saw within the mirror, to shadows of her own fantasies.\(^4\)

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 303.
\(^2\)"Old Esther Dudley," *Twice-Told Tales*, p. 332.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 337.
\(^4\)Ibid., p. 339.
Devices: Hawthorne makes use of the magic mirror in the story. It may be said that the heavy key of the mansion held a charm for Esther.

The story is "Lady Eleanor's Mantle," a weird story of a proud, arrogant, and selfish woman.

Setting: Province House is the place of action for this story also.

Atmosphere: There is a feeling of strangeness and awe in this narrative. The author thinks that he imparted an additional wildness in the story.

Incidents in Plot: The story is about Lady Eleanor Rochcliffe, "a rich and high born" lady, who comes to Province House to claim protection of Governor Shute as her guardian. To heighten her beauty, she wears an embroidered mantle, a scarf with magic properties.

"...this mysterious mantle has thrown an awe around my image of her, partly from its fabled virtues and partly because it was the handiwork of a dying woman, and perchance owed the fantastic grace of its conception to the delirium of approaching death."

It was this scarf, embroidered by a victim of smallpox, which brought death to Lady Eleanor.

Characters: Jervase Helwyse, though perhaps not Gothic in character, is certainly out of the ordinary.

Devices: Hawthorne employs three Gothic elements in the story. He makes use of the enchanted mantle, the circumstance of gruesome death as in the death scene of Lady Eleanor, and the appearance of ghosts.

From observation made of the historical sketches, it is clear that Hawthorne's treatment of New England history in his fiction has added romantic mystery and terrifying retribution to the events of the past.

2 Ibid., p. 186.
In these tales, although Hawthorne does not utilize all of the stock conventionalities of the Gothic machinery, he makes use of the supernatural and emphasizes the ghostly atmosphere. Hawthorne's ghosts, as Leslie Stephen states,

are confined to their proper sphere, the twilight of the mind and never venture into the broad glare of daylight. We can see them as long as we do not gaze directly at them; when we turn to examine them, they are gone, and we are left in doubt whether they were realities or an ocular delusion generated in our fancy by some accidental collaboration of half seen objects.¹

Besides his ghosts in these tales, the use of witchcraft, magic and other supernatural phenomena is predominant.

Moral Tales and Allegories

As in his other stories, Hawthorne employs Gothic machinery in his moral tales and allegories; but there is a tendency to appropriate its use for ethical purposes rather than for mere terror and horror. In some of the narratives, as a consequence, he shifts emphasis from weird incidents to the delineation of weird characters. In this group also, Hawthorne makes use of the mysteries of science to heighten Gothic effects.

The first story for discussion in this group is "Feathertop" in which witchcraft is the salient point.

Setting: The story has its setting in Mother Rigby's cottage.

Atmosphere: In this cottage Mother Rigby dabbles in witchcraft. Here she has power to conjure. Her fire coal is always brought from a particular chimney corner in her cottage. In this atmosphere Feathertop is created.

¹ Leslie Stephen, Hours in a Library, I, 196.
Incidents in Plot: In this story Mother Rigby converts her scarecrow into a man and sends him out into the world to take his chance among the other men of straw and empty fellows who go bustling about the world.1

Feathertop had the opportunity to see himself in a full length mirror. He remarks to his mother upon his return:

I've seen myself, mother! I've seen myself for the wretched, ragged, empty thing I am! I'll exist no longer. 2

Characters: Mother Rigby "was one of the most cunning and potent witches in New England." Dickon is her invisible servant.

Devices: In this story the author chiefly uses two Gothic conventions: witchcraft and the magic mirror.

"The Wedding Knell" attracts special attention with its living corpse. Hawthorne mingles the mysteriousness of death with the wedding rites.

Setting: The scene of this queer wedding is a "certain church in the city of New York." 3

Atmosphere: There is an ill omen in the mournful tolling of the bell. As the funeral procession paced into the church the spectators shuddered with irrepressible awe.

The atmosphere is filled with the trepidation of the guests.

Incidents in Plot: In "The Wedding Knell," a funeral procession arrives at the church for a wedding; the spectral group paces slowly to the altar;

2 Ibid., p. 215.
3 Ibid., p. 196.
5 Ibid., p. 222.
in the midst is the bridegroom in his shroud. He wishes to be married and then the couple will go to their coffins.

Characters: The bridegroom dressed in his grave clothes, as well as the constituents of the funeral procession, definitely produces Gothic atmosphere and manifests Gothic traits.

Devices: Hawthorne uses the tolling of the bell and the gloomy atmosphere effectively. The appearance of the corpse in its shroud is a stock Gothic device.

Several other stories, although not richly ornamented with Gothicism, are included in this study because the faint traces of the Gothic in them enhance their flavor, as the following four stories will reveal.

The first in this category is "The Lily's Quest."

Setting: The setting of the story is in "a wide estate."

Atmosphere: The constant presence of the "dismal figure wrapped in a black velvet cloak" casts gloom over the story.

Incidents in Plot: A young couple seeks a proper site for their temple of happiness, but Walter Gascoigne's constant warnings of some earthly affliction deters their choice. When a suitable place is located, it becomes the tomb of the young woman.

Characters: Walter Gascoigne is a mysterious and melancholy figure and is the only character in the story suggestive of the Gothic mold.

Devices: The story is overlaid with gloom.

The second story, "The Ambitious Guest," concerns a great catastrophe.

"The Lily's Quest," Twice-Told Tales, p. 496.
Setting: The story occurs in a Notch of the White Hills.

Atmosphere: The howling wind has a terrifying effect on the family in the cottage.

There was a wail along the road as if a funeral were passing. To chase away the gloom, the family threw pine branches on their fire.

Incidents in Plot: The plot of "The Ambitious Guest" is this: A young man stops at a cottage in the mountains to lodge during a stormy night. The guest, along with the family, hearing a rumbling noise, leaves the house for a safer shelter and is buried beneath a landslide.

Characters: There are no Gothic characters; however, the mother feels the impending doom.

Devices: The story has a gloomy, melancholy air and ends in sudden terrifying death for the chief characters. Thus weird atmosphere and horrible death are the two chief devices of Gothic nature in the story.

Hawthorne has used a wild Indian legend for the basis of "The Great Carbuncle."

Setting: The Crystal Hills provide the eerie setting for the story.

Atmosphere: Awe and wonder are created in the romantic description of the majestic mountains.

Incidents in Plot: Several adventurers, seeking the Great Carbuncle, meet in Crystal Hills. Three of them find it. One falls dead; the other two, deciding that the treasure is too great, leave it.

Characters: In the story are two Gothic characters. The Seeker, who "had been condemned to wander among the mountains till the end of time,"

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"The Ambitious Guest," ibid., p. 373.
reminds one of Coleridge's tortured Ancient Mariner. The misshapen
doctor had been an alchemist.

**Devices:** Hawthorne uses romantic scenery. The subtitle of the story is
"A Mystery of the White Mountains." Death again strikes in a mysterious,
sudden manner.

"The Man of Adamant" is an uncanny tale.

**Setting:** The setting of the story is in the wilderness, forlorn and
desolate.

**Atmosphere:** The gruesome figure of a man

whose gesture and attitude warned the father and children
to stand back, while his visage wore a most forbidding
frown

sat within the entrance of the cave creating a horrifying picture in the
story.

This repulsive personage seemed to have been carved in
the same grave stone that formed the walls and portal
of the cave.2

**Incidents in Plot:** In the story, Richard Digby, "the gloomiest and most
intolerant of a stern brotherhood," determines to seclude himself in the
wilderness to enjoy his solitude. He becomes a petrified stone.

**Characters:** Mary Goofe, who prevails upon Digby to give up his solitary
life, "had been buried in an English graveyard, months before."4

**Devices:** The setting, the atmosphere and the ghost are the Gothic
features of this story, along with preternatural transformations.

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2Ibid.
3Ibid., p. 226.
4Ibid., p. 235.
In each of the following two stories is to be found one character who has preternatural qualities.

"A Select Party" is a fantastic tale.

Setting: A castle in the air is the scene of the story.
Atmosphere: To remove the gloom from the castle, the owner has it richly decorated.

Incidents in Plot: In this sketch, the owner of this bizarre castle invites a few "distinguished personages" to his party.

Characters: The Man of Fancy, a guest at the festival, "has a prolonged life." There is no trace of the Gothic in the other characters.

Devices: The tale is fantastic, and in its phantasy, it produces a macabre atmosphere akin, at least, to that in tales saturated with Gothicism.

In "The Virtuoso's Collection" is another unusual character.

Setting: The setting of the story is a museum.
Atmosphere: The variety and quaintness of the collection arouse awe and wonder.

Incidents in Plot: The sketch simply tells of the various curiosities in this new museum.

Characters: The curator, who has "a dark complexion and high features," is the Wandering Jew.

Devices: The eerie atmosphere and the threat of impending doom might be considered Gothic.

"The Great Stone Face" is one of Hawthorne's best stories.

Setting: The setting of the story is in a spacious valley, situated at the base of high and lofty mountains. On one side of a mountain is the
Great Stone Face, "a work of Nature in her mood of majestic playfulness, formed...by some immense rocks." When viewed from a distance, this precipice has the features of the human countenance,

a human face, with all its original divinity intact, did they appear...with the clouds and glorified vapor of the mountains clustering about it, the Great Stone Face seemed positively alive.

Atmosphere: The prophecy concerning the Great Stone Face creates a mood of anxiety and wonder on the part of the reader. And as each new heralded leader fails to fulfill the prophecy, the gloom of the story is deepened.

Incidents in Plot: The plot of the story is this: A mother tells her young son, Ernest, the legend of the Great Stone Face. It was the belief among the inhabitants in the valley that

at some future day, a child should be born hereabouts, who was destined to become the greatest and noblest personage of his time and whose countenance, in manhood, should bear an exact resemblance to the Great Stone Face.

This prophecy makes a deep impression on the youth. Throughout his life each proclaimed leader fails to be the "man of prophecy." But Ernest, growing in wisdom and godliness, becomes renown. Reaching old age, with "reverend wrinkles across his forehead, and furrows in his cheeks, Ernest is himself the likeness of the Great Stone Face!"

Characters: Mr. Gathergold, Old Blood and Thunder, Old Stony Phiz, nor the poet are Gothic in character. However, it may be said that there is some-

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2 Ibid., p. 31.
3 Ibid., p. 32.
4 Ibid., p. 52.
5 Ibid., p. 61.
thing miraculous about Ernest, as his visage assumes a resemblance to the Great Stone Face.

**Devices:** The setting, atmosphere, and the fulfillment of the prophecy in Ernest give the story its Gothic character.

"The Prophetic Pictures" is another narrative containing pictures of magical qualities.

**Setting:** The story takes place in Boston.

**Atmosphere:** The rumors that the painter has "an awful gift" creates an air of mystery and wonder.

**Incidents of Plot:** The painter in the story has an unusual art. Instead of painting just the physical features of a person, he paints the "mind and heart" too. His portraits of Elinor and Walter foreshadow evil.

"Time wore on; the painter, returning from an expedition in the Crystal Hills, reaches the home of Elinor and Walter just in time to avert a catastrophe.

The painter seemed to hear the step of Destiny approaching behind him, on its progress towards its victims.

Walter stands with a knife aimed at the bosom of his wife. The artist, knowing that he is the "chief agent of the coming evil which he had foreshadowed," cried out: "Hold, madman!" Elinor's life was saved.

**Characters:** It is reported of the painter that after he has once got possession of a person's face and figure, he may paint him in any act or situation whatever—and the picture will be prophetic.

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2 Ibid., p. 262.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., p. 254.
Devices: In this story, Hawthorne uses a Gothic character. The painter is a sort of a magician with an evil influence. Also in the story is the use of the animated picture to give the effect of uncanny mystery.

The story of "Ethan Brand" concerns an odd character.

Setting: The place of action is near a lime-kiln in ominous mountains.

Atmosphere: The atmosphere is depressing. The return of the fiend changes the peace and quietness to that of gloom and horror.

Incidents in Plot: The story is of Ethan Brand, who before going on his search

had been accustomed to evoke a fiend from the hot furnace of the lime-kiln, night after night, in order to confer with him...each laboring to frame the image of some mode of guilt which could neither be atoned for nor forgiven.1

Ethan, returning from his wanderings, when he discovers the object of his search in his own heart, says,

Unshrinkly I accept the retribution! 2

He leaps into the lime-kiln; "a fearful peal of laughter" is heard.

Characters: Ethan Brand is a sorcerer; he possesses a strange, penetrating stare and a fiendish laugh.

Devices: Hawthorne employs a fiend, horrible shrieks, preternatural transformations and sorcery to produce terror and the gruesomeness of evil.

Hawthorne's interest in science is revealed in the following stories.

"Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" has a profusion of the Gothic machinery.

1 "Ethan Brand," ibid., p. 344.
2 Ibid., p. 345.
Setting: The setting for "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" is in the doctor's dim, old-fashioned chamber, festooned with cobwebs and besprinkled with antique dust.\(^1\)

His bookcases are filled with gigantic folios, black-letter quartos, little parchments-covered duodecimons, and there is a large book of magic. The statue of Hippocrates converses with him; a skeleton in an oaken case rattles its bones; his fiancée's picture steps out of the frame; and the spirits of his deceased patients, who dwell in the magic mirror on the wall, peep out at him.

Atmosphere: Everything in the setting lends to the weird and unearthly atmosphere.

Incidents in Plot: The plot of the story is this: The doctor conducts an experiment with magic water (a witch's brew) to make four of his aged friends young again. The effect was marvelous. Dancing in their youth again, they overturn a table and the water upon it is spilled. Suddenly the rejuvernation experienced among the friends expired, bringing back their infirm and feeble state of health. Having no more of the cordial, they immediately make plans to seek the Fountain of Youth.

Characters: The doctor is a sort of wizard. His friends, aged and decrepit, lend support to the atmosphere of mystery and uncanny magic.

Devices: Hawthorne uses such Gothic machinery as the book of magic, the skeleton, the talking statue, the animated picture, the magic mirror, and the elixir of life.

In "The Birthmark," Aylmer seeks to perfect an object of nature and fails.

\(^1\) "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," *Twice-Told Tales*, p. 265.
Setting: Aylmer's laboratory is the scene of the story.

Atmosphere: The arrangement and beauty of the laboratory give it the appearance of being enchanted. In these surroundings, Aylmer is confident that "he could draw a magic circle round" Georgiana "within which no evil might intrude."

Incidents in Plot: In the story Aylmer's beautiful wife, Georgiana, has one little defect which mars her beauty. He removes this malignant spot and Georgiana dies.

Characters: Aylmer is an alchemist. Aminadab, his assistant, who possesses "a gross, hoarse chuckle," has a coarse and rugged nature.

Devices: Hawthorne uses Gothic characters: Aylmer, a sorcerer, and his assistant (with his Oriental name and features) has traits of the misshapen villain.

The third story, "Dr. Rappaccini's Daughter," is a story about a doctor who distils "plants into medicines that are as potent as a charm."

Setting: The story has a typical Gothic setting. It takes place in the southern region of Italy.

Atmosphere: The romantic description of the doctor's garden relieves the gloom of the story, yet there is much horror in this beautiful spot.

Incidents in Plot: This narrative is a translation. In the story Dr. Rappaccini cultivates the most gorgeous but the most poisonous plants for medicinal purposes. His interest in the advancement of science being so great he sacrifices his daughter for the cause.

2 "Dr. Rappaccini's Daughter," ibid., p. 309.
Characters: Dr. Rappaccini, a diabolical man, dressed in black, "stooping and moving feebly like a person in inferior health," is engaged in an occult science. His fanaticism is so extreme that his personality dominates the plot and the personality of the other characters.

Devices: Hawthorne uses several elements related to the Gothic in this story. There is the stock Gothic use of the manuscript (the collected works of M'de l'Aubepine). The doctor is an Italian; he has committed a mysterious crime; he produces a new and original elixir of life.

In the foregoing stories, the results of the author's fancy and imagination are vivid and striking creations of his art. In these stories Hawthorne makes use of ghostly atmosphere and fiendish characters not only to effect terror but to personify evil. There is usually a horrible retribution experienced by the main characters. To produce gruesome effects, Hawthorne employs such stock Gothic conventionalities as witchcraft, magic, sorcery, ill omens, ghosts, corpses, manuscripts, animated pictures, fiends, midnight atmosphere. But he adds at least two devices which produce Gothic effects: the scientific laboratory with its mystic vapors and, secondly, symbolism.

Romances

In Hawthorne's "Preface" to The Marble Faun, he writes:

No author, without a trial can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity in broad and simple daylight as is happily the case with my native land...Romance and poetry, ivy, lichen, and wall flowers, need ruin to make them grow.1

1 Ibid., p. 319.
2 Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Marble Faun (Boston, 1883), p. 15.
The American scene, according to Hawthorne, was too young to serve as a rich background for romances; but *The Scarlet Letter* is an excellent example of the author's treatment of a local theme against the American background. Hawthorne, as has been stated before, liked the unusual, the marvelous; and in writing his romances, he has ingeniously woven into them the devices of the Gothic machinery to enhance his themes and heighten the effects of his narratives.

We shall first briefly examine *The Scarlet Letter*, a story of the deep pathos and sufferings of Hester Prynne, who proves to be a strong and courageous woman as she bears her shame and the public scorn.

**Setting:** The background of the story is in Boston. There are, however, six specific scenes of action: First, The Market Place, where Hester, with her child, sits upon the scaffold; second, The Prison, where Chillingworth treats the child; third, The Governor's Mansion, where Hester talks about retaining the custody of her child; fourth, The Pillory, where the strange phenomena is observed at midnight by Dimmesdale, Hester and Pearl; fifth, The Forest, where Hester and Dimmesdale make plans to go away; sixth, The Market Place, where Dimmesdale, confessing his guilt, dies.

**Atmosphere:** Gloom, mystery, and death heavily charge the atmosphere of the story.

**Incidents in Plots:** The story of *The Scarlet Letter* is presumably taken from an old manuscript. Accompanying the manuscript is a scarlet cloth with the imprint of the letter "A," which is surely imbued with magical properties; when Hawthorne placed the material to his breast, he experienced a sensation not altogether physical, yet almost
so, as of burning heat; and as if the letter were not
of red cloth but red hot iron.¹

In this story, Hester is judged guilty of adultery, and her punishment
is to wear the letter "A" embroidered in scarlet cloth as a symbol of
her crime. Her paramour, Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale, a young clergyman,
who had come from one of the great English universities
bringing all the learning of the age into the wild forest, ²
is crushed because he conceals his guilt. Little Pearl is the sprite-
like, unpredictable creature of this union. Feeling that he has been
wronged and seeking revenge, the old deformed wizard, Arthur Chillingworth,
devotes himself

for seven years, to the constant analysis of a heart full
of torture and deriving his enjoyment thence and adding
fuel to those fiery tortures which he analyzed and gloated
over. ³

One day Hester and Pearl go to the mansion of the governor. In the
hall they see the fine old portraits of his forefathers, who "were gazing
with harsh and intolerant criticism." Besides the pictures is the
governor's finest armor which looked like polished mirrors. Little Pearl
is fascinated with her reflection in it, but as Hester looked

owing to the peculiar effect of this convex mirror, the
scarlet letter was represented in exaggerated and gigan-
tic proportions. ⁴

One night the minister's conscience prompts him to mount the scaffold
at midnight; as Hester and Pearl join him, a strange phenomenon is seen

¹ The Scarlet Letter, Works, I, 33.
² Ibid., p. 64.
³ Ibid., pp. 158-159.
⁴ Ibid., p. 99.
⁵ Ibid., p. 100.
in the sky that had the appearance of an immense letter—the letter A—marked out in lines of dull red light.\(^1\)

The letter "A" appears also on the minister's chest.

The governor's sister, Mistress Hibbins, is reputed to be a witch. She accuses Hester of practicing witchcraft too. The old hag also tempts Dimmesdale, who, out of guilt, cried out:

> Have I sold myself to the fiend whom, if men say true, this yellow-strangled and velvet old hag has chosen for her prince and master?\(^2\)

Little Pearl has witchcraft in her eyes. Her reflection in the brook in the forest seemed to communicate somewhat of its own shadowy and intangible quality of the child herself.\(^3\)

Pearl often plays in the graveyard; there Chillingworth gathers herbs. Hester's home is located beside the deep, dark forest.

After seven years of torture and anguish, the minister ascending the scaffold in the Market Place, publicly acknowledges his guilt, then dies in Hester's arms, revealing a soul destroyed by sin.

Characters: Hester, who takes on the appearance of a Stoic, remained at the scene of her guilt, the scene of her earthly punishment and develops the most skillful art of needlecraft, finally becoming a self-ordained "Sister of Mercy." Dimmesdale, an intellectual, intro-

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1. Ibid., p. 145.
2. Ibid., p. 206.
3. Ibid., p. 194.
4. Ibid., p. 76.
spective, religious figure, suffers a horrible retribution. Little Pearl is an elfish child. Once while Hester was looking into the baby's eyes she found that she beheld not her own miniature portrait but another face...a face, fiendlike, full of smiling malice...it was as if an evil spirit possessed the child.

Old Chillingworth is well versed in medicine and alchemy; he is also a striking evidence of man's faculty of transforming himself into a devil.

Devices: The Gothic elements in the story are copious. The story is allegedly taken from a manuscript. The scarlet cloth is an amulet. The governor's mansion might serve for the stock Gothic castle; in the mansion are the traditional armor and the animated portraits. Mirrors are used: Little Pearl's eyes, the armor, the brook—all have preternatural implication. The magic letter in the sky foreshadows an ill omen; the letter mysteriously appears on the minister's chest and eats into his vitals. Witches are spoken of, and witchcraft is practiced. Little Pearl is an elf-like creature; she plays in the graveyard; Chillingworth gathers mysterious herbs there. Dimmesdale has an ecclesiastical tie; he and Hester are guilty of a crime. Chillingworth's torture of Dimmesdale is a crime. His fiendish deformity is an attribute of the villain; he is also a magician and an alchemist.

In The House of the Seven Gables a curse is placed upon the family of this house because the site of their home is secured through false claims.

1 Ibid., pp. 91-92.
2 Ibid., p. 158.
Setting: The story occurs in "a wooden house with seven acutely-peaked gables" in a New England town, Salem.

Atmosphere: Throughout the romance there is a gloomy and ghostly air; however, it is relieved with the gayety of Phoebe.

Incidents in Plot: The plot of the story is this: Colonel Pyncheon, through false claims, comes into possession of Matthew Maule's land. Old Maule, before his execution for witchcraft, puts a curse on Colonel Pyncheon, vowing that

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God will give him blood to drink.

On Maule's homestead the Colonel builds his mansion,

the imposing edifice. ... Its whole visible exterior was ornamented with quaint figures conceived in the grotesqueness of a gothic fancy....On every side the seven gables pointed sharply toward the sky.

Near the house, Maule's Well, a "natural spring of soft and pleasant water, grew hard and brackish."

During the house warming the Colonel is found seated in his study.

...there was an unnatural distortion in the fixedness of Colonel Pyncheon's stare; ...there was blood on his ruff, ...his hoary beard was saturated with it.

The curse--gruesome death! Each time a Pyncheon dies in this room, the rumor is

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He has Maule's blood to drink.

1 The House of the Seven Gables, ibid., p. 255.
2 Ibid., p. 256.
3 Ibid., p. 259.
4 Ibid., p. 254.
5 Ibid., p. 263.
6 Ibid., p. 268.
The young Clifford Pyncheon is convicted upon circumstantial evidence for the murder of the last Pyncheon to die in this chamber within the last seventy years. The features of the large portrait of the old Colonel which remains in his study seem to symbolize an evil influence. At one time during an interview between Mr. Pyncheon and the carpenter Maule, the picture was observed to have lost all patience and was on the verge of leaving its frame.

In another chamber,

a large dim looking glass...was fabled to contain within its depths all the shapes that had ever been reflected there...

The posterity of Matthew Maule has some connection with this mirror; they use a sort of mesmeric process to bring forth the departed Pynchons. In Holgrave's story, he relates how the grandson, Matthew Maule, hypnotizes Alice Pyncheon and finally causes her death. Holgrave, the descendant of Maule, is versed in mesmeric powers also, and has an art for making portraits. It was the rumor that old Matthew Maule at midnight often arose from his grave and "had an inveterate habit of haunting a certain mansion." Phoebe often hears strange noises and is aware of an unseen presence in the house. In speaking of the house being haunted, Hepzibah says to Phoebe:

but in an old house like this, you know dead people are very apt to come back again!*

Judge Pyncheon, the perpetrator of the crime for which Clifford was accused, meets his death in this house. Holgrave knows the combination

1 Ibid., p. 268.
2 Ibid., p. 452.
3 Ibid., p. 322.
for the secret cabinet behind the colonel's portrait, and discovers the long sought deeds only to find that they are worthless.

Characters: Old Matthew Maule, a wizard, who places a curse on the Pyncheon family, has the power to rise from his grave. The grandson of Maule, using his mesmeric power on Alice Pyncheon, causes her death. Holgrave, the youngest of the Maules, who has a prophetic touch in the making of pictures, is also a mystic.

Devices: As can be seen in the foregoing, this romance is deep in the Gothic tradition. It is permeated with a ghostly atmosphere, with rumors of ghostly happenings in the house, and with ghosts parading through it. The manuscript, the crime, the deeds, the old portrait, which comes to life; the secret cabinet containing the deeds; the magic mirror, which reflects the images; the ancestral chair in which the Pyncheons die—all are magically connected with the old Gothic edifice. Moreover, there are the mysterious deaths of the Pyncheons; the curse—God gives them blood to drink. The Maules, having mesmeric powers, are sorcerers and wizards; old Maule arises from the grave; Holgrave, as a photographer, has a magical and prophetic touch.

The Blithedale Romance is a story of contemporary life. It contains the least of the Gothic machinery used by Hawthorne in his romances.

Setting: The story takes place at Blithedale, a communal farm, established for altruistic purposes.

Atmosphere: The story has a fairly even temper.

Incidents in Plot: In this narrative the lives of some of the adventurous characters at Blithedale become entwined; and for the vivacious and exotic Zenobia, the result is her tragic death. Priscilla,
a very young woman... in a poor decant gown, her brown hair slightly waved, and her face of "a wan, almost sickly hue," arrives at the farm during a snow storm. Her immediate attachment to Zenobia is evident, as

she dropped down upon her knees, clasped her hands and gazed piteously into Zenobia's face.  

Zenobia suggests writing a ballad about the affair. Later, Zenobia and Westervelt, a villain, attempt to exploit Priscilla's supernatural powers in their mesmeric exhibition. Hollingsworth rescues Priscilla. Zenobia drowns herself.

Characters: Westervelt with his metallic laugh and false teeth gives the impression that he is a sham. He possesses mesmeric powers. Priscilla has some preternatural powers. Westervelt explains to the audience that the roar of a battery of cannon would be inaudible to her. And yet, were I to will it, sitting in this very hall, she could hear the desert wind sweeping over the sands as far off as Arabia...

Devices: Even though the traces of the Gothic in this story are comparatively faint, they nevertheless reveal Hawthorne's knowledge of and predilection for the Gothic. The following items suggested by Zenobia for a ballad are pertinent to the point.

The storm, the startling knock at the door, the entrance of the sable knight Hollingsworth and this shadowy snow-maiden, who precisely at the stroke of midnight shall melt away at my feet in a pair of wet slippers!

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2 Ibid., p. 28.  
3 Ibid., p. 199.  
4 Ibid., p. 29.
Westervelt is a wizard. Priscilla, possessing supernatural powers, poses as the Veiled Lady. Zenobia foreshadows her death.

Hawthorne's interest in ghost stories is very evident as he has incorporated the "haunted house" in many of his stories. There was a rumor that the villa which he occupied in Rome was haunted because a murder had been committed there long, long ago, and that the strange noises heard was the reenactment of the crime. This rumor inspired Hawthorne to choose this setting as Donatello's ancestral home, Monte Beni, in The Marble Faun, which Hawthorne thought was the best of his romances.

The Marble Faun is a fairy-like romance.

Setting: Rome, Italy, a cultural center of the fine arts and religion affords a rich background for the romance. Most of the action of the story takes place in this city with the exception of one scene at Monte Beni.

Atmosphere: The art galleries, the cathedrals, and the ancient ruins give an air of awe, wonder, mystery, and ghastliness.

Incidents in Plot: In this cultural center of fine arts and religion, three artists—Miriam, Hilda, and Kenyon, together with their friend, Donatello, an ardent admirer of Miriam—have many rich and varied experiences. However, Miriam warns Donatello that

If you follow my footsteps they will lead you to no good.

These friends visit the catacombs of St. Calixtus which contain all that ghastliness which the Gothic minds love to associate with death.

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2 Ibid., p. 101.
3 Ibid., p. 41.
The group encounters a spectre of the catacombs. The spectre becomes attached to the beautiful and mysterious Miriam, and declares:

Henceforth, I am nothing but a shadow behind her footsteps. She came to me when I sought her not. She has called me forth, must abide the consequence of my reappearance in the world.1

This apparition, "dark, bushy-bearded, wild of aspect and attire," becomes Miriam's model and haunts her every move. These artists discover an original sketch of Guido in which his demon has the same visage as that of Miriam's model. Hilda copies Guido's painting of Beatrice in which there is a striking resemblance of Miriam. A self portrait is made by Miriam which reveals her great beauty.

Later, Donatello, who is the very image of the Marble Faun, and who has traits of that class of ancient men, throws Miriam's model over Tar- pian Rock. This crime cements the destinies of Donatello and Miriam. It is revealed that Miriam's persecutor, whom Donatello hurls over the precipice, is a monk of the Capuchin church. As the friends stood at the bier they saw a little stream of blood ooze from the dead monk's nostrils;...it crept slowly towards the thicket of his beard, where...it hid itself.3

They go to view the cemetery beneath the church, where the monk is to enjoy "the luxury of a consecrated bed."

Donatello retires to his ancestral castle, Monte Beni, where the famous sunshine wine, with its magical properties, is made. Of this wine

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1 Ibid., p. 46.
2 Ibid., p. 34.
3 Ibid., p. 221.
4 Ibid., p. 225.
he says,

This is a wine, the secret making of which has been kept in our family for centuries; nor would it avail any man to steal the vineyard, in which alone the Monti Beni grape can be produced.¹

Here in these romantic surroundings, Kenyon fashions a bust of Donatello which seems to interpret the transformation of Donatello's character. In returning to Rome to atone for his crime, he, Miriam, and Kenyon believe that the statue of Pope Julius is endowed with life.

Characters: Donatello, who has the characteristics of a faun, possesses a power over animals. The Spectre of the Catacombs, Miriam's model, has magical power over her; he has the characteristics typical of a villain; he is also a Capuchin monk. Neither Hilda nor Kenyon possesses outstanding Gothic traits, but the work of both artists seems to have preternatural qualities. The beautiful and talented Miriam has a dark, mysterious secret.

Devices: Hawthorne has used the Gothic machinery abundantly in this romance. Some of the prominent parts of this machinery are the following: the Gothic castle with its vivid description; the weird description of the catacombs and the Capuchin cemetery; Miriam's secret crime is parallel to that of Beatrice Cenci, which implies a crime of an incestuous nature; Donatello's crime; Miriam's model has spectral qualities and a pact with the devil; he is a villain whose pact with the devil gives him a sinister, diabolical influence; Miriam seems to be bewitched when he is near her; there is magic in the wine of Donatello; works of art are used profusely;

¹ Ibid., p. 257.
a little trickle of blood is seen to flow from the dead monk's nostrils; Donatello says that the blood of the monk has cemented Miriam's life with his.

In the preceding discussion, it is readily seen that the Gothic tradition conspicuously permeates Hawthorne's romances. He employs all of the Gothic machinery pointed out in his other narratives and adds those of hypnotism or mesmerism as found in *The House of the Seven Gables* and *The Blithedale Romance*.

Abortive Romances

The patterns of the last four romances attempted by Hawthorne were left without definite forms; but they have certain patterns in common: the themes, the elixir of life and the bloody footstep. Another common feature of these unfinished works indicates that they were to follow in the Gothic tradition. Of "The Ancestral Footstep," Hawthorne writes,

"I do not wish it to be a picture of life, but a Romance, grim, grotesque, quaint...yet the atmosphere should be such as to excuse all wildness...there should be a tinge of the grotesque given to all the characters and events."  

"The Ancestral Footstep" was to have been Hawthorne's English Romance.

Setting: The story takes place in England.

Atmosphere: It has a weird and ghostly air mingled with horror.

Incidents in Plot: The story is of Middleton, an American, who goes to England to take possession of the ancestral estate that is two centuries old. The land is now in the hands of a dark, mysterious Mr. Eldredge. The heir, Middleton, hearing the legend of the Bloody Footstep, seeks out...
Smithell Hall. He discovers the ancestral mansion, with its secret chambers, drawers and cabinets. Finally Middleton decides that he would rather establish his home in a virgin soil.

Characters: It appears that Mr. Eldredge is to be the villain. In one instance it is stated that he comes to his death by his "criminal and treacherous designs."

Devices: Hawthorne uses four Gothic elements. The story is told from another person's point of view. The mansion is the Gothic castle. The villain is an Italian. The story includes the legend of the Bloody Footstep.

"The Dolliver Romance," a fragment, was the latest of Hawthorne's writings.

Setting: Dr. Dolliver's apothecary shop is the scene of action.

Atmosphere: The story has a weird, grotesque atmosphere.

Incidents in Plot: In the story, the apothecary, Dr. Dolliver, who has the care of his three year old granddaughter, Pansie, cultivates mysterious and poisonous flowers. He partakes of a cordial to make himself young. Old Colonel Dabney, who speaks of the Bloody Footstep bearing its track down through his race, is jealous of the doctor's youth. He demands of the doctor the elixir of life; the colonel drinks and dies.

Characters: Dr. Dolliver, having a knowledge of medicine, is interested in perfecting the elixir of life. There is no evidence of the Gothic in little Pansie and Colonel Dabney.

Devices: In this sketch, Hawthorne makes use of three Gothic elements. The doctor uses an elixir of life. The mysterious and exotic plants which have medicinal properties are cultivated by the doctor. The Bloody Footstep is spoken of.
The next romance, "Septimus Felton," is the story of a young scholar.

**Setting:** The setting of the story is in a small wooden house on the Lexington Road near the village Concord.

**Atmosphere:** In the story there is an air of awe and wonder saturated with gloom.

**Incidents in Plot:** "Septimus Felton" is a story of a student by the same name, who is interested in making scientific research. He is constantly visited by Dr. Portsoaken, who has an interest in spiders. Septimus kills a British soldier, Sibyl Daey's lover, and finds an old manuscript on his body; he deciphers it and learns to concoct a magic drink similar to the Indian brew made by his Aunt Keziah. He discovers that he is an heir to the old Norton estate in England. Sibyl tells the legend of Friar Bacon's drink, which is the heart blood of a pure young girl; Sibyl drinks Septimus' cordial and dies. A mysterious flower grows on the soldier's grave.

**Characters:** Dr. Portsoaken, wishing "to practice some new mode of medical science," is interested in spiders. Sibyl Daey seems to be an unearthly character. Through her contact with the Indians, Aunt Keziah learns the formula for a witch's brew. Septimus, who is typical of the scholar engaging in esoteric arts in the Gothic novel, concocts an elixir of life.

**Devices:** Hawthorne uses several elements related to the Gothic. These elements are the family castle; an old document; the elixir of life, and the strange flower on the grave. The bloody footprint is traced through

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"Septimus Felton," Hawthorne's Works, XIV, 162.
the Norton family. Aunt Keziah’s witch drink has magical qualities.
Sibyl tells the legend of Friar Bacon’s drink. Dr. Portscaken is a
sorcerer.

The last romance, “Dr. Grimeshawe’s Secret,” is a tale of wild
melodrama.

Setting: The story has two settings. The first part of the story
occurs at Dr. Grimeshawe’s home in America; the second part takes place
in England.

Atmosphere: The story, grotesque and gruesome, has a gloomy and melanc-
oly air.

Incidents in Plot: The doctor in “Dr. Grimeshawe’s Secret” is a dark,
mysterious creature, who has the care of a young girl and boy. In his
dusty office is his collection of spiders; from their cobwebs he extracts
a substance of medicinal value. To add to the gloom of the story, his
shabby home is beside a graveyard; in it a silver key is found that
finally establishes the English lineage of Edward Redolyff, the boy,
when he unlocks a secret chest. The family mansion, which is linked with
the story of the bloody footstep and is now occupied by the treacherous
Lord Braithwaite, is typical with its secret passages and underground
chambers. Here Redolyff has contact with an Italian priest and hears
the strange story of Ormskirk.

Characters: Dr. Grimeshawe, who is interested in making an elixir from
the cobweb of spiders, has traits in common with the magicians in the
Gothic novels. Lord Braithwaite, who has many dark crimes, is an Italian.
He serves poisoned wine to a guest and insinuates making a stab in his
heart with a stiletto.
Devices: Hawthorne uses much of the Gothic machinery in this romance. The castle, with its dark passages and family ghost, the mysterious crime, the bloody footstep, the graveyard—where the common flowers on the graves sprang from some English maiden's heart—all are related to the Gothic. Dr. Grimmeshawe is a magician. The Italian priest is housed in the castle. Braithwaite, a villain, serves his guest a poisoned drink. The mysterious tale of Ormskirk is told. In his lonely chamber are his chair, books and writing materials.

It is obvious that these unfinished romances are, even in their present stage, thoroughly Gothic in character. The Gothic themes—the elixir of life and the bloody footstep—are used; and in conjunction with other stock conventionalities, they help to effect macabre effects.

The Gothic situations and machinery that have been pointed out in this chapter are a manifestation of Hawthorne's predilection for the Gothic and his adaptations of the Gothic tradition for his purposes. It may be observed that his early stories and romances, abounding in the Gothic machinery, put major stress on weird, uncanny situations and incidents; but in his moral tales and allegories more emphasis is placed on the weird and uncanny characters. However, from beginning to end, in all classifications, Hawthorne uses stock Gothic machinery introduced in the eighteenth century; but to the old Gothic pattern he adds certain new features: for example, witchcraft, mesmerism, clairvoyance, symbolism and the dark mysteries of science. To what end Hawthorne uses the Gothic machinery, what the distinguishing features of his handling of this machinery are, how his treatment of the Gothic reflects his creativeness—these will be discussed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER IV

HAWTHORNE'S USE OF GOTHIC DEVICES

It may be repeated that the Gothic elements in Hawthorne's fiction, as cited in the preceding chapter, were the outgrowths of two dominant factors. First, Hawthorne delighted in dark, gloomy subjects. Of his taste for these themes, James writes:

What pleased him in such subjects was the picturesqueness—their rich duskiness of color, their chiaroscuro; but they were not the expression of a hopeless, or even of a predominantly melancholy, feeling about the soul.¹

And, secondly, Gothicism, which continued as a literary vogue until the mid-nineteenth century, greatly influenced Hawthorne and contemporary fictionists.

Cross states that

From Mrs. Radcliffe down to 1850, the novelists were exceedingly few who did not on occasion excite their readers by the strange and the marvelous, or frighten them by some sort of supernatural or bloody performance.²

It was this type of literature that had a great appeal for both the public and the writer. But Hawthorne's employment of Gothic machinery was not entirely for the same purpose as those writers who used the Gothic primarily to evoke terror and horror in the reader. In Cross' appraisal of Hawthorne's use of the Gothic is found this statement: "Hawthorne...

refined Gothic art and fashioned it to high ethical purposes.

¹Henry James, op. cit., pp. 58-59.
²Wilbur L. Cross, op. cit., p. 158.
⁴Wilbur L. Cross, op. cit., p. 165.
In evaluating Hawthorne's fiction, Gorman makes this statement:

The best of Hawthorne's fantastic short tales are surcharged with an unearthly glow, a brooding sense of the supernatural, a comprehension of the invisible and mystic auras surrounding the soul. They are like spells and if these spells are weakened by an over-obvious moralistic inference the reader must accept them for what they are and reflect that no other type of mind but one intensely susceptible to moralistic conclusions could have created them. They are the late harvest of the Puritan tradition, dark-petaled flowers growing in lonely meadows and more gracious in aspect than the early harvest.1

Also stressing the moral bent of Hawthorne's fantastic stories, James says:

They are moral and their interest is moral; they deal with something more moral than the accidents and conventionalities, the surface occurrences of life....he cared for the deeper psychology...2

Viewing Hawthorne as primarily a moralistic and creative artist, this chapter will first, attempt to show how Hawthorne uses Gothic machinery to clarify and vivify his moral ideas and purposes; secondly, it will give some distinguishing features of Hawthorne's handling of Gothic machinery; and, thirdly, it will point out how Hawthorne's treatment of the Gothic reflects his creativeness.

In Hawthorne's stories there is always evidence of some moral-dread. In speaking of this particular characteristic of his work, Brownell comments that "Hawthorne's imagination impelled him to the production of fiction, but it was his Puritanism that restrained his fiction

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1 Herbert Gorman, op. cit., p. 50.
2 Henry James, op. cit., pp. 63-64. See also Austin Warren (ed.), Nathaniel Hawthorne, lxvii, lxix.
within the confines of the didactic.\textsuperscript{1} Hawthorne, Brownell contends, had the most ingenious faculty for discovering morals upon which tales could be framed. Even in Hawthorne's lighter sketches, there is always a moral idea. For example, in "Little Annie's Ramble" the author says:

So, come, Annie, but if I moralize as we go, ... only look about you and be merry.\textsuperscript{3}

Indeed, Hawthorne constantly makes the reader conscious of his ethical intent. As he closes "The Prophetic Pictures," he asks the question: "Is there not a deep moral in the tale?" In "Wakefield" Hawthorne says of Wakefield:

He has left us much food for thought, a portion of which shall lend its wisdom to a moral...\textsuperscript{5}

This ethical intent of Hawthorne naturally led him to study and treat such themes as sin, guilt, repentance and retribution. But to intensify, personify, dramatize these themes, he calls to his aid Gothic devices and situations. These devices and situations, as will be shown, are so woven into his ethical purpose that a different terror—the terror of punishment and inevitable retribution—is felt by the reader. Marrying the Gothic to the ethical, Hawthorne—especially in his later works—puts

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1} W. C. Brownell, \textit{America Prose Masters} (New York, 1923), p. 34.
  \item \textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. 64.
  \item \textsuperscript{3} "Little Annie's Ramble," \textit{Twice-Told Tales}, p. 153.
  \item \textsuperscript{4} "The Prophetic Pictures," \textit{Ibid.}, p. 217.
  \item \textsuperscript{5} "Wakefield," \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 172-173.
\end{itemize}
many of his stories in the form of the allegory. This form, using the abstract in concrete manifestations or demonstrations of moral ideas, is natural to the temperament and times of Hawthorne. For Puritanism, as it has been pointed out, is the basis of Hawthorne's own character; and as he portrays the New England scene in his fiction, he capitalizes on the superstitious beliefs and customs of his forefathers. He chooses, for example, witchcraft as one medium for illustrating his moral ideas; and in so using it, he at the same time achieves eerie, other worldly Gothic effects. But these Gothic effects are subservient to the main ethical purpose. In "Feathertop," to illustrate, Hawthorne's use of witchcraft is to bear out a universal truth. In this moralized legend, according to Foster, the scarecrow, who comes to life, is Hawthorne's way of "idealizing into a single figure all the stupidities of mankind." Doubleday sums up the moral of "Feathertop" as a social criticism, because Hawthorne draws Feathertop as the representative type of "thousands upon thousands of coxcombs and charlatans in the world" who "live in fair repute and never see themselves for what they are." Thus it may be seen that through the use of witchcraft—a skill that fits well into the Gothic framework—Hawthorne points out the foibles of mankind and pronounces a severe indictment on his fellowman.

Again in "Young Goodman Brown," Hawthorne uses witchcraft. Three of the characters in the story are witches: Goody Cloyse, "that pious teacher of the catechism," but actually an old friend of the Black Man;

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1 C. H. Foster, op. cit., p. 246.
Goody Cor., "that unhanged witch"; and Martha Carrier, "who had the devils promise to be queen of hell." The characters (according to the record of Cotton Mather) were actual citizens of Salem; each was tried before Judge Hawthorne in 1692, and each was sentenced to death. The import of witchcraft in the story is striking, as the story reveals how a young man's faith was destroyed. This story, Quinn thinks, "portrays the horror of a young husband who believes that his wife has been tainted by the moral leprosy of witchcraft by which he had himself been tempted." Young Goodman Brown, going into the forest to the witches' meeting, encounters the devil, who may have been his own evil nature, for the guide's discourse was so apt, says Doubleday, "that his arguments seemed rather to spring up in the bosom of his auditor than to be suggested by himself." From his experience, Brown loses all hope and cries out:

My faith is gone! There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil; for to thee is this world given.

Brown returns home a disillusioned and distrustful man.

Several interpretations are advanced for the story. In commenting on it, Cherry thinks that Goodman Brown is impelled by "an instinct that

1 Ibid.
2 P. N. Cherry, "The Sources of Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown'," American Literature, V (Jan., 1934), 342-349. See also N. F. Doubleday, "Hawthorne's Use of Three Gothic Patterns," College English, VII (February, 1946), 256.
3 Termaine McDowell, "Nathaniel Hawthorne and the Witches of Colonial Salem," Notes and Queries, CXVI (March 5, 1954), 152.
5 N. F. Doubleday, "Hawthorne's Use of Three Gothic Patterns,", p. 256.
guides mortal man to evil,"1 and that Hawthorne considers the witchcraft a manifestation of secret sin in the human heart. Cherry expresses the theme in these words: "the effect of secret sin in the human heart and the dual nature of man." Matthiessen gives another idea of the theme. He states that "mere doubt of the existence of good, the thought that all men are evil, can become such a corrosive force as to eat out the life of the heart." Obviously, then, the witch material in the story is subservient, but not accidental. Doubleday says that "it serves as an imaginative substantiation for a parable of the soul." He also states that the story may be read on three levels: first, as a witch story; secondly, as a theological allegory; and thirdly, as an analysis of a state of mind in which, through the contact of the individual with evil, all virtue seems hypocrisy. Hawthorne closes "Young Goodman Brown" in a unique way. He asks, "Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch meeting?"

The foregoing discussion of "Young Goodman Brown" can lead but to one conclusion: that Hawthorne, the moralist, is primarily interested in

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1 F. N. Cherry, op. cit., p. 346.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
5 N. F. Doubleday, "Hawthorne's Use of Three Gothic Patterns," p. 256.
6 Ibid.
the problems of good and evil and in man's relation to these forces. Since these forces are mysterious and are beyond sight and touch, yet are knowable, Gothic machinery is a handy tool for one like Hawthorne, who uses witchcraft to show the nature of sin and its retribution. His use of witchcraft in this way is interpreted by Doubleday "as a symbol of the will to evil." An instance of this is in The Scarlet Letter. After leaving Hester in the forest, Dimmesdale meets with Mistress Hibbins, who tempts him. The minister is confused and cries out: "Am I mad!" His guilty conscience prevents his determining the incident as real or imaginary. "The doubt of the actuality," Doubleday thinks, "is the symbolic value and witchcraft becomes the symbol of the will to evil." Dimmesdale is truly a spiritual and moral failure. There is hypocrisy in his heart as he leads the people in the spiritual life. He is a failure morally, because of the concealment of his sin. The encounter with the old hag confuses him. He is finally overwhelmed by torture and anguish and suffers an exacting retribution for the sin of hypocrisy.

The use of witchcraft and its eerie concomitants are, as it has been shown, in conspicuous evidence in The House of the Seven Gables, which tells of the curse placed by old Matthew Maule upon Colonel Pyncheon, who had defrauded Maule of his land. For two centuries, there are the mysterious deaths in the Pyncheon family, apparently true to Maule's prediction that "God will give him blood to drink." The Colonel, as well as his descendants, suffers a horrible retribution for sin. The use of witch-

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1 N. F. Doubleday, "Hawthorne's Use of Three Gothic Patterns," p. 256.
2 Ibid.
craft and wizardry in the story not only links the long past with the present generation, but carries the ethical connotation that the sins and iniquities of the forefathers will be visited upon the younger generations.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that Hawthorne's use of witchcraft and its concomitants is not an end, but an effective means for setting forth moral values and of delving into man's sub-consciousness and warning us of the inevitability of punishment from sin. We have seen how Hawthorne uses an element related to the Gothic machinery—witchcraft. Let us now see how he uses some of the other devices.

As it has been pointed out, Hawthorne's art is of a fanciful nature, and is expressed often in the form of the allegory. He had a taste for conceits and analogies; and in his stories, ideas and materials are usually symbolic of something else. Matthiessen explains that when Hawthorne has Sibyl Daey to say:

> Everything, you know, has its spiritual meaning, which to the literal meaning is what the soul is to the body.\(^1\)

it is really an explanation of how Hawthorne's imagination works.

In Hawthorne's allegories are some of his most masterful strokes on the various kinds of sin. Whatever symbol is used the moral outcome of the ancient wrong is the same. With Hawthorne, sin and its retributions are synonymous. He warns against the "sin of pride," which is the intel-

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\(^1\) W. C. Brownell, op. cit., pp. 57-63. See also Henry James, op. cit., p. 60; C. H. Foster, op. cit., p. 245; Francis C. Matthiessen, op. cit., pp. 243-244; Wilbur L. Cross, op. cit., p. 164; Raymond W. Short, *Four Great American Novels* (New York, 1945), xxiii.


\(^3\) Francis C. Matthiessen, op. cit., p. 242.
lect perverted by pride or worshipped as God. Hawthorne also sees sin in human isolation, "that separateness from one's brother which results in the primary isolation of God."

Richard Digby's sin in "The Man of Adamant" is that of isolation. His retribution is his becoming the petrified stone. The mantle in "Lady Eleanor's Mantle" is the symbol of her insolence. On her death bed, Lady Eleanor says:

I wrapped myself in pride as in a mantle and scorned the sympathies of nature and therefore nature had made this wretched body the medium of a dreadful sympathy.

As can be expected, in the allegories are numerous symbols. In The Marble Faun, Donatello's hairy ears are symbolic of his animalism. In The Scarlet Letter, the embroidered letter "A" is a symbol of Hester's sin—adultery; also little Pearl's scarlet dress and the letter "A" on the minister's chest are symbols. Using these symbols, Hawthorne often illuminates the errant nature of man's mind and soul. An illustration of this is "The Wedding Knell." In the story the tolling of the bell is symbolic of the futility of seeking worldly happiness in old age. "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" reveals that the four friends did not profit by their experience. Having their youth again, they did the same things. Aylmer in "The Birthmark" attempts to improve nature. The result is tragic.

1N. F. Doubleday, "Hawthorne Inferno," College English, I (May, 1940), 663.
2Paul E. More, op. cit., pp. 31-32.
It was Hawthorne's discovery of the danger in the new emphasis upon experimental science, Blair thinks, that caused Hawthorne to portray the scientist as a fiend or devil. Blair comments that

Hawthorne seemed to think that the exclusive cultivation of the scientific faculty produces atrophy of soul, and creates and lets loose in the world an agent which is "fiendish" and who becomes utterly unmoral and irresponsible.\(^1\)

Hawthorne's most diabolical characters are scientists: Dr. Rappaccini, Ethan Brand and Chillingworth. "Dr. Rappaccini's Daughter" reveals how an innocent person is affected by the sin of another. The doctor's interest in his scientific research causes him to lose his human sympathy. He tries to transcend the limits of mortality, and the retribution of his sin is the tragic death of his daughter, Beatrice. In "Ethan Brand," Ethan who has a pact with a devil,规格ulates with the human heart in his search for the Unpardonable Sin, the evil which grew in his own heart, until his heart

had withered,--had contracted--had hardened,—had perished! It had ceased to partake of the universal throb.\(^3\)

Ethan's success in his quest is his retribution for it. He says, "My task is done, and well done!" In seeking revenge, Chillingworth "violated in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart." This evil

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\(^1\) Walter Blair, Theodore Hornberger, Randall Stewart (eds.), \textit{op. cit.}, p. 735.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 736.
\(^4\) Paul E. More, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 42. See also N. F. Doubleday, "Hawthorne's Use of Three Gothic Patterns," p. 358.
might be called the Unpardonable Sin. As he tortured the minister, 
Chillingworth's sin was so vile that his own deformity became more acute 
and he seemed to take on the appearance of a fiend. In referring to 
Chillingworth and the Spectre of the Catacombs, Cross calls them the 
persecuting demons in the romance. He sees them 
as a personification of the mistakes, misfortunes and 
sins of our past life which will not come out of our 
imagination.1

We have been discussing Hawthorne's use of allegory or symbolism. 
This device, according to Quinn, may be another member of the Gothic 
family. At any rate Hawthorne attached to this device far more mystery 
and eeriness than is commonly the case. And therefore he achieves 
Gothic effects while revealing man's fundamental sins.

Not only does Hawthorne use the Gothic devices of witchcraft and 
allegory for ethical ends; he also uses art—particularly painting. 
Hawthorne's interest in works of art sprang from his idea that through 
them human character can be revealed. In his fiction he uses the 
picture as a symbol of moral truth. He also makes the mysterious por-
trait a part of the New England legend. In "Edward Randolph's Portrait" 
the picture is an authentic likeness of the Evil One. In the story the 
picture reveals character and foretells incidents or discloses past 
events. "The Prophetic Pictures" discloses the artist's ability to 
accurately portray character. This highlights the theme of the story: 
"The individual's destiny is the result of what the individual is and 
does." The picture of Colonel Pyncheon plays an important part in the

1 Wilbur L. Cross, op. cit., p. 164.
3 Ibid.
affairs between Colonel Pynoheon and Matthew Maule, the wizard. In 
The Marble Faun, works of art carry a significant meaning in the story. 
For instance, Miriam has a resemblance to the picture of Beatrice 
Cenci. This resemblance implies that her crime is of a similar diaboli-
cal nature and that it springs from an inner depravity.

It is evident that Hawthorne's many uses of the Gothic are for 
ethical purposes. Through the use of witchcraft, symbolism and works 
of art, and others, he attempts to draw the mind and soul of man from 
their dark, sinister hiding places into the light of day. Once exposed, 
they are mirrors and warnings of "The wages of sin is death." It is 
clear that Hawthorne, in his ethical approach to the problems of human 
character, explores the realm of the intangible, of the supernatural. 
Here again the Gothic machinery serves his ethical purposes felicitously.

Hawthorne's interest in the supernatural was a Puritan heritage. 
The early New England people settled in those regions which were once the 
"devil's territories." These stern, religious people, living beside the 
deep, dark forest, the midst of "demonic powers," created an environment 
of awe and terror. Everything that could not be rationalized, was termed 
1 
supernatural. Hence we find Hawthorne making the supernatural a part of 
the New England scene.

One of Hawthorne's methods of using the supernatural was to evade 
2 the responsibility of it by introducing it as a tradition or legend. 
The mysterious deaths of the Pynoheons in The House of the Seven Cables 
became a tradition in the family. Each time a Pynoheon passed in the

2 Arthur Hobson Quinn, op. cit., p. 143.
usual mysterious manner, the rumor—"He has Maule's blood to drink"—was on everyone's mind or lips.

The supernatural elements in Hawthorne's works, according to Cross, are treated similarly to those by Shakespeare. Sometimes Hawthorne offers a partial explanation or none at all. In The Scarlet Letter, the letter "A", which appears in the sky might have been the burning out of a meteor, and the appearance of it on the minister's chest could have been caused by some physical disorder. Miriam's model might have been a criminal or a beggar hiding in the catacombs.

Hawthorne's use of the ghost, as has been stated, is always confined to the twilight. In "Lady Eleanor's Mantle," the author says,

There is a belief...that in a certain chamber of this mansion a female form may sometimes be duskily discerned....

There are many ghostly noises in The House of the Seven Gables; but Hawthorne states that it was a rumor that Old Maule arose from his grave at midnight and visited a certain mansion. The guests in "Howe's Masquerade" are masked, and the procession of dignitaries, who descend the stairs, are masked also. Lundblad speaks of this as a Radcliffean device, as the reader may choose that it is a ghostly apparition or either the whole pageant is a macabre jest played by the Boston Whig Party. Hawthorne's use of the Radcliffean method is evident in The Marble Faun. An addition of a chapter was made to the romance to account for some of the unusual happenings in the story.

3Jane Lundblad, op. cit., p. 103.
However, unlike that of Radcliffe and many Gothicists, Hawthorne's use of ghosts and ghostly effects is to make his moral purpose and message more effective, but never just for terror and horror. In this respect, he is nearer Shakespeare than he is the stock Gothicist.

Hawthorne's frequent use of the gloomy, macabre atmospheric effects seems to result from a natural bent. Once he wrote to Fields, saying that he wished God had given him the faculty to write a sunshiny book. After his completion of The Marble Faun, he wrote again to Fields stating that he was going to write more genial books; but the Devil himself always seems to get into my inkstand, and I can only exorcise him by pensful at a time.

The following criticism of The Marble Faun, which pleased Hawthorne very much, describes the kind of atmosphere Hawthorne created for his fiction:

...with regard to the story which has been slightly criticized, I can only say that to me it is quite satisfactory. I like those shadowy shapes flitting through the golden gloom which is the atmosphere of the book. I like the misty way in which the story indicated rather than revealed. The outlines are quite definite enough, from beginning to end, to those who have imagination enough to follow you in your airy flights. ....It is exactly the romantic atmosphere of the book in which I revel.

Indeed Hawthorne's fondness for the unusual and the marvelous led him into the realm of the supernatural which was his "distinctive province as a writer." The approach to all of his fiction, Matthiessen believes,

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1 Austin Warren (ed.), Nathaniel Hawthorne, lxxvii.
2 Ibid.
is the relation between appearance and reality. In "The Hollow of the Three Hills," the opening phrase,

In those strange old times, when fantastic dreams and madmen's reveries were realized among the actual circumstances of life, is characteristic of Hawthorne's approach in his fiction. As Hawthorne closes "Howe's Masquerade," he writes,

"...it is desperately hard work when we attempt to throw the spell of hoar antiquity over localities with which the living work and the day that is passing over us have aught to do....As I emerged through the venerable portal whence their figures had preceded me, it gladdened me to be conscious of a thrill of awe."

This is the kind of mood Hawthorne creates. In The Scarlet Letter, he is quite conscious of the extreme gloomy, morbid and melancholy atmosphere. He offers the reader one of the bright blooming roses at the door of the prison as a token of some little means of relieving the gloom. Hawthorne once confessed to Bridge that the story "lacks sunshine," and he found it almost impossible to throw any cheering light into it. Again, Hawthorne gives everything a ghostly and gloomy aspect in The House of the Seven Gables. Even the chicken and the flowers are drawn with an antiquated and dwarfish appearance. But the temper of the book alternates between tragedy and comedy, between realism and supernaturalism. The appearance of the youthful Phoebe, with her gay disposition, certainly relieves the gloom. But her gay spirit is balanced by the ambivalent gloom of Hepzibah.

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1. Francis O. Matthesen, op. cit., p. 205. See also Arthur Hobson Quinn, op. cit., pp. 81-82.
Hawthorne's use of inclement or eerie climatic conditions is appropriately made to fit both mood and the moral of the story. The pale moonlight, shining through the window falls on the corpse in "The White Old Maid." The howling wind precedes the landslide in "The Ambitious Guest." Ellen makes her midnight flight during a storm in "Fanshawe." The rain falls incessantly in "Peter Goldthwait's Treasure" and "The Seven Vagabonds"—all foreshadowing or illuminating impending doom and the omnipresence of evil. To be sure, the atmosphere in the stories adds to the desired psychological effects on both readers and characters and brings about a catharsis of fear, pity, and repentance.

As can be seen from the foregoing discussion, the Gothic machinery was useful—almost indispensable—to Hawthorne and his ethical thesis: that the dual nature of man makes him as much a creature of the devil as of God—that this duality is the source of much of man's suffering and tragic defeats. To dramatize and to animate this thought, to heighten the gruesomeness and terrible consequences and causes of evil—Hawthorne uses Gothic machinery. His use of the machinery in this way is a kind of contribution to the genre. For others before him and contemporaneous with him, like Poe, for example, used it merely for excitement and bizarre thrills. Another contribution to the Gothic vogue is seen in his adaptation of its conventionalities to the American scene.

In using this material, the author, altering and adapting the Gothic to the American setting (which in its elemental and primitive nature was dissonant with Gothic culture), stamps his personality upon both the material used and the devices employed. On the American scene,

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there was not to be found the old castles and monasteries in ruins; but this does not seem to handicap Hawthorne. He uses, instead, the large colonial house. A good illustration of the American house with its Gothic trappings and implications is Colonel Pyncheon's house in The House of the Seven Gables, or Governor Bellingham's mansion in The Scarlet Letter.

Another adaptation by Hawthorne is his use of the works of art. The animated picture, so often used in Gothic tales to create horror, Hawthorne, as it has been said, uses to reveal character. "The Prophetic Pictures" is an example. In the story the artist drew Walter as a madman, because he saw insanity in his character. Kenyon, in The Marble Faun, fashions a bust of Donatello which shows the transformation in Donatello after he has committed his crime.

Hawthorne also adapts witchcraft to his artistic purposes. In his fiction it becomes a part of Puritan conscience and ideology. He therefore weaves it into his fiction to bring out both moral ideas and his criticism of Puritanism. "Young Goodman Brown" and The Scarlet Letter well illustrate this fact.

Again, Hawthorne's interest in the elixir of life and the Wandering Jew of the Gothic novels leads him to use the scientist, who engages in esoteric arts, as a character in his fiction. Because of Hawthorne's interest in modern science and its relation to morality, he introduces a character similar to the wizard of the old Gothic tale yet a character fundamentally different because his tools and interests differ from those of his prototype. But Hawthorne's scientists are failures because he finds in them a fiendish sin: the sin of pride, a pride that puts the
acquisition of knowledge above the love of God and goodness.

Along with his adaptations, Hawthorne makes some additions to the Gothic tradition. His interest in mesmerism reflects the prevalent belief and interest in this phenomena, which was the vogue in Boston in the 1830's and 1840's. Not only were there theatrical exhibitions, but mesmerism was used for effecting cures also. Hawthorne gives this hypnotic power to one of his characters in *The House of the Seven Gables*. Through mesmerism, Matthew Maule attempts to obtain from Alice Pyncheon, who is in a state of mesmerism, information concerning the whereabouts of a lost document, the discovery of which would place in the possession of the Pyncheons a vast estate. He continues his mesmeric powers over her, causing her death. Another instance of the use of mesmerism is in *The Blithedale Romance*, when Westernvelt has Priscilla to pose as the Veiled Lady in his exhibition. It is made known then that Priscilla is a clairvoyant.

In his adaptations of and additions to the Gothic machinery, Hawthorne reveals his indigenous creativeness. In blending this machinery with serious ethical purpose, he not only makes significant contributions to the Gothic tale but to the psychological and problem fiction. Hawthorne is so adept at blending the real with the unreal, the natural with the supernatural that, as Lundblad states, this blending forms an integral and essential element of his artistic method, and a great part of his originality consists in his completely unprejudiced manner of using old worn-out ideas and figures abstracted from Gothic literature...

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1 Randall Stewart (ed.), *The American Notebooks* (New Haven, 1932), lxxv.
2 Jane Lundblad, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
In this chapter, we have seen that Hawthorne uses Gothic conventions, not merely for excitement but for the purpose of artistically heightening the terror and reality of sin and its consequences; that in appropriating Gothic devices to his purpose and needs, he transcends conventional employment of these devices; that in so doing, he reveals the creative soul of the artist.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this study of Hawthorne's employment of Gothic machinery, the purpose was to cite the many Gothic devices discovered in his fiction and to show how he uses them in his own original manner. But to understand and appreciate Hawthorne's interest in and use of the Gothic, it was necessary to include pertinent introductory and background material to serve as a point of departure for the study.

In this study, it was noted that Gothicism, as a literary vogue, was one important phase of the pronounced interest in medievalism during the middle and latter part of the eighteenth century. This preoccupation with the customs and mores of the Middle Ages inevitably led to the genesis and spread of the Gothic novel, a tale of terror and horror. Horace Walpole, originating this type of fiction, gave it its name, machinery and characters. The many imitators and immediate followers of Walpole had the same purpose as he—that of merely creating horror to terrify or thrill the reader. Among the most prominent of these followers were Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, who added verisimilitude by convincingly explaining the supernatural occurring in her works; William Beckford, who injected extreme fantasy and the marvelous; M. G. Lewis, writer of the most gruesome and shocking Gothic tale; and C. R. Maturin, whose novel creates very interesting psychological effects.

The works of these progenitors and those of other writers of the genre were read by Hawthorne, who, being reared in an unusual environment of seclusion, found great delight in tales of a fantastic and macabre nature. Hawthorne, a direct descendant of stern and hardy Puritans, was placed in this perplexing situation by tragic circumstances.
When he was four years old, his mother went into seclusion at the death of her husband as a form of mourning, imposing upon her young son an ascetic type of life. Hence his father's death, his mother's bereavement and his own introvertive temperament contributed to Hawthorne's morbid introspective habits. It was natural, then, for him to develop a taste for the weird and the marvelous in literature, to escape into a world of fancy and shadows. And his era supplied him with enough literary transports to convey him to lands where abstractions and ghosts are concrete; for it was the era of the Gothic tale of Edgar Allen Poe.

It seems, therefore, that there are two dominant reasons why Hawthorne used Gothic machinery in his work. First, he was admirably and indigenously fitted for it. Secondly, as a professional writer of fiction, he, along with other contemporary writers, was desirous of pleasing the public. But he was too much the artist and moralist merely to cater to public taste. He wanted his readers to think and reflect deeply on the mystery and significance of life. In his narratives, therefore, he added to and adapted Gothic devices to suit his esthetic and ethical purposes. It was found that in his early tales he uses Gothic machinery profusely, even, perhaps at the expense of his moral purpose. In his middle period, his tales are not so heavily weighted down with Gothic trappings which now are decidedly subservient to the ethical. In the last period, the tales and romances are a perfect blend of the ethical and Gothic, with the latter serving to heighten powerfully the truth and reality of the former. It can be observed, then, that although Hawthorne used Gothic machinery, his employment, however, was not for the same purpose as that of the early Gothicists; for he
used the Gothic as a tool to drive home more effectively the moral intent or import of his tale. If his tales and romances effect fear and terror it is the fear and terror of guilt, of the equal omnipotence of good and evil—not the fear and terror of a mere ghost story. And herein lies his artistry, his originality—to stamp his personality upon a conventional practice or vogue and give it different use, different direction, different meaning.

Thus from this study of Hawthorne's use of the Gothic, the findings resolve into three points of interest. First, Hawthorne's use of Gothic machinery was for ethical purposes. He used it as a tool or force to carry home to the reader the fear and terror of sin and its retributions. Secondly, Hawthorne's vivid, creative imagination and fancy influenced his selection, arrangement and tone color of his Gothic elements. Having the originality of the true artist, he appropriated or adapted the Gothic to his own purposes. Hence Hawthorne's handling of the Gothic is artistic and creative. Thirdly, in his ethical and esthetic handling of the machinery, it becomes an inextricable part of his artistic performance.
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